

The Role of Release Planning in the Reintegration Experiences
of High-Risk, Violent Offenders

By
Sophie R. Dickson

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form, to this or any other university for a degree:

Signature: _____

Publications

Data and literature from this thesis have been reported in the following format and been published or submitted for publication:

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Definitions for this Thesis

Recidivism – also referred to as ‘reoffending’ is the subsequent reconviction of an offender for any new offence following release from prison. In the context of this thesis, recidivism is an indicator that reintegration has not been successful (Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone, & Peeters, 2006). In this thesis, breaches of parole will not be included as a measure of recidivism, given that they are breaches of release conditions, rather than actual new offences.

Reintegration - also referred to as ‘reentry’, is the process of offenders transitioning from prison back into the community (Naser & La Vigne, 2006). For the purpose of this thesis, the reintegration period is deemed to be the first six to twelve months following release, as this is the period in which offenders are at a heightened risk of recidivism due to the challenges they face (Burnett, 2009). The challenges offenders face during this period will be discussed in depth in this thesis.

Desistance – this is a difficult concept to define because it is about looking for the absence of a behaviour (i.e., reoffending), not its presence. In its simplest form, to desist means to cease a behaviour (Law & Ward, 2011). Simply giving up crime may be easy; an offender may steal a purse, then desist for the rest of the day. However, maintaining that behaviour is much more difficult (Maruna, 2001). I view desistance as a process of maintained abstinence from offending, one that takes sustained effort over time. In the context of reintegration, the first six to twelve months after release are seen as the most challenging time for an offender to avoid crime, therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, desistance will be defined as the absence of a new conviction during the reintegration period. Various theories regarding how offenders desist will be discussed later in this thesis.

Abstract

High-risk offenders face a variety of challenges when reintegrating back into the community, such as difficulty finding stable accommodation, obtaining employment, and accessing positive support networks. These reintegration challenges are a contributing factor to the high recidivism rates of this offender group and therefore necessitate dedicated attention to helping prepare high-risk offenders for such challenges. One method of aiding the transition from prison into the community is release planning, which simply involves helping an offender to plan for the fundamentals of life in the community. Release plan quality has been found to predict recidivism, suggesting that release plans are an appropriate target for intervention. The aim of the current thesis is to explore *how* release plans aid the transition from prison into the community and result in reduced recidivism rates.

Study one explored the assumption that good quality release plans help offenders to have better experiences in the community after release (the ‘external’ pathway). Whilst the results suggested that better quality plans are related to better external experiences in general, a strong plan in a particular area (e.g., for accommodation) did not always translate into a good experience in that area. Additionally, experiences on parole only partially mediated the relationship between release plans and recidivism. Study two explored an alternative possibility: that good quality release plans have a psychological effect, resulting in higher levels of motivation to desist, self-efficacy, and prosocial identity (the ‘internal’ pathway). The results indicated that motivation to desist was the only variable mediating the relationship between release plans and recidivism (again, only partially). Study three, therefore, explored together the relative contributions of the external and internal pathways and found support for the external pathway, with external experiences fully

mediating the relationship between release plans and recidivism. These external experiences also predicted levels of motivation to desist in the community. Finally, Study three also explored the role that Self-Determination Theory (SDT) may play in the role of release planning, with the aim of identifying contextual factors that help to improve the quality of release plans. After developing two measures to assess the specific SDT variables in the context of release planning, I found that the more offenders endorsed items indicating that they felt autonomous during release planning, the more intrinsically motivated they felt to create release plans, and the better quality their release plans were.

The three studies together indicate that good quality release plans are related to offenders having better external experiences in the community, which in turn are related to reduced rates of reoffending. These positive external experiences are related to increased levels of motivation to desist in the community. There were measurement issues with the internal factors, suggesting that further research is required to better understand the role of psychological factors in the role of release planning. SDT has utility in the release planning process; the context in which offenders make release plans impacts on the quality of their plans. This thesis provides a strong argument for additional assistance in release planning being provided for offenders coming up for release.

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Chapter One

Introduction to Release Planning

Background

A small proportion of offenders is responsible for a large percentage of crime. In fact, just 20-30% of violent offenders commit 80% of all crimes (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). In New Zealand, these prolific offenders are known as *high-risk offenders* and are typically young Maori males who come from criminal families and have been involved in antisocial behavior from a young age (Wilson, 2004). High-risk offenders in New Zealand are also typically involved in gangs such as Black Power or the Mongrel Mob, who are known to engage in violence and intimidation (Payne, 1997). This group is criminally versatile, engaging in a variety of different types of crime from property offences, to drug offences, to violence (Wilson, 2004). As a result, they are frequently imprisoned; however, imprisonment does not reduce the likelihood of their further offending (Wilson, 2004). These high imprisonment rates may in part be explained by their release circumstances; the international literature has demonstrated that following periods in prison, these offenders tend to be released to crime-ridden, impoverished communities (Petersilia, 2003). In the community, most of these offenders also experience unstable housing, unemployment, and conflictual relationships. They abuse drugs and alcohol, and many have physical and/or mental health problems (Wilson, 2004). These various challenges in the community are thought to contribute to their high rates of recidivism, which is very costly to New Zealand society. An estimate in 2003/2004 put the cost of crime to New Zealand society at \$9.1 billion, a large proportion of which would have been committed by these high-risk offenders (Roper & Thompson, 2006). A single high-risk offender will

cost New Zealand \$3 million across his life span (Cheng, 2011). This figure includes the high cost of imprisonment, legal costs, and loss of earnings, amongst other things (Snively, 1994). Aside from the financial cost of offending, there is also the large human cost. Victims of crime suffer both physically and mentally. The victims of domestic violence, for example, experience increased rates of depression, substance abuse, and chronic illness (NZPG, August 2005). The extensive costs of the crimes committed by these high-risk offenders, both financial and human, necessitate dedicated attention to predicting and preventing their future offending.

The focus of this thesis is the high rates of reoffending in these high-risk offenders following their release from prison. All offenders face challenges to reintegrating back into the community. High-risk offenders are particularly vulnerable when being released to the difficult community circumstances that the literature has documented, due to their problem-solving difficulties and other risk factors. Therefore, the difficult release circumstances that high-risk offenders face are even more likely to lead to disastrous reoffending in the community. Key to the problem of recidivism is the nature and quality of the release plans put in place, as past research has linked good quality release plans to reduced rates of recidivism (Willis & Grace, 2008, 2009).

Release plans help offenders to prepare for the challenges they will face in the community. The aim of this thesis is to examine the release plans of high-risk offenders, to discover if the quality of release plans will predict recidivism in this high-risk population and, if so, to examine *how* release plans may be helping to reduce recidivism rates. Do release plans really help offenders to have better experiences in the community? Or is there something else about release planning that helps? The remainder of this chapter will explore the types of challenges the literature

has shown that offenders face in the community after release, describe programmes that have been developed to address these challenges, and discuss how release planning is used in such programmes. Next, it will explore how release plans can be used to predict reoffending, what risk factors are typically used to assess offending risk, how community experiences may also help us to predict risk, and how release plans work.

Community Barriers for Ex-Prisoners

Offenders face a number of barriers when returning to the community. The cumulative effect of all of these barriers makes it difficult to resume an ordinary life (Graffam, Shinkfield, & Lavelle, 2004). In fact, Harrison and Schehr (2004) stated that imprisonment may contribute to recidivism because the process of reintegrating back into the community is so challenging. Also important is that offenders don't feel prepared for release (Bucklen & Zajac, 2009). This section will examine more closely some of the challenges that offenders face following release from prison: from finding somewhere to live, to having positive people to support them.

Accommodation. Accommodation is crucial to the successful reintegration of prisoners back into the community, yet it is difficult for many of them to obtain. Most prisoners return to live with their families after release, but these living arrangements are often only temporary (Solomon, Visher, La Vigne, & Osborne, 2006). Options other than living with family members are extremely limited and often unavailable to ex-prisoners. The majority of future recidivists end up living in unstable, temporary accommodation after release from prison (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). An Australian study revealed that many prisoners do not receive any established support in finding accommodation following release, which results in inadequate accommodation

(Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone, & Pieters, 2006). In fact, many of the prisoners in this study were homeless after release. The same study showed that the more frequently ex-prisoners moved accommodation, the more likely they were to reoffend, and that those living with support people were less likely to reoffend than ex-prisoners living without support people (Baldry et al., 2006). The reasons for offenders' difficulties in finding suitable accommodation include both the scarcity of affordable accommodation and the attitude of landlords. Affordable housing is typically limited to unstable, criminogenic, and drug-ridden neighbourhoods (Graffam et al., 2004), and the majority of landlords do not accept tenants with criminal records (Clark, 2007).

Employment. Numerous studies have revealed the challenges faced by ex-prisoners attempting to find employment in the community. In a study of ex-prisoners' adjustment to life in the community, it was reported that unemployment was the norm (Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009). Recidivists are also more likely to be unemployed before they reoffend than non-recidivists (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). Those who do manage to find employment typically find low-skilled jobs that pay insufficient wages to support them and their families (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). Financial hardship is also the norm following release into the community (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). Few offenders have work lined up after release, but those who do manage to find work have lower rates of reoffending than those who remain unemployed (Solomon et al., 2006). An examination of the reasons for the low employment rates of ex-prisoners revealed that unemployment is due to characteristics of both the ex-prisoners and their potential employers. Ex-prisoners tend to have limited education and work experience, antisocial attitudes, transport difficulties, and substance abuse issues that hinder their ability to find work.

Employers tend to rule out people with criminal records, preferring people with positive attitudes to work, and those who have the skills to do the job well (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2003).

Social Support. The main source of social support for ex-prisoners is their families (Bobbitt & Nelson, 2004). Families can provide a positive influence and, in fact, strong family support has been found to reduce the likelihood of recidivism, as well as increase the likelihood of finding employment after release (Solomon et al., 2006). However, families can also be problematic: for example when domestic violence occurs within the family, or when the family engage in other criminal activities (Naser & La Vigne, 2006). Offenders often experience interpersonal conflict with their social supports in the community, and those who recidivate tend to have less support than those who remain offence-free following release (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). A source of concern is that ex-prisoners who have spent longer periods in prison tend to struggle to maintain attachments to family. Therefore, those who need the most support in the community tend to have the least to draw on (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). It has been found that only a minority of ex-prisoners has regular, positive contact with family (Graffam et al., 2004).

Following release from prison, many offenders have no friends in the community, and those who do usually have criminal friends (La Vigne, Visher, & Castro, 2004). Offenders who go on to recidivate are more likely to spend time with criminal peers in the community than non-recidivists (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). Many ex-prisoners lose their non-criminal friends due to their involvement in drugs and crime, and others are isolated from all social support due to a desire to avoid antisocial associates (Graffam et al., 2004).

Release Environment. It has frequently been reported that many ex-prisoners end up living in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods (e.g., La Vigne et al., 2004; Hipp, Turner, & Jannetta, 2010). The areas that they are released to have above-average rates of unemployment and high rates of families living below the poverty line. Even when ex-prisoners move away from their old, familiar neighbourhoods, they often move to similarly disadvantaged areas (Solomon et al., 2006). The highest risk offenders tend to return to areas with few service providers, such as employment or housing services (Hipp, Jannetta, Shah, & Turner, 2011). The social characteristics of the area the offender is released to then influences future crime: unstable informal networks of social control are related to increased rates of offending (Petersilia, 2001).

Summary. Offenders often face barriers upon reentering the community, and those who later recidivate face more barriers than non-recidivists following release from prison. These difficulties can be targets for intervention; ensuring offenders are better prepared for the practical challenges they will face when reentering the community ought to help reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Next, I will describe a variety of programmes that have been developed to improve the reentry experiences of offenders and to reduce reoffending on parole. Then I will explore the approach taken in New Zealand.

Reentry Programmes

Reentry programmes have been defined as correctional programmes that focus on the transition into the community from prison, or programmes that begin in prison and continue on into the community (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). Such programmes target a range of offender needs, from housing and employment to substance abuse treatment.

In this section, I will describe a selection of these programmes: first, some general reentry programmes, then programmes that focus on a more specific reentry need: employment. Rather than an exhaustive review of all reentry programmes, the aim of this section is instead to illustrate the types of efforts that have been made to assist reentry, and some of the limitations in the programmes and their evaluations.

The Boston Reentry Initiative was introduced in 2001 to improve the chances of successful reintegration for high-risk violent offenders (Braga, Piehl, & Hureau, 2009). During their prison sentence, each offender selected for the programme had an individual release plan developed, as well as meetings with representatives from criminal justice agencies, social service providers, and faith-based organisations. Following release, each offender was then encouraged to follow their release plan and to continue to work with the mentors and service providers in the community. They were provided with a variety of services, from immediate accommodation, clothing, and employment assistance, to longer-term substance abuse, mental health, or educational services. Compared to a similarly high-risk violent, but untreated, control group, the Boston Reentry participants were arrested for any crime, as well as for any violent crime, at a 30% lower rate. The programme participants also took significantly longer to reoffend both violently and non-violently than the control group. Braga and colleagues stated that the results showed that it is possible to reduce reoffending rates in this high-risk population through effective service delivery. The results were promising but it is important to note that the control group came from an earlier cohort of prisoners, and each control offender was matched to a participant through a propensity score method. Although a relatively robust method of finding matched controls, this does create some risk of a cohort effect: the controls may have been released at a time during which they faced more challenges in finding housing,

employment, or support than the study participants, the different environmental context resulting in an increased recidivism rate.

In an effort to reduce reoffending on parole in California, legislators funded the Preventing Parolee Crime programme in the 1990s. The programme had a broad scope, utilizing services that assisted offenders on parole with substance abuse treatment and education, job training and placement services, maths and literacy training, and supported accommodation for up to six months (Zhang, Roberts, & Callanan, 2006). An analysis of outcomes for all offenders on parole between July 2000 and June 2002 found that programme participants had an 8% lower recidivism rate than controls, and the more immersed in the programme the participants were, the lower their recidivism rates. Zhang and colleagues (2006) noted that it did not matter what types of services the offenders succeeded in meeting treatment targets for; as long as they met treatment targets in one area they were less likely to recidivate than participants who did not meet any targets (who reoffended at the same rate as controls). These results supported the contention that community-based services for offenders should be expanded in order to reduce recidivism on parole, and that we should develop strategies to encourage offender participation in such programmes. Unfortunately, the results may have been due to a selection bias, wherein the more motivated offenders were more likely to be referred to, and to engage in, the Preventing Parolee Crime programme. The more immersed offenders were less likely to reoffend, but these more motivated offenders would have been less likely to reoffend anyway.

The Accelerated Community Entry programme in Michigan had a different approach, utilising a reentry court model based on the drug court structure (Knollenberg & Martin, 2008). These reentry courts facilitated offender reintegration

through holding monthly court hearings in the community for offenders on parole. Probation officers provided information at the hearings about the conduct of the offender, so that the offender could be rewarded for good behaviour or sanctioned for any violations. Treatment providers made recommendations for any substance abuse or mental health treatment the offender might require. These court hearings continued for at least 12 months, at which point the offender graduates onto traditional supervised release. Knollenberg and Martin's assessment indicated that, when implemented correctly, such programmes are effective at engaging support systems in the reintegration process, offenders felt encouraged by the rewards to do well, and the cost of mistakes motivated offenders to avoid them. The research was limited by a small sample size, unreliable assessment tools, and lack of recidivism analyses.

One of the key reasons for high recidivism rates amongst offenders following release from prison is a lack of job training and opportunities for work. Because recidivism is linked to unemployment, poor quality employment, and low wages, many programmes have been developed to increase employment opportunities for offenders on parole with the aim of decreasing recidivism rates. Work release programmes aim to remedy this situation by allowing prisoners, as they near the end of their sentence, to go out to work during the day but return to prison at night. The programmes enable offenders to learn to work, earn some money, and acquire more positive habits. One such programme is Washington State's prison work release programme. An assessment of this programme compared the outcomes for 125 participants and for 93 controls (Turner & Petersilia, 1996). At one year follow-up, the work release participants were less likely to have been rearrested (22%) than controls (30%) but this difference was not statistically significant. These relatively

low rates of rearrest indicate that the offenders included in this study are not the high-risk offenders for whom such reintegration assistance is really necessary.

As a result of changing legislature focused on monitoring and control in the 1980s, a sharper focus on public protection over “social work for offenders” led to a decline in reentry efforts in the United Kingdom. Recently, however, new reentry initiatives have begun to emerge. Innovative probation practices known as “Pathfinders” were developed, which were concerned with resettling short-term prisoners (Lewis, Maguire, Raynor, Vanstone, & Vennard, 2007). These seven programmes aimed to reduce reoffending by offenders on parole through assisting them with practical problems (e.g., finding accommodation), making referrals (e.g., to drug treatment services), and helping to address motivation and attitudes (e.g., with short cognitive-motivational programmes). Offenders enter the programme while still in prison, and continue to receive assistance for up to three months after release. Of the seven projects evaluated, four were run by probation services, and three by volunteer organizations. Lewis and colleagues (2007) stated that, despite some initial implementation problems, the programmes resulted in a good level of continuity of care from prison into the community. At 12 months follow up, participants showed no significant reduction in recidivism when controlling for pre-existing level of risk; however, those who had contact with programme staff in the community (as opposed to the majority who participated in prison only) had significantly lower rates of reoffending than those with no contact in the community. Again, although these results support the need for greater continuity of services in the community, they may be the result of a selection bias because the programmes were completely voluntary, so once again it may have only been the most motivated offenders who engaged, particularly in the community.

The Prolific and other Priority Offenders strategy was launched in the UK in 2004, with the aim of coordinating various programmes and supports that manage prolific offenders. The resettlement strand of the strategy involved having a single case manager to follow each offender through his or her sentence. While the offender was in prison, the case manager and offender developed an action plan regarding accommodation, education or training, substance abuse treatment, finance, and health (Millie & Erol, 2006). In the community, the case manager made referrals and acted as a mentor for the offender. A qualitative assessment of the strategy found that offenders developed trusting relationships with their case managers and other staff, that the large number of appointments that the offenders had to keep track of meant that breaches were common, and that many offenders did not receive the substance abuse treatment or employment support that they needed (Millie & Erol, 2006). Unfortunately, the assessment did not include any recidivism analyses, so no conclusions can be drawn regarding the effectiveness of the programme. It was helpful to see some of the practical issues surrounding the programme (e.g., very few offenders received help with housing, simply because housing wasn't available) because these issues demonstrate the difficulties surrounding offender reintegration.

Visher, Winterfield, and Coggeshall (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of eight studies that used random assignment experimental designs to examine the effects of employment-focused programmes. The studies included in the meta-analysis included the Baltimore Living Insurance for Ex-Prisoners, the Transitional Aid Research Project, the National Supported Work Demonstration, the Job Training Programme for Probationers, the Job Training Partnership Act, JOBSTART, Job Corps, and Opportunity to Succeed. These programmes involved basic education, vocational training, job-readiness counselling, job placement services, and/or other support

services for offenders on parole. The small mean of the effect sizes for these studies (0.03) indicated that the employment programmes did not reduce recidivism rates amongst the treated offenders compared to controls. Visser and colleagues stated that this may have been due to the small number of rigorous evaluations that have been conducted of employment programmes and emphasised the need for more evaluations to be conducted. The results did not examine whether participation in the programmes increased the likelihood of offenders gaining employment in the community. If employment was particularly easy to come by, or particularly hard for that matter, participating in such programmes may not have helped improve the employment prospects of the participants and therefore may not have reduced their reoffending.

Summary. This review of reentry programmes demonstrates that a wide variety of approaches have been taken to improve reentry experiences for offenders, with varying levels of success. A key component of many of these programmes is helping offenders to make plans for managing the challenges they will face in the community. In New Zealand, this approach is taken for our high-risk offenders. Next, I will focus on the New Zealand context: our approach to reducing reentry challenges, and the efficacy of this approach.

The New Zealand Approach: Release Planning

As mentioned above, reentry programmes focus on the transition from prison into the community. Part of the approach to aiding this transition in New Zealand (i.e., that used by the New Zealand Department of Corrections during the period covered by this research) has been to focus on release planning, particularly for offenders who are

anticipating an early release or parole¹. Release planning involves examining an offender's plans for life after release, and helping him to improve weak plans by, for example, helping him to access resources, which could ease his transition back into the community (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). Currently, New Zealand's Special Treatment Unit (STU) programmes (rehabilitation programmes for high-risk offenders) include a component on release planning as prisoners near release into the community; this treatment component simply involves addressing fundamental survival issues such as where an offender will live and how he will support himself financially after release. For offenders who do not go through a STU, release planning takes place less formally, often with the assistance of the offender's case manager or a member of the custodial staff. For an offender to be granted early parole, the New Zealand Parole Board will examine his release plans and refuse early release if, amongst other reasons, his release plans are not considered suitable.

Release plans are the focus of this research. This thesis will look at release plans in close detail, examining what they look like, how they impact on ex-prisoners' community experiences, whether they are linked to reduced rates of reoffending, and potential mechanisms for how they may reduce reoffending. In the next section, I will describe research that has been conducted on release plans in New Zealand.

Past Research. Very little research has been conducted on the plans that offenders make before release. Willis and Grace (2008) looked at the quality of plans for release in a sample of relatively low risk child sex offenders, following treatment

¹ In New Zealand, parole is formally defined as the period of supervision in the community following the early conditional release of an offender who has been sentenced to two or more years in prison. Its aim is to ease the transition back into the community from prison (NZ Parole Board Website - http://www.paroleboard.govt.nz/utility/faq/parole_faqs.html). Offenders who are not granted early parole are released on standard conditions at their Sentence End Date; however, this is also commonly referred to as parole.

in an intensive rehabilitation programme in New Zealand (Kia Marama in Christchurch). They developed a coding protocol measuring prisoners' accommodation, social support, employment, idiosyncratic risk factors (i.e., plans for risky situations specific to the prisoner), prosocial approach goals², and motivation to carry out their plans (as judged by the therapist). Willis and Grace then rated the prisoners' release plan quality based on psychologists' final reports to the Parole Board and Community Probation Service (both just prior to release). They found that sexual reoffenders had significantly poorer plans for accommodation, employment, and prosocial approach goals as well as overall planning scores, than those who did not commit further sexual offences. In a second study, Willis and Grace (2009) refined their coding protocol and assessed the release plans of a second sample of child sex offenders who had participated in another custodial rehabilitation programme in New Zealand (Te Piriti in Auckland). They found that sexual reoffenders had significantly poorer plans for accommodation, employment, social support, idiosyncratic risk factors, motivation, and prosocial approach goals, as well as overall planning scores, than those who did not commit further sexual offences. Overall, Willis and Grace (2008, 2009) found that better quality pre-release plans (i.e., plans that were more specific, confirmed, and more prosocial) were linked to lower rates of reoffending after release from prison, and therefore concluded that interventions to improve release plans might help to lower recidivism rates.

While encouraging, this research has some limitations. The research was conducted on two samples of low-risk child sex offenders, bringing into question its generalizability to the high-risk population of offenders that I am interested in. The

² These goals are based on the Good Lives Model of offender rehabilitation in which primary goods, such as relationships with others, are promoted as treatment targets (e.g. Ward & Stewart, 2003).

time to reoffending was also very long in Willis and Grace's studies: an average time to reoffending of 10.5 years. This long follow-up period makes it difficult conceptually to link plans made before release with experiences 10 years later. In contrast, high-risk offenders can be reconvicted within weeks of release from prison. These differences bring into question whether the same release planning factors will be related to reoffending in these two groups.

To address that question, Dickson, Polaschek, and Casey (2013) set out to replicate Willis and Grace's (2008) study in a sample of high-risk violent offenders from Te Whare Manaakitanga (TWM in Upper Hutt; one of New Zealand's STUs). Dickson and colleagues used Willis and Grace's coding protocol as a starting point then developing it further, based on the literature regarding salient risk factors for offenders in the community and limited by the information available on offenders' prison files. The coding protocol included measures of safety planning (plans for managing risk specific to the prisoner), accommodation, employment, prosocial support, plans to avoid antisocial associates, number of risk factors in the release environment, and an overall release planning score. We found a similar pattern of results to that reported by Willis and Grace (2008, 2009); men who went on to reoffend following release had significantly poorer overall release plans than men who did not reoffend, supporting the idea that release planning is important regardless of type of offending. There were some minor differences; employment was found to be the most strongly predictive factor amongst the high-risk violent offenders of Dickson and colleagues' study, whereas accommodation was most predictive amongst the child sex-offenders in Willis and Grace's. This disparity may be due to the neighbourhood reactions to child sex offenders being released there; a challenge not faced to the same degree by violent offenders.

Summary. Release plans have been found to predict recidivism in both lower-risk child sex offenders and high-risk, violent offenders. These results show that release plans are related to reduced rates of reoffending; indicating that release plans could be a good predictive tool, possibly explaining variance outside of what is included in current measures of risk. This observation brings us to the next section, which looks at release planning as a means of predicting recidivism, the ways in which we currently assess risk, and how release planning could add to our understanding of risk.

Release Plans as Risk Predictors

Another way of conceptualizing the quality of release plans is as a risk prediction tool. Willis and Grace (2008, 2009) found that the quality of an offender's release plans predicted whether he was likely to go on to recidivate. These results led to the question of whether release plans are simply an indicator of the offender's risk level. Scoones, Willis, and Grace (2012) examined whether release plans are protecting prisoners from reoffending, or whether the plans are merely a proxy for the risk level of the offender. They assessed the quality of release plans with a sample of child sex offenders from Kia Marama as well as their risk of future sexual offending on both static and dynamic measures of risk. They found that plans for accommodation, employment, social support, and prosocial approach goals all contributed significant incremental validity to the prediction of sexual offending, above both the static and dynamic risk measures, indicating that release plans are tapping into variance that is distinct from existing risk measures. Dickson and colleagues (2013) also replicated these analyses with their sample of high-risk violent offenders. We found that, while controlling for risk level assessed by both static and dynamic measures, release plans

did not predict reconviction but did predict reconviction resulting in reimprisonment (a marker of more serious offending). We speculated that minor offending was commonplace in this sample of very high-risk offenders, and so is unaffected by having good release plans. Good quality plans for life in the community are, however, helping to protect men from being quickly reimprisoned, despite their high level of risk.

It appears that release plans aren't simply a proxy for other risk measures. Instead, they are contributing independent variance to the prediction of recidivism. The following section will look at how the field of criminal justice psychology currently assesses risk of offending, conceptualises risk factors, and how we can also view as risk factors the challenges that offenders face in the community.

Risk factors for General Offending. Risk factors (i.e., the variables associated with an increased risk of future offending) fall into two categories: static or dynamic. Andrews and Bonta (2010) described static risk factors as historical or relatively fixed aspects of offenders' lives that predict future offending. In a meta-analysis of 131 studies on the predictors of adult offending, Gendreau, Little, and Goggin (1996) found that the static factors which were significantly predictive of offending were: age, criminal history as an adult, criminal history as a preadult, and family rearing practices. Whilst these static factors can be used to predict offending, their very nature as fixed, historical factors means they cannot be targeted in treatment, nor can they be used to measure any changes in risk level over time.

Dynamic risk factors, on the other hand, have more utility as they are changeable and, when changed, result in a corresponding increase or decrease in risk of reoffending (Olver, Wong, & Nicholaichuk, 2007). Dynamic risk factors, also labeled "criminogenic needs" by Andrews and Bonta (2006), can therefore serve as

targets for intervention. In their meta-analysis, Gendreau and colleagues (1996) found that antisocial personality, antisocial associates, interpersonal conflict, social achievement, and substance abuse, were all significant dynamic predictors of adult offending. Static factors are conceptualized as reflecting “risk status”, or an individual’s long-term risk of reoffending relative to others, whereas dynamic factors reflect “risk state”, which is the intraindividual variability in offending potential (Douglas & Skeem, 2005).

Dynamic risk factors can be further split out into two types: stable and acute. Hanson and Harris (2000) described stable dynamic risk factors as those that are slow to change, remaining stable for months or years, such as alcoholism or antisocial attitudes. Acute dynamic risk factors, however, change rapidly, over the course of minutes, hours, or days. In a study of probationers, Zamble and Quinsey (1997) found that recidivism was predicted by acute dynamic factors such as negative mood. Hanson and Harris (2000) also studied acute factors, such as offenders’ moods and cognitions prior to reoffending, but they suggested that interventions ought to be aimed at changing stable dynamic risk factors, rather than acute, as the acute factors are related only to the timing of the offence rather than the long-term potential to offend.

The various risk factors described above have been reconceptualised as “psychologically meaningful variables” by Mann, Hanson and Thornton (2010). Psychologically meaningful variables are individual propensities, or enduring characteristics, that can be recognized during an individual’s transactions with others or with their environment. We can see some risk factors as place-holders for the underlying psychological trait that puts an offender at risk for reoffending. For example, an individual’s propensity to be drawn to criminal associates is a distinct,

and potentially more accurate, predictor of offending risk than the associates themselves. Like the risk factors discussed above, the most useful propensities are those that can change with treatment; however, it is not necessary for them to be amenable to change to be considered psychologically meaningful.

Assessment of Offending Risk. Having identified the factors related to prior criminal involvement, we can predict the risk of future crime with tools that assess these static and dynamic factors. Risk prediction has evolved over the years, having consisted initially of nothing more than the unstructured professional opinion of a clinician. Such approaches were primarily based on the clinician's own judgment of the offender's risk, using their experience and knowledge of offending behavior, and had marginal predictive validity (Wong & Gordon, 2006). More recently, actuarial measures developed. Scales consisting of a list of risk factors are completed and scored, giving an overall numerical result that can then be aligned with a previously established level of risk of being reconvicted of a further offence (Craig & Browne, 2008). These results are then used to rank offenders in terms of their comparative levels of risk. The early versions of these tools were made up of static factors alone, such as criminal and family history (e.g. VRAG, GSIR, Static-99; Wong & Gordon, 2006). These static-based tools had good predictive validity but were not able to assess change in risk over time, or to tell us what to target in treatment.

The next generation of risk assessment tools overcame these limitations by including dynamic risk factors (e.g., criminal attitudes and criminal associates) and were able to predict recidivism as accurately as the static tools, and also inform treatment (e.g., VRS: SO; Olver et al., 2007). The latest generation of risk assessment tools assesses both static and dynamic risk factors over time to guide and monitor service delivery to, and supervision of, offenders (e.g., LS/CMI; Andrews, Bonta, &

Wormith, 2004). It has been suggested that the predictive power of risk assessment tools has reached a plateau, at which the most well-validated tools have very similar predictive power. In order to improve the ability of these tools to predict recidivism, we need to explore novel means of identifying and combining risk factors (Yang, Wong, & Coid, 2010). The assessment of release plan quality may help to provide incremental predictive validity to our current measures of risk.

Release Challenges as Dynamic Risk Factors. I am proposing that the various challenges that offenders face on release, such as difficulty finding accommodation or employment, could be conceptualized as dynamic risk factors. In their study of parolees, Zamble and Quinsey (1997) found that men who reoffended in the community were less likely to be employed, were worse off financially, were more isolated, spent more time with criminal peers, were more likely to abuse substances, reported more problems, and had poorer emotional experiences than men who did not reoffend. Other factors such as socio-economic background and mental health were not related to reoffending. In order to be a dynamic risk factor, we would need to see that these release challenges are factors that can be changed with intervention and that this change would result in an alteration in the offender's risk of reoffending (Olver et al., 2007). I am proposing that these challenges are factors for which an offender can make plans and that release planning is the intervention by which we can reduce these challenges, resulting in lower recidivism rates.

This proposal is based on the assumption that good quality release plans *do* lead to better quality experiences in the community, but this assumption is as yet untested. The assumption is that release plans lead to reduced rates of recidivism through their effect on community experiences: that this is the mechanism underlying the effectiveness of release planning. It is important that this assumption be tested. If

we are to use release plan quality measures as risk assessment tools, it is vital that we understand how these risk assessment tools are predicting the outcome. This is not the only potential mechanism underlying release plans; there are a variety of ways that release plans could be impacting on recidivism rates.

Mechanism underlying Release Plans

Willis and Grace (2008, 2009) made a few brief suggestions regarding the mechanism underlying the effectiveness of release plans. The first suggestion was related to the theory of informal social control, which states that bonds to supportive people, employment, and other adult institutions inhibit offending behavior (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Although they did not expand on how this theory relates to release planning, it could be assumed that, for example, better quality plans for an offender's employment lead to better experiences of employment in the community and, in turn, a greater amount of informal social control being exerted over the offender.

Willis and Grace's next suggestion related to acute dynamic risk factors. First, that the challenges faced during reintegration may increase the odds of acute dynamic risk factors arising, which would then increase the risk of offending behavior. Second, that stable accommodation and employment allow the offender to maintain the gains made during the rehabilitation programme. Again, they did not expand on this mechanism any further, so one is left to assume that the offender had learnt to manage the acute dynamic risks in the programme, and that good quality release plans led to them experiencing fewer acute risk factors and being better equipped to manage them in the community.

Finally, Willis and Grace (2009) referred to the Good Lives Model, a model of offender rehabilitation that promotes basic human needs such as relatedness, agency,

or knowledge as treatment targets (e.g., Ward & Stewart, 2003). They suggested that good quality release planning allows offenders to meet these basic human needs, for example, that planning for social support leads to the offender meeting the basic need of relatedness, which in turn reduces their likelihood of offending.

Willis and Grace (2008, 2009) made a variety of suggestions on a possible causal mechanism underlying the effectiveness of release planning, however, so far these are just suggestions. No research has been conducted into *how* release plans affect recidivism rates in the community. What is problematic about these suggestions is that they are all based on the assumption that release plans affect community experiences in the expected way; that is, that good plans for life in the community lead to good experiences in the community. This assumption is logical but, as yet, without evidence. The literature identifies areas such as housing, employment, and social support as being problematic for ex-prisoners and links them to increased recidivism rates, and plans for these challenging areas have been found to reduce reoffending. It seems likely that release plans do impact on community experiences in the expected way, but we need to back these theories up with research. Willis and Grace also mentioned that plans may help to increase feelings of agency, or relatedness, which hints at plans having an impact on internal factors, not just on external experiences. While the reintegration literature focuses on providing practical services to overcome the challenges faced upon release from prison, the literature on desistance focuses on changes in thinking and identity (e.g., Maruna, 2001) as well as external factors. For example, Maguire and Raynor (2006) stated that quitting crime requires changes in thinking as well as in circumstances.

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore potential ways in which release plans impact on recidivism, in order to better understand the way they predict risk and

how they help to reduce reoffending. There are three potential pathways that this influence could take. First, plans may be influencing external factors. By external factors I am referring to factors outside of the offender, such as their relationship, employment, or financial situation. Release plans could translate directly into better quality parole experiences, making the process of abstaining from crime easier for the offender. Second, as Willis and Grace suggest, plans could influence internal factors. By internal factors, I am referring to factors inside the offender: psychological factors such as personal goals, attitudes to crime, and problem solving ability. Third, there may be an interplay of internal and external factors. The literature on desistance looks at both the external and internal factors involved in an offender giving up crime. The next chapter will look at how release plans may impact on recidivism rates through their influence on external factors.

Chapter Two:

The ‘External’ Pathway

Theoretical Underpinnings

The first pathway I will explore to explain the relationship between release plans and recidivism is the ‘external’ pathway. As mentioned, what underlies Willis and Grace’s (2008, 2009) suggested mechanism for the relationship in question is the assumption that good quality plans turn into good quality experiences. This assumption is yet to be robustly tested.

There is existing theory that explains how external experiences, such as experiences of employment or social support, are related to the process of desistance. In their 1993 work “Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life”, Sampson and Laub examined childhood causes of crime and adult causes of desistance from crime. In the context of existing theories that asserted childhood temperament and family socialisation explained adult delinquency in full, they were interested in stability and change in deviance across the life span. They were also interested in how deviance is influenced by social ties to institutions and other individuals. Sampson and Laub theorised that weak bonds to school and family contribute to the onset of crime and delinquency during childhood or adolescence. Informal social control serves as links in the chain of deviance across the life span; therefore, delinquency continues on into adulthood. For example, poor attachment to school can lead to poor school achievement, which in turn makes employment more difficult to obtain. Children who are strongly bonded to school and family have systems of obligation and restraint in place, which make crime more costly to the individual. As a result, the individual is more likely to conform. For delinquent

individuals who do not have these systems of restraint in place, delinquency will continue unless salient life events known as “turning points” can counteract the continuity of delinquency (Laub & Sampson, 1993, p. 304). For example, a good marriage or a stable job can re-bond an individual back to society and facilitate desistance as part of the transition into adulthood. Delinquent individuals stumble across these turning points, rather than selecting them. As Sampson and colleagues maintain, good things can happen to bad people (Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998).

To test their theory, Sampson and Laub (1993) used data from a three-wave study conducted by Glueck and Glueck (1950), which followed a sample of 500 delinquent boys from two correctional schools and 500 non-delinquent controls (matched on age, race/ethnicity, neighbourhood, and IQ) from public schools. Their initial wave collected data from the boys at ages 10 to 17, who were then followed up at ages 17 to 25, and again at ages 25 to 32. Sampson and Laub looked at what childhood factors differentiated boys who became serious delinquents from boys who did not, and found that the strongest predictors of increased rates of delinquency were social process variables, such as erratic or harsh discipline by parents, low rates of parental supervision and attachment, low school attachment, and attachment to delinquent peers. Structural background factors such as family poverty, residential mobility, parental criminality, and parental alcoholism were related to increased rates of delinquency through their impact on social process variables (e.g., parental criminality was related to higher rates of delinquency through increased rates of erratic or harsh discipline). These results supported the idea of continuity of behaviour over time, by demonstrating that weak bonds to society at an early age are related to later juvenile delinquency.

Next, Sampson and Laub (1993) examined the relationship between juvenile delinquency and adult outcomes, and found that delinquent children had significantly more arrests in adulthood, abused alcohol more, engaged in more self-reported deviance, had less stable employment, were more likely to get divorced, and had weaker attachment to their spouses than the control children. These results were more evidence for the continuity of deviance across the life span. However, adult crime could not be explained by childhood deviance alone. Some of the delinquent boys desisted from crime and some of the control boys had late-onset criminal careers, so Sampson and Laub looked at changes across the life span that influenced deviance. They examined sources of social control in the Gluecks' sample and found that both job stability and marital attachment were related to lower rates of later deviance in both the delinquent and control groups, independent of juvenile delinquency. These results supported the contention that external factors, such as marrying the right woman, can maintain desistance in an otherwise deviant male.

A review of Sampson and Laub's (1993) work led me to agree with Willis and Grace's (2008, 2009) hypothesis that external factors explain the link between good quality release plans and reduced rates of recidivism. Following Sampson and Laub's view of desistance from crime, we would assume that better quality release plans (including plans for employment and social support) lead directly to better experiences on parole (such as increased job stability and closer attachment to prosocial peers). These positive experiences on parole support desistance, explaining the reduction in recidivism rates. The first study of this thesis will test this hypothesis and examine the impact that release plans have on parole experiences during the first two months of life in the community after release from prison. I will measure the quality of release plans while offenders are still in prison, then explore a variety of

experiences they have on parole, including experiences of employment, social support, accommodation, and so on. I will examine whether better quality plans lead to better experiences on parole in terms of both overall experiences, and experiences for which men have planned. I will test whether men who reoffend within six months of release have poorer experiences on parole than men who do not reoffend. I will then look at whether release plans lead to lower recidivism rates through community experiences; that is, whether it is the plans themselves or the experiences that follow that influence recidivism rates. The first study will test Sampson and Laub's explanation of desistance as being influenced by external factors.

Introduction to Study One

The primary aim of study one was to unravel the relationship between release plans and recidivism in a violent, high-risk offender sample, exploring the role that post-release external experiences may have in this relationship. The first step was to examine the quality of release plans. A coding protocol was used to rate retrospectively the quality of offenders' plans before they were released from prison, then the release plans of recidivists and non-recidivists were compared in order to see if the relationship between release plans and recidivism (at 6 months post-release) found by Dickson, Polaschek and Casey (2013) was replicated in this extended sample. The second step was to examine the parole experiences of this sample during the first two months following release from prison. A coding protocol was developed to assess systematically the types and quality of parolee's experiences. The experiences of recidivists and non-recidivists were compared to identify whether there was a relationship between parole experiences and recidivism. The third step was to explore the relationship between release plans and external experiences on parole,

investigating whether release plans are related to the experiences that follow. The fourth step was then to assess whether parole experiences mediated the relationship between release plans and recidivism; is it the plans themselves or the experiences that follow that lead to reduced rates of recidivism?

The secondary aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the types of experiences high-risk offenders in New Zealand have following release from prison. The international literature suggests that offenders typically struggle during this period, experiencing high rates of unemployment, unstable accommodation, little prosocial support, and exposure to a raft of risk factors. This study was an opportunity to discover whether New Zealand offenders face those same difficulties, because this is an area that has not received much attention in the literature.

Method

Participants

The sample was drawn from all those who had entered the programme at Te Whare Manaakitanga (TWM) at Rimutaka Prison in Wellington, New Zealand between 2005 and 2009. Those who were eligible for the study were men who had left the unit and been released from prison a minimum of six months when the recidivism data were extracted in April 2011, and for whom both sufficient Psychological Service file information and Community Probation Service notes could be obtained. In total 136 men entered the programme at TWM during this period. Files for 5 of the men could not be located, and 64 men had not been released from prison six months or more before the data were extracted. Therefore, the final sample comprised 67 men, including the Dickson et al. (2013) sample of 49 men. The data for this study were extracted 11 months later than those in Dickson et al. so an additional 18 men who

had been released from prison at least 6 months prior to this later date were able to be included. I removed from the study any offenders who were convicted of a new offence in the first two months following release.

Of this sample of 67, 55.2% identified as New Zealand Maori, 22.4% as New Zealand European, 19.4% as Pacific Island, and 3% as Asian. At the time of their release from prison, participants ranged in age from 21 - 50 years ($M = 32.81$, $SD = 6.85$). Most of the sample (85.1%) had completed the programme at TWM. Those who did not complete either asked to leave or were removed from the programme for being disruptive, unresponsive, or for offending during the programme. Participants' mean RoC*RoI score was 0.68 ($SD = 0.16$), representing a 68% chance that they would reoffend resulting in reimprisonment over the next five years. Participants had served various lengths of time in prison, ranging from 1.5 to 18.7 years ($M = 6.03$, $SD = 4.14$).

The Rehabilitation Programme

TWM is an intensive group rehabilitation programme for high-risk violent offenders, which focuses on areas such as attitudes to offending, problem solving, relationship skills, and mood management (Polaschek et al., 2005). It is one of four Special Treatment Units (STUs) in New Zealand. TWM's aim is to significantly reduce the risk of further violent offending by participants and it is successful at this; however, many of the participants still go on to commit another violent crime (Polaschek, 2011). Programme staff assist participants in developing release plans: helping to address their needs in the areas of accommodation, employment, ongoing treatment,

and social support. In the final weeks of the programme men also work on their “safety plans”, which are plans for managing high-risk situations after release.

Men selected for TWM have a current violent offence and a significant history of violence. They must agree to be included in the programme and have no evidence of major mental disorder, neurocognitive deficits or poor English language abilities. The men sign consent forms upon entry into the programme that include permission for their file information to be used for research and evaluation purposes.

Measures

RoC*RoI. The Risk of ReConviction*Risk of ReImprisonment (Bakker, Riley, & O’Malley, 1999) was developed for the New Zealand Department of Corrections. It is an actuarial tool that estimates the likelihood of an offender being reconvicted, leading to reimprisonment, within five years. It is expressed as a probability; therefore scores range from 0 to 1, reflecting their level of risk. The RoC*RoI is a computer-generated score based on static risk factors, and therefore requires no clinical judgement. The measure was developed and cross-validated on two samples of 24,000 offenders and was found to have a moderately high level of predictive validity (Bakker et al, 1999).

Violence Risk Scale. The Violence Risk Scale (VRS; Wong & Gordon, 1999-2003) is made up of 6 static risk factors and 20 dynamic risk factors. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale, where a score of 0 indicates the factor has no relationship to violent offending and a score of 3 indicates that there is a consistent and significant relationship with violent offending. Those items that are considered to be a risk factor for the individual (i.e., those that are rated a 2 or 3) are then scored on a stage of

change continuum: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. Ratings are made by members of a trained therapy team, who use interview information, file data, and staff observation to complete the VRS. Wong and Gordon (2006) found that VRS scores predicted both general and violent recidivism.

Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version. The Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL: SV; Hart, Cox, & Hare, 1995) is a simplified screening version of the Psychopathy Checklist – Revised (Hare, 1991, 2003), that was designed to identify those at risk of psychopathy, so a more detailed assessment could take place. The PCL: SV, however, has been found to be a useful risk assessment tool in its own right; it has good reliability and validity, and is a good predictor of recidivism (Hart et al, 1995). It has 12 items, with six items loading onto each of the two factors. Ratings are made on a 3-point scale by members of a trained therapy team, where a rating of 0 is given if the item does not apply and a score of 2 given if it fully applies.

Recidivism. Recidivism was defined as any new conviction within six months following release to the community after programme participation. Three reconviction indices were examined: any new conviction (excluding breaches of parole conditions), any new violent conviction (i.e. an offence against a person – such as assault, robbery, homicide), and any new conviction leading to imprisonment (excluding breaches of parole conditions). Criminal histories were extracted from the New Zealand Department of Corrections National Conviction Records database in April 2011.

Release Planning. The Dickson et al. (2013) Release Plan coding protocol was used to measure the quality of men's plans in the following areas of interest:

accommodation, employment, prosocial support, antisocial associates, and release environment. Dickson and colleagues reported that this protocol was found to be reliable ($\kappa=0.81$, $p<0.001$) and a valid predictor of reconviction resulting in reimprisonment. For the current study, the item “Post-Release Treatment” from the original protocol was excluded because the item was measuring the number/presence of release conditions made by the New Zealand Parole Board for treatment in the community, rather than plans the offender had made for their life after prison. The variables of interest were scored from the offenders’ release plan reports, psychological reports, reintegration checklists, and safety plans. The protocol was used to measure offender’s plans at the time of release, rather than at the end of treatment, as some men remain in prison for a substantial period of time after the programme and their plans may change during this period. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the coding protocol. Dickson and colleagues (2013) reported that the interrater reliability (IRR) statistic for the Release Plans scale was 0.81: deemed to be good agreement, so IRR was not repeated on these data for this scale.

Parole Experiences. For this study, I developed a second coding protocol with 11 items to measure the experiences of men in the first two months after release from prison. The procedure for developing it is described below. The items included in the scale are accommodation, type of accommodation, employment, prosocial support, types of support received, and a count of the number of types of support being received, the risk level of the release environment, how they coped with risks or challenges in their release environment, the amount of contact with antisocial associates, their response to this contact, and their attitude towards reporting to probation. See Appendix 2 for the coding protocol. It is important to note that not all offenders in the sample were granted early parole, but the period in which offenders

are still reporting is commonly referred to as “parole”. Therefore, when describing the experiences during the first two months after release for all offenders, I refer to them as their “parole experiences”.

Procedure

Approval for the study was gained from the Department of Corrections and the Victoria University School of Psychology Human Ethics Committee. Psychological Treatment files for each participant were sourced from the Department of Corrections, and within these files, relevant materials for coding were identified and then used to rate the quality of each man’s Release Plans. I was blind to recidivism outcomes while coding the quality of Release Plans.

Next, I developed the Parole Experiences coding protocol. To do this, I sourced a sample of Community Probation Service notes (for 26 offenders) from the Department of Corrections Offender Management system. These notes are written by an offender’s probation officer and were found to cover the following topic areas: the offender’s presentation (i.e. attitude to reporting to probation, attitude to probation officer and other staff, and mood) during reporting, where the offender is living, who they are associating with, where they are working, how they are spending their leisure time, treatment they are receiving, any issues that may have arisen on parole (e.g., financial stress) and how they dealt with that, and any rule-breaking the offender may have engaged in and its consequences (e.g. a warning or a breach charge laid). An evidence recording sheet was then created for each of the 26 participants, on which everything mentioned in the notes about each topic area listed above was recorded. From this, an initial Parole Experiences coding protocol was created, with 54 ratings

across 18 areas of interest, based on the presence or absence and quality of each variable.

I coded the experiences of half of the sample and looked at the ability of each variable to capture variance in the sample and how highly correlated each variable was to all others. Variables that did not capture much variance (e.g., all but two of the sample received the same score for experience of homelessness), or that were highly correlated with a conceptually similar variable (e.g., attitude to authority was strongly related to attitude to reporting to probation) were omitted from the coding protocol. The 11 variables that remained made up the final coding protocol, which I then used to code the entire sample. It is important to note that two of the items—how they coped with risks and response to contact with antisocial associates—were only coded for men who were reported to have had risks in their environment or who had contact with antisocial associates, respectively. As a result, not all men have scores for these items, and analyses of these items only include men who received a score.

Community Probation Service notes were sourced from the Department of Corrections Offender Management system and used to rate the quality of each offender's experiences during the first two months in the community. Again, I was blind to recidivism outcomes while coding the quality of parole experiences. A second rater then coded the notes of a subsample of 20 men, in order to establish interrater reliability (reported below). Recidivism data were obtained after coding was completed. All recidivism data were extracted from the IOMS database, coded, and entered into the database for analysis. The follow-up period was fixed at 6 months for all participants.

Data analytic strategy

Recall that an aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the types of experiences high-risk offenders in New Zealand have following release from prison. For a full understanding, the parole experiences described in this study include both external (e.g., accommodation, employment) and internal (e.g., attitude, coping strategies) experiences. The other aim of this study is to explore whether external experiences on parole explain the relationship between release plans and recidivism. Therefore, when creating a total Parole Experiences score to use in the analyses testing this hypothesis I have only included the external variables: accommodation, release environment, employment, antisocial contact, and prosocial networks.

In the results section I will first examine the reliability of the scales I used to measure release plan quality and parole experience quality, then describe the release plans and parole experiences of this sample. Next, I will explore the ways in which recidivists differ from non-recidivists with regards to their release plans and parole experiences. I will then assess whether release plans and parole experiences are merely a proxy for risk level as measured by existing tools.

Once I have established that release plans and parole experiences differentiate between men who reoffend and those who don't, and that this link is not simply due to pre-existing risk level, I will explore how release plans relate to experiences on parole. Next, I will examine whether parole experiences explain the relationship between release plans and reoffending, and then look at the way in which variables within both the parole experiences scale and within the release plans scale are related to one another.

Results

All analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 19). To investigate normality I examined the distributions of the scores on each item of the two scales. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic assesses the normality of the distributions and, when a significant result is found, indicates that the assumption of normality has been violated (Pallant, 2005). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics revealed that all individual items of the Release Plans scale and the Parole Experiences scale were non-normally distributed. The items tended to be positively skewed with negative kurtosis (i.e., skewed to the left and speed-bump shaped). However, the total scores for both the Release Plan scale and the Parole Experiences scale were normally distributed. As a result of these findings, non-parametric tests were used throughout this study where appropriate (i.e., for analyses involving individual item scores). Non-parametric tests are a more conservative alternative to parametric tests, as they make fewer assumptions about the data on which they are used (Field, 2009). All analyses were repeated using the parametric alternatives, and in all cases the same results were found. The non-parametric results have been reported. Scores on the various risk measures (RoC*RoI, VRS, PCL:SV) were normally distributed, so parametric tests were used for analyses involving these measures.

Reliability

First I examined the IRR of the Parole Experiences scale, then I looked at the internal reliability of the Parole Experiences scale and the Release Plans scale.

Interrater Reliability. IRR analyses using the Kappa statistic (κ) were performed to determine consistency among raters on the Parole Experiences Scale. The individual item Kappas ranged from 0.73 to 1.00. Pallant (2007) states that

Kappas in excess of 0.70 demonstrate a good level of interrater reliability; therefore all Kappas are deemed to be very good for this scale.

Internal Reliability. A reliability analysis, using Cronbach's alpha, was then calculated to determine the reliability of the Release Plan scale ($\alpha = 0.12$). This very low value indicates an unreliable scale (Field, 2009). Table 3 (on page 64) shows the item-total correlations for the Release Plans scale, demonstrating that all items, except for accommodation, are significantly, positively correlated with the total scale score.

Internal reliability was then calculated to determine the reliability of the Parole Experiences scale ($\alpha = 0.75$). Alphas in excess of 0.70 are recommended as an acceptable value; therefore this alpha indicates a reliable scale (Field, 2009). Table 5 (on page 71) shows the item-total correlations for the Parole Experiences scale, demonstrating that all items in the scale are significantly, positively correlated with the total scale score.

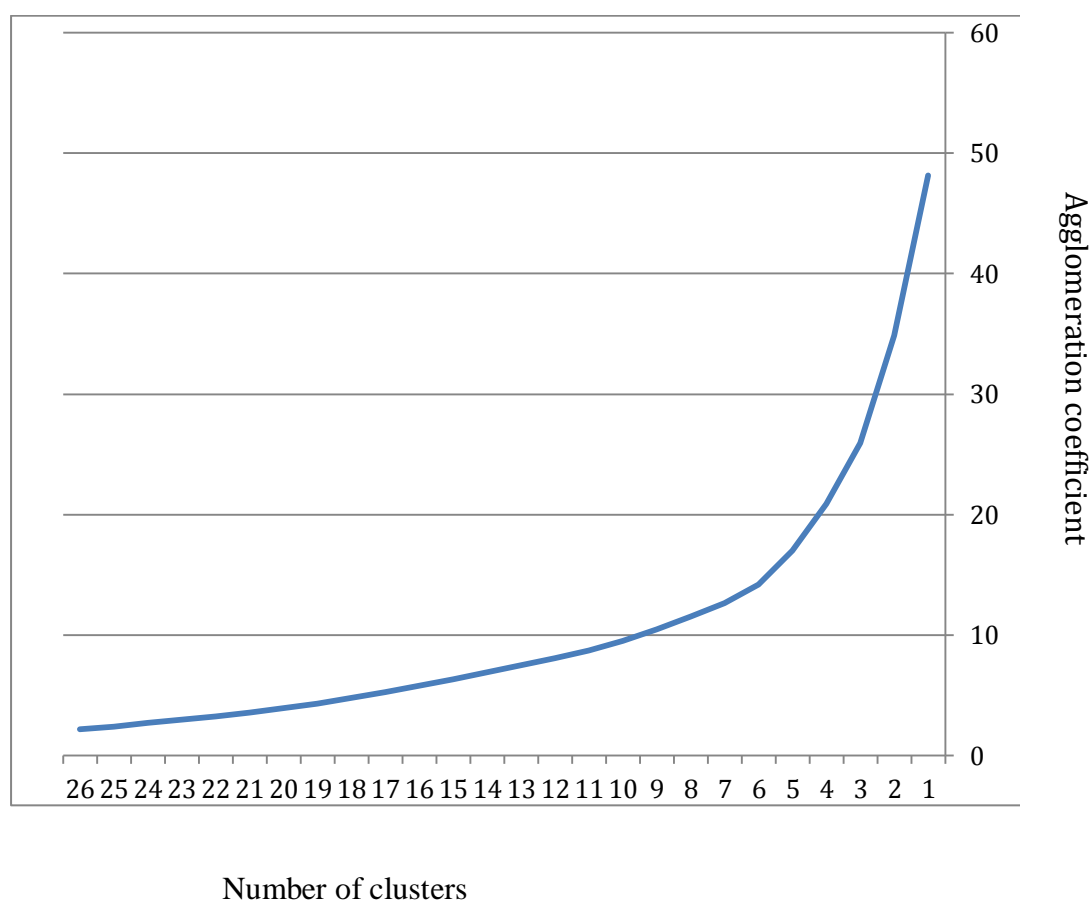
Cluster Analyses

Due to the poor reliability of the Release Plans scale, cluster analyses were conducted to examine whether there were distinct patterns (i.e., item clusters) in the plans that offenders make for release. A cluster analysis will create groups of cases that have similar scores on each of the release plan variables, which may help to explain why the items in the Release Plans scale do not vary together.

I used a Ward's method cluster analysis with squared Euclidian distances to determine the number of subgroups in the sample. Ward's method (Ward, 1963) was used because it enables us to identify how many clusters best fit the data. This method initially treats all cases as individual clusters then groups together the most similar clusters. The clusters that are most similar are those that, when combined, have the

least within-cluster variance (Replogle & Hair, 1977). This step is then repeated until all cases are combined into a single cluster. A Ward's method cluster analysis is appropriate for use with both binary and continuous variables (e.g., Sevigny & Coontz, 2007).

Figure 1. Agglomeration Plot of Offenders on the Release Plans Scale



To determine the optimal number of clusters, I examined the agglomeration coefficients, which are plotted against the number of clusters in Figure 1. The agglomeration coefficients indicate the amount of within-cluster variance. When two similar clusters are merged, the variance will increase slightly; however when two very different clusters are merged, the variance will increase greatly. A sudden jump in the agglomeration coefficients indicates that dissimilar clusters are being grouped together and that this is the point at which to stop grouping together the clusters (Spaans, Barendregt, & Muller, 2009), in a similar manner to how scree plots are used to interpret a factor analysis. Figure 1 shows the gradual increase in agglomeration coefficients, with no obvious jumps. A closer inspection of the agglomeration coefficients indicated that there was a slight jump at the three-cluster solution, as well

as another slight jump at a two-cluster solution. To best explore the possible patterns, I therefore examined both a two- and a three-cluster solution.

Two cluster solution. A series of Mann-Whitney U tests (for all continuous variables) and chi-square tests for independence (for the two binary variables: Release Environment and Avoidance of Antisocial Associates) were conducted to identify the differences in release plans made by the two clusters of offenders identified in this solution. Table 1 contains the medians, percentage with plans, z-values or chi-squares, and p-values for the comparison between the two clusters on all items of the Release Plans scale.

Cluster 1 ($n=41$). Offenders in cluster 1 had safety plans as well as plans in place for accommodation, employment, and prosocial support; however, they had no plans at all for managing risks in their release environment or for avoiding contact with antisocial peers. Table 1 shows a significant difference between offenders in cluster 1 and offenders in cluster 2 on plans for employment. A closer inspection reveals that the offenders in cluster 1 had significantly higher scores on plans for employment ($M=0.52$, $SD=0.39$) than offenders in cluster two ($M=0.29$, $SD=0.26$). As the offenders in cluster 1 appear to have made plans around employment, but have not made any plans to avoid risk, I have labeled this cluster as “Employment-Focused”.

Cluster 2 ($n=26$). Offenders in cluster 2 had safety plans as well as plans in place for accommodation, prosocial support, avoiding antisocial associates, release environment, and (somewhat poorer plans) for employment. Table 1 shows that offenders in cluster 2 had significantly higher scores on plans for avoiding antisocial associates and for release environment than offenders in cluster 1. As the offenders in cluster 2 appear to have made plans around avoiding risk, I have labeled this cluster as “Risk-Avoidant”.

Table 1

Mean Ratings on Release Plans scale for Two-Cluster Solution

Planning variable	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
	Median	Median		
	<i>n</i> = 41	<i>n</i> = 26		
Safety plan	1.00	1.00	1.41	0.16
Accommodation	1.00	1.00	0.04	0.97
Employment ^a	0.33	0.33	2.30	0.02
Prosocial support	1.00	0.75	1.49	0.14
	% with plans	% with plans	χ^2	<i>p</i>
Release environment	0%	58%	27.20	<0.01
Antisocial associates	0%	65%	32.55	<0.01

Note. Higher scores indicate a better plan.

^a Because non-parametric tests were used, Medians are reported in this table. The medians for both clusters are the same, not explaining where the significant difference lies. The means for the two clusters for employment plans show that Cluster 1 ($M = .52$, $SD = .39$) is significantly higher than Cluster 2 ($M = .29$, $SD = .26$).

Three cluster solution. A series of Kruskal-Wallis tests and chi-square tests was conducted to identify the differences in release plans made by the three clusters of offenders identified in this solution. Table 2 contains the medians, percentage with plans, *z*-values or chi-square values, and *p*-values for the comparison between the three clusters on all items of the Release Plans scale. Table 2 shows that there was a statistically significant difference across the clusters on release environment plans with offenders in cluster 2 scoring significantly higher than offenders in cluster 1 and 3. There was no significant difference on release environment plans scores for the offenders in clusters 1 and 3. Table 2 also shows a significant difference across the clusters on plans to avoid antisocial associates, with offenders in cluster 3 scoring

more highly than offenders in the other two clusters, and offenders in cluster 2 scoring more highly than offenders in cluster 1. There was a borderline significant result for employment: post-hoc comparisons showed that offenders in Cluster 1 had significantly higher scores than offenders in Cluster 3, $U = 137.50$, $z = -2.07$, $p = .04$. Cluster 2 was not significantly different to the other clusters (see footnote under Table 2 for further details).

Cluster 1 ($n=41$). This cluster is the same as Cluster 1 in the two-cluster solution, so again I have labeled this cluster as “Employment-Focused”.

Cluster 2 ($n=15$). Offenders in cluster 2 had safety plans as well as plans for accommodation, (some plans for) employment, prosocial support, release environment, and avoiding antisocial associates. Cluster 2 was the only group of offenders who had made plans for release environment therefore I have labeled this cluster as “Release-Environment”.

Cluster 3 ($n=11$). Offenders in cluster 3 had safety plans as well as plans in place for accommodation, (some plans for) employment, and avoiding anti-social associates; however, they had poorer plans than the other clusters for prosocial support and no plans at all for release environment. As the offenders in cluster 3 had significantly stronger plans to avoid antisocial associates than offenders in the other two clusters, I have labeled this cluster as “Antisocial Associate-Avoidant”.

The cluster analyses revealed that there are subgroups of offenders who tend to make different patterns of plans for release; particularly plans for avoiding antisocial associates and risks in their release environment. An examination of both the two- and three-cluster solutions revealed a similar picture; one cluster prioritized employment over avoiding risks, while another (which was one cluster in the two-cluster solution, or was split into two for the three-cluster solution) focused strongly

on avoiding potential risks in the environment after release, as opposed to making plans for employment. In the three-cluster solution the latter group was split into those who avoided antisocial associates and those who avoided other risks in the release environment. As both of these groups were avoiding risk the two-cluster solution appears to be the most parsimonious and will be the cluster solution used in later analyses.

These two clusters show opposing plans in the areas of employment, and avoiding risk. It may be that to be able to make good plans for employment after release, an offender needs to be returning to an area they know and in which they have contacts. Those who choose to avoid an area they know well (due to the risk that accompanies returning to such an area) may have to sacrifice those employment-related contacts. Therefore, as plans in one area improve, plans in the other area get worse. This pattern of results may explain the poor reliability of the Release Plan scale. The scale reliability tests indicated that as plans for one item increases, the other items do not all increase as well. It may be that one type of plans is more important in reducing recidivism: indicating that one type of plan ought to be focused on more in treatment.

A commonly reported distinction in the literature on goal setting is that between approach and avoidance goals. Approach goals move towards a positive or desirable outcome (e.g., finding employment), whereas avoidance goals move away from a negative or undesirable outcome (e.g., staying away from old associates). Approach goals are associated with more positive outcomes, such as increased effort, more persistence, higher aspiration, and better performance (Elliott, 1999; Elliott & Church, 1997). For this reason, it is important to consider whether there are different offending outcomes associated with the orientation of the offenders' plans, with the

hypothesis that offenders who made the employment-oriented plans would be less likely to reoffend than offenders who made the risk avoidance-oriented plans.

Table 2

Mean Ratings on Release Plan scale for Three-Cluster Solution

Planning variable	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	z	p
	Median	Median	Median		
	$n = 41$	$n = 15$	$n = 11$		
Safety plan	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.03	0.36
Accommodation	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.22	0.33
Employment ^a	0.33	0.33	0.33	5.64	0.06
Prosocial support	1.00	1.00	0.50	3.68	1.00
	% with plans	% with plans	% with plans	χ^2	p
Release environment	0%	100%	0%	66.00	<0.01
Antisocial associates	0%	40%	100%	47.27	<0.01

Note. Higher scores indicate a better plan.

^a Because non-parametric tests were used, medians are reported in this table. The median score for employment was the same for all clusters, not explaining where the borderline significant difference lies. The means for the three clusters for employment plans show that Cluster 1 ($M = .52$, $SD = .39$) was significantly higher than Cluster 3 ($M = .24$, $SD = .15$). Cluster 2 was not significantly different to the other clusters ($M = .33$, $SD = .30$).

Comparison of the Two Clusters on Reconviction and Reimprisonment.

In order to determine whether the two clusters differed on reoffending outcomes, chi-square tests were conducted. A chi-square test for independence indicated no significant association between cluster membership and reconviction, $\chi^2(1, n=67) = 0.02, p=.90, \phi=.02$. A second chi-square test for independence indicated that there was also no significant association between cluster membership and reimprisonment, $\chi^2(1, n=67) = 0.18, p=.67, \phi=.05$. The fact that the two clusters do not differ on reconviction or reimprisonment indicates that the broad types of plans offenders make do not determine whether they reoffend in the community, which does not support the hypothesis that offenders who made employment-oriented plans would be less likely to recidivate than offenders who made risk-avoidant plans. Instead, it appears that it is the overall quality of the plans, rather than the types of plans that make up that overall quality, that are important in predicting outcome. For example, an offender may spend a lot of time creating really good quality plans for employment, whereas another may spend that time creating plans across a variety of areas. As long as they do the same amount of total planning, the types of plans they have will not be related to reoffending rates. The total scale score will therefore continue to be used in the planned analyses, as it reflects the overall quality of plans of the offenders in this sample. I will now return to my planned analyses, exploring how external experiences may explain why better quality release plans impact on recidivism.

Quality of Release Plans

The average scores on Release Plan scale items are presented in Table 3. On average, men in the sample scored 54.7% of the maximum available score for release planning, with a higher score indicating a better quality plan. The median score on each item

indicates plans as follows: safety plans were in place and personalized to the individual, accommodation was confirmed, employment had been considered but no steps had been taken towards securing a job, the individual had prosocial supports in place who were aware of their offending, the participant had no plans to avoid old associates, and the participant was being released to an environment where they had previously offended. Spearman Rank Order Correlations showed that the items were not significantly correlated with each other; the exception was a significant, positive correlation between safety plans and prosocial support. All items, except accommodation, were significantly, positively correlated with the total release planning score.

For individual variables in this sample, the average scores indicate that men did engage in some planning for each item, and that there is variation across participants on each item. This variation will allow comparisons of the release plans between those who went on to reoffend and those who did not, and between those who were reimprisoned and those who remained in the community during the first six months after release.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation or Percentage with Plans, Range, Median, Correlations to Total Release Plan Score, and Intercorrelations for Release Plan Scale

Release Plan Item	Mean (SD) or % with plans	Range ³	Median	Item- Total	2	3	4	5	6
1. Safety Plan	0.74 (0.34)	3	1.00	0.64**	0.01	0.12	0.36**	0.21	0.10
2. Accommodation	0.87 (0.24)	3	1.00	0.11	-	-0.09	<0.01	0.01	0.11
3. Employment	0.43 (0.36)	4	0.33	0.36**	-	-	0.14	-0.23	-0.14
4. Prosocial Support	0.81 (0.25)	3	1.00	0.33**	-	-	-	-0.01	-0.01
5. Release Environment	22.4%	2	0.00	0.50**	-	-	-	-	0.18
6. Antisocial Associates	25.4%	2	0.00	0.43**	-	-	-	-	-

³All variables were scored on a scale from 0 to 1, so that they contributed equally to the total. The range indicates how many points there were on the scale from 0 to 1 for each item. For example, accommodation is scored on a 3 point scale, whereby a score of 0 indicates no plans for accommodation, a score of 0.5 indicates plans for accommodation have been made but not confirmed, and a score of 1 indicates that the man has confirmed accommodation plans. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Comparisons of Recidivists and Non-Recidivists on Release Plan Quality

In order to demonstrate the link between release plans and reoffending in this sample, I looked at the recidivism outcomes at six months after release. I then compared the Release Plan scale scores of the men who were reconvicted of any new offence during the first six months after release, and those who remain conviction-free to see if release plans were able to distinguish between these two groups. I then compared the Release Plan scale scores of men who had been reimprisoned within this time period to men who remained in the community.

Overall Recidivism Outcomes. Within 6 months of release, 20 parolees (29.9%) had been convicted of a new offence (excluding breaches), 5 (7.5%) had been convicted of a new violent offence, and 12 (17.9%) were back in prison. Because of the low base rate of violent offending, we limited analyses to two variables: any reconviction, and reimprisonment (as an indication of more serious offending)⁴.

Any Conviction. First I examined whether Release Plan scale score rated at release differed between participants who were reconvicted within six months of release and those who were not. Mann-Whitney U tests were used for the continuous variables and Chi-squared tests of independence were used for the binary variables (Release Environment and Avoiding Antisocial Associates). As table 4 shows, those who were reconvicted had significantly poorer quality plans for employment and overall than those who were not reconvicted. The effect sizes (r) for both were over 0.30; considered a medium effect size (Pallant, 2007).

Reimprisonment. Next, I examined whether Release Plan scale score rated at time of release differed between parolees who were reimprisoned within six months

⁴ Those who were imprisoned were either imprisoned as the result of a new violent offence, or for the commission of multiple non-violent offences.

of release and those who remained in the community during this time. As Table 4 shows, test results indicated no significant differences on any individual items; however, the total Release Plan scale scores were significantly higher in parolees who remained in the community than for those who returned to prison. The effect size for total plan quality was small (Pallant, 2010). Overall, the results support the link between plans and reoffending, enabling further analyses that can explore the role that parole experiences play in this relationship.

Table 4

Comparisons of Release Plan Quality: Reconviction and Reimprisonment

Planning variable	Not reconvicted	Reconvicted	z	p	r	In community	Returned to	z	p	r
	Median or Mean (SD) $n = 47$	Median or Mean (SD) $n = 20$				Median or Mean (SD) $n = 55$	Prison Median or Mean (SD) $n = 12$			
Safety plan	1.00	1.00	1.16	0.25	0.14	1.00	1.00	0.71	0.48	0.09
Accommodation	1.00	1.00	0.37	0.71	0.05	1.00	1.00	0.97	0.33	0.12
Employment	0.33	0.17	2.92	<0.01	0.36	0.33	0.33	1.12	0.26	0.14
Prosocial support	1.00	0.50	1.76	0.08	0.21	1.00	0.75	0.87	0.38	0.11
Release plan total	3.52 (0.83)	2.70 (1.00)	3.49	<0.01	0.43	3.41 (0.86)	2.67 (1.16)	2.10	0.05	0.26
	% with plan	% with plan	χ^2	p	r	% with plan	% with plan	χ^2	p	r
Release environment	28%	10%	1.60*	0.21	0.20	25%	8%	0.82*	0.36	0.10
Antisocial associates	23%	30%	0.07*	0.79	<0.01	25%	25%	0.00*	1.00	<0.01

Note. Higher scores indicate a better plan

Quality of Parole Experiences

Next, I examined the community experiences of this sample during their first two months on parole. The median scores on Parole Experiences scale variables are presented in Table 5. On average, men scored 59% of the maximum available score for parole experiences, with higher scores indicating better-quality experiences. Spearman Rank Order Correlations demonstrated that there were several significant correlations between the scale items (seen in Table 5). The following section will describe in depth the experiences of this sample in the community in the first two months following release from prison on each of the items of the Parole Experiences scale.

Attitude to Reporting. Just over half of the sample (50.7%) was very positive about reporting to probation, making only positive comments to their probation officer about the experience (e.g., “I’m trying really hard to meet all my requirements”) or had only positive observations made by their probation officer (e.g., “He appears committed to the parole process.”). Some (17.9%) had a mix of both positive and negative comments and observations about parole in their notes. Others (11.9%) were very negative about reporting to probation, making only negative comments (e.g., “I may as well be back in prison rather than on parole”) and receiving only negative observations from their probation officers (e.g., “He constantly tries to get out of his appointments.”).

Accommodation. About half of the sample were living with family (52.2%): usually their parents, siblings, aunties, or uncles. One fifth lived in supported accommodation (20.9%; e.g., with the Salvation Army), and others lived with their partner (14.9%), with friends (6.0%) or in other shared accommodation (6.0%). While most of the sample lived with people who were not reported to be antisocial after release (71.6%), some were released to live with reportedly antisocial people (28.4%;

antisocial people were defined as anyone who the Probation Officer mentioned in their notes as known to be involved in crime).

Release Environment. A small number of people in the sample (9.0%) had more than one risk factor evident in their release environment (e.g., gang activity, isolation, victim contact), whereas more had just one risk factor evident (32.8%). The majority of the sample had no risk factors identified in their release environment (58.2%).

Coping. For the members of the sample for whom a risk, or some other type of challenge (e.g., relationship conflict or employment problem) was evident in the first two months of parole, two-fifths did not demonstrate any reported ability to cope with the challenge at hand (40.3%). Others were able to demonstrate the ability to cope, but were unable to verbalize their method of coping (14.9%), or were able to cope and explain the coping strategy they used (37.3%; e.g., using communication skills, relying on support people for help, or removing themselves from risky situations).

Employment. Some participants (23.9%) were able to gain full-time employment in the community, and others (35.8%) were able to gain part-time employment. The largest group (40.3%) did not gain any employment during their first two months of life after release from prison.

Contact with Antisocial Associates. Most of the sample had no reported contact with antisocial associates during their first two months on parole (61.2%). Others reported bumping into antisocial associates just once, either unintentionally (11.9%) or intentionally (7.5%). The rest had multiple contacts with antisocial associates, again either unintentionally (9.0%) or intentionally (10.4%).

Response to Contact with Antisocial Associates. The participants' responses to this contact varied. Some (13.4%) responded in an antisocial way: either picking a

fight with the associate, or resuming a friendship with them. A larger group (17.9%) responded prosocially, explaining to the associate that they were no longer involved in crime and did not want to have any contact with them. A small group (6.0%) responded in a neutral way: simply saying hello or waving to the associate.

Prosocial Support Networks. The majority of the sample (64.2%) had two or more networks of prosocial support in the community. A smaller group was relying on only one network of social support, which was either family or friends (25.4%), or organizations in the community (6.0%; e.g., a support agency such as the Salvation Army). A few men (4.5%) had no prosocial support in the community (except for their probation officer).

Types of Support Received. The men most commonly received support with finding accommodation (94%), followed by emotional support (80.6%), employment (22.3%), transport (20.9%), financial assistance (11.9%), food/clothing/bedding (6.0%), assistance in avoiding high-risk situations (3.0%), and help in making friends (1.5%).

With regards to the number of types of support received, some received four types of support (19.4%), others received three (23.9%), the largest group reported receiving two types of support (40.3%), and the rest received either one type of support (14.9%) or no support at all (1.5%).

These results also show that the sample had a wide range of experiences during their first two months on parole. This variation will allow comparisons on Parole Experiences scale scores between those who went on to reoffend and those who did not, and between those who were reimprisoned and those who remained in the community within the first six months after release.

Table 5

Median or Percentage with Plans, Range, Correlations to Total Parole Experiences Score, and Intercorrelations for Parole Experiences Items

Parole Experiences Item	Median or % with plans	Range ⁵	Item- Total	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Accommodation	71.6%	2	0.38**	0.06	0.19	0.02	0.08	0.18	0.11	0.25*	0.14
2. Attitude	1.00	3	0.66**	-	0.33*	0.29*	0.25	0.37**	0.71**	0.44**	0.41**
3. Release Environment	1.00	3	0.37**	-	-	-0.09	0.19	0.57**	-0.02	0.33**	0.38**
4. Coping	0.50	3	0.51**	-	-	-	-0.02	-0.14	0.45*	0.06	0.11
5. Employment	0.50	3	0.48**	-	-	-	-	0.26*	0.12	0.31*	0.07
6. Antisocial Contact	1.00	5	0.27*	-	-	-	-	-	0.36	0.21	0.10
7. Response to Contact	0.50	3	0.68**	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.16	0.21
8. Prosocial Networks	1.00	4	0.50**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.42**
9. Types of Support	0.50	5	0.44**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

⁵ All variables were scored on a scale from 0 to 1, so that they contributed equally to the total. The range indicates how many points there were on the scale from 0 to 1 for each item.

Comparison of Parole Experiences for Recidivists and Non-Recidivists

Next, I looked to see whether parole experiences were different for offenders who went on to reoffend, compared to those who did not. Specifically, I looked again at the recidivism outcomes at six months after release for the sample and then compared the Parole Experiences scale scores of the offenders who were reconvicted of any new offence during the first six months after release, and those who remained offence-free, to see if Parole Experiences scale scores were able to distinguish between these two groups. I then compared the parole experiences of offenders who had been reimprisoned within this time period to offenders who remained in the community.

Any Conviction. I examined whether offender's experiences in the first 2 months of parole differed between those who were reconvicted of a new offence within six months of release and those who were not reconvicted within six months. A chi-square test of independence was used for the binary variable (accommodation), a T-test was used for the total Parole Experiences scale score (as it was normally distributed) and Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted on the remaining continuous, non-normally distributed variables. As Table 6 shows, those who were reconvicted had significantly lower scores on risks in the release environment (i.e., more risks) than those who were not reconvicted, and the effect size for the release environment item indicated that there was a medium size difference between the two groups on this variable.

Reimprisonment. Next, I examined whether experiences on parole differed between participants who were reimprisoned within six months of release and those who remained in the community during this time. As Table 6 shows, those who returned to prison received lower scores than those who remained in the community on all items of the coding protocol. Tests show that those who returned to prison had

significantly lower scores on attitude, release environment, contact with antisocial associates, prosocial support networks, and total Parole Experiences scale score than those who remained in the community. There were medium effect sizes for attitude, release environment, contact with antisocial associates, and total parole experience score. These results support the idea that there is a link between experiences on parole and reoffending, particularly reimprisonment.

Overall, the results support the link between Parole Experiences scale scores and reoffending, indicating that they are appropriate variables to examine as potential mediators of the relationship between release plans and reoffending. However, before that, it is important to establish that the relationships between release plans and reoffending, and parole experiences and reoffending, are not due to the risk level of the offender (i.e., that higher risk offenders tend to have poorer plans and experiences, explaining why plans and experiences predict recidivism). The next step is to examine the relationship between release plans, parole experiences, and risk.

Table 6

Comparisons of Parole Experience Quality: Reconviction and Reimprisonment

Experience Variables	Not Reconvicted Median, Mean (SD) or % with plans; $n = 47$	Reconvicted Median, Mean (SD) or % with plans; $n = 20$	$z(*\chi^2;$ $**t)$	p	r	In Community Median, Mean (SD) or % with plans; $n = 55$	Reimprisoned Median, Mean (SD) or % with plans; $n = 12$	$z(*\chi^2;$ $**t)$	p	r
Accommodation	72%	70%	<0.01*	1.00	<0.01	73%	67%	0.01*	0.95	<0.01
Attitude	1.00	1.00	1.40	0.16	0.17	1.00	0.25	3.56	<0.01	0.43
Release	1.00	0.50	3.65	<0.01	0.45	1.00	0.50	3.60	<0.01	0.44
Environment										
Coping	0.50	0.50	0.12	0.90	0.01	0.50	0.00	1.32	0.19	0.16
Employment	0.50	0.50	1.46	0.15	0.18	0.50	0.00	1.62	0.11	0.20
Antisocial Contact	1.00	0.75	1.89	0.06	0.23	1.00	0.38	2.70	0.01	0.33
Response to Contact	1.00	0.50	1.02	0.31	0.12	1.00	0.00	1.81	0.07	0.22
Prosocial Support	1.00	1.00	1.11	0.27	0.14	1.00	0.67	2.02	0.04	0.25
Types of Support	0.50	0.50	1.72	0.09	0.21	0.50	0.50	1.81	0.07	0.22
Total Parole Score	5.58 (1.16)	4.78 (2.09)	1.04**	0.30	0.13	5.67 (1.13)	3.83 (2.17)	2.74**	0.01	0.33

Prediction of Recidivism Based on Risk Assessment Instruments

In order to rule out the possibility that release plans and parole experiences were acting as a proxy for pre-existing risk, I looked at the scores of the sample on three risk assessment tools. The risk assessment instruments included in these analyses are the Risk of ReConviction*Risk of ReImprisonment, the Psychopathy Checklist:Screening Version, and total scores on the Violence Risk Scale prior to treatment. Table 7 shows that the PCL:SV and VRS pre-programme total scores were significantly correlated, as were the VRS and RoC*RoI, but the RoC*RoI was not significantly related to the PCL:SV. Neither reconviction nor reimprisonment were significantly correlated with any of the risk measures. Release Plan scale score was not significantly related to any of the risk measures either; however, both the PCL:SV and VRS were significantly correlated with Parole Experiences scale score.

It was surprising that there was no significant correlation between the RoC*RoI scores and the PCL: SV scores, as would be expected, but this may be due to a lack of variance as all members of this sample were very high-risk. Because the risk assessment instruments are not related to either reconviction or reimprisonment in this sample, they cannot be responsible for the relationships already uncovered between release plans and reoffending, and parole experiences and reoffending⁶. Therefore, I will continue with my analyses, looking next at whether release plans directly translate into parole experiences.

⁶ I also conducted one-way analyses of covariance to examine the relationships between release plans and recidivism and between parole experiences and recidivism while controlling for level of risk. These relationships remained the same when controlling for each of the three risk measures.

Table 7

Correlations between Risk Assessment Variables, Release Plans Scale Score, Parole Experiences Scale Score, and Recidivism.

	PCL: SV	VRS	Release Plans	Parole Experiences	Reconviction	Reimprisonment
RoC*RoI	0.10	0.40**	-0.06	-0.13	0.21	0.11
PCL:SV		0.56**	-0.20	-0.30*	0.13	0.12
VRS			-0.16	-0.26*	0.19	0.16

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$. VRS=Violence Risk Scale pre-programme scores

The Relationship between Release Plan Variables and Parole Experience

Variables

Next, I examined the relationship between the Release Plan scale scores and the Parole Experiences scale scores during the first two months of parole. Table 8 shows the Spearman Rank Order correlations between each Release Plan scale variable and each Parole Experiences scale variable, as well as the total scores. There were significant, positive correlations between: a) employment plans and employment experiences; b) employment plans and release environment; c) employment plans and total parole experiences score; d) plans to avoid antisocial associates and response to contact with antisocial associates; e) total release plan score and attitude to reporting; f) total release plan score and response to contact with antisocial associates; and e) total release plan score and total parole experiences score. There were significant,

negative correlations between: a) release environment plans and accommodation; b) release environment plans and employment; and c) plans to avoid antisocial associates and employment. Contrary to what was expected, there were no significant correlations between accommodation plans and accommodation experiences, release environment plans and release environment experiences, prosocial support plans and networks of prosocial support or types of prosocial support, or between plans to avoid antisocial associates and contact with antisocial associates. Some of these relationships may not have been found due to a lack of variance in the release plan quality of the sample. For example, everyone has plans for accommodation, so accommodation plans don't predict experiences.

The correlation matrix shows a number of significant relationships between release plans and parole experiences, including a significant, positive correlation between the total scores on both scales. Further analysis of the way in which parole experiences potentially mediate the relationship between plans and reoffending could help to further disentangle how it is that plans and experiences predict reoffending. More specifically, hierarchical logistic regressions and mediation will uncover whether plans only predict reoffending through outcome or, as the correlation matrix suggests, there is variation unexplained by experiences on parole alone.

Table 8

Spearman Rank Order Correlations between Release Plans and Parole Experiences.

	Safety Plans	Accommodation Plans	Employment Plans	Release Environment	Prosocial Support	Antisocial Associates	Total Release Plan Score
Attitude	<0.01	0.18	0.06	0.19	0.14	0.21	0.29*
Accommodation	<0.01	0.11	0.11	-0.38**	-0.09	0.06	0.01
Release Environment	0.04	0.08	0.28*	0.06	0.14	-0.13	0.14
Coping	0.11	-0.01	-0.06	0.23	0.08	0.10	0.23
Employment	0.02	-0.11	0.57**	-0.30*	0.17	-0.32**	0.07
Antisocial Contact	0.03	0.06	0.18	-0.03	0.15	-0.05	0.12
Response to Contact	0.38	<0.01	0.07	0.34	0.11	0.42*	0.61**
Prosocial Support Networks	-0.08	-0.04	0.22	-0.05	-0.03	-0.10	-0.02
Types of Support	0.08	0.19	0.04	<0.01	0.08	0.06	0.15
Total Parole Experience	0.11	0.16	0.31*	-0.03	0.12	-0.03	0.27*

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Hierarchical Logistic Regressions

Two hierarchical logistic regressions were conducted to examine whether the total Release Plans scale score contributed significant incremental predictive power to the total Parole Experiences scale score of men in this sample when predicting reconviction and reimprisonment. Earlier results have indicated that the Release Plans score and the Parole Experiences score are correlated, and that the Release Plans score predicts recidivism. Hence, I was interested to see whether the Release Plans score was still a predictor of recidivism if I controlled for the variance in recidivism explained by the Parole Experiences score. In each case, the first predictor variable (i.e., the total Parole Experiences scale score) was entered in the first block, and the second (i.e., the total Release Plans scale score) in the second block. Total Parole Experiences scale score is entered first in the hierarchical regression as I want to know whether it is a predictor on its own, or if it will only predict when the Release Plans scale score is added to it. Table 9 shows that total Parole Experiences scale score was not a significant predictor of reconviction (i.e., the chi-square for the model was not significant) but when Release Plans scale score was added, the model significantly predicted reconviction (i.e., the chi-square became significant). These results mean that Release Plans scale scores are explaining a significant amount of variance in reconviction but Parole Experiences scores are not.

Table 10 shows that, when predicting reimprisonment, the Parole Experiences scale score is a significant predictor (i.e., the chi-square for the model is significant). When Release Plans scale scores are added into the model, Release Plans scale scores do not add any significant incremental validity to the prediction of reimprisonment (i.e., the chi-square does not significantly improve). This pattern of results indicates that parole experiences may be mediating the relationship between release plans and

reimprisonment, because they are explaining all the variance that release plans could be predicting. The extent to which this is occurring can be uncovered by conducting a logistic mediational analysis. Mediational analyses are used to identify whether a relationship between two variables is partly or wholly due to the influence of a third variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Parole experiences may be fully mediating the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment (i.e., the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment may exist only because of the impact of plans on parole experiences) or the picture may be more complex, with parole experiences only partially mediating the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment.

Table 9

Hierarchical Logistic Regressions: Parole Experience scale and Release Plans scale as Predictors of Reconviction.

	B (SE)	Wald (df=1)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Block 1 ^a				
Parole Experiences	-0.34 (.18)	3.57	0.72	[0.51, 1.01]
Block 2 ^b				
Parole Experiences	-0.19 (.19)	0.97	0.83	[0.57, 1.21]
Plan Quality	-1.01 (.38)	7.17**	0.36	[0.17, 0.76]

^a $R^2 = .08$ (Nagelkerke); Model $\chi^2(1) = 3.74$, $p = .06$. ^b $R^2 = .24$ (Nagelkerke); Block $\chi^2(1) = 8.84$, $p = 0.003$. Model $\chi^2(2) = 12.58$, $p = .002$

** $p < .01$

Table 10

Hierarchical Logistic Regressions: Parole Experience scale and Release Plans scale as Predictors of Reimprisonment

	B (SE)	Wald (df=1)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Block 1 ^a				
Parole Experiences	-0.78 (.24)	10.14**	0.46	[0.29, 0.75]
Block 2 ^b				
Parole Experiences	-0.67 (0.25)	7.52**	0.51	[0.32, 0.83]
Plan Quality	-0.64 (.44)	2.17	0.53	[0.22, 1.24]

^a $R^2 = .29$ (Nagelkerke); Model $\chi^2(1) = 13.20, p = .001$ ^b $R^2 = .34$ (Nagelkerke); Block $\chi^2(1) = 2.36, p = .12$. Model $\chi^2(2) = 15.56, p = .001$.

** $p < .01$

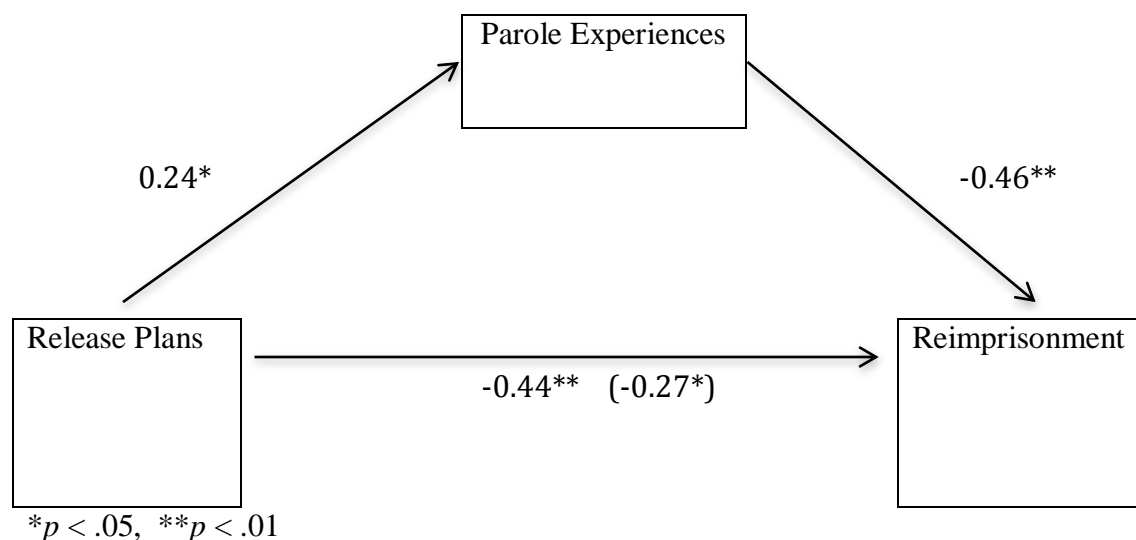
Mediational Analysis

A logistic mediational analysis was conducted to examine whether the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment was mediated by parole experiences (see Figure 2). Following the mediation procedures outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), regressions were run to test the relationships between the variables. First of all, consistent with earlier results, the relationship between the independent variable (Release Plans scale score) and the dependent variable (reimprisonment) was found to be significant ($\beta = -.44, p < .01$). Next, the relationship between the independent variable and the potential mediator (Parole Experiences scale score) was also found to be significant ($\beta = .24, p < .05$). The potential mediator and the dependent variable were also

significantly related ($\beta = -.46, p < .01$). The final regression examined the initial effect of the independent variable (total Release Plans scale score) on the dependent variable (reimprisonment), when controlling for the potential mediator (total Parole Experiences scale score). The mediated path between release plans and reimprisonment decreased when controlling for parole experiences ($\beta = -.27, p < .05$). The standardized regression coefficient between release plans and reimprisonment controlling for parole experiences is in parentheses.

In order for this change to indicate mediation, the decrease in the mediated path must be tested for significance (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The Sobel test shows that the change in the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment was significant ($z = 1.96, p = .03$). Baron and Kenny (1986) stated that a relationship is perfectly mediated when the independent variable has no impact on the dependent variable once the mediating variable is controlled for; however, a partial mediation may occur when the relationship between the independent and dependent variables has significantly reduced, but is still different from zero. These results indicate that parole experiences partially mediate the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment.

Figure 2. Standardized Regression Coefficients for the Relationship between Release Plans and Reimprisonment as Mediated by Parole Experiences.



The significant mediation result indicates that parole experiences are explaining a significant amount of the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment. Parole experiences, however, are not explaining this relationship in full; there is still a significant relationship present when the effect of parole experiences is controlled for.

Discussion

The aim of study one was to describe and explore the role that external experiences on parole may play in the relationship between release plans and reoffending. For the rationale to my analyses, please refer back to pages 40-44.

Scale Reliability

First I examined the reliability of the scales. The initial reliability analyses revealed that, although the Parole Experiences scale was internally reliable, the Release Plans scale was not. Cluster analyses were run to uncover any underlying patterns in release plans that may exist. A two cluster solution was found to best describe the data.

Although both clusters were similar on safety planning, accommodation, and prosocial support, one cluster focused more on planning for employment, and the other on planning for avoiding risk following release. This finding was unexpected because Willis and Grace (2008, 2009) reported that all items in their Release Plans scale were significantly, positively correlated with their total scale score, which they took to mean that release plans are a unitary construct. The results of the current study do not support this, suggesting instead that plans fall into two types: employment plans and risk avoidance plans. The difference in results may reflect the different factors associated with offending and reintegration for these two offender groups (e.g., child sex offenders may not be permitted to return to the environment in which they offended, whereas high-risk offenders commonly return to live with family), or different ways in which planning is approached in the different treatment programmes. The implications of these results are that there appears to be two approaches to creating release plans: either through building on strengths, or through avoiding risks.

Some researchers have discussed the distinction between approach and avoidance plans, and how approach plans are linked to more positive outcomes. For this reason, it was important to consider whether there were different offending outcomes associated with the orientation of the offenders' plans, with the hypothesis that offenders who made the employment-oriented plans would be less likely to reoffend than offenders who made the risk avoidance-oriented plans. The results showed that there was no significant difference between these two clusters in reoffending rates, indicating that the type of plan an offender makes is less important than his overall plan quality. The results also suggested that providing more links to community support following release may allow those offenders planning to avoid risk to create more strengths-based positive plans. Rather than planning to avoid risk, they

can improve their overall quality of plans by increasing their positive planning around employment in particular. On a similar note, offenders who are returning to a high-risk environment in which they have planned employment need to be encouraged to spend more time planning ways to avoid the risks that are present in that environment.

Release Planning

Overall, release plans in this sample were not particularly comprehensive. For example, around three quarters of the sample had no plans to avoid risks they expected to encounter following release. The quality of the release plans assessed in this study, however, is similar to those found in other samples of prisoners nearing release. Willis and Grace (2008, 2009) found that similar plans were in place for the child sex offenders in their sample: confirmed accommodation, social support in place, but no confirmed employment. The other planning items used by Willis and Grace were not directly comparable as we were not able to measure motivation, idiosyncratic risk, or Good Lives Model variables. On the comparable items we see a similar picture for two very different samples of offenders. These similarities imply that the risk level or even the type of offending an individual engages in do not influence the quality or types of plans that they make for life in the community. These similarities also potentially reflect similar processes across the New Zealand special treatment units for release planning, and probably similar requirements for the New Zealand Parole Board to grant offenders early release. It is also interesting to note that accommodation was not related to the overall release planning scale score. This result may also be due to New Zealand Parole Board requirements. Because offenders are unlikely to be released without having accommodation in place, there is little variation in accommodation scores.

The quality of offenders' overall release plans was able to discriminate between those who went on to reoffend and those who did not. These results support past research that has demonstrated that a simple scale measuring the quality of plans on just a handful of codable items is able to differentiate between those who will go on to reoffend within six months of release and those who will not (Willis & Grace, 2008, 2009; Dickson et al, 2013). The significant result for the total Release Plans scale score supports the earlier contention that it is the overall quality of an offender's plan, and not the types of plans making up the total, that is important in the prediction of reconviction.

The sample in this study was largely the same as that in the Dickson et al. (2013) study but included additional offenders. As expected, there are similarities between these results and those of Dickson and colleagues (2013). For example the fact that the employment item was the strongest individual predictor of reconviction in the scale. There were differences too; the release plans had a stronger relationship to reconviction than reimprisonment in this study, whereas the reverse was true in the Dickson and colleagues' study (this will be discussed in greater depth in the General Discussion). The current study also did not find that individual items tended to discriminate between men who went on to reoffend and men who did not; however, the overall scale score supported the general conclusions of Willis and Grace (2008, 2009); release plans appear to be a suitable target for intervention because higher plan quality overall appears to be protecting offenders from recidivism during the first six months after release.

Parole Experiences

The experiences that the majority of offenders in this sample had during the first two months of parole were generally positive. Employment was possibly the most problematic area of life for men in this sample, with the majority of the sample not being in full-time employment. This result is consistent with previous findings that highlight the high rates of unemployment in ex-prisoners (e.g., Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009). In this study, however, only the first two months of life after release are being examined and it would be understandable for it to take some time; two months is a short period of time to adjust to life in the community and find full-time employment, and offenders in the sample may not have been looking for employment yet. In fact, the average release plan score indicated that offenders had taken some steps to finding a job, but had no specific plans. Also similar to previous research was the finding that most ex-prisoners reside with their families after release (e.g., Solomon et al, 2006); just over half in this sample were residing with family.

Some of the results were more positive than those reported in the literature. For example, a large proportion of the men in this study reported no contact with antisocial associates. This unexpected finding potentially reflects a lack of reporting to probation officers about contact with antisocial peers, or alternatively may reflect Graffam and colleagues' (2004) statement that some offenders isolate themselves in order to avoid antisocial associates. The large proportion of this sample that had prosocial support in place may suggest that ex-prisoners do not need to completely isolate themselves to do so, as does the lack of a significant correlation between prosocial supports and avoiding antisocial associates. In this study, the majority of offenders had two or more networks of prosocial support, and received more than one type of support, suggesting that many offenders in this sample were able to avoid antisocial associates without

having to isolate themselves. Another positive finding was the low rates of risk factors in the release environments of this sample. More than half reported no risk factors at all, which is totally unexpected given the grim results seen regarding the typical release environments of ex-prisoners overseas (e.g., La Vigne et al., 2004). It was also encouraging to see the positive coping used to deal with risks and to deal with contact with antisocial associates in this study. These results may reflect the influence of the treatment programme these men had participated in, which aimed to help them cope with these acute risk factors.

While these results paint a more encouraging picture of life after prison in New Zealand than I had expected, it pays to remember that these experiences were those that the men reported to their probation officers. It would not be hard to believe that parolees would fail to mention that they were spending time with criminal peers, that they were living in crime-ridden areas, or would over-emphasize the amount of positive support they were receiving in order to make a good impression on a person who has the ability to send them back to prison.

The quality of offenders' parole experiences also allowed us to statistically discriminate between those who went on to reoffend and those who did not. These results support the idea that there is a link between experiences on parole and reoffending, particularly reimprisonment (e.g., Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). While only release environment scores differed between men who were reconvicted and men who were not, we saw that scores on attitude, contact with antisocial associates, prosocial support, and overall parole experiences were able to differentiate between men who returned to prison and those who did not. These results generally support past research, which has found that ex-prisoners who reoffend after release tend to have poorer experiences in the community than those who remain offence-free (e.g., Petersilia,

2001; Solomon et al, 2006). It was surprising, however, that accommodation and employment did not differentiate between men who returned to prison and men who remained in the community, given that past research has supported a relationship between poor experiences of accommodation and employment and reoffending (e.g., Baldry et al., 2006; Solomon et al., 2006). The lack of significant results may be due to the way in which these items were measured. A count of the number of times an offender had to move, or the number of jobs they had, may have captured more of the variation in the sample regarding their experiences of accommodation and employment.

The Relationships between Release Plans and Parole Experiences

The next question was whether release plans translate into parole experiences and the results indicated that they do to some extent, but this is not necessarily a direct translation. I found a number of significant relationships between release plans and parole experiences, including a significant, positive correlation between the total scores on both scales. In some cases these correlations indicated the direct relationship between plans and experiences that would be expected. For example, there was a strong positive correlation between plans for employment and experiences of employment. In most cases, however, the plans for one domain were not significantly correlated with experiences in that domain. Instead, there were several unexpected relationships. One example is the significant, negative correlation between release environment plans and accommodation experiences, which implies that planning to reduce risks in the environment means that you end up in an area where your accommodation is less stable. Similar relationships were observed for release

environment plans and employment experiences, and for antisocial associates' plans and employment experiences.

These relationships imply that plans do not translate in a predictable and concrete way into experiences during the first two months of parole. One explanation for this is that the items are not really independent of each other. For example, the significant relationship between release environment plans and accommodation experiences implies that an offender is released to an area with more risk factors but this means he ends up with better quality accommodation, probably because he is returning to the area in which his family lives. Another explanation is that other factors are coming into play that are influencing both plans and parole experiences, including internal psychological factors such as motivation or self-efficacy. Release plans could be doing more than translating directly into experiences; they could be affecting reoffending through another route. The relationship between plans to avoid antisocial associates, and contact with these associates after release implies that planning cannot completely prevent contact but that those who made such plans may have been more motivated to avoid becoming ensnared in such encounters, in that they handled such contacts more effectively. Overall, it appears that release planning leads prisoners to live more positive lives in the community, but in complex and indirect ways.

Do Parole Experiences Explain the Relationship between Release Plans and Reimprisonment?

The significant mediation result supported the hypothesis that parole experiences are explaining a significant amount of the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment. This result means that offenders who make better quality release plans have better experiences on parole and, as a result, are less likely to be reimprisoned.

Parole experiences, however, are not explaining this relationship in full; there is still a significant relationship present when the effect of parole experiences is controlled for. There are a couple of possible explanations for this result. One is that I may not have effectively measured the quality of offenders' experiences; incomplete data may have meant I did not adequately capture what was happening in offenders' lives. More complete data than what could be collected from the Probation Officers' notes may help to explain this relationship in full. Capturing other parole experiences, such as substance use or finances may have also helped to explain why some offenders returned to prison while others didn't. The second, more interesting explanation is that other variables may be explaining the relationship between release plan quality and reimprisonment. This begs the question: what other variables may be responsible? As suggested earlier, factors such as motivation to carry through plans, or feelings of self-efficacy, may be playing a role in the relationship between plans and reimprisonment. The second study of this thesis will begin to unravel the psychological factors that influence offenders upon release from prison and how these factors affect the plans they had made for life in the community.

The aim of this study was to explore one potential mechanism to explain the relationship between release plans and recidivism: do release plans lead to better parole experiences shortly after release, and therefore reduced rates of reoffending? Although the results do support this idea, it seems that the picture is more complex. Better quality parole experiences explain this relationship in part, but there remains a significant amount of variance still unaccounted for in the predictive ability of release plans. Study two of this thesis will explore whether factors internal to the offender, such as motivation or self-efficacy, help to explain this relationship.

Chapter Three:

The 'Internal' Pathway

Sampson and Laub's theory has received support from a number of studies (e.g., Bahr, Harris, Fisher, & Armstrong, 2010; Blokland & Nieuwbeerta, 2005; Horney, Osgood, & Marshall, 1995; Sampson, Laub, & Wimer, 2007). Sampson and Laub (1993) argued that it is structural changes in lifestyle that cause desistance and that any internal changes seen in desisting offenders are incidental and largely irrelevant. An important point to note, however, is that the quality of these bonds matters; employment alone is not enough; rather, stable employment where the individual is committed to the job is required for desistance to occur. The necessary quality of the bonds hints that the individual must be open to creating these social bonds, potentially reflecting the development of a more prosocial attitude, but Sampson and Laub state that social bonds are chance events that could happen to anyone. Other authors, however, argue that internal changes are crucial to the process of desistance. While these two positions may be complementary, I will first turn to the other side of the debate: internal factors that may be contributing to desistance from crime. This chapter will explore internal factors that may help to explain the efficacy of release planning.

The Internal Pathway

Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph (2002) argued that Sampson and Laub's Social Control Theory provides an incomplete picture of the desistance process, because it ignores the work the offender does to move toward, and then sustain, a new way of life. They argued that it is offenders themselves who move towards environments that include such positive influences as a spouse and employment, rather than simply

chancing upon them, and that we therefore need to focus on the role of factors internal to the offender. Without taking internal factors into account, we cannot explain how offenders begin the desistance process before having accrued social capital, or why some offenders with stable jobs and good marriages continue to commit crimes.

Giordano and colleagues therefore focus on the cognitive transformations that they believe are fundamental to the desistance process. This is not to say that they disregard the importance of the external factors that Sampson and Laub argue for; in fact, they assert that these factors can provide a scaffold for life changes. But it is up to the individual to latch on to these opportunities, to seize these hooks for change, and doing so is the result of internal factors.

Giordano and colleagues (2002) posit four types of cognitive transformation that take place during the desistance process. The first is when the offender becomes more open to change. The individuals may start to see personal change as a possibility and be willing to put effort in to change their behaviour. The second is a shift in the perceived availability, meaning, and salience of a “hook for change”. A hook for change is a circumstance that can help an offender move towards positive change (e.g., the offender is offered a job and perceives it as a positive thing). Third is the ability to envision and begin to fashion a prosocial “replacement self”. The offender may start to see himself or herself in a different, prosocial light (e.g., they imagine themselves as a hard-working employee), and the fourth is a transformation in the way the offender views their deviant behaviour. Giordano and colleagues (2002) stated that offenders may then begin to realise the harm they were causing others or they may start to see that crime is inconsistent with their “hard-worker” status. These cognitive shifts are then associated with changes in behaviour that are, in turn, maintained by the cognitive shifts.

Giordano and colleagues (2002) analysed the life narratives of 97 female and 83 male offenders, and found evidence to support the importance of cognitive transformations during the process of desistance. Many hooks for change were mentioned, such as prison, religion, having children, and marriage. What was interesting was that the hook for change was not sufficient in itself to cause desistance. Rather, the narratives revealed that the offenders had to be open to change (e.g., they *wanted* to have children), and the hook for change had to provide a replacement self (e.g., as a parent) for it to maintain desistance. The narratives were gathered from individuals who had participated in a study about delinquency thirteen years earlier. A real strength of this study is that it explored both males and females, because females are often ignored in delinquency research. A potential limitation of the narratives is their retrospective nature. Individuals who had desisted may have later developed internal attributions regarding their desistance. A prospective study may be more informative, demonstrating how desistance occurs without the biases of hindsight. These results support the contention that the external factors to which Sampson and Laub attributed desistance are insufficient without cognitive transformations taking place.

The work of Giordano and colleagues led me to hypothesise that release plans influence recidivism rates through their impact on internal factors. The creation of good quality release plans may lead to an increase in certain internal factors, which promote desistance from crime. For this thesis, I have selected three internal factors that are thought to be involved in the desistance process. The aim is to see if release plans have a positive impact upon these three factors. The three internal factors are motivation, self-efficacy, and identity.

Motivation

The first internal factor that will be explored in this thesis as a potential mechanism underlying the link between release plans and reoffending is motivation to desist. In their seminal work on Motivational Interviewing, Miller and Rollnick (1991, p. 19) defined motivation as “the probability that a person will enter into, continue, and adhere to a specific change strategy.” They also broke down the concept of motivation into a person being willing, able, and ready. First, being *willing* is the extent to which a person desires a change. This desire is often triggered by a discrepancy between their current status and their goal. Next, being *able* reflects confidence that they can change (also known as “self-efficacy” – covered in next section). Finally, being *ready* reflects the behavioural change being a high priority, for example, an individual may want to quit smoking and feel able to but at this stage it is not a high priority, so change does not occur.

Motivation to change is fundamental to behaviour change; level of motivation predicts outcome (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Much of the empirical research into motivation has been conducted in the addiction area. For example, in a study of recovered heroin addicts, Klingemann (1991) found that motivation to change was the first major stage in the process of desistance from heroin abuse. Prochaska and DiClemente have been prominent in this field and proposed the Transtheoretical Model of Change (e.g., Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992). Their model operationalizes motivation to change across five stages, including precontemplation (no intention to change behaviour), contemplation (thinking about changing but have not yet committed to change), preparation (some small behaviour changes occurring but the intention is there to make bigger changes soon), action (successful behaviour change is occurring), and maintenance (working to prevent relapse). Various studies

have supported this model, and found that stage of change is related to relevant outcomes such as drinking, smoking, and weight loss (e.g., DiClemente & Hughes, 1990; DiClemente, Prochaska, & Gilbertini, 1985; Prochaska, Norcross, Fowler, & Follick, 1992; Rossi, Prochaska, & DiClemente, 1988).

The Transtheoretical Model of Change has been incorporated into a measure of risk of violent offending – the Violence Risk Scale (VRS; Wong & Gordon, 2000) – and a measure of risk of sexual offending – the Violence Risk Scale – Sexual Offender version (VRS-SO; Wong, Olver, Nicholaichuk, & Gordon, 2003). In each case, as well as a smaller group of static items, a series of dynamic items are rated on a four-point scale (0 – 3) indicating the level of risk the offender poses for that item. Each item that is rated either a 2 or 3 (and therefore deemed a risk factor) is then rated on a second scale reflecting a modified version of the Transtheoretical Model of Change. In other words, the scale identifies the stage of change that the offender is at for each risk factor they present. In a study of the VRS-SO, Olver, Wong, Nicholaichuk, and Gordon (2007) calculated the amount of change each offender made during treatment and examined its relationship to sexual recidivism. They found that change scores made a unique contribution to the prediction of sexual recidivism, when controlling for level of risk. These results indicate that the further an offender moved through the stages of change, the less likely they were to sexually reoffend. Similarly, Lewis, Olver, and Wong (2012) used the VRS to assess pre-treatment risk, and the amount of change on relevant risk factors across treatment, in a sample of high-risk violent offenders. They found that the more change offenders made during treatment on the dynamic risk factors, the less likely they were to violently reoffend. It is important to note that change does not always occur in a linear fashion through the stages: offenders can

move back and forth. These results support the idea that the further through the stages of change an offender moves, the lower his risk.

There is little other research into motivation to desist from offending and what research there is tends to take a more exploratory approach. For example, Shover (1983) interviewed a sample of property offenders to examine the reasons that offenders give for giving up crime. He identified three motivations for desistance in his sample: incommensurate time, aspirations and goals, and tiredness. Offenders begin to see time as a valuable, but diminishing, resource that they do not want to waste by being in prison. The property offenders also reported revising their aspirations and becoming less materialistically driven. Rather than committing crime for material gain, these offenders wanted to live peaceful, stable, family-oriented lives. Finally, offenders became tired of committing crime. They were worn out by the criminal justice system and tired of their former lifestyles.

Pyrooz and Decker (2011) explored the motivations behind leaving gangs. They found that gang members were both pushed out by factors such as growing tired of gang life and the desire to avoid punishment, and pulled out by factors such as family or work responsibilities. Burnett (2000) conducted a longitudinal study in which male property offenders were interviewed at three stages: prior to release from prison, at 4-6 months after release, then at between 7 and 20 months after release. The participants were asked about their aspirations, expectations, and stumbling blocks to desistance. Burnett explored what motivated the participants in the study and found that those who persisted with offending were motivated to get a “buzz”, make money, and finance drug habits. Those who desisted were motivated to avoid prison, or found new prosocial interests other than crime, which they did not want to jeopardise by reoffending.

Put simply, the literature on desistance suggests that motivation to desist can be seen as the fundamental first step in the desistance process. To measure level of motivation for behaviour change, McMurran (2002) suggested that it is simply uncovered by asking an individual whether they intend to engage in a particular behaviour, because expressed intention is the most readily accessible indicator of motivation. However, in his review of treatment for alcoholics, Miller (1985) noted the opposite: that stated willingness to participate in treatment does not predict participation in treatment or treatment outcomes (whether motivation is a good predictor of behaviour will be important to establish in this study and will also be discussed in the self-efficacy section). Miller went on to explain that a common explanation for why treatment fails with alcoholics is a lack of motivation, which is seen as a trait of the client. In fact, Miller described a variety of treatment methods that can increase levels of motivation in a client, such as giving advice, providing feedback, goal-setting, role-playing and modelling, maintaining contact, providing choice, and decreasing the attractiveness of the problem behaviour. The identification of various factors that influence motivation demonstrates that motivation is a dynamic state, not a static trait. Motivation is something that can be altered through intervention and the Motivational Interviewing literature focuses on the ways in which a therapist can increase motivation for positive change. A question of this thesis is whether motivation levels for desistance change as a function of the quality of release plans created in treatment.

In summary, research has demonstrated that motivation is the first, necessary step to conscious and deliberative behaviour change. Motivations for desistance can vary but it is the overall level of motivation related to desistance that is of interest in this research. In this thesis, I will explore the relationship between quality of release

plans, expressed intention to desist, and recidivism, in order to determine whether motivation mediates the relationship between release plans and recidivism. Given that motivation is a dynamic state, it is hypothesized that better quality release plans will be related to increased levels of motivation to desist once in the community, which will in turn lead to reduced rates of reoffending and reimprisonment. It is theorized that making good quality plans for life in the community will increase offenders' judgements that desistance is a desirable goal, thus increasing expressed intention to desist. However, the relationship between release plan quality and motivation is assumed to be bi-directional; prior to release, more motivated offenders will put more effort into creating good quality plans for life after release. I will therefore control for the level of motivation at pre-release to explore whether good quality plans at that time contribute independently to increased motivation in the community.

Self-Efficacy

The second internal factor I will explore as a potential mechanism is self-efficacy. At times, people do not act to the best of their ability, even when they know how to complete a task, because their beliefs about their capabilities mediate the relationship between knowledge and behaviour (Bandura, 1982). In particular, the way people judge their own capabilities affects how they behave. Bandura (1982) defined self-efficacy as the judgement of how well one can execute a given behaviour. In other words, a high level of self-efficacy is the perception that you can perform a certain action well. Efficacy beliefs impact on our behaviours, our thought patterns, and our emotional reactions. Bandura stated that we tend to avoid activities that we believe exceed our capabilities, but happily undertake tasks that we deem ourselves as capable of managing. Betz and Hackett (1981) supported the importance of self-efficacy in

determining behavioural choices in a study of career decision-making, in which they asked participants to rate how capable they felt at succeeding in different roles. Male participants judged themselves to be equally capable at succeeding in both traditionally male and female occupations. Female participants, on the other hand, judged themselves as being capable of succeeding in the traditionally female occupations but not capable of succeeding in traditionally male roles. These results were particularly striking given that the two groups did not differ in their scores on standardized tests, demonstrating that self-efficacy judgements determined whether the participants would use their skills or not, not actual skill levels.

Self-efficacy also determines how much effort we put into our endeavours and how long we will persevere in the face of difficulty. Those with high levels of self-efficacy for a task will exert greater effort when faced with difficulties when performing the task, while those with low self-efficacy will give up. Bandura (1982) experimentally induced different levels of self-efficacy in a sample of phobic clients, then asked them to complete a series of mastery tasks related to their phobia. As expected, performance on the tasks varied as a function of self-efficacy. Higher levels of self-efficacy have been linked to better performance in a variety of domains, such as academic performance (Barling & Snipelisky, 1983), weight loss (Chambliss & Murray, 1979), athletic performance (Weinberg, Yukelson, & Jackson, 1980), pain tolerance (Neufeld & Thomas, 1977), stress (Averill, 1973), and music performance (Kendrick, Craig, & Lawson, 1982). Self-efficacy beliefs can generalize to behaviours across a specific domain and are based on past experiences, others' experiences, verbal persuasion, and affective states experienced during the task (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy has been explored in relation to desistance behaviour, originally in the area of desistance from substance use. Marlatt and Gordon (1980) developed a

model of relapse, focusing on heroin addiction, alcoholism and smoking. They posited that individuals who have high levels of self-efficacy regarding their ability to cope would make the effort needed to succeed in coping with high-risk situations. Those with low levels of self-efficacy are less likely to use coping skills and relapse is more likely to occur. The link between low self-efficacy and vulnerability to relapse has received empirical support in a variety of studies (e.g., DiClemente, 1981; Condiotte & Lichtenstein, 1981). Regarding other problematic behaviour, Allen, Leadbeater, and Aber (1990) administered questionnaires to a sample of at-risk adolescents. They found that low levels of reported self-efficacy for socially competent behaviours were related to delinquency, hard drug use, and unprotected sexual intercourse.

Self-efficacy is not always directed at prosocial behaviours, however. Brezina and Topalli (2012) examined self-efficacy in regard to criminal behaviour: offenders' perceptions of how good they are at crime. In their multi-method study of criminal self-efficacy beliefs they found that, despite being viewed by society as "failures", many offenders viewed themselves as successful at crime. Their self-efficacy beliefs were related to monetary gain from crime, the ability to evade apprehension, and to having skills and expertise at crime. In turn, higher self-efficacy ratings were related to lower ratings of an intention to "go straight" (which in itself is predictive of future offending; e.g., Burnett, 2000).

Self-efficacy beliefs are similar to the concept of hope. Burnett and Maruna (2004) defined hope as the overall belief that your goals can be met, and is comprised of two parts: the will (i.e., motivation) and the ways (i.e., self-efficacy). An individual is motivated to achieve their goals *as well as* having available pathways to meet their goals (Snyder, Harris, & Anderson, 1991). Martin and Stermac (2010) explored levels of hope in an offender sample and found an inverse relationship between hope and

risk. Higher risk offenders reported lower levels of hope than lower risk offenders. Unfortunately this study does not inform us of the directionality of the relationship between hope and offending. Is it that higher levels of hope protect an individual from offending? Or does chronic offending lower an individual's levels of hope? When interviewing offenders prior to their release from prison, Burnett and Maruna (2004) asked whether the offenders thought they were able to go straight. While the vast majority *wanted* to go straight (i.e., were motivated), only a quarter of the sample thought they would definitely be *able* to (i.e., had high levels of self-efficacy). Burnett and Maruna found that offenders were fairly accurate at predicting whether or not they would reoffend; those who thought that they would be able to give up crime were usually correct, suggesting that self-efficacy ratings were more accurate than motivation ratings in the prediction of reoffending. They concluded that an offender's level of hope would impact upon their likelihood of success after release from prison and found that this was the case; even 10 years after release, levels of hope at release still predicted reoffending rates. Burnett and Maruna found that the belief that they were able to change was related to offenders having a better ability to cope with problems in the community.

Another concept very similar to that of self-efficacy is Carol Dweck's concept of mindset. Dweck (2006) describes two mindsets that individuals may hold. The first is a "fixed" mindset, where individuals view themselves as either having an ability or not. For example, people with this mindset see intelligence as permanently fixed at a certain level: we are either smart or we are not. Individuals with a "growth" mindset see abilities as something that can change and develop through effort and experience. These individuals see intelligence as something that can be improved on by learning and persistence. Crucially, individuals who hold these two mindsets will react to

failure in very different ways. Those with a fixed mindset will see failure as a reflection of their lack of ability or competence, and view themselves as incapable at succeeding at that task. Those with a growth mindset view failure as an opportunity to learn. They view themselves as being able to improve on the task, so they put in more effort in order to develop their ability. Offenders may view their ability to live a prosocial life from these two mindsets. Offenders with a fixed mindset may see their past failure at living a prosocial life, and ending up in prison, as an indication that they are not capable of succeeding in the community. As a result there is no point in them putting in effort, as they are simply not able to succeed (i.e., they have low self-efficacy). Offenders with a growth mindset, however, will increase their effort and persist at trying to live a prosocial life. In the same manner as self-efficacy, mindset—viewing yourself as capable of succeeding in the face of failure—would predict how much effort offenders put into living a prosocial life and ultimately, how well they do in the community. I am interested in whether good quality release plans can help offenders to shift their mindset. More specifically, whether good release plans increase an offender's level of self-efficacy to desist.

In this study I will measure prisoners' self-efficacy beliefs related to desistance from crime before release, and then at two months following release. Research has demonstrated that self-efficacy is related to improved performance at a task: we are more likely to attempt the task and, in the face of challenges, we are more likely to increase our effort towards succeeding at the task. Self-efficacy may therefore explain the link between good quality release plans and lower rates of reoffending in the community. Spending time creating good-quality release plans to succeed in the community may help to increase feelings of self-efficacy and this, in turn, will impact on performance in the community. By creating plans, an offender may learn what is

necessary to succeed in the community, what resources they have available to them, and what risky situations they need to avoid after release. This increase in awareness will then help to raise the offender's belief that they are capable of success. It is expected that higher levels of self-efficacy may contribute to increased involvement in release planning but, when controlling for ratings of self-efficacy before release, it is hypothesised that better release plans will be related to increased ratings of self-efficacy in the community. Higher levels of self-efficacy will, in turn, be related to reduced rates of reoffending.

Identity

The third internal factor I will explore is identity. In his book "The Stories We Live By", McAdams' (1993) central idea was that identity is a life story, or narrative, that we create for ourselves to provide unity and purpose to our lives. To create a narrative we integrate our scattered life experiences into a coherent story that is meaningful and reflects truths about ourselves. It is a unique story that continues to develop throughout our lives. This story is an account of the past that explains why things happened as they did and also explains who we will become in the future; stories make sense of our actions. Identity can become a problem, however, when there are incongruities in our lives: who we were at one time may not be who we are now, or who we want to be in the future. This problem is one that offenders face when telling their life stories. Offenders who desire a crime-free future need to make sense of their criminal past.

Maruna (2001) similarly argued that to desist offenders need to make a fundamental shift in their sense of self. They do this by creating a narrative that makes sense of their past and explains how they have become a new, "straight" person. To test his hypothesis, Maruna compared the self-narratives of a group of persistent

offenders with a group of desisters. The two groups were matched on age and prior offending, and were found to have come from similarly disadvantaged backgrounds. Maruna analysed their narratives and found that the two groups told their stories in fundamentally different ways. Persistent offenders had the desire to “go straight” but felt powerless to make any changes. Maruna labelled their narratives as “Condemnations Scripts”; they saw themselves as victims of circumstance who have no control over their lives (a marker also of low levels of self-efficacy).

Desisters, on the other hand, told stories of redemption, wherein their negative past experiences helped them to become the stronger, wiser person they are today. They explained that they had always been a good person, deep down, and that their crimes were a product of the environment that they were in. An opportunity came along for them to free themselves from these constraints, giving them a moral purpose to do good or to help others. This “Redemption Script” makes meaning of their past in a positive way that enables them to maintain their desistance. Desisters’ negative past experiences provided a pathway to a new identity and a more authentic way of living. They viewed their “real self” as a non-criminal who had made mistakes in life, but who could use their experiences to help others.

Maruna’s (2001) research is somewhat problematic in that it examines two extreme groups – offenders who had completely given up crime and offenders still fully involved in crime – and ignores the fact that desistance may exist on a continuum. Some offenders may reduce their involvement in crime, or commit less serious crimes than previously, but these individuals are ignored in this research. Therefore, the results are not representative of the full spectrum of offenders. Another issue is that the research is retrospective; asking offenders to look back and tell their stories. These stories may not represent what is happening to the offender during the process of

“going straight”. Rather, the stories may be created from the position they currently find themselves in. Although very interesting, this research does not inform of us what is happening at the time an offender is making their way through the desistance process.

Vaughan (2007) theorised further about the construction of narrative identities in desisting offenders. He posited that the creation of a narrative enables desisters to differentiate their past self and past habits from their present and future ideal self, while still being the same person. Vaughan suggests that, when faced with the option of changing one’s life (e.g., contemplating employment), one moves through four stages. First, the actor has an emotional reaction to a situation (e.g., whether a job offer is perceived positively or not). Second, they review their choices and their concerns regarding the situation. Next, they deliberate the pros and cons of a potential situation, and compare their current self to potential future selves (e.g., if I take the job I could become a “worker” or I could refuse the job and remain a “criminal”. Who do I wish to be?). Finally, they dedicate themselves to one course of action and one identity, which constrains them from incompatible selves and habits (e.g., I have chosen to take this job and be a “worker” so I should stop being a “criminal” and committing offences). Because the offender has now taken on a new identity, they need to resolve the tension caused by the change. That is, they need to make these disparate identities into a coherent whole. Vaughan posited that a narrative is created to explain their past behaviour and declare the future ideal self to which they have dedicated themselves. The narrative places the events in order, making sense of them, and acknowledging the harm they caused in the past, while creating distance from the present.

Besides theories on narrative identity, other studies have suggested that identity shifts play a role in desistance. Shover (1983) interviewed a sample of property

offenders, in order to discover why, as they age, offenders tend to give up crime. One of the reasons for desistance was a change in identity. As offenders age they, like all people, reflect back on their lives. The offenders in Shover's sample who gave up crime said that they realized their crime had been unproductive and they now viewed their younger selves as foolish. Their earlier identity and behaviour had no value for constructing a better future. The offenders who continued to commit crimes, however, believed it was too late for them to change and they would not be able to achieve anything in life. Bahr and colleagues (2010) also found that unsuccessful parolees were more likely to define themselves as drug addicts than successful parolees.

In this study I will measure prisoners' identity on a continuum from identifying themselves as "high-risk criminals", to seeing themselves as someone who is "going straight" or is law-abiding. I will measure identity before release from prison, then at two months following release. Research has demonstrated that offenders who desist make a shift in identity from that of an offender to that of a redeemed member of the community, whereas offender who persist with crime continue to see themselves as offenders who do not have the ability to change. None of the research has examined when this change occurs. This study will examine whether we see that shift during the initial reintegration period. Changes in identity may also help to explain the link between release plans and recidivism because, in line with Vaughan's (2007) view of identity change, creating release plans may be seen as an opportunity for offenders to change their lives. It is a period of reflecting on the lifestyle one wants to lead in the future, exploring options for life after release, and weighing up the pros and cons of different situations. One offender may choose to go back to their old life and old habits, while another may choose to start afresh and move to a new place away from their old associates and old lifestyle. Picturing oneself in a new, offence-free lifestyle

may help to trigger a shift in identity that, in turn, leads to a decrease in offending in the community. I am interested in whether offenders have selected a new ideal future self, or if they are continuing to see themselves as an offender. It is hypothesised that better quality release plans will be related to a more prosocial identity in the community, which will in turn be related to reduced rates of recidivism in the community.

Summary. As described, internal factors may be responsible for the relationship between release plans and recidivism. Study two will explore the reported levels of three internal factors at both pre-release and in the community in a sample of high-risk offenders. Next, study two will explore how release plans relate to motivation, self-efficacy, and identity, and how these factors in turn impact on recidivism rates.

Introduction to Study Two

The overall goal of study two was to explore the role that three internal factors play in the relationship between release plan quality and recidivism. Specifically, do motivation, self-efficacy, and identity mediate this relationship in a sample of high-risk, often violent offenders? The first step was to examine the quality of offenders' release plans before they were released from prison, then to compare the release plans of recidivists and non-recidivists in order to see if the relationship between better quality release plans and lower rates of recidivism (at 6 months post-release) was replicated with this new sample. The second step was to examine the offenders' ratings of motivation, self-efficacy, and prosocial identity, as rated at pre-release, and at two months follow-up, then to compare the ratings of recidivists and non-recidivists in order to see if these internal factors differentiated between the two groups. It was

hypothesized that offenders who went on to reoffend would have made significantly lower ratings of the three internal factors at both time periods. The third step was to explore the relationship between release plan quality and the three internal factors at pre-release and two-month follow-up, with the hypothesis that better quality release plans would be related to higher levels of the motivation, self-efficacy, and prosocial identity.

The next steps drew the variables together into Structural Equation Models, in which I was able to simultaneously test all the hypothesised relationships. Separate models were run for motivation, self-efficacy, and identity, but the proposed relationships were the same for each of the three. It was hypothesised first that better release plan quality would be related to higher ratings of the internal factors at pre-release, and at two months follow-up, as well as lower rates of recidivism. Second, it was hypothesised that higher ratings of the internal factors at pre-release would be related to higher ratings of the internal factors at two months follow-up. Finally, I hypothesised that higher ratings of each of the internal factors at two months would be related to lower rates of recidivism, meaning that the internal factors, like the parole experiences in study one, would partially mediate the relationship between release plans and reoffending. I hypothesised that this would only be partially (instead of fully) mediating the relationship because external experiences would be independently explaining some of the relationship.

Method

Study Design

The current study takes its data from a larger study, “The Parole Project”, conducted by a team of researchers at Victoria University of Wellington, including me. The

Parole Project had a four-wave, longitudinal design, in which offenders were interviewed during the six weeks before release from prison (but ideally as close to release as possible), and at 2, 6, and 12 months following release. Often by the 12 month mark it was difficult to track down the offenders, particularly if they were no longer reporting to the community probation service. The initial pre-release interview was conducted face-to-face with the offender while he was in custody. The following three interviews were conducted over the phone with the offender while he was in the community (or, if the offender was back in custody, over the phone with him in prison). The offender's Probation Officer was also interviewed if the offender was still reporting. There is a Probation Officer interview for 2 months, 6 months, and occasionally 12 months following release, depending on the length of the individual offender's reporting period. The current study uses information gathered as part of the Parole Project at the pre-release wave of data collection and the two-month follow-up.

The Parole Project included both offenders who had graduated from one of the four high-risk Special Treatment Unit rehabilitation programmes (STUs; see page 45 for a description), and a comparison sample of similarly high-risk offenders serving sentences of a similar length but who had not gone through a STU. The procedure will describe the different recruitment methods used for these two groups of offenders, but it is important to note that in the current study all offenders were included in all analyses, therefore the treatment status of the offenders is not important in this study. The offenders were grouped together to increase the sample size and associated power for statistical analyses. In the next study (study three) I will make comparisons between treated and untreated offenders.

Participants

In total, data from 141 male offender volunteers were used in this study. At the time of their pre-release interview all offenders were classified as minimum to high-medium security prisoners in New Zealand prisons. For offenders to qualify for inclusion in the study, they either had to have completed one of the four Special Treatment Unit rehabilitation programmes targeted at high-risk offenders or to have been sentenced to at least two years imprisonment. The offenders needed to have a RoC*RoI of .65 or greater, be able to speak English, and not be scheduled for deportation following release. As is the case for all New Zealand prisoners who have been sentenced to two years or longer in prison, all of the offenders in this study were released on conditions (see Appendix 3 for information about release conditions); they had to report to Community Probation Services for at least six months after release from prison. The length of reporting varied amongst the offenders in the sample; offenders released before the end of their sentence (i.e., onto early parole) had to report until six months after their sentence end date, whereas those who served their full sentence reported for just the standard six month period. Offenders included in this study were the first 141 offenders eligible for inclusion in the project who were released between November 2010 and June 2012.

Participants' average age at release was 32.29 ($SD=8.67$). The sample consisted predominantly of Maori offenders (66.4%), followed by NZ European offenders (23.8%), Pacific offenders (6.3%), and offenders of other ethnicities (e.g., Asian or European; 2.1%). The vast majority of the sample ($n=132$) was on a finite sentence of, on average, 1437.84 days in prison ($SD=1039.87$). The remaining nine offenders were serving life sentences. The offenders in the sample, including life-sentenced offenders, had served an average of 1610.08 days in prison ($SD=1873.19$). Over half of the

sample (52.7%) had a violent index offence, including assault (32.2%), aggravated robbery (14.9%), murder (4.9%), and manslaughter (0.7%). Just under a third (32.2%) had a property index offence and 7.0% had a sexual index offence (including rape 5.6%, and indecent assault 1.4%). The remainder of the sample had drug-related (4.2%), driving-related (1.4%), or other miscellaneous index offences (2.5%).

The average RoC*RoI of offenders in the sample was .74 ($SD=.12$), indicating that they had, on average, a 74% likelihood of reoffending and returning to prison in the 5 years following release. The average age at first conviction was 15.90 ($SD=1.75$) and the average age at first violent conviction was 18.85 ($SD=3.59$). The average number of previous convictions was 73.85 ($SD=61.25$) and the average number of previous violent convictions was 5.22 ($SD=4.48$). All of these measures indicate the high-risk, violent nature of this sample.

Overall, seventy-one offenders declined to take part in the research. They had an average RoC*RoI of .72 ($SD=.11$), were on average 33.23 years of age ($SD=9.55$) at release, and had served an average of 1209.96 days ($SD=798.68$) in prison. Of this group, 63.4% identified as Maori, 18.3% as NZ European, 15.5% as Pacific, 1.4% as Asian, and 1.4% as Australian. Their index offences were violent (46.5%), property (32.4%), drug (8.5%), sexual (5.6%) and other (7.0%). Offenders who declined did not differ significantly from the participants included in this study on RoC*RoI ($t[221]=-0.93, p=.35$), age at release ($t[221]=0.72, p=.28$) or days served ($t[221]=1.57, p=.12$), nor did they differ on ethnicity $\chi^2=5.08, p=.17$.

Measures

Pre-release Measures

Release Plans Scale. The quality of offenders' release plans was coded from file data, including psychological reports, reports to the parole board, and offender plans. The coding protocol from study one was amended somewhat for use in study two (see Appendix 4). The accommodation, employment, and prosocial support items remained the same, but the safety plan item was excluded here because many of the participants had not gone through treatment and therefore did not have a specific safety plan document. The other two items—reflecting plans to avoid antisocial associates and plans to reduce/manage risk in the release environment – were amended slightly for study two. For both items an additional point was added to the scale to capture more variation; for the antisocial associates item to include how frequent an offender's contact with those associates would be, and for the release environment item scale to include whether the offender had plans to manage his risk in the environment (in essence capturing the same information as was in the safety plan, but based on file information available for all participants). All items could be coded from the file information, and file information was available for all participants, so missing data was not an issue for this coding protocol.

Internal Factors. During the pre-release interview, offenders were asked to give a rating of the level of each of the three internal factors on a series of Likert scales. For motivation they were asked: "How much do you want to go straight?" The anchors on the Likert scale were 1: not at all, and 6: really want to go straight. For self-efficacy they were asked: "How confident are you that you'll be able to go straight? Do you have the ability to go straight?" If the offender had said he did not want to go straight ($n = 3$), he was asked "Hypothetically, if you did decide to go straight, how

confident would you be that you could do it?” The anchors on the Likert scale were 1: not at all confident, and 6: very confident. Finally, for identity the offenders were asked: “How much do you see yourself now as a high-risk person?” The anchors on the Likert scale were 1: not at all, and 6: a very important part of who I am. The responses on this item were then reverse-coded so that a higher score indicated a more prosocial identity.

Two Months Post-Release

Internal Factors. Offenders were asked to re-rate the levels of internal factors at the two-month follow-up. The questions were re-worded in this interview. Regarding their motivation, offenders were asked: “How committed are you to staying here in the community? (To going straight?) Are you trying to keep away from crime?” They answered on a 6-point Likert scale that had the following anchors, 1: not really trying at all, and 6: trying very hard. Regarding self-efficacy, they were asked: “How confident are you that you can continue to make it in the community?” They answered on a 6-point Likert scale that had the following anchors, 1: not at all, and 6: very confident. Finally, regarding identity they were asked: “How much do you see yourself at the moment as a person who’s going straight, just trying to be an ordinary member of the community, or as someone who is still a bit of a criminal?” They answered on a 6-point Likert scale that had the following anchors, 1: definitely a full-on criminal, and 6: definitely going straight, just trying to fit in like an ordinary person.

Six Months Post-Release

Recidivism. Recidivism was defined as any new offence within six months following release to the community that resulted in a reconviction. Three reconviction indices were examined: any new conviction (excluding breaches of conditions), any new violent conviction, and any new conviction leading to imprisonment. Criminal

histories were extracted from the National Conviction Records database in December 2012. Breaches of release conditions were not included under “any new conviction” because they are not a new criminal behaviour (e.g., an offender may receive a breach for consuming alcohol if he had a condition not to use drugs or alcohol).

Procedure

The Parole Project was approved by the Department of Corrections and the Victoria University School of Psychology Human Ethics Committee in November 2010. Each month thereafter the research team monitored the release of both treated STU graduates and untreated comparison offenders, attempting to interview every STU graduate before release. The comparison offenders were selected from a much larger pool, based on practical considerations such as location and availability of researchers; it is therefore important to note that we only contacted for interview a small proportion of the eligible untreated offenders. Offenders were interviewed by a single member of the research team. In total, seven trained interviewers conducted interviews with participants.

When the research team identified a potential participant, we asked the prison to provide information about the research to the offender (see information sheet in Appendix 5) and ask for his preliminary consent to be approached by the research team. If he agreed, we scheduled the face-to-face interview, which took place in either an interview room within the prison units or in the visitor centre. Only the researcher and the offender were present for these interviews: confidentiality was stressed to the offender, along with the right to decline participation. During the pre-release interview, offenders were informed of the purpose of the study, what their participation would entail, and provided with more information (see Appendix 6). Once any questions had

been answered to the satisfaction of the offender, the offender signed consent forms and we proceeded. The interviews took approximately 1.5 to 2.5 hours, depending on how much the offender had to say. Offenders were given a small amount of confectionery as a thank you for participating in the study. At the end of the interview, the researchers described the follow-up interview to the offender, explained the process for contacting them, and gained consent to contact them two months after release.

Following the pre-release interview, the offenders' file data were examined for the purpose of rating release plan quality (and for other purposes related to the overall Parole Project). Relevant file information (psychological reports, reports to the parole board, and offender plans) from the Department of Corrections Offender Management System was also examined. I was blind to any recidivism outcomes when I coded the quality of each offender's release plans from this information, and those who failed before the two month follow-up were excluded later.

At the time of the two-month follow up, the offenders' Probation Officers were contacted. We asked them to speak to the offenders to check if they were still happy to take part in the study and to provide us with a contact phone number for the offender, or if not, a time to call him at Community Probation Services. This phone interview was to take place confidentially without the Probation Officer or anyone else in the room. The interview at two months took approximately 30-40 minutes. At the end of the interview, offenders were thanked and offered either a supermarket voucher worth \$30 or a \$30 top-up card for their phone.

Probation officers were also interviewed at around the same time, regarding their view of the offenders' progress in the community. The Probation Officer interviews were conducted over the phone by a member of the Parole Project Team and took approximately 40 minutes to complete. These interviews were conducted

separately from the offenders' interviews, and usually by a different interviewer. No information regarding the offender's answers was given to his Probation officer, and vice versa. At the follow-up, if the research team was unable to interview either the offender or his Probation Officer, the offender was excluded from this study (this occurred in 11 cases). Offenders who were excluded from the study were significantly younger ($M=25.90$, $SD=6.22$) than offenders in the study $t(150)=3.17$, $p<.01$, had served significantly shorter sentences ($M=753.54$ days, $SD=233.10$) than offenders in the study $t(150)=4.84$, $p<.01$, but did not differ on the RoC*RoI ($M=.76$, $SD=.08$) when compared to offenders who remained in the study $t(150)=0.63$, $p=.53$.

Finally, I gathered recidivism data when all offenders in the sample had been out of prison for at least six months. Recidivism data were gathered from the Department of Corrections Offender Management System. I recorded any new offence (excluding breaches of release conditions), any new violent offence, and any new offence resulting in reimprisonment that occurred in the first six months that each offender had been in the community.

Data Preparation

A number of steps were taken to prepare the data for the following analyses. First, I removed from the study ten offenders who were convicted of a new offence in the first two months following release. Second, I needed to substitute missing data from the pre-release interviews when offenders had not answered a question. No offender failed to answer all of these questions; however, a few did not answer one of the three questions regarding internal factors. Preliminary analyses showed the items were significantly correlated (Motivation and Self-Efficacy $r(141)=.43$, $p<.01$; Motivation and Identity $r(141)=.29$, $p<.01$; and Self-Efficacy and Identity $r(141)=.32$, $p<.01$)

therefore, in these situations, the average of their other two responses was used for the missing item.

Third, the data from the Probation Officer interviews were substituted for offender data in cases where the research team had been unable to contact the offender in the community. Specifically, I needed to substitute the offenders' missing ratings for the three internal factors at the two-month follow-up point. Again, these ratings were significantly correlated with one another: Motivation and Self-Efficacy $r(141)=.70$, $p<.01$; Motivation and Identity $r(141)=.52$, $p<.01$; and Self-Efficacy and Identity $r(141)=.43$, $p<.01$. When an offender had failed to rate one item, I substituted the average of his other two ratings for the missing data point. When the research team failed to contact the offender at the two-month follow-up ($n=45$), so we had no ratings, I imputed the missing data from the ratings given by the Probation Officer (who was also interviewed at this time and asked the same questions regarding the offender). I used a regression equation based on the relationship between offenders' ratings and Probation Officers' ratings for offenders for whom we had both data points to predict what the missing offender ratings would be based on the Probation Officer's ratings. I then substituted the imputed score for the missing score. This method was used in order to increase the sample size and because the Probation Officers' ratings and the offenders' ratings were significantly related to one another (Motivation $r(87)=.22$, $p<.05$; Self-Efficacy $r(87)=.30$, $p<.01$; Identity $r(87)=.44$, $p<.001$).

Results

In this section I assessed the reliability of the scale I used to measure release plans, then examined the release plans of this sample and their ratings of motivation, self-efficacy, and identity at pre-release and at two months post-release. Next, I moved on

to the hypotheses of the study. I compared recidivists with non-recidivists in relation to the quality of their release plans and their ratings of the three internal factors. It was hypothesised that recidivists would have poorer quality release plans and lower ratings of internal factors. Next, I explored how release plans and internal factors related to one another; hypothesising that better quality plans would be related to higher ratings of internal factors. Finally, I looked at how all of the variables in the study related to one another using Structural Equation Modeling. I hypothesised that better quality release plans would predict higher levels of the internal factors at time 2 (controlling for the internal factors at time 1), which in turn would predict lower rates of recidivism.

When running the Structural Equation Models (SEMs), I first examined how well my proposed models fitted the data, then (if they did not fit the data well) I modified the models in a data-driven way, eliminating non-significant pathways and adding in any pathways suggested by the modification indices (if theoretically relevant). I then examined how well the modified models fitted the data. Analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 19) and Amos (version 19).

Preliminary analyses using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics established that each individual item of the Release Plans Scale and the total Release Plan scale score were non-normally distributed, as was each of the internal factor items. As a result of these findings, non-parametric tests were used throughout this study (including a bootstrapping method for the SEMs). All analyses were repeated using parametric tests, and the same pattern of results was found. The non-parametric tests were reported throughout this study.

Scale Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha for the Release Plans scale was calculated to discover whether the scale was reliable. The Release Plans scale ($\alpha=0.64$) was deemed to be sufficiently reliable for a scale with only five items (Cortina, 1993). The scale had an average inter-item correlation of 0.27.

Release Plans Scale

First, I looked at the quality of the release plans made by the offenders. The average scores on release plan items are presented in Table 11. On average, offenders scored 57% of the maximum available score for release planning, with a higher score indicating a better quality plan. The median (*Mdn*) score on each item indicates plans as follows: accommodation was confirmed, employment had been suggested but no steps had been taken towards securing a job, the offender had prosocial supports in place who were aware of his offending, the offender expected to have some (infrequent) contact with old associates, and the offender was being released to an environment where he had previously offended but had some plans to manage his risk.

Spearman Rank Order Correlations (seen in Table 11) demonstrated that most of the items were significantly positively correlated with each other; employment was the only item that had non-significant correlations with some other items, namely prosocial support, antisocial associates, and release environment. All items were significantly positively correlated with the total release plan quality score.

Table 11

Mean and Standard Deviation, Median, Range, Correlation to Total Release Plan Score, and Spearman's Intercorrelations for Release Plan Scale Items

Release Plan Item	Mean (SD)	Mdn	Range	Item- Total	2	3	4	5
1. Accommodation	0.73 (0.35)	1.00	3	0.67**	.22**	.51**	.17*	.25**
2. Employment	0.32 (0.35)	0.33	4	0.56**	-	.16	.15	.11
3. Prosocial Support	0.85 (0.29)	1.00	3	0.65**	-	-	.31**	.36**
4. Antisocial Associates	0.49 (0.30)	0.50	3	0.62**	-	-	-	.49**
5. Release Environment	0.46 (0.30)	0.50	3	0.63**	-	-	-	-

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Note. All items were coded on a scale from 0 to 1, and all were coded in a positive direction where higher scores indicated more positive, prosocial plans.

Comparisons of Recidivists and Non-Recidivists on Release Plan Quality

In order to examine the link between release plans and reoffending, I obtained the recidivism outcomes at six months after release. Within 6 months of release, 26 parolees (18%) had been convicted of a new offence (excluding breaches), 7 (5%) had been convicted of a new violent offence, and 17 (12%) were back in prison. Because of the low base rate of violent offending, I limited comparisons to two variables: any reconviction, and reimprisonment (as an indication of more serious offending).

Any conviction. First I examined whether release plan quality prior to release differed between participants who were reconvicted for offences committed within six months of release and those who were not. As Table 12 shows, Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that those who went on to reoffend had significantly lower scores on items related to planning for prosocial support, avoiding antisocial associates, release environment, and for total release planning score. There were small effect sizes for prosocial support, antisocial associates, and total release plan quality score. There was a medium effect for release environment.

Reimprisonment. Next, I examined whether release plan quality rated at time of release differed between parolees who were reimprisoned within six months of release and those who remained in the community during this time. As Table 12 shows, Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that participants who were reimprisoned had significantly lower quality release plans for prosocial support, release environment and total plan quality scores than those who remained in the community. There was a small effect size for release environment (Pallant, 2010).

Table 12

Comparisons on Release Plans Scale: Reconviction and Reimprisonment

Release Plans scale variable	Not reconvicted Mdn <i>n</i> = 115	Reconvicted Mdn <i>n</i> = 26	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i> *	In community Mdn <i>n</i> = 124	Returned to Prison Mdn <i>n</i> = 17	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Accommodation	1.00	0.50	1.86	.06	0.16	1.00	0.50	1.05	0.30	0.09
Employment	0.33	0.00	0.85	.39	0.07	0.33	0.33	.02	0.99	<.01
Prosocial Support	1.00	0.75	3.13	<0.01	0.26	1.00	1.00	2.06	0.04	0.17
Antisocial Associates	0.50	0.50	3.08	<0.01	0.26	0.50	0.50	1.57	0.12	0.13
Release environment	0.50	0.25	4.12	<0.01	0.35	0.50	0.00	3.47	<0.01	0.29
Total Plan Quality	3.00	2.33	3.41	<0.01	0.29	3.00	2.50	2.10	0.04	0.18

Note. Scores were put on a scale from 0 to 1, and all were coded in a positive direction where higher scores indicated more positive, prosocial plans.

*Effect sizes were calculated for the Mann Whitney U tests using the value of *z* to calculate an approximate *r*, in order to have an effect size comparable to those in other studies (Pallant, 2013).

Ratings of Internal Factors

Pre-Release Ratings. Next I examined the participants' pre-release ratings of subjective levels of motivation to desist, self-efficacy for desistance, and identity. The ratings are shown in Table 13. On average, the participants indicated that they were highly motivated to give up crime, they were confident they could give up crime, and they did not see themselves as high-risk people.

Two-Month Follow-Up Ratings. At two months follow up participants gave a second rating for the internal factors, also shown on Table 13. On average, their ratings indicated that they were still highly motivated to give up crime, they were still confident they could give up crime, and they still saw themselves as low-risk. Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests indicated that the ratings were significantly higher at the two-month follow up for self-efficacy. The differences for motivation and identity were not significant. As Table 14 shows, all of the internal factors, at all time points, were significantly positively correlated with one another when Spearman Rank Order correlations were calculated.

Table 13

Ratings of Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and Identity at Pre-Release and Two-Month Follow-Up

	Pre-Release	Two-Month	<i>z</i>
	Mdn	Follow-up Mdn	
Motivation	6.00	6.00	0.62
Self-Efficacy	5.00	5.58	4.48**
Identity	6.00	5.40	0.54

** $p < .001$

Table 14

Spearman Rank Order Correlations between Pre-release (Time 1) and Follow-Up (Time 2) Ratings of Internal Factors

	2	3	4	5	6
1. T1 Motivation	.43**	.31**	.31**	.23**	.26**
2. T1 Self-Efficacy	-	.28**	.26**	.33**	.27**
3. T1 Identity	-	-	.29**	.19*	.22*
4. T2 Motivation	-	-	-	.48**	.55**
5. T2 Self Efficacy	-	-	-	-	.46**
6. T2 Identity	-	-	-	-	-

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Comparisons of Recidivists and Non-Recidivists on Internal Factors

I compared the internal factors of the men who were reconvicted of any new offence during the first six months after release, and those who remain offence-free to see if internal factors were able to distinguish between these two groups. I then compared the internal factors of men who had been reimprisoned within this time period to men who remained in the community.

Any Conviction. As Table 15 shows, those who were reconvicted within six months of release reported lower time 1 self-efficacy, time 2 motivation, and time 2 identity than those who were not reconvicted. Mann-Whitney U tests showed that offenders who were reconvicted for a new offence rated themselves as having significantly less self-efficacy at time 1 than offenders who were not reconvicted.

Reimprisonment. As Table 15 shows, those who returned to prison rated time 2 motivation and time 2 identity lower than those who remained in the community, but rated time 2 self-efficacy higher. Mann-Whitney U tests showed that there were no significant differences between ratings made by participants who were reimprisoned and those who remained in the community.

Table 15

Comparison on Pre-Release (Time 1) and Two-Month Follow up (Time 2) Internal Factors: Reconviction and Reimprisonment

Internal Factor	Not reconvicted	Reconvicted	z	p	r	In community	Returned to	z	p	r
	Mdn	Mdn				Mdn	Prison Mdn			
	$n = 115$	$n = 37$				$n = 130$	$n = 22$			
T1 Motivation	6.00	6.00	1.49	0.14	0.13	6.00	6.00	1.71	0.09	0.14
T1 Self-Efficacy	5.00	4.50	2.06	0.04	0.17	5.00	5.00	1.64	0.10	0.14
T1 Identity	6.00	6.00	1.36	0.18	0.11	6.00	6.00	0.83	0.41	0.07
T2 Motivation	6.00	5.80	1.75	0.08	0.15	6.00	5.87	0.36	0.17	0.03
T2 Self-Efficacy	5.58	5.58	0.91	0.36	0.08	5.58	5.70	0.18	0.86	0.02
T2 Identity	5.39	5.00	1.59	0.11	0.14	5.39	5.00	0.28	0.78	0.02

Relationship between Release Plan Items and Internal Factors

I examined the relationships between release plans and internal factors at both pre-release and at two months follow-up. Table 16 shows that, at pre-release (time 1) there were a few significant, positive correlations between release plan items and motivation, but most were small and non-significant. Overall release plan quality was significantly positively correlated with motivation. At time 2 (two months follow-up) the pattern was quite similar. There were several significant relationships, mainly with motivation as seen in Table 17, and again overall release plan quality was significantly positively correlated with motivation. At both times, overall release plan quality was not significantly correlated with either self-efficacy or identity.

Table 16

Spearman Rank Order Correlations between Release Plan Items and Internal Factors at Time 1.

	Motivation	Self-Efficacy	Identity
Accommodation	.17*	.12	.15
Employment	.05	.07	.09
Prosocial Support	.19*	.13	.11
Antisocial Associates	.12	.12	.02
Release Environment	.12	.07	<.01
Total Release Plan	.22**	.15	.13

*p<.01 **p<.001

Table 17

Spearman Rank Order Correlations between Release Plan Items and Internal Factors at Time 2

	Motivation	Self-Efficacy	Identity
Accommodation	.20*	.14	.10
Employment	.06	<.01	.10
Prosocial Support	.24*	.18*	.12
Antisocial Associates	.07	.09	.21*
Release Environment	.12	.07	.01
Total Release Plan	.23**	.12	.15

*p<.01 **p<.001

Do Internal Factors Mediate the Link Between Release Plans and Reoffending?

Based on theory (see pages 96 to 109), it was hypothesized that internal factors mediate the relationship between release plans and recidivism. Despite the univariate analyses showing that release plans were only related to motivation, I decided to run models using all three internal factors in order to further explore the relationships between the variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to control for the relationship between pre-release ratings of the internal factors and both release plans and the time 2 ratings of the internal factors, to determine whether release plans contribute independently to internal factors in the community. Total scores for release plan quality were used in the models as well as the participants' ratings of internal factors and then the dichotomous reoffending outcomes. As such, all the variables in the models were observed, making these relatively straight-forward path models. The hypothesized model for each internal factor is presented first, based on the theory discussed in the general introduction. Each model used both reconviction and reimprisonment as outcome variables, in order to see if the relationship changed with the severity of the offending. Indirect effects were also calculated, using bootstrapping methods, to assess the strength of the relationship between release plans and reoffending when mediated by the internal factor.

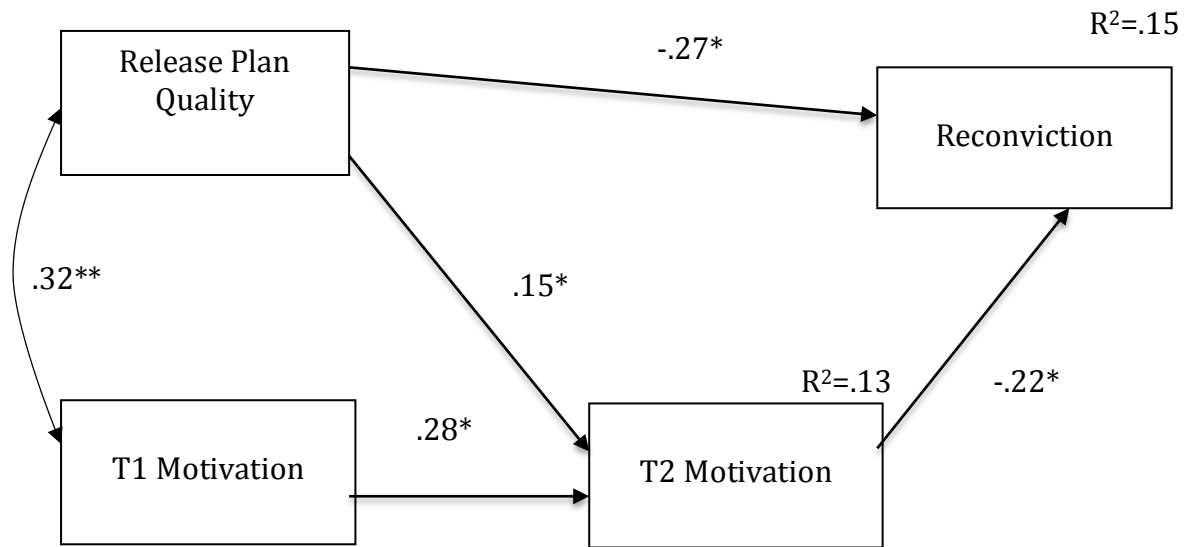
Theorized models are followed by modified models. Models were amended in a data-driven way, with non-significant paths deleted. Modification indices were examined, with a view to adding any recommended paths. The indices used to assess the goodness of fit were the chi-square statistic (a non-significant p-value indicates adequate fit), the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (less than 2 indicates good fit), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; over .90 indicates adequate fit) and the Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA; under .10 indicates adequate fit) as all

have demonstrated past utility in models based on forensic samples (Meehan & Stuart, 2007). There is some concern about the inclusion of non-normally distributed variables in the Structural Equation Models. Typically the effect of violating the assumption of normality is that the chi-square becomes too large (making the model more likely to be rejected) and the standard errors become too small (making the path coefficients more likely to be significant). Therefore the bootstrapping method described by Byrne (2010) was performed to enable me to report the significance of the path coefficients with a greater degree of accuracy. The results presented are from the bootstrapped analyses.

Does Motivation Predict Reconviction?

Figure 3 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which motivation is mediating the relationship between release plans and reconviction. Both release plan quality and time 1 motivation were significant predictors of time 2 motivation. Release plan quality was also significantly, negatively related to reconviction and time 2 motivation was also a significant negative predictor of reconviction. The fit indices indicated that this model was a good fit to the data. The model explained 15.0% of the variance in reconviction outcome and demonstrated that, as predicted, better quality release plans were related to lower rates of reconviction. It also demonstrated that better quality release plans led to increased levels of motivation in the community (controlling for pre-release motivation), which in turn led to lower rates of reconviction at six months after release. The indirect effect from release plan quality to reconviction (mediated by time 2 motivation) was significant with a standardised indirect coefficient of -.013, $p < .05$.

Figure 3. The Relationships between Release Plans, Motivation, and Reconviction – Theorized Model.

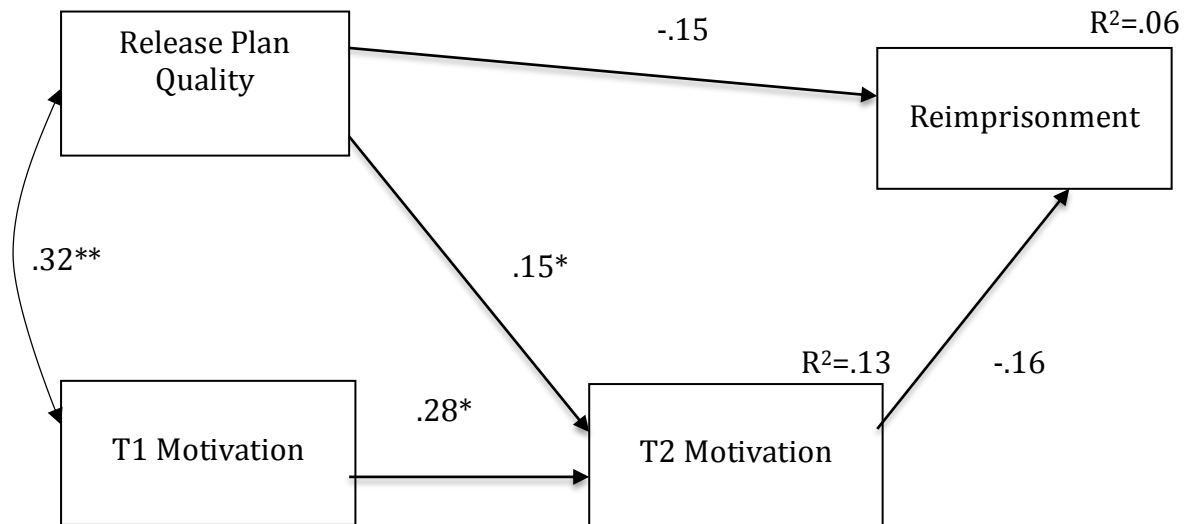


Fit indices: $\chi^2 = 0.51$, $p = .48$; $\chi^2/df = 0.51$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = <0.01.

Does Motivation Predict Reimprisonment?

Figure 4 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which motivation is mediating the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment: indicating more serious reoffending. As in the last model, both release plan quality and time 1 motivation were significant predictors of time 2 motivation. However, neither release plan quality nor time 2 motivation were significant predictors of reimprisonment. The fit indices indicated that this model was a barely adequate fit to the data. Unfortunately, neither release plan quality nor motivation were not related to reimprisonment, so modifying the model would not have demonstrated a mediation effect. The model was therefore not modified. The model explained 6.0% of the variance in reimprisonment outcome. The indirect effect from release plan quality to reimprisonment (mediated by time 2 motivation) was non-significant with a standardised indirect coefficient of -.008, $p = .09$.

Figure 4. The Relationships between Release Plans, Motivation, and Reimprisonment
– Theorized Model.

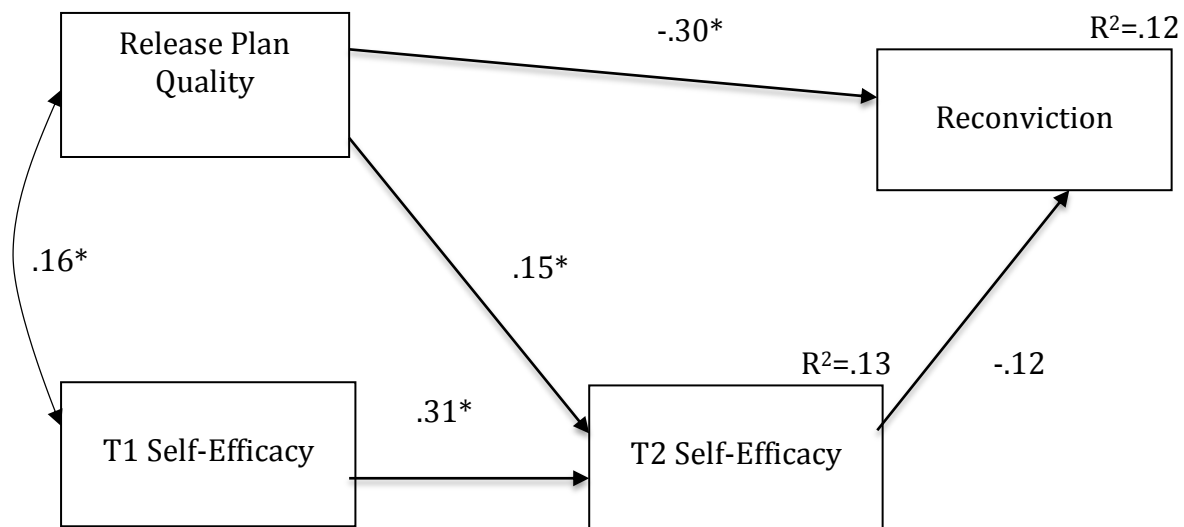


Fit indices: $\chi^2=2.87, p=.09$; $\chi^2/df= 2.87$; CFI=0.95; RMSEA=0.12.

Does Self-Efficacy Predict Reconviction?

Figure 5 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which self-efficacy is mediating the relationship between release plans and reconviction. Both release plan quality and time 1 self-efficacy were significant predictors of time 2 self-efficacy in this model. Time 2 self-efficacy was not a significant predictor of reconviction but release plan quality was a significant predictor of reconviction in this model. The fit indices indicated that this model was a good fit to the data, therefore the model was not modified. The model explains 12.0% of the variance in reconviction outcome. The indirect effect from release plan quality to reconviction (mediated by time 2 self-efficacy) was non-significant with a standardised indirect coefficient of -.006, $p=.12$.

Figure 5. The Relationships between Release Plans, Self-Efficacy, and Reconviction – Theorized Model.

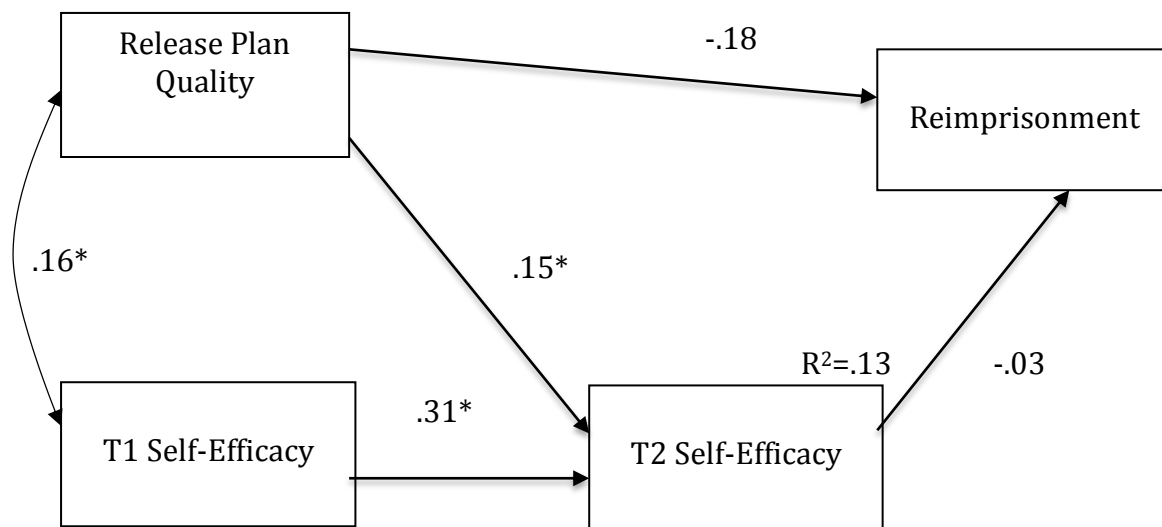


Fit indices: $\chi^2 = 0.52$, $p = .47$; $\chi^2/df = 0.52$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = < 0.01.

Does Self-Efficacy Predict Reimprisonment?

Figure 6 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which self-efficacy is mediating the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment: indicating more serious reoffending. As in the last model, both release plan quality and time 1 self-efficacy were significant predictors of time 2 self-efficacy. Neither time 2 self-efficacy nor release plan quality were significant predictors of reimprisonment. The fit indices indicated that this model was a good fit to the data. The model was therefore not modified. The model only explained 4.0% of the variance in reimprisonment outcome. The indirect effect from release plan quality to reimprisonment (mediated by time 2 self-efficacy) was non-significant with a standardised indirect coefficient of -.002, $p = .46$.

Figure 6. The Relationships between Release Plans, Self-Efficacy, and Reimprisonment – Theorized Model.



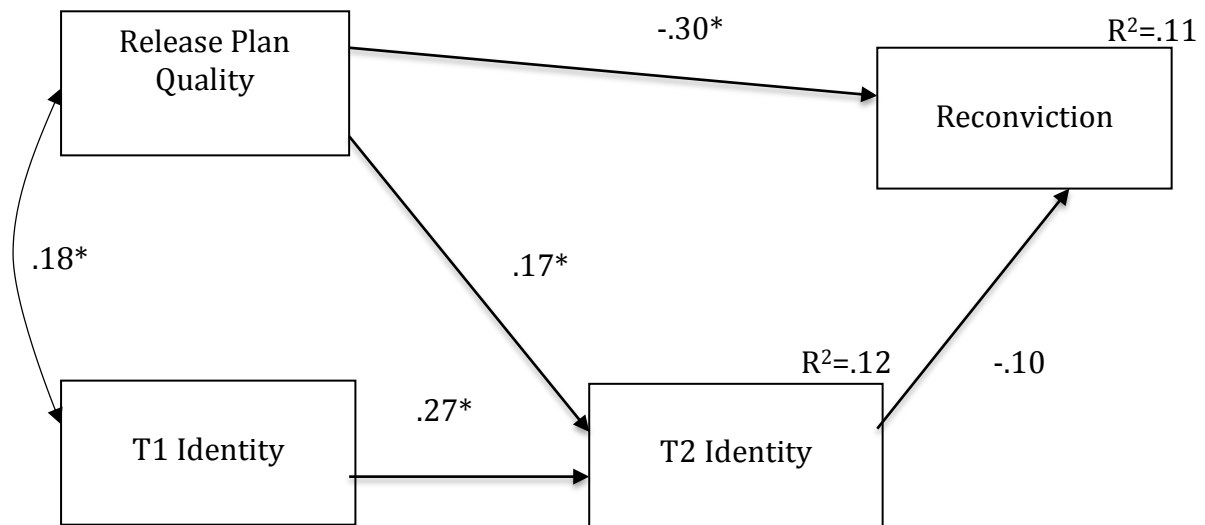
Fit indices: $\chi^2=1.00$, $p=.32$; $\chi^2/df= 1.00$; CFI=1.00; RMSEA=0.01.

Does Identity Predict Reconviction?

Figure 7 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which identity is mediating the relationship between release plans and reconviction. Both release plans and time 1 identity significantly predicted time 2 identity. Release plans were significantly related to reconviction, but time 2 identity was not significantly related to reconviction. The fit indices indicated that this model was not an adequate fit to the data. The model explained 11.0% of the variance in reconviction outcome. The indirect effect from release plan quality to reconviction (mediated by time 2 identity) was non-significant with a standardised indirect coefficient of -.007, $p=.17$.

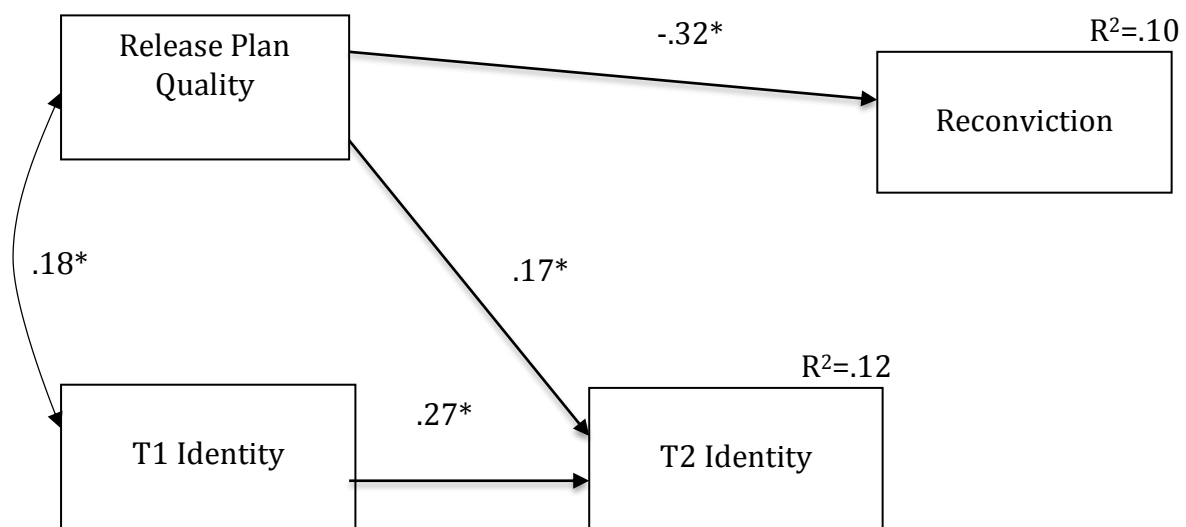
Figure 8 shows the modified model of these relationships, from which the non-significant relationship has been removed. The modified model suggested that release plans led to increased levels of prosocial identity in the community, however, identity was not related to reconviction.

Figure 7. The Relationships between Release Plans, Identity, and Reconviction – Theorized Model.



Fit indices: $\chi^2=3.58$, $p=.06$; $\chi^2/df= 3.58$; CFI=0.93; RMSEA=0.14.

Figure 8. The Relationships between Release Plans, Identity, and Reconviction – Modified Model.

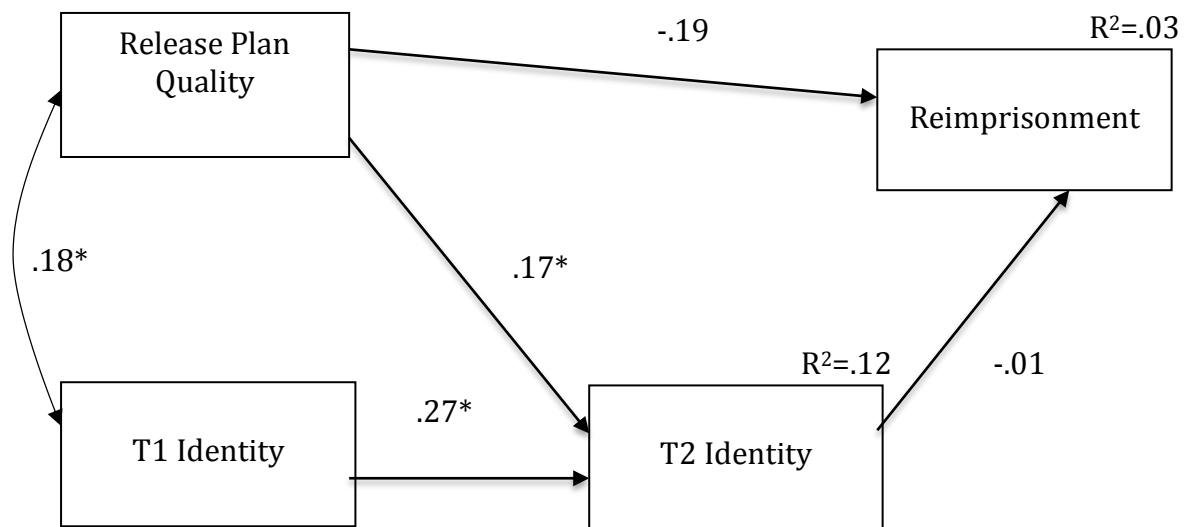


Fit indices: $\chi^2=5.03$, $p=.08$; $\chi^2/df= 2.52$; CFI=0.92; RMSEA=0.10.

Does Identity Predict Reimprisonment?

Figure 9 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which identity is mediating the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment. Both release plans and time 1 identity significantly predicted time 2 identity. Neither time 2 identity nor release plan quality were significant predictors of reimprisonment. The fit indices indicated that this model was a good fit to the data, and does not need to be modified. The model only explained 3% of the variance in reimprisonment outcome. The indirect effect from release plan quality to reimprisonment (mediated by time 2 identity) was non-significant with a standardised indirect coefficient of $-.001$, $p=.86$.

Figure 9. The Relationships between Release Plans, Identity, and Reimprisonment – Theorized Model.



Fit indices: $\chi^2=0.13$, $p=.71$; $\chi^2/df= 0.31$; CFI=1.00; RMSEA=<0.01.

Discussion

The current study aimed to explore the role that internal factors played in the relationship between release plans and reoffending. It was hypothesised that better quality release plans would lead to increased levels of motivation, self-efficacy, and identity at two months following release, which in turn would lead to reduced rates of reconviction and reimprisonment at six month following release. In order to test these hypotheses, I examined the levels of the three internal factors before release and in the community, as well as assessing the quality of offenders' release plans. I examined the relationships between release plans and the three internal factors, and between the internal factors and recidivism. Finally, I incorporated all of the variables into Structural Equation Models to test whether the internal factors were mediating the relationship between release plan quality and recidivism.

Release Plans

When assessing the quality of offenders' release plans I saw that, despite using an adapted coding protocol, similar quality release plans were reported in this study as were reported in study one, and in Willis and Grace's (2008, 2009) studies. I also found that the quality of release plans was able to differentiate between offenders who went on to reoffend and those who did not; also supporting the results of past research. Although there was some variation in which individual items significantly predicted outcome, we again saw that the overall quality of release plans had a strong relationship to reoffending outcomes, which continues to support the study one contention that it is the overall quality of an offender's plan, and not the types of plans that the total is made up of, that is important in the prediction of reoffending. Also, despite the employment item not being correlated with most of the other scale items, the scale reliability dramatically improved in this study. This improvement may be due to the bigger sample size, the adaptations to the coding protocol, or better information for coding being recorded. Whatever the cause, coding release plan quality differently certainly wasn't detrimental. The correlations between the scale items were quite a lot higher and all positive, indicating that the clusters in release plans found in the study one sample would not be present in this one.

Internal Factors

Turning to the univariate analyses of internal variables, the offenders in this sample reported that they were motivated, confident, individuals, who saw themselves as low-risk both while still in prison and when in the community. There was little change over time in these internal factors: only self-efficacy significantly differed between pre-release and in the community. Reported levels of self-efficacy significantly

improved from pre-release to two-months follow up, indicating that offenders became more confident in their ability to desist once they had re-joined the community.

When exploring the links between internal factors and recidivism, I found only that self-efficacy at pre-release predicted reconviction. It was interesting that self-efficacy in the community was not predictive of reconviction, despite it being predictive at pre-release. One could assume that an offender's belief in their ability to desist would be more predictive once he had begun to experience life in the community, and had a better idea of how well he would perform; however, this was not the case. It appears that offenders' lower ratings of self-efficacy while still in prison are more able to predict who will go on to reoffend. It is also surprising that motivation and identity were not predictive, given the contention that level of motivation predicts outcome (Miller & Rollnick, 2002) and that a prosocial identity is a step to desistance (Vaughan, 2007). One possible reason that motivation and identity were not predictive of reoffending is the near-ceiling ratings for these items. The participants gave very high ratings for these two items and the resulting lack of variance in the scores would have made them less able to differentiate between offenders who would go on to recidivate, and those who would not.

Next, I explored the relationships between release plans and the internal factors at both pre-release and in the community. Few significant relationships were found, and the relationships that were found tended to be small. Overall release plan quality was related to motivation both at pre-release and in the community. This result was encouraging as it supports the idea that release planning helps to motivate offenders to give up crime. These univariate analyses do not rule out the possibility, however, that higher levels of motivation are driving this relationship. It may be that more motivated offenders tend to create better release plans, rather than better release

plans leading to increased motivation. It is important to control for pre-release motivation to test whether release plan quality has an independent effect on levels of motivation to desist.

Do Internal Factors Mediate the Relationship between Release Plans and Recidivism?

Finally, the relationships between the variables were analysed simultaneously using Structural Equation Modeling. The first two models explored motivation as a potential mediator of the relationship between release plan quality and reoffending. I found that good quality release plans were related to increased levels of motivation to desist in the community (when controlling for pre-release motivation), and decreased the likelihood of reconviction, as hypothesized. These results support the hypothesis that creating good quality release plans helps desistance to become a more desirable goal for offenders, thus increasing expressed desire to desist. This increased motivation then helps offenders to maintain desistance. However, when predicting reimprisonment, neither release plan quality nor motivation predicted outcome. It may be that the low rates of reimprisonment in this sample—due to the short follow-up—led to the lack of significant results in this model, and in the following models predicting reimprisonment. In the prediction of reconviction, when controlling for levels of motivation, release plan quality was still significantly related to reconviction (i.e., it was a partial mediation), indicating that release plans influence reconviction more than just through their relationship with motivation levels. It follows that motivation appears to be one of the routes through which release plans impact on recidivism, but there are still other independent mechanisms for which this model does not account.

The next two models explored self-efficacy as a potential mediator of the relationship between release plan quality and either reconviction or reimprisonment, and revealed that self-efficacy did not appear to be mediating either relationship. Although good quality release plans increase levels of self-efficacy reported in the community, this increased self-efficacy does not lead to reduced rates of recidivism. These results indicate that creating good quality release plans help offenders to believe that they are more capable of desisting from crime, but this belief does not translate into them being less likely to commit further crimes. Given the close relationship between motivation and self-efficacy indicated in the data, this is a surprising result. It appears that being motivated to give up crime is more important than feeling you are capable of doing so in this sample.

The final two models explored identity as a potential mediator of the relationship between release plan quality and reoffending. When controlling for identity at pre-release, release plan quality contributed independently to identity in the community, however, identity at in the community was not related to reconviction or reimprisonment. Again these results indicate that creating good quality release plans are helpful, and enable an offender to see themselves in a more prosocial light, but this does not make them less likely to commit further crime. It is surprising that identity was not related to whether an individual offends or not, again given that it was found to be correlated with motivation in the community. Potential issues with the measurement used to assess identity will be discussed in the limitations section of this discussion.

In general, the results of the Structural Equation Models were inconsistent. Whilst the three internal factors were related, their relationships to reoffending outcomes were varied. Motivation to desist was the only factor that had the expected

relationships to release planning and recidivism. These inconsistent results may reflect a small sample size with a lot of error variance, or the single-item measures I used may not have been adequate operationalisations of the concepts of self-efficacy or identity. In future, it would be helpful to use well-validated, reliable measures of the internal factors, in order to more effectively explore how they may be related to release planning and recidivism.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the use of Probation Officers' ratings substituted for offenders' missing ratings for the internal variables at two-months follow-up. These substitutions were made to help increase the sample size, given that we were unable to contact a relatively high number of offenders ($n = 45$) at two months after release. Although the Probation Officers' and offenders' ratings were correlated with one another, there was far from a perfect relationship between the two: sharing between five and twenty per cent of variance. Introducing a different source of data into the study unfortunately means introducing additional error into the data. This additional source of error may also help to explain the variable results in the study.

A second limitation of this study is that the Structural Equation Models had variable fits to the data and typically only explained a small amount of the variance in recidivism outcome. These results suggest that the models are not encapsulating all of the variables that explain recidivism in this sample. In the general discussion I will address the theoretical implications of these results, and make some suggestions for variables that could be measured to increase the amount of variance explained by the models.

Finally, the questions used to measure the concept of identity were problematic. At pre-release, participants were asked “How much do you see yourself as high-risk?” and in the community “How much do you see yourself as someone who’s going straight, just trying to be an ordinary member of the community, or someone who is still a bit of a criminal?” In retrospect, there are a few issues with these questions. First, the pre-release question is worded negatively, asking whether the participants see themselves as criminals, rather than seeing themselves as prosocial people. The literature on identity emphasises the importance of a new, replacement identity, rather than just the absence of a criminal identity as important in the desistance process. This problematic wording may help to explain why identity did not predict recidivism. Second, the community identity question is then framed in a more positive light, including the possibility that they may see themselves as going straight. This wording is problematic as it differs from the pre-release question substantially, meaning it may be tapping into something different. Fortunately, the identity questions at pre-release and in the community were as well correlated as the motivation questions at pre-release and in the community, indicating that they were measuring related, if not identical, concepts. More generally, it is unknown how well these questions are actually measuring an individual’s identity. Does answering a single question on a scale give us a meaningful representation of how offenders see themselves? As mentioned, future research ought to incorporate better-developed measures of these internal factors.

Summary. Overall this study demonstrated that motivation to desist is partially mediating the relationship between release plans and reconviction. Having examined the roles of external and internal pathways separately, the next study will explore together the relative contributions of the external and internal pathways, and

how these two pathways relate to one another. Study three will also continue to explore the role of motivation in release planning more broadly, by examining contextual factors measured at the time of release planning and how they impact both on the quality of the plans themselves and the motivation level of the offender.

Chapter Four:

The Interplay of Internal and External Factors and Self-Determination Theory in Release Planning

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore mechanisms underlying the relationship between release plans and recidivism rates. Based on the desistance literature, it is hypothesised that this relationship may follow two potential pathways. First, as explored in study one; release plans may simply improve a parolee's experiences in the community. For example, better quality plans for employment lead to better experiences of employment after release, or increased social support, or less time with antisocial peers, which will in turn reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Second, as explored in study two, release planning may influence factors that are internal to the offender: motivation, self-efficacy, and identity. These internal factors may then reduce the likelihood of reoffending. A third hypothesis, to which we now turn, is that internal and external factors influence one another, as proposed by Le Bel, Burnett, Maruna, and Bushway (2008).

The Interplay of Internal and External Factors

Le Bel and colleagues (2008) looked at the interplay of internal factors (known as "subjective changes") and external factors (known as "social changes") in the process of desistance. Their research question was: "which comes first?", likening the internal and external factors to the chicken and the egg. They conducted multiple interviews with 130 male offenders, the first taking place just prior to release from prison, and the final interviews taking place ten years later. Le Bel and colleagues found that both internal and external variables independently predicted reoffending at the ten-year follow-up. When included together in prediction of reoffending, Le Bel

and colleagues discovered that internal factors had an indirect effect on reoffending through external factors. For example, levels of hope predicted the number of re-entry problems the offenders had. The authors concluded that this supported a subjective-social model, in which individual factors precede external events, meaning that individuals “act as agents of their own change” (Le Bel et al., 2008, p. 155). In a similar fashion, the first aim of this study is to explore the interplay between internal and external factors as potential mediators of the relationship between release plans and reoffending.

The second aim of study three is to examine the internal pathway in more detail to uncover the mechanism that may be at work. More specifically, study three will look more closely at the role that motivation plays in this relationship by utilising Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to help explain the process of release planning.

Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan developed Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as an explanation for the regulatory processes underlying goal-driven behaviour (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). They theorised that different processes were related to different levels of well-being and effective functioning. At their best, people can be inspired, striving to learn new skills, and exerting a great deal of effort, yet people can also be passive and uninspired. This variation in human behaviour represents variation in motivation. Rather than treating motivation as a single construct however, SDT distinguishes between types of motivation. In particular, SDT focuses on whether the source of the motivation for an action is either autonomous (also known as “self-determined”) or controlled (non self-determined). Actions that are autonomously

motivated are actions; a) for which a person has a sense of choice, b) that they feel are personally important, and c) that are congruent with their own values. Actions for which motivation is controlled are those in which a person feels pressure or coercion from an external agent (e.g., an employer) or intrapsychic force (e.g., feeling guilty) to engage and there is a lack of personal investment. We can imagine that a prisoner making plans in order to please the parole board and get an early release will feel differently about their release plans than a prisoner who is making plans simply because they enjoy making plans for the future. In the first case, the plans are a means to an end. In the second, creating the release plans is an end in itself.

Figure 10. The Continuum of Motivation in Self-Determination Theory.

Behaviour	Nonself-determined				Self-determined	
Type of Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
	Non-motivation	External	Introjected	Identified	Integrated	Intrinsic

Deci and Ryan proposed that behaviours fall on a continuum from more autonomously motivated to more controlled, as seen in Figure 10 (figure adapted from Deci & Ryan, 2000). The most autonomous type of motivation is referred to as “intrinsic motivation”. Actions that are intrinsically motivated are those that an individual finds rewarding in themselves; they are inherently satisfying, and the individual would engage in them in the absence of other rewarding consequences. For example I may read a novel because it is interesting and I enjoy reading it. Other actions are extrinsically motivated, meaning they are performed in order to achieve some form of reward or consequence; however, they can still vary in terms of how controlled or autonomous they are. The least autonomous are externally motivated actions. These are performed entirely in order to comply with an external reward or punishment contingency. For example I may have no desire at all to read a course text book but I know I have to so that I will pass an exam. The next type fall under the heading of introjected motivation, in which actions are somewhat internalised but not congruent with one’s values. One may perform such an action to avoid feeling guilty or to avoid damage to one’s self-esteem. For example, I may read the text book because I promised my mother that I would try to get a good grade for the class. The third type is identified motivation, where the value of an action has been recognised to the point where an action is seen as personally important. For example, I am reading the text book because I want to be a good student. The most autonomous type of

extrinsic motivation is called integrated motivation, where an individual sees the value of an action and integrates it with their other values and needs. I read the text book because I value learning and like to apply the knowledge I've gained in every day life. The final type of motivation is referred to as "amotivation". Amotivation is the state where no motivation is present, either intrinsic or extrinsic, and an individual may feel they have no control over their actions.

Deci and Ryan developed the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ; Ryan & Deci, 2000), which measures how autonomous or controlled a person's motivation is for an action; that is, it reveals how intrinsically motivated they are for a particular behaviour. A variety of forms of the SRQ have been developed to assess people's motivation across different domains, such as exercise, academia, religion, friendship, and learning (Self Determination Theory, 2013). The questionnaires ask an individual why they engage in a behaviour, and provide a variety of reasons that the participant may endorse (or not). The different reasons represent different levels of motivation from extrinsically motivated to intrinsically motivated. A score is calculated for each subscale, indicating the participant's level of intrinsic, identified, introjected, and extrinsic motivation.

Research on SDT has demonstrated that the theory is able to predict persistent positive behaviour change across a variety of domains. When an individual is more intrinsically motivated to perform an action, they tend to perform the action better and persist with the action longer than if they are relatively more extrinsically motivated. They also tend to have more interest in the action, more confidence, more creativity, less stress, better self-esteem, and better general well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research has demonstrated the positive outcomes related to more intrinsic motivation in the domains of exercise (Kowal & Fortier, 1999), weight-loss (Williams, Grow,

Freedman, Ryan, & Deci, 1996), smoking cessation (Williams, McGregor, Sharp, Kouides, Levesque, Ryan, & Deci, 2006), health (Williams, Minicucci, Kouides, Levesque, Chirkov, Ryan, & Deci, 2002), employment (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989), academic achievement (Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991), and prosocial behaviour (Gagne, 2003). In this study I am interested in offenders' motivations to make release plans. From the SDT research I hypothesised that prisoners who are more intrinsically motivated to make prosocial plans for life in the community will have more positive outcomes following release from prison, including greater persistence at "going straight" and better parole experiences.

Much of what we do is not intrinsically motivated; yet we still do it. Deci and Ryan posit that actions can become more intrinsically motivated through the processes of internalization and integration, whereby social norms or requests become personally valued. These social norms or requests are brought into harmony with an individual's other values and identity and thereby result in lasting behaviour change. For example, a popular teacher may be very strict about punctuality in class and, over time, the students in the class may begin to believe in the importance of punctuality also, and see punctuality as important to them. This process is so natural to humans that SDT proposes it is the process through which children are socialized. However, for this process to occur, humans require their basic psychological needs to be met. If these needs are thwarted, motivation will be diminished. Thus, the idea of creating release plans may at first be extrinsically motivated for prisoners, however, if their basic psychological needs are met in the treatment context (or at a later stage when making plans) they ought to internalise the value of their plans and become more intrinsically motivated to follow through with their plans.

Deci and Ryan propose that we have three basic psychological needs that need to be satisfied as we pursue a goal. The first is autonomy, which is the desire to be the source of our own actions. The second is competence, or one's ability to interact effectively with our environment. The third is relatedness, or the feeling of being connected to significant others. These three factors facilitate intrinsic motivation and the internalization of extrinsic motivation. Autonomy, competence, and relatedness act as situational motivational antecedents. In the punctuality example, the students who experience higher levels of autonomy, competence and relatedness in class will internalize and integrate the importance of punctuality more. As a result they will report more intrinsic motivation for being punctual. Research has shown that, while all three needs are important, autonomy is vital for behaviour to be self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Deci and Ryan (2000) developed a measure to assess levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, called the Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS). The measure assesses general basic need satisfaction; however, some domain-specific measures have also been developed (e.g., the Basic Need Satisfaction at Work Scale; Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; and the Basic Need Satisfaction in Exercise scale; Vlachopoulos, & Michailidou, 2006). These scales have been used to demonstrate the link between basic psychological need satisfaction and optimal functioning across domains (e.g., Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Kasser, Davey, & Ryan, 1992; La Guardia, Ryan & Couchman, 2000; Gagne, 2003).

SDT has not yet been directly applied to research on parole or reintegration, yet similar theories are beginning to be developed. Robinson and McNeill (2008) proposed a model of parole compliance that describes various motivational postures and types of compliance. Some parolees will not comply with parole, due to their

postures of defiance (including resistance, disengagement, and game-playing). Other parolees simply meet the minimum requirements of parole (usually to avoid punishments associated with non-compliance); others actively engage and cooperate with parole (based on an acceptance of authority as legitimate and belief in compliance as normative). This model implies a similar continuum from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. However, SDT is seen as a more suitable theory in this study due to its explanatory depth and implications for intervention. It identifies contextual factors that, if they turn out to be important to reintegration planning in this study, can be manipulated in order to increase motivation for release planning. Thus, we can reduce future offending by increasing the likelihood that offenders' basic psychological needs are being met during the process of release planning.

To this end, I aim to explore how contextual factors influence the process of release planning. The first contextual factor is treatment status; how does participating in an intensive rehabilitation programme (i.e., a Special Treatment Unit) influence these SDT variables? Offenders who participate in treatment may be at a decided advantage with regards to release planning because they have considerable support from experienced therapy staff in creating plans, whereas untreated offenders have variable levels of support from family, friends, or Corrections staff in creating plans. I was interested in how treatment influences an offender's view of the release planning perspective. For example, do they feel higher levels of relatedness? Does the high level of support compromise their experience of autonomy? The second contextual variable was Parole type. Two offenders may both be equally intrinsically motivated to create release plans. One offender, however, may appear more extrinsically motivated (and therefore, overall, relatively less intrinsically motivated) because he is eligible for early release on parole, and therefore wants to make good release plans to

impress the Parole Board. The second offender may appear more intrinsically motivated to create release plans because he is not eligible for early release—or in fact, has already turned down the opportunity to apply for early release, or been turned down in earlier applications—and therefore would now not endorse the extrinsic motivation items on the scale. Therefore the two offenders' levels of reported extrinsic motivation to create release plans may be more to do with the stage of their sentence, than how much they look forward to being free again. Exploring these two contextual variables may help to inform us how to best assist offenders in different circumstances.

Introduction to Study Three

The first goal of this study was to explore how the two domains of community experiences—internal and external—may be contributing to the relationship between release plans and reoffending. As found in studies one and two, the experiences offenders have on parole and their levels of motivation to desist each individually mediate this relationship. The aim of this next study was to explore (a) the contribution of these two domains together, through the inclusion of both parole experiences and motivation to desist as potential mediators in the same model, and (b) how these two domains influence one another. The first step was to describe key variables in this sample: their release plan quality, motivation to desist, parole experiences, and recidivism rates. The second step was to create Structural Equation Models that would test simultaneously the relationships between all of these variables. It was hypothesised that offenders who created better release plans would have more positive experiences in the community, including better experiences on parole, more motivation to desist, and lower rates of reconviction and

reimprisonment. More specifically, it was hypothesised that the relationship between release planning and reoffending would be mediated both by internal and external experiences in the community. Next, it was hypothesised that these two domains would have a positive impact on one another, meaning that both motivation to desist and parole experiences would positively predict each other.

The second goal of study three was to explore whether Self-Determination Theory (SDT) can be applied to the process of release planning: more specifically, to (a) examine self-reported levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness during release planning; (b) measure self-reported motivations for release planning, from intrinsic motivation (e.g., “I made plans for my life in the community because it was fun and enjoyable”) through to extrinsic motivation (e.g., “I made release plans so the New Zealand Parole Board would be more likely to give me parole”); and (c) include these SDT variables in a model to test whether they predict the quality of release plans. The first step was to adapt Deci and Ryan’s scales to measure SDT variables within the context of release planning, to examine whether these scales were accurately measuring the variables in this sample, and then simply to describe the various factors in the sample: the reported levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness during release planning. The second step was to create Structural Equation Models in order to test simultaneously the hypothesised relationships between the variables. It was hypothesised that those with higher levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness would, through the processes of internalization and integration, be more intrinsically motivated to create release plans. Because intrinsic motivation is related to better performance on a task, it was also hypothesized that offenders who were more intrinsically motivated would have created better quality release plans.

Finally, this study aimed to explore in more detail how contextual variables—treatment status and parole type—may be impacting on the release planning process. I hypothesised that offenders who participated in treatment would feel higher levels of relatedness compared to untreated offenders who receive less assistance in creating release plans, and that untreated offenders would report higher levels of autonomy than treated offenders. I also hypothesised that offenders who were released early on parole would report higher levels of extrinsic motivation to create release plans than offenders who are released on conditions at their sentence end date, because they are likely to be more motivated to create release plans for the Parole Board.

Method

Study Design

The current study, like the last, is part of the Parole Project. The current study uses data collected at the same time periods as study two (from offenders pre-release, probation officers and offenders two months after release, then reoffending databases at six months following release) but includes additional measures. I developed these measures after the Parole Project had started; they were introduced into data collection part-way through. Therefore the sample included in this study is different to the last: both a smaller and later sample. The same guidelines and procedure were used throughout the Parole Project, so this method section will only cover areas that were different from the study two method section.

Participants

In total, data from 104 male offender volunteers were used in this study, 46 of whom had completed treatment in a Special Treatment Unit and 58 of whom were untreated.

At the time of their pre-release interview all offenders were classified as minimum to high-medium security prisoners in New Zealand prisons. The same inclusion and exclusion criteria applied for this sample as for that in study two: to have served a minimum of two years in prison, to have a RoC*RoI of .65 or greater, to be able to speak English (because it was an interview-based study), and not be scheduled for deportation following release. Ten participants were reconvicted of a new offence within two months of release and were excluded from the study. Again, offenders were either released onto early parole ($n = 58$) or released onto standard conditions at their sentence end date ($n = 46$).

Participants' average age at release was 32.83 years old ($SD=9.22$). The sample consisted predominantly of Maori offenders (62.5%), followed by NZ European offenders (28.85%), Pasifika offenders (6.73%), and offenders of other ethnicities (i.e., Asian or European; 1.92%). The vast majority of the sample ($n=97$) was on a finite sentence of, on average, 1617 days in prison ($SD=1203$). The remaining 7 offenders were serving life sentences. The offenders in the sample, including life-sentenced offenders, had served an average of 1692 days in prison ($SD=1794$). Approximately half of the sample (49.1%) had a violent index offence, including assault (26.0%), aggravated robbery (14.4%), murder (7.7%), and manslaughter (1.0%). Just under a third (30.8%) had a property index offence and 10.5% had a sexual index offence (including rape 3.8%, unlawful sexual connection 4.8%, and indecent assault 1.9%). The remainder of the sample had drug-related (2.9%), driving-related (2.9%), or other miscellaneous index offences (3.8%).

The average RoC*RoI of offenders in the sample was .73 ($SD=.13$), indicating that they had, on average, a 73% likelihood of reoffending and returning to prison in the 5 years following release. The average age at first conviction was 15.7 years old

($SD=1.80$) and the average age at first violent conviction was 18.74 ($SD=3.87$). The average number of previous convictions was 71.00 ($SD=63.27$) and the average number of previous violent convictions was 4.56 ($SD=4.26$). All of these measures indicate the high-risk, violent nature of this sample. The 71 offenders who declined to take part in the project did not differ significantly from the participants included in this study on RoC*RoI ($t[173]=0.43, p=.67$), age at release ($t[173]=-0.28, p=.78$) or ethnicity $\chi^2=5.21, p=.16$. They did differ on days served ($t[173]=2.41, p=.02$), indicating that offenders who declined to take part in the research served shorter sentences than offenders who were included in this sample.

Measures

Pre-Release Measures

Basic Need Satisfaction in Release Planning Scale. This is a 9-item scale designed to measure the Basic Psychological Needs of autonomy (3 items), competence (3 items), and relatedness (3 items). I developed the scale for this study, based on the family of Basic Psychological Needs Scales (BPNSs) created by Deci and Ryan (Self Determination Theory, 2013). Although the original Basic Need Satisfaction in General scale has 21 items, others such as Basic Needs Satisfaction in Relationships have only nine. To develop a scale related to release planning, I reworded items from two existing BPNSs so that they reflected the individual's experience of creating release plans. Because some of the offenders in the sample were expected to have limited literacy, I attempted to use simple, concrete language for the scale items. The scale had a Flesch Reading Ease score of 94.5, indicating it is very easy to understand (Flesch, 1948). Each item was rated on a seven-point Likert Scale (1 = not at all true; 7 = very true). Table 18 contains the original items taken

from either the Basic Need Satisfaction in General scale or the Basic Need Satisfaction at Work scale and re-worded for the new scale. To ensure that the items were still representing each of the three needs, a panel of five academics was given the individual items and asked to indicate which need they thought each item was measuring. All academics accurately identified the need associated with each item. To score the scale, three subscales were formed, each representing how much an individual experiences satisfaction of one of the three needs. As seen in table 18, two items in the Basic Need Satisfaction in Release Planning were reverse scored. After reverse scoring these two items, the subscale scores were created simply by averaging the three item scores that represent each need.

Table 18

Items that were Re-Worded for the Basic Need Satisfaction in Release Planning Scale.

Need	Basic Need Satisfaction in General scale	Basic Need Satisfaction at Work Scale	<i>Basic Need Satisfaction in Release Planning Scale</i>
Autonomy	1. I feel like I am free to decide for my self how to live my life	2. When I am at work I have to do what I am told (reverse-scored) 3. I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my job gets done	1. When making my release plans I felt like I got to decide my plans for myself 2. When making release plans I just did what I was told (reverse-scored) 3. It mattered what I thought my plans should be
Relatedness	1. People in my life care about me 3. People I interact with on a daily basis take my needs into consideration	2. I really like the people I work with	1. I feel like I had support when making my plans 2. I really like the people who helped me make my release plans 3. I feel like if I needed help when making my plans I could ask for it
Competence	1. In my life I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am (reverse-scored)	2. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working 3. I do not feel very competent at work (reverse-scored)	1. When making my release plans I had the chance to show how on to it I am 2. I felt a sense of pride in myself when making my release plans 3. I did not know how to make good release plans (reverse-scored)

Release Planning Self-Regulation Questionnaire. Similarly, I developed an 8-item scale to measure the degree to which an offender feels intrinsically motivated to create release plans. The scale was developed based on the family of Self-Regulation Questionnaires (SRQs) created by Deci and Ryan (Self Determination Theory, 2013). These questionnaires each have two items that tap into each of the types of motivation for an action: intrinsic motivation, identified motivation, introjected motivation, and extrinsic motivation. Because the pre-existing SRQ measures only assess these four types of motivation, I did the same. To develop a scale related to release planning, I re-worded items from existing SRQs so that they reflected the individual's experience of creating release plans. Because some of the offenders in the sample may have limited literacy, I attempted to use simple, concrete language for the scale items. The scale had a Flesch Reading Ease score of 71.2, indicating it is fairly easy to understand (Flesch, 1948). Each item was rated on a seven-point Likert Scale (1 = not at all true; 7 = very true). Table 19 contains the original items taken from the Deci and Ryan's Motivation for Working Out Scale and re-worded for the new scale. To ensure that the items were still accurately representing the types of motivation, a panel of five academics was given the items and asked to indicate which motivation type they thought each item was measuring; which they did with 100% accuracy. To score the scale, first the subscale scores for each of the motivation types were calculated (simply by averaging the two items related to that type of motivation). Then, a Relative Autonomy Index (RAI; Self Determination Theory, 2013) was calculated, using the following formula:

$$2 \times \text{Intrinsic} + \text{Identified} - \text{Introjected} - 2 \times \text{Extrinsic}$$

Table 19

Items that were Re-Worded for the Release Planning Self-Regulation Questionnaire.

Regulation	Motivation for Working Out Scale	<i>Release Planning Self-Regulation Questionnaire</i>
External	1. I work out because I want others to see me as physically fit 2. I work out because others like me better when I am in shape	1. I made release plans because other people would think badly of me if I didn't. 2. I made release plans because then the New Zealand Parole Board will look at me more favourably.
Introjected	1. I work out because I feel pressured to work out 2. I work out because I would feel bad about myself if I didn't do it	1. I made release plans because I felt pressured to make them 2. I made release plans because I would feel bad about myself if I didn't
Identified	1. I work out because working out is beneficial for my health and lifestyle 2. I work out because it is personally important for me to work out	1. I made release plans because making plans is beneficial for my future life in the community 2. I made release plans because it was personally important for me to make plans
Intrinsic	1. I work out because it is fun and interesting 2. I work out because I simply enjoy working out	1. I made release plans because it was fun and interesting 2. I made release plans because I enjoy making plans for the future

Release Plan Quality. The quality of offenders' release plans just prior to release was once again coded from file data, such as psychological reports, reports to the parole board, and offender plans. The coding protocol was the same as that used in study two (see Appendix 4.)

Two Months Post-Release Measures

Parole Experiences. Probation Officers' ratings of offenders' parole experiences were used in this study. They were asked—with reference to the particular offender—to: "Rate overall how well his [reintegration domain] is working out so far?" The ratings covered the following domains: accommodation, personal support, community support, employment, contact with antisocial associates, and

alcohol and drug use. Each domain was rated on a 6-point Likert scale from 1: very poor, to 6: great.

Motivation to Desist. The same item to assess offenders' levels of motivation to desist was used as in study two, see page 115 for details.

Six Months Post-Release Recidivism Data. Recidivism was defined as any new offence within six months following release to the community that resulted in a reconviction. Three reconviction indices were examined: any new conviction (excluding breaches of conditions), any new violent conviction, and any new conviction leading to imprisonment. Criminal histories were extracted from the New Zealand national conviction records database in April 2013. Breaches of release conditions were not included under "any new conviction" because they are not a new criminal behaviour (e.g., an offender may be convicted of a breach for consuming alcohol if he had a condition not to use drugs or alcohol).

Procedure

The procedure for this study was the same as that outlined in the study 2 method section, pages 116-118. The only new addition was that offenders were given the two new questionnaires (the Release Planning Self-Regulation Questionnaire and the Basic Need Satisfaction in Release Planning) to fill out following the pre-release interview.

Results

The first part of this section explored the relative contributions of, and interplay between, the internal and external experiences of offenders in the community, in order to help better explain the relationship between release plans and reoffending. To do so, I first described the overall quality of release plans, parole experiences, levels of motivation to desist, and recidivism rates of this sample. After describing these various factors, I looked at how they related to one another using Structural Equation Modeling. Analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 19) and Amos (version 19).

Next I explored the role of SDT in release planning. First, I evaluated the new SDT measures, exploring the reliability of each scale and examining how well the theorized structure of each scale matched the data from this sample. I then briefly described the reported levels of the three Basic Psychological Needs (BPNs) during release planning, and how these three factors related to one another. I then described the levels of various types of motivation to create release plans reported by the sample, and their overall Relative Autonomy Index (RAI), then looked at how these relate to the BPNs.

To establish normality, I examined the distribution of each variable used in this study. The Kolmogorov-Smirnoff statistic revealed that all variables, with the exception of the Parole Experiences scale total score and the RAIs were non-normally distributed. I therefore used non-parametric tests throughout this study. Again, however, the analyses were repeated using parametric tests, and the same pattern of results was found. In the Structural Equation Models, bootstrapping was used to compensate for the non-normal distribution of most of the variables (Byrne, 2010).

The Role of Internal and External Domains of Experience in the Community

Pre-Release Release Plan Quality. On average, men in the sample scored 56% of the maximum available score for release planning ($Mdn = 2.83$), with a higher score indicating a better quality plan. The scale was deemed to be sufficiently reliable ($\alpha = .50$) for a scale with only five items and had an average inter-item correlation of 0.20 (Cortina, 1993).

Parole Experiences. On average, participants scored 39% of the total available score for Parole Experiences ($M=27.63$, $SD=6.72$), with a higher score indicating more positive experiences on parole. The scale was deemed to be have good internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$).

Motivation to Desist. At two months follow-up, participants gave a rating for their level of motivation to desist. These ratings ($Mdn=6.00$, $Range=1.00-6.00$) indicated that they were highly motivated to continue desisting from crime.

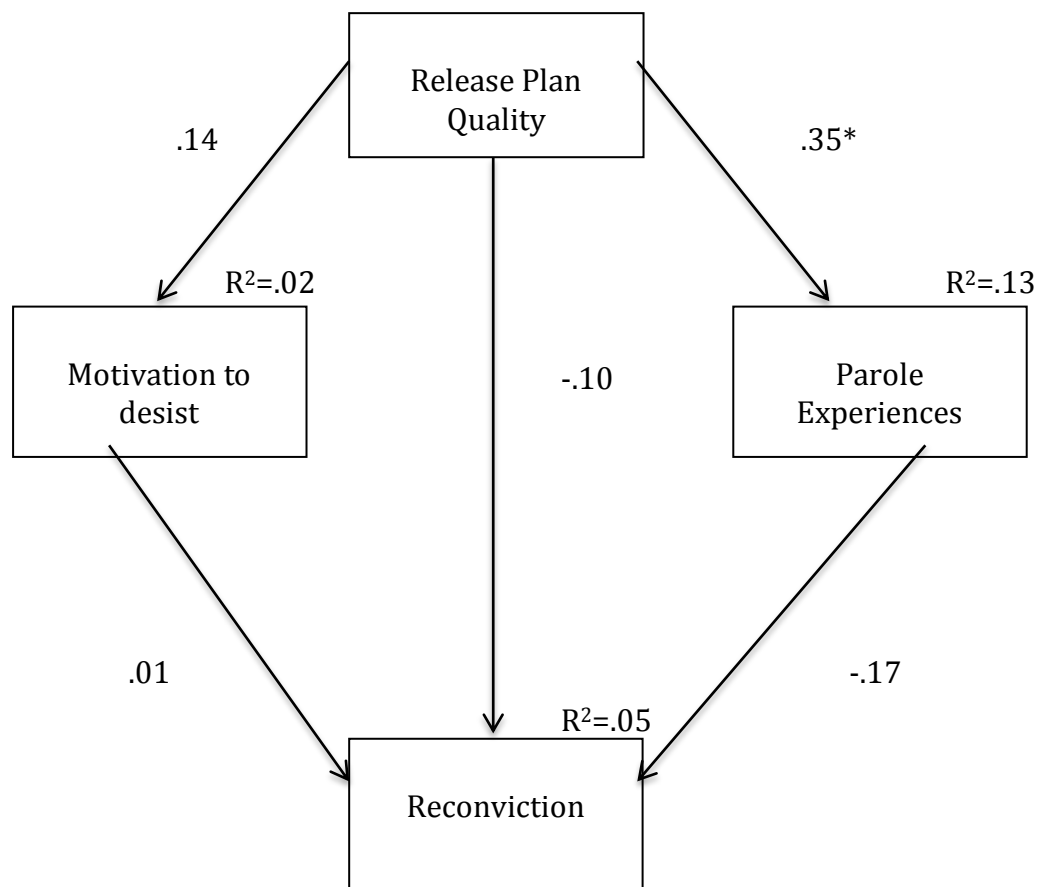
Recidivism. Fifteen men (14.4%) were convicted of a new offence (excluding breaches), 3 men were convicted of a new violent offence (2.9%), and 9 men (8.7%) were reimprisoned between two and six months after release. Because the rates of violent reconviction were low, I only used the other two indices in the following analyses.

The Contributions of Internal and External Domains. In order to test the relative contribution of the internal and external domains, I created Structural Equation Models to test the relationships between the variables. I hypothesized that better quality release plans would lead to both increased levels of motivation to desist in the community, and better parole experiences, and these in turn would lead to reduced rates of reoffending. The indices used to assess the goodness of fit were the chi-square statistic (a non-significant p value indicates adequate fit), the ratio of chi-

square to degrees of freedom (under 2 indicates adequate fit), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; over .90 indicates adequate fit) and the RMSEA (under .10 indicates adequate fit; Byrne, 2010).

Figure 11 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which release plan quality predicted reconviction, and was mediated by both motivation to desist and parole experiences. In this model, release plan quality was only a predictor of parole experiences. No variables predicted reconviction. The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data. The model explained 5% of the variance in reconviction. There were no significant indirect effects between release plan quality, either mediated by motivation to desist (standardized indirect effect coefficient of .001, $p=.86$) or by parole experiences (standardized indirect effect coefficient of -.023, $p=.07$).

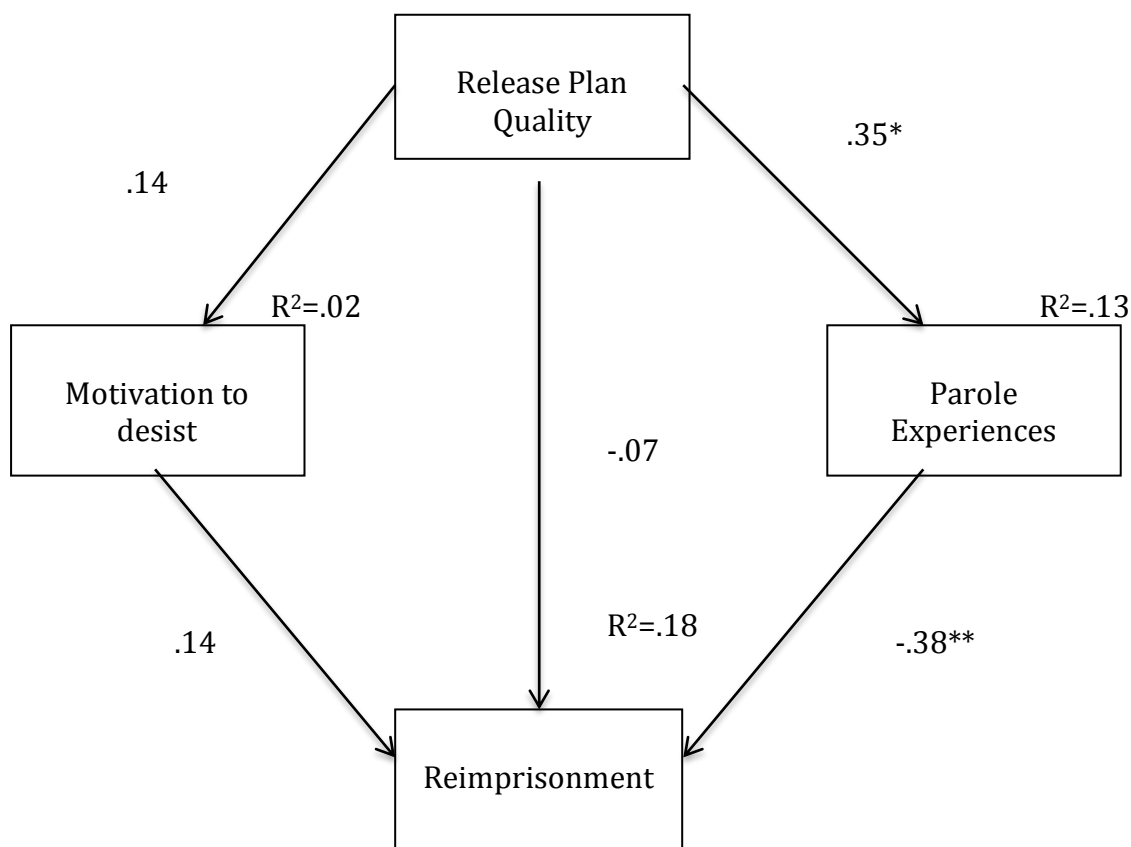
Figure 11. SEM Testing the Role of Internal and External Domains of Experience in the Prediction of Reconviction



Fit indices: $\chi^2(1)=7.62$, $p<.01$; $\chi^2/df= 7.62$; CFI=0.71; RMSEA=0.25

Figure 12 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model in which release plan quality predicted reimprisonment, and was mediated by both motivation to desist and parole experiences. In this model, again, release plan quality was only a predictor of parole experiences. Parole experiences, in turn, were predictive of reimprisonment. The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data. The model explained 18% of the variance in reimprisonment. The only significant indirect effect was the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment, mediated by parole experiences (coefficient of .041, $p<.05$).

Figure 12. SEM Testing the Role of Internal and External Domains of Experience in the Prediction of Reimprisonment.

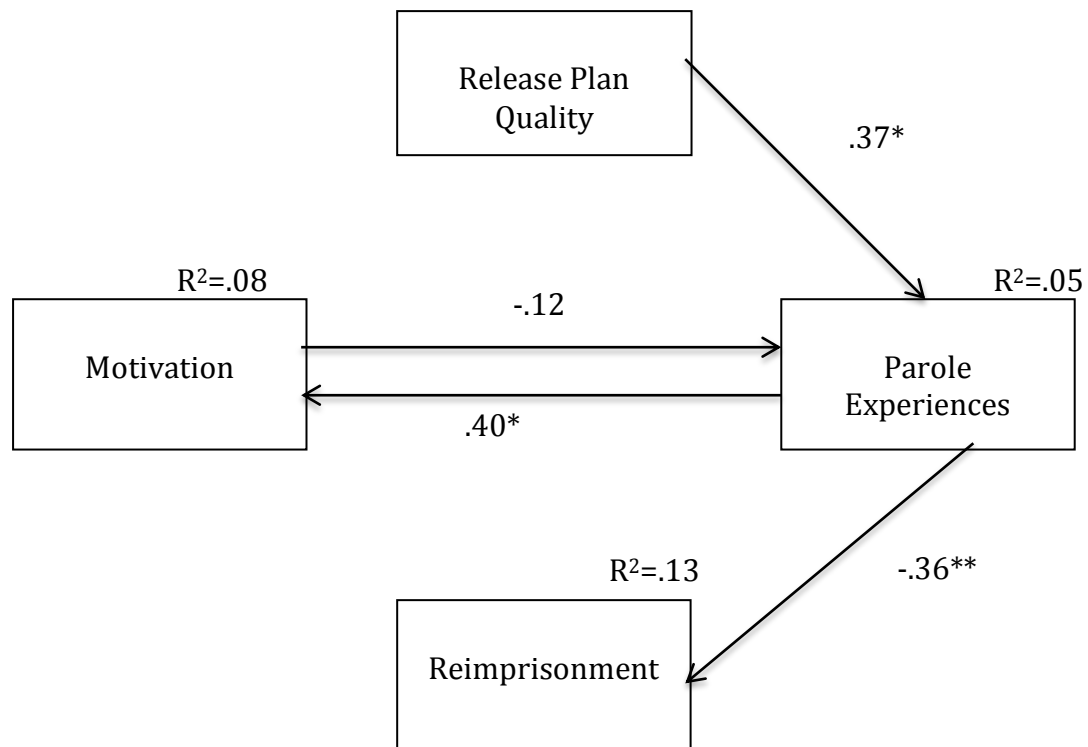


Fit indices: $\chi^2(1)=7.64, p<.01$; $\chi^2/df= 7.64$; CFI=0.81; RMSEA=0.25

The next step was to explore in more depth how the internal and external pathways influence one another. The results of the study this far indicated that parole experiences alone were explaining the relationship between release plan quality and reimprisonment; however, motivation to desist may have been independently related to parole experiences. These analyses were only run with reimprisonment as the outcome variable because reconviction was not significantly predicted by any variables in the model (see Figure 11). Figure 13 shows the standardized regression

coefficients for the relationships between these variables. Release plan quality predicted parole experiences, which in turn predicted reimprisonment. Parole experiences were also a positive predictor of motivation to desist, but motivation did not predict parole experiences. The fit indices indicated that this model was a good fit to the data. This model explained 13% of the variance in reimprisonment. The indirect effect from release plan quality to reimprisonment (mediated by parole experiences) was significant with a standardised indirect coefficient of $-.040$, $p < .05$.

Figure 13. SEM of the Interplay Between Motivation and Parole Experiences



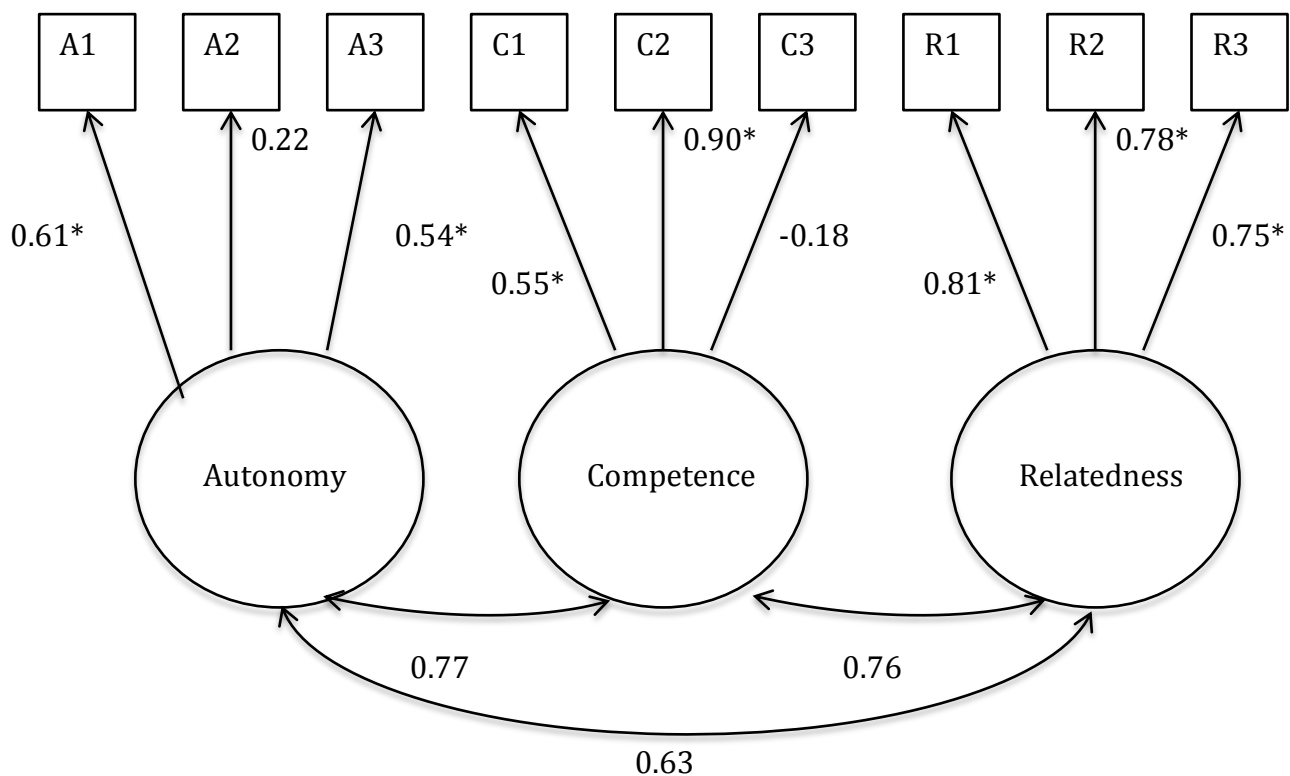
Fit indices: $\chi^2(2)=2.66, p=.27, df=2; \chi^2/df=1.33; CFI=0.98; RMSEA=0.06$.

Self-Determination Theory in Release Planning

Basic Psychological Needs (BPNs). A calculation of the internal reliability of the items for each of the three BPNs indicated that although the relatedness subscale ($\alpha = .82$) and the autonomy subscale ($\alpha = .48$) were internally reliable, the scale for competence ($\alpha = .26$) was not sufficiently internally reliable. In order to see how each item was contributing to the scale for the relevant BPN, Structural Equation Modeling was used to conduct a Confirmatory Factor Analysis: a technique used to confirm the fit between a hypothesized, theory-driven model and the observed data (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). All scale items were entered into a Structural Equation Model, as well as the theorized needs they were thought to be measuring, in

order to examine the relationship between each scale item and the overarching BPN (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Basic Psychological Needs Scale

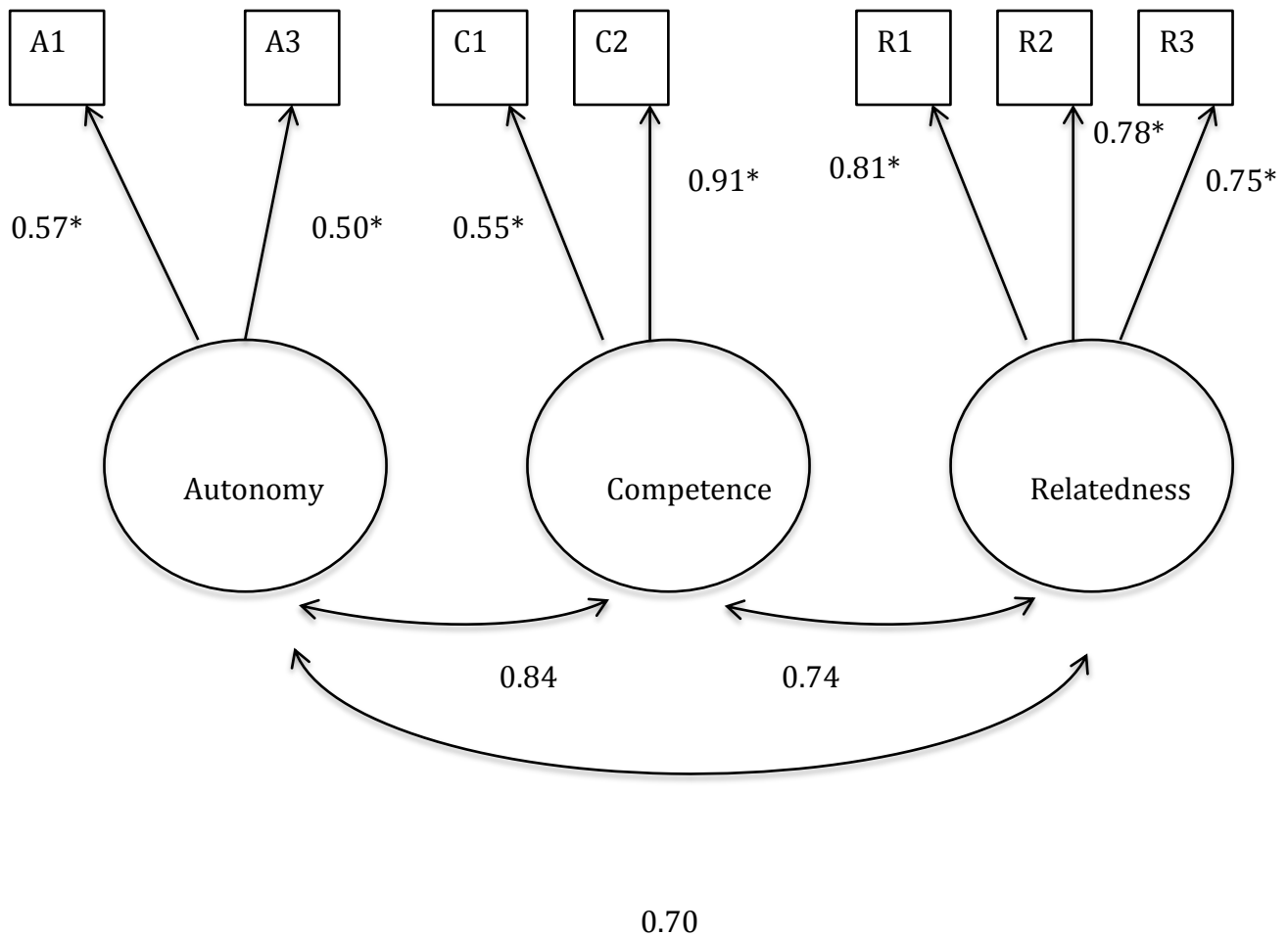


Fit indices: $\chi^2(24)=50.33, p<.01$; $\chi^2/df= 2.10$; CFI = 0.90; RMSEA = 0.10.

Figure 14 shows the standardized regression coefficients for each of the BPNS items, and their related latent variable. In the model, all observed variables were significant predictors of their latent variable, except for autonomy item 2 and competence item 3 (see Table 18 for item details). All three of the BPNs were highly related to one another. The fit indices indicated that this model was not an ideal fit to the data.

Figure 15 shows the standardized regressions when the non-significant autonomy item 2 and competence item 3 were removed. The fit indices indicated that this model was a good fit to the data. Because the removal of these two items improved the model fit, autonomy item 2 and competence item 3 were removed from the scale, and therefore from all further analyses.

Figure 15. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Modified Basic Psychological Needs Scale



Fit indices: $\chi^2(11)=15.76$, $p=.15$; $\chi^2/df= 1.43$; CFI = 0.97; RMSEA = 0.07.

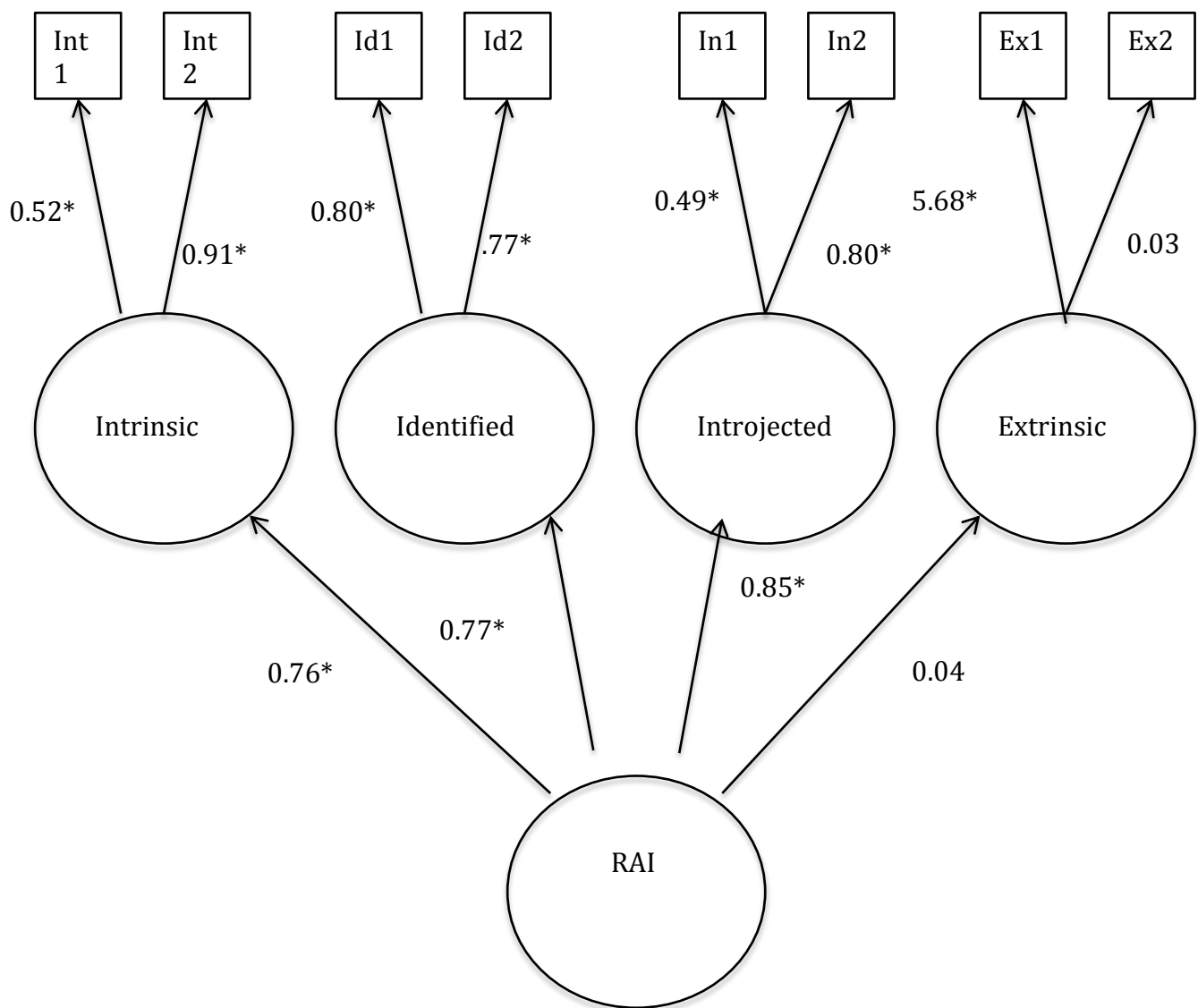
New Cronbach's alphas could not be calculated for the Autonomy and Competence subscales as each had only two items remaining. The correlations between the two remaining items for Autonomy ($\rho(104)=.45$, $p<.01$) and Competence ($\rho(104)=.52$, $p<.01$) were high enough to conclude that there was sufficient internal reliability between the remaining items (Cortina, 1993).

The median ratings offenders gave of their Autonomy ($Mdn=6.00$), Competence ($Mdn=4.50$), and Relatedness ($Mdn=5.67$) were compared using a Friedman Test. There was a significant difference between the three types of BPN, $\chi^2(2, n=109)=37.37, p<.01$. Inspection of the median values showed that the ratings of Autonomy were higher than both Competence and Relatedness, and that the ratings of Competence were lower than Relatedness. Spearman Rank Order correlations demonstrated that the three needs were all significantly, positively correlated with one another (Autonomy and Competence $\rho(104)=.42, p<.01$; Autonomy and Relatedness $\rho(104)=.46, p<.01$; Competence and Relatedness $\rho(104)=.55, p<.01$), confirming the SEM results.

Types of Motivation from the Self-Regulation Questionnaire. Next, I examined the types of motivation for creating release plans reported by the participants. As there were only two items in the scale representing each type of motivation, I could not calculate a Cronbach's alpha to investigate the internal reliability of the subscales. Instead, I again used Structural Equation Modeling to run a Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the scale items to explore whether the data fitted the structure proposed by SDT, and how each item was contributing to the measurement of its relevant type of motivation (the latent variable). Figure 16 shows the regression coefficients for the pathways between each scale item, and its latent variable (i.e., the type of motivation it is measuring), as well the relationship between those latent variables and the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI: a measure of how relatively intrinsic the offender's motivation to create release plans was). In the model, all observed variables were significant predictors of their latent variable, except for extrinsic item 2 (see Table 19 for item details). Intrinsic, Identified, and

Introjected motivation were all predictors of the RAI, but Extrinsic motivation was not. The fit indices indicated that this model was a good fit to the data.

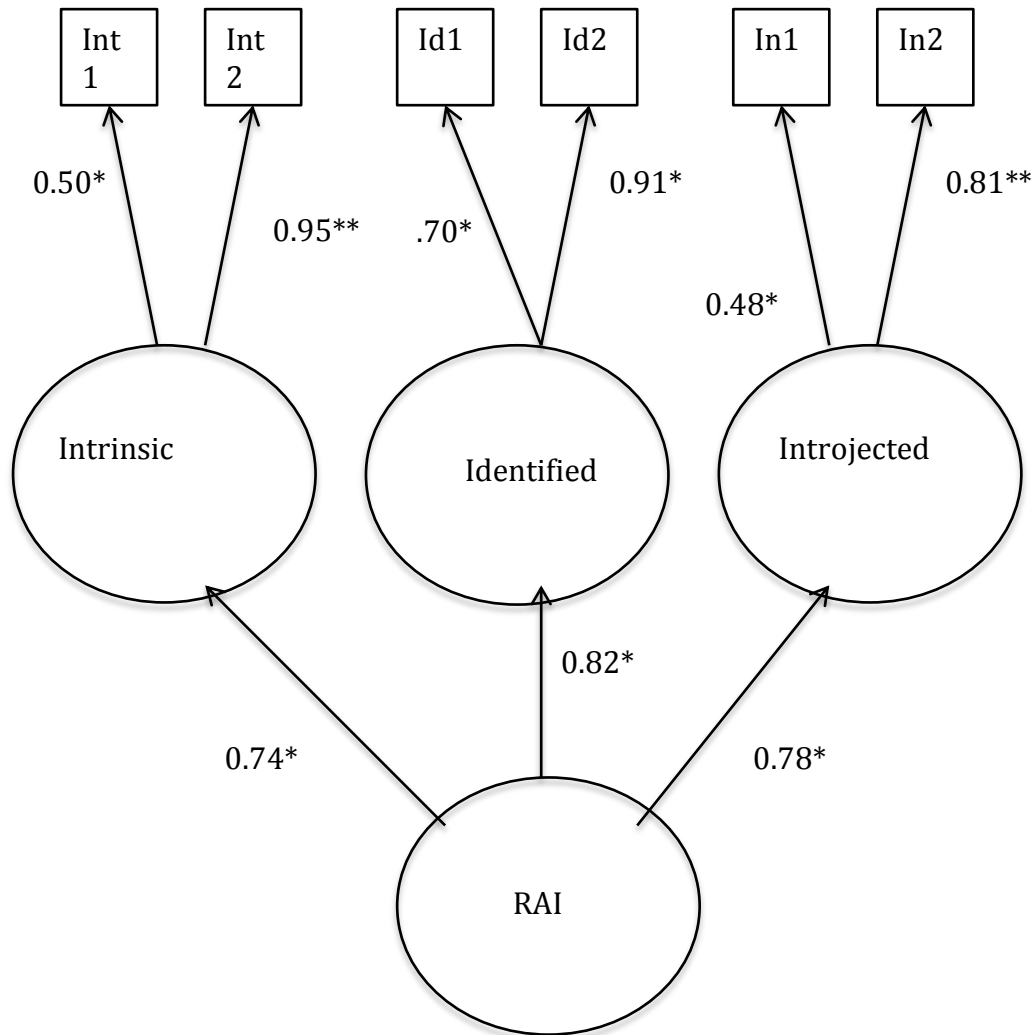
Figure 16. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Self-Regulation Questionnaire



Fit indices: $\chi^2(16)=25.10$, $p=.07$; $\chi^2/df=1.05$; CFI=1.00; RMSEA=<0.01.

Because the Extrinsic subscale was not significantly related to the overarching RAI variable, I decided to modify the model and exclude the Extrinsic items, in order to see how that affected the model fit. Figure 17 displays the modified CFA with the Extrinsic items excluded. The fit indices indicated that this model was also a good fit to the data.

Figure 17. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Modified Self-Regulation Questionnaire



Fit indices: $\chi^2(6)=3.87$, $p=.69$; $\chi^2/df=0.65$; CFI=1.00; RMSEA=<.001.

These results led to the question of whether the Extrinsic items should be included in the calculations of the RAI. On the one hand, Deci and Ryan propose that they should, and the overall good fit of the theorized model supports their idea (Figure 16). Alternatively, the data suggest that Extrinsic construct does not fit with the other types of motivation in this sample as theorized. In order to explore both options I therefore calculated three types of Relative Autonomy Index. The first, “RAI1”, was

based on Deci and Ryan's theory and includes the Extrinsic items in the original formula to calculate the RAI ($2 \times \text{Intrinsic} + \text{Identified} - \text{Introjected} - 2 \times \text{Extrinsic}$).

Next, I explored alternative methods of calculating the RAI without the Extrinsic items: should the formula still weight the intrinsic items as the original formula does? Therefore, "RAI2", was based on the results of the CFA and excluded the Extrinsic items and instead calculated the RAI using the following unweighted formula: $\text{Intrinsic} + \text{Identified} - \text{Introjected}$. "RAI3", also excluded the Extrinsic variables but double-weighted the Intrinsic variables as the RAI1 did, using the following formula: $2 \times \text{Intrinsic} + \text{Identified} - \text{Introjected}$.

Relationships between SDT Variables. The correlations between the two items within each subscale (i.e., type of motivation) were as follows: Intrinsic ($\rho(104)=.45, p<.01$), Identified ($\rho(104)=.68, p<.01$), Introjected ($\rho(104)=.39, p<.01$), and Extrinsic ($\rho(104)=.16, p=.10$). Table 20 demonstrates that the most strongly endorsed level of motivation to create release plans was Identified, followed by Intrinsic, then Introjected, then Extrinsic. A Friedman Test was conducted to compare scores on the four types of motivation and a statistically significant difference was found, $\chi^2=152.25, p<.01$. Inspection of the median values showed that ratings of Identified motivation were higher than all other types of motivation, and that Extrinsic motivation was rated lower than all other types of motivation. The positive average RAI scores indicated that the sample was tending towards being more intrinsically motivated to make release plans than extrinsically motivated.

Table 20

Levels of Motivation for Release Planning

Motivation Level (Range)	Median or Mean (SD)
Intrinsic (2-14)	8.00
Identified (2-14)	14.00
Introjected (2-14)	7.00
Extrinsic (2-14)	5.00
RAI1 (-36 - +36)	9.69 (9.75)
RAI2 (-12- +26)	13.00
RAI3 (-8- +40)	20.67 (7.71)

Table 21 contains the Spearman Rank Order correlations between the different types of motivation. Intrinsic motivation was significantly, positively correlated with both Identified and Introjected motivation, and Identified motivation was significantly, positively correlated with Introjected motivation. Extrinsic motivation was not correlated to the other types of motivation to create release plans, confirming the results of the SEM.

Table 21

Spearman Rank Order Correlations Between Types of Motivation.

Motivation Type	Identified	Introjected	Extrinsic
Intrinsic (2-14)	.36**	.38**	.04
Identified (2-14)	-	.42**	<.01
Introjected (2-14)	-	-	.12
Extrinsic (2-14)	-	-	-

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Relationships between Basic Psychological Needs and Types of

Motivation. As Table 22 demonstrates, all three BPNs were significantly positively correlated with each type of motivation to create release plans (except for Extrinsic motivation) and with each of the three RAIs.

Table 22

Spearman Rank Order Correlations between Basic Psychological Needs and Levels of Motivation

Level of Motivation	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
Intrinsic	.34**	.56**	.39**
Identified	.63**	.43**	.55**
Introjected	.29**	.42**	.30**
Extrinsic	-.12	.09	.12
RAI1	.37**	.31**	.23*
RAI2	.34**	.35**	.36**
RAI3	.37**	.49**	.40**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Relationship between Release Plan Quality and Basic Psychological

Needs. None of the three BPNs were significantly correlated with the quality of release planning (Release Plan Quality and Autonomy $\rho(104) = .07$, $p = .51$; Release Plan Quality and Competence $\rho(104) = .08$, $p = .42$; and Release Plan Quality and Relatedness $\rho(104) = .13$, $p = .19$).

Relationship between Release Plan Quality and Level of Motivation to

Create Release Plans. Participants' Release Plan Quality was related to their reported levels of Identified motivation (Release Plan Quality and Identified $\rho(104) = .20$, $p = .04$) but not related to any other type of motivation, nor to their RAI (Release Plan Quality and Intrinsic $\rho(104) = .02$, $p = .87$; Release Plan Quality and Introjected $\rho(104) = -.05$, $p = .65$; Release Plan Quality and Extrinsic $\rho(104) = .03$,

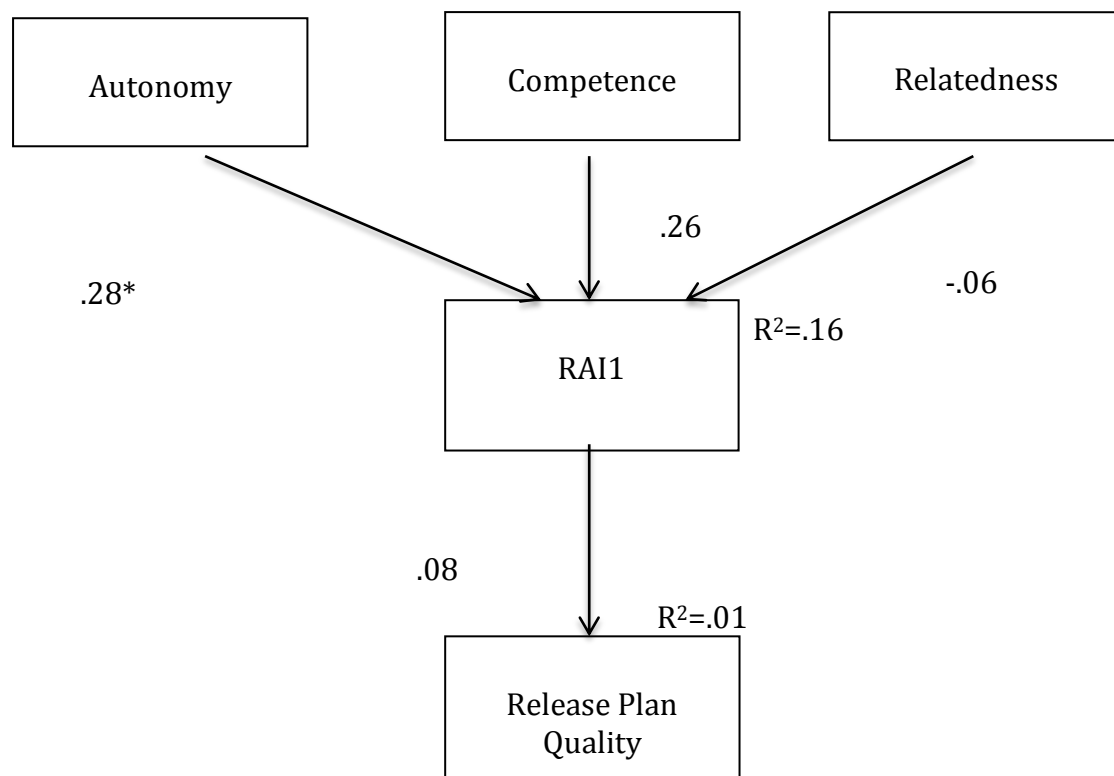
$p=.76$; Release Plan Quality and RAI1 $\rho(104)=.05$, $p=.64$; Release Plan Quality and RAI2 $\rho(104)=.16$, $p=.11$; and Release Plan Quality and RAI3 $\rho(104)=.11$, $p=.25$).

The Relationships between SDT Variables and Release Plan Quality

In order to test how the SDT variables related to one another, I created Structural Equation Models to test all of the relationships simultaneously. SDT suggests that when the three BPNs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met, we become more intrinsically motivated to complete a task. I hypothesized that a higher reported level of these three BPNs during release planning, and the corresponding increase in intrinsic motivation to create release plans (reflected by the RAI), would then result in better quality release plans being made. In the models I first used the theory-based RAI1 (which double-weights the continuum extremes), then the empirically-based unweighted RAI2, then the empirically-based weighted RAI3, in order to test which was best able to predict the quality of release plans.

Relative Autonomy Index 1. Figure 18 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model, using the original Relative Autonomy Index (RAI1) as the measure of more intrinsic motivation to create release plans. In this model, only Autonomy was a significant predictor of more intrinsic motivation. More intrinsic motivation, in turn, did not predict the quality of release plans. The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data. Given that there was only one significant relationship in this model, it was not considered helpful to modify the model. None of the three BPNs had significant indirect effects on release plan quality through RAI1.

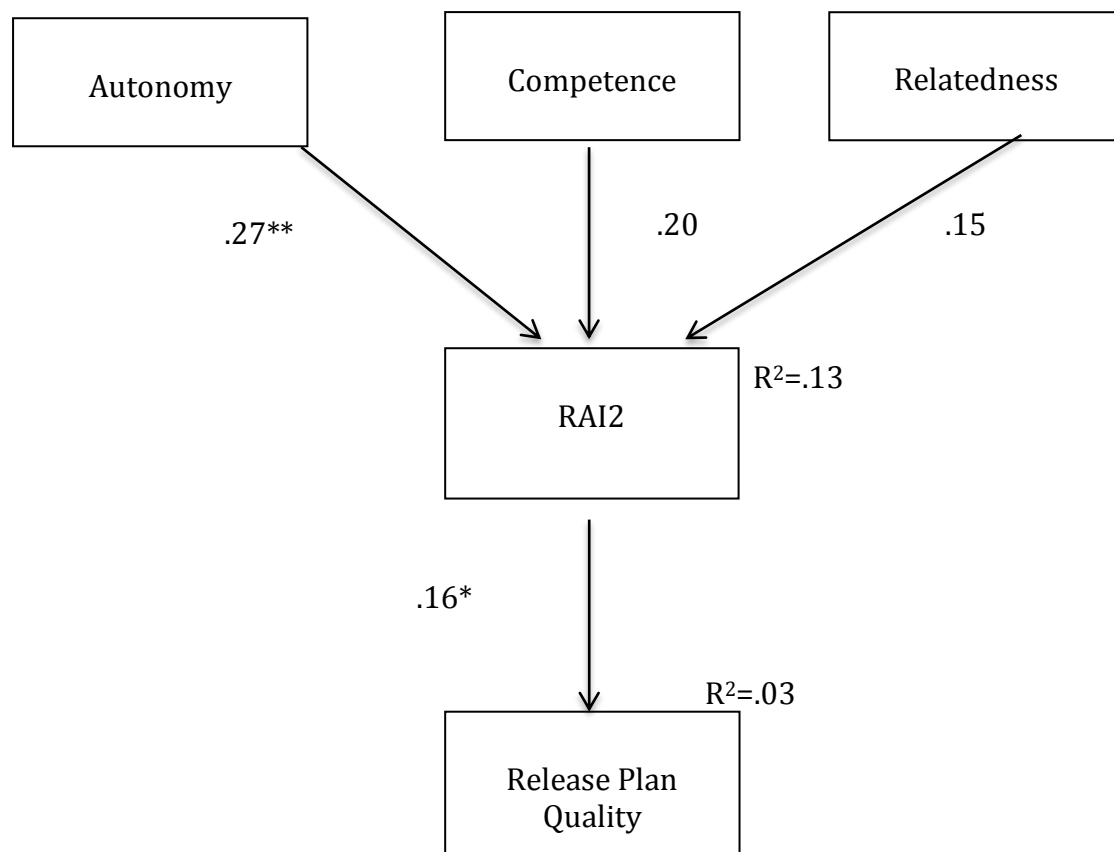
Figure 18. SEM of all SDT Variables Including RAI1.



Fit indices: $\chi^2(6)=95.80, p<.01$; $\chi^2/df=5.04$; CFI=0.30; RMSEA=0.20.

Relative Autonomy Index 2. Figure 19 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model, using RAI2 as the measure of more intrinsic motivation to create release plans. In this model, Autonomy was the only significant predictor of more intrinsic motivation. More intrinsic motivation, in turn, predicted the quality of release plans. The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data. Again, the model was not modified. Autonomy was the only BPN with a significant indirect effect on release plan quality (mediated by RAI2) with a standardized indirect effect coefficient of .032, $p<.05$.

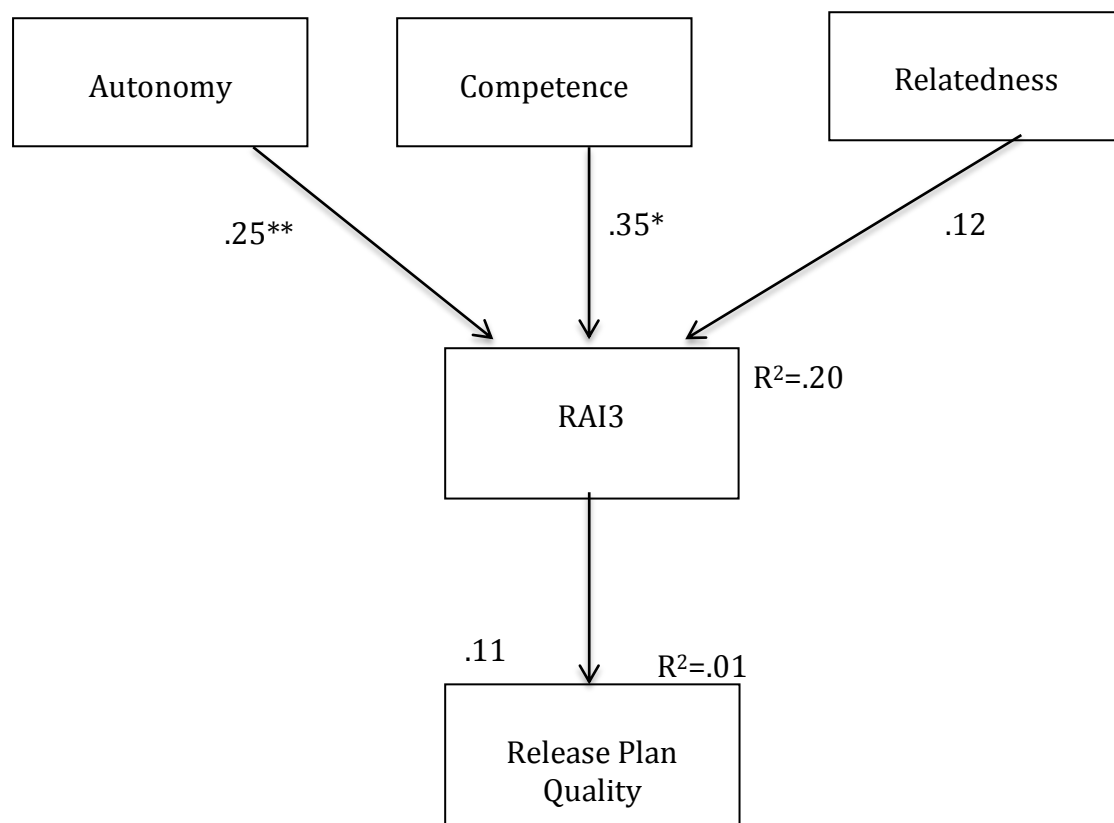
Figure 19. SEM of all SDT Variables Including RAI2.



Fit indices: $\chi^2(6)=74.49, p<.01$; $\chi^2/df=12.42$; CFI=0.27; RMSEA=0.33.

Relative Autonomy Index 3. Figure 20 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the theorized model, using RAI3 as the measure of more intrinsic motivation to create release plans. In this model, both Autonomy and Competence were significant predictors of more intrinsic motivation. More intrinsic motivation, in turn, did not predict the quality of release plans. The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data. Again, it was not considered helpful to modify the model. None of the three BPNs had significant indirect effects on release plan quality through RAI3.

Figure 20. SEM of all Variables Including RAI3



Fit indices: $\chi^2(6)=74.83, p<.01$; $\chi^2/df=12.47$; CFI=0.34; RMSEA=0.33.

Contextual Variables that may Impact on Release Planning

Finally, I was interested in exploring more how contextual factors may be impacting on the release planning process. I therefore examined two possible sources of influence: treatment status, and type of parole (i.e., early release on parole or release on standard conditions at the sentence end date). I compared the SDT variables for the groups created by the contextual factors to explore any differences between them in the release planning process. Prior analyses demonstrated that, of the three RAI formulas, the RAI2 performed the best in terms of predicting release plan quality in this sample. The RAI2 will therefore be the sole index used in the following analyses.

The Impact of Treatment on Self-Determination Variables. First, I explored the impact that treatment has on SDT variables. I hypothesised that treated offenders would report greater levels of relatedness because they have more assistance in creating release plans, and that this relatedness would lead to them feeling more intrinsically motivated to create release plans. I also hypothesized that treated offenders would report reduced levels of autonomy, compared to untreated offenders. Table 23 presents the median scores for the two groups on the various SDT variables. Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that Treated offenders had significantly higher scores on Relatedness and Identified motivation than Untreated offenders, as well as having significantly higher RAI2 scores and higher Release Plan quality.

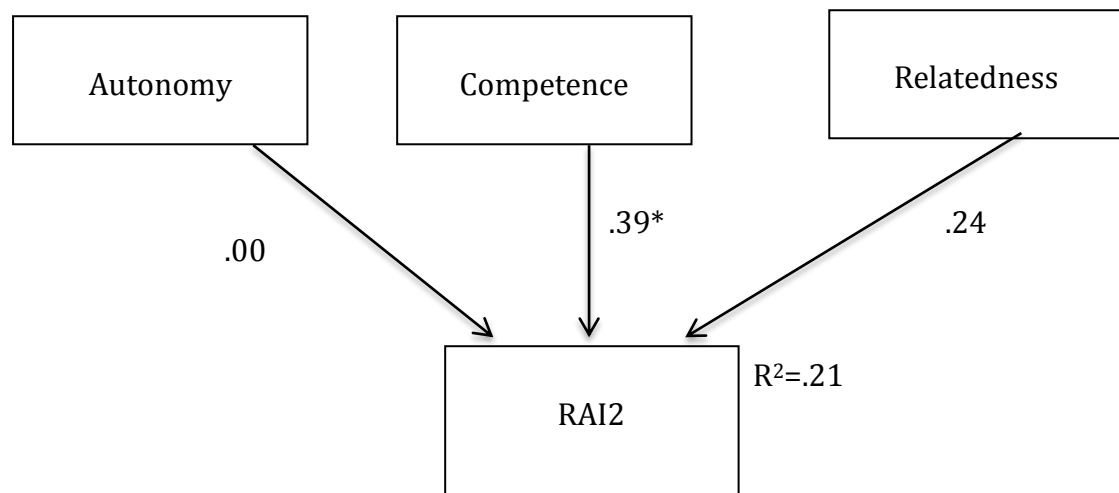
Table 23

Comparison of Treated and Untreated Offenders on SDT variables

Variable	Treated	Untreated	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
	Offenders	Offenders		
	Median	Median		
	<i>n</i> =55	<i>n</i> =49		
Autonomy	6.00	5.50	1.78	.08
Competence	5.00	4.00	1.84	.07
Relatedness	6.50	5.00	3.67	<.01
Intrinsic	8.00	8.00	0.99	.32
Identified	14.00	13.00	2.01	.04
Introjected	7.00	8.00	0.60	.55
Extrinsic	6.00	5.00	0.74	.46
RAI2	14.00	11.00	2.49	.01
Release Plan	3.25	2.67	3.01	<.01
Quality				

The next step was to look at how the variables relate to each other in these two groups, and whether these relationships differ. Figure 21 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the relationships between the SDT variables for the Treated group. In this model, only Competence was a significant predictor of more intrinsic motivation (RAI2). The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data.

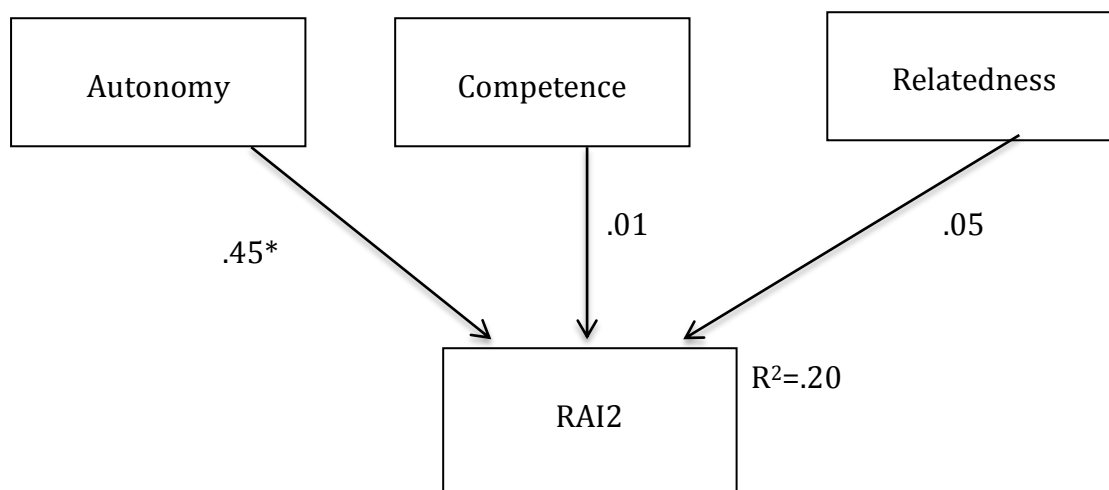
Figure 21. SEM of SDT variables for Treated Offenders



Fit indices: $\chi^2(3)=39.97$, $p<.01$; $\chi^2/\text{df}=13.32$; CFI=0.40; RMSEA=0.37.

Figure 22 demonstrates the standardized regression coefficients for the relationships between the SDT variables for the Untreated group. In this model, only Autonomy was a significant predictor of more intrinsic motivation (RAI2). The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data.

Figure 22. SEM of SDT variables for Untreated Offenders



Fit indices: $\chi^2(3)=27.25$, $p<.01$; $\chi^2/\text{df}=9.08$; CFI=0.25; RMSEA=0.42.

The Impact of Parole Type on Self-Determination Variables. The next comparison of interest was to explore whether parole type had an impact on Self-Determination variables. By parole type, I am referring to whether an offender is released early on parole, which is release at a date earlier than his sentence end date, or released on parole at the sentence end date (when conditions are still imposed). I hypothesized that an offender being released early on parole would be more extrinsically motivated to create release plans because he is (at least in part) likely to be creating good plans in order to impress the Parole Board, and secure his early release on parole. An offender being released on conditions at his sentence end date, on the other hand, has less reason to impress the Parole Board, so although his plans may be as good quality, he is likely to be less extrinsically motivated to create plans. As Table 24 demonstrates, Mann-Whitney U Tests show that early paroled offenders were significantly more extrinsically motivated to create release plans than offenders who were released on conditions at their sentence end date. Early paroled offenders also had significantly better quality release plans.

Table 24

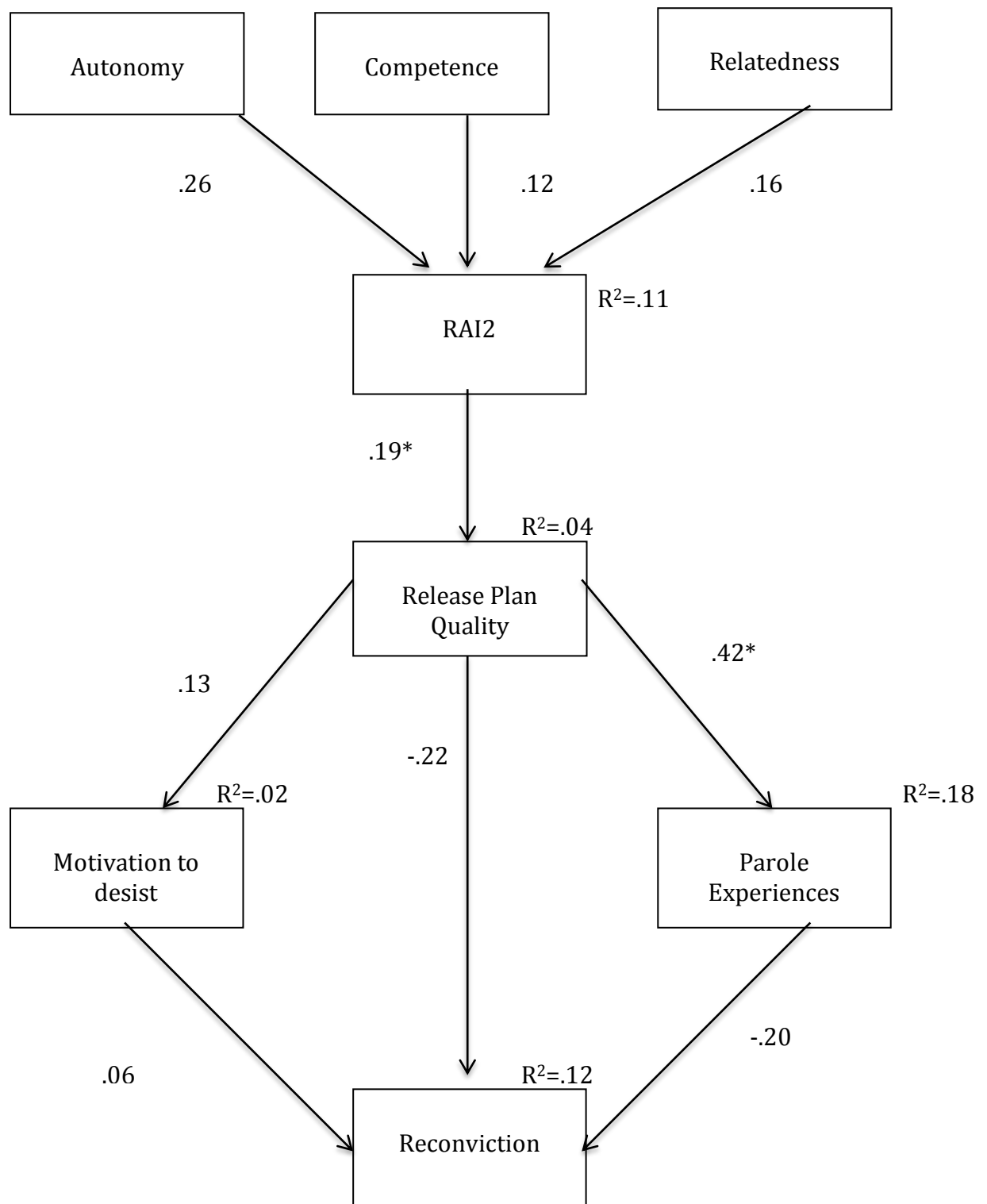
*Comparison of Early Paroled and Released On Conditions at Sentence End Date**Offenders on SDT variables*

Variable	Early Paroled	Released on	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
	Offenders	Conditions		
	Median	Offenders		
	<i>n</i> =55	Median		
		<i>n</i> =49		
Autonomy	6.00	6.00	.19	.85
Competence	4.75	4.00	.08	.93
Relatedness	6.00	5.33	1.19	.24
Intrinsic	8.00	8.00	1.51	.13
Identified	14.00	14.00	0.15	.88
Introjected	7.50	7.00	1.68	.09
Extrinsic	6.00	4.00	2.20	.03
RAI2	13.00	12.00	0.39	.70
Release Plan	3.00	2.67	2.51	.01
Quality				

The next step was to look at how the variables related to each other in these two groups, and whether these relationships differed. Figure 23 demonstrates the standardized regression coefficients for the relationships between the variables for the Early Paroled group. In this model, none of the three Basic Psychological Needs were significant predictors of more intrinsic motivation to create release plans (RAI2). More intrinsic motivation was predictive of release plan quality, and release plan

quality was then a significant predictor of parole experiences. The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data.

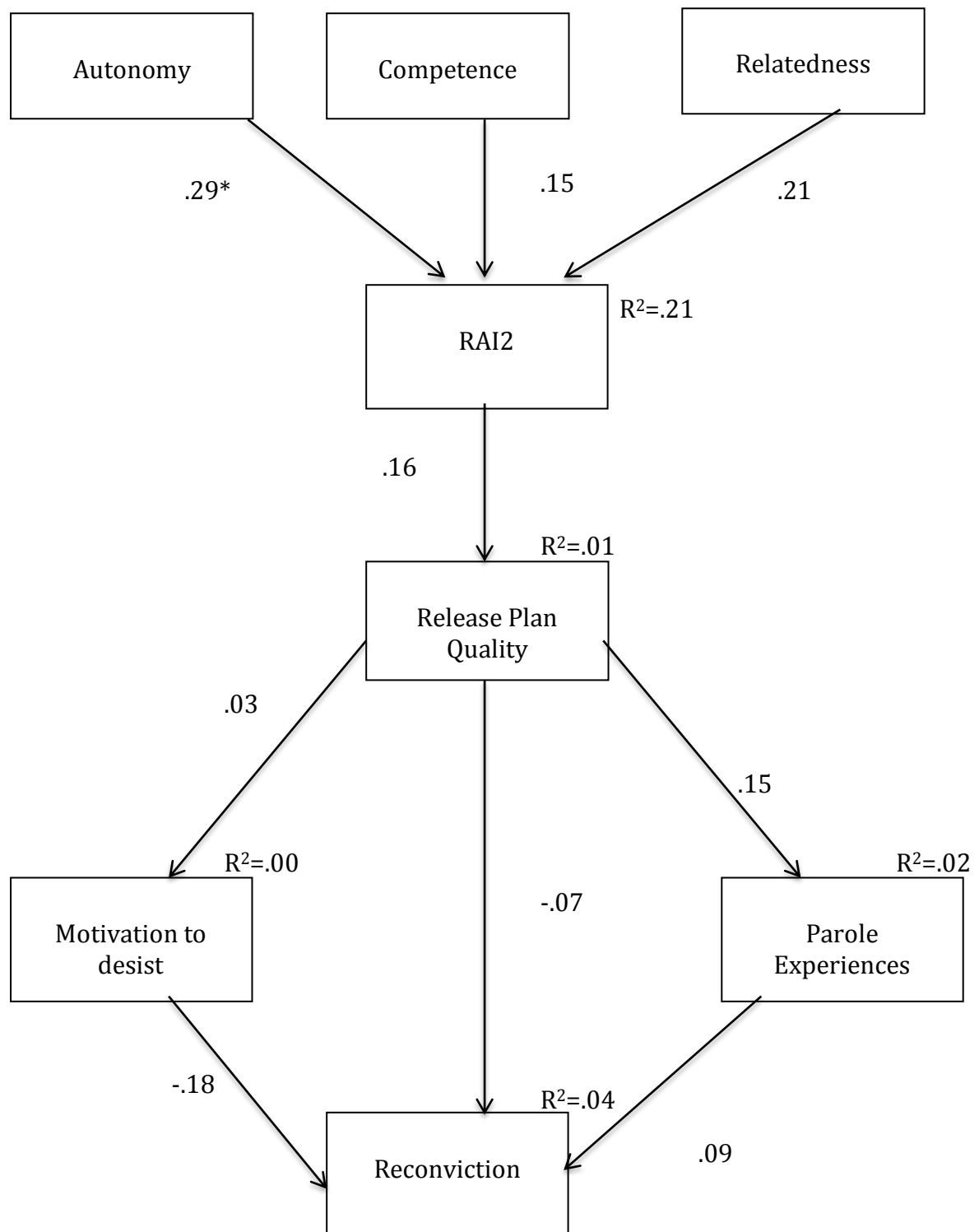
Figure 23. SEM of all Variables for the Early Paroled Group



Fit indices: $\chi^2(19)=76.65, p<.01$; $\chi^2/df=4.03$; CFI=0.33; RMSEA=0.22.

Figure 24 shows the standardized regression coefficients for the relationships between the variables for the Released on Conditions group. In this model, Autonomy was a significant predictor of more intrinsic motivation to create release plans (RAI2). More intrinsic motivation was not predictive of release plan quality, and release plan quality was not a significant predictor of parole experiences. No variable was predictive of reconviction. The fit indices indicated that this model was a poor fit to the data.

Figure 24. SEM of all Variables for the Released on Conditions Group.



Fit indices: $\chi^2(9)=41.22, p<.01$; $\chi^2/df=2.17$; CFI=0.20; RMSEA=0.31.

Discussion

The Relative Contribution and Interplay of Internal and External Experiences

The first aim of this study was to explore how two domains of experiences—internal and external—contribute to the relationship between release plans and reoffending and the dynamic interplay between the two in this process. To do this I first examined the quality of the release plans, parole experiences, and motivation to desist in the sample. The overall quality of release plans in this study was similar to that reported in study two of this thesis. I did not examine the release plans at the level of the individual items in this study, so cannot make comparisons regarding individual release plan items. The levels of motivation to desist were also similar to those reported in study two, indicating that offenders in this sample were highly motivated to desist from crime. Parole experiences, however, were reported as being poorer than those reported in study one. In the current study parole experiences were rated by Probation Officers themselves, rather than coded from their notes as in study one of this thesis. Therefore, they are not directly comparable as the experiences are rated on a different scale and from a different perspective. Taken at face value, the lower scores may indicate that Probation Officers tend to rate offender's experiences as being more negative than I (and my fellow rater) would using the coding protocol I developed. I will discuss the difference between these ratings in the General Discussion.

The next step was to test the relationships between the variables using Structural Equation Modeling. In the model predicting reconviction, release plan quality did not predict reoffending on its own, nor through either motivation to desist or parole experiences. The only significant relationship in the model indicated that better release plans were related to improved parole experiences. The model fit was

poor, indicating that my hypothesised model did not fit the data well. In the model predicting reimprisonment, better release plans led to improved parole experiences, which in turn led to reduced rates of reimprisonment. This result supports the external pathway hypothesis, as did the results for the imprisonment model in study one, supporting the idea that rather than affecting factors internal to the offenders, release plans help them to have better external experiences in the community. These external experiences (e.g., better experiences of prosocial support or employment), in turn, help to reduce their likelihood of returning to prison. The internal pathway, from release plans through motivation to desist to reoffending, was not significant in either model. This result is not congruent with the results of study two, where motivation to desist partially mediated the relationship between release plans and reoffending. These results are also somewhat different from the results of study one, where release plan quality predicted reimprisonment, even when parole experiences were controlled for (i.e., a partial mediation rather than a full mediation). It may be that having the Probation Officers rate these experiences, rather than rating them from Community Probation Service notes, is accounting for more of the variance in parole experiences and therefore is helping to explain more of the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment (this will be discussed in more depth in the General Discussion). Again, the model predicting reimprisonment had poor fit indices, indicating that my hypothesised model did not fit the data well.

The next model explored how the offenders' external and internal experiences on parole may be influencing each other. It was hypothesised that each of these domains would have a positive effect on the other. For example, an offender who is more motivated to desist would have better experiences finding employment or an offender who has positive supports around him would feel more motivated to give up

crime. Surprisingly, this influence only went one way. Better parole experiences led to increased levels of motivation to desist but motivation to desist was not predictive of parole experiences. This model had a good fit to the data. These results indicate that external experiences such as finding a job can help an offender to become more motivated to desist, but his level of motivation to desist does not predict whether he will find employment. This finding implies that the offender may not have, or may not be exerting, much control over his external experiences. Creating good release plans helps but, once in the community, the offender's motivation does not help him to access more positive opportunities. Alternatively, it may be that motivation to desist from crime does not equate to motivation to find work or avoid antisocial associates. An offender may have a strong desire to give up crime but not understand that his external experiences will help him to do so. If true, this explanation would imply that offenders require more education on how best to achieve desistance. The theoretical underpinnings of the interplay between internal and external factors will be discussed more in the general discussion.

Self-Determination Theory in Release Planning

The second aim of this study was to explore the role that Self-Determination Theory (SDT) may play in explaining why some offenders create better quality release plans than others, and how those plans then lead to reduced rates of reoffending. In order to do this, I developed and validated two new scales to assess SDT variables in the context of release planning: The Basic Psychological Needs in Release Planning Scale, assessing an offender's experiences of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and the Release Planning Self-Regulation Questionnaire, measuring the types of motivation an offender felt to create release plans.

After two items were dropped from The Basic Psychological Needs in Release Planning Scale, it demonstrated good internal reliability for each of the three subscales and a CFA showed an excellent fit between Deci and Ryan's theory and the data. Offenders reported that all three of their BPNs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were satisfied to some extent during the release planning process and, as expected, the results showed that all three of the BPNs were significantly, positively correlated with one another. The scale revealed that Autonomy was the most strongly endorsed BPN in this sample, next was Relatedness, and Competence was the least strongly endorsed. In other words, offenders tended to endorse items that indicated they felt that they got to decide what their release plans should be, and that they felt like they had support when making release plans. To a lesser extent, they endorsed items that indicated that they felt capable of making good plans. These results imply that offenders require more resources and skills for creating plans for the future so that they feel more capable of doing so.

Next, the data from the Release Planning Self-Regulation Questionnaire was examined. Although the CFA model showed an overall good fit between the theory and the data, in this sample extrinsic motivation did not contribute to the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI: an indicator of how intrinsically motivated they were to create release plans), which is not in line with Deci and Ryan's theory. Extrinsic motivation (e.g., making release plans so that others will look at them more favourably) was also not related to the other types of motivation to create release plans measured in the scale. To explore whether an RAI based on theory, or RAIs based on the empirical results (whether weighted or not), were a better predictor, three RAIs were calculated for this study and used for all subsequent analyses. The Release Planning Self-Regulation Questionnaire showed that offenders reported a variety of different types

of motivation for creating release plans. The most commonly endorsed items were the Identified motivation items (e.g., offenders created good release plans because they saw benefit to themselves in doing so). Overall, the Relative Autonomy Indices indicated that offenders tended to be more intrinsically than extrinsically motivated to create release plans (i.e., they saw value in creating good release plans). Although extrinsic motivation to create release plans was not related to the three BPNs, the other motivation types and both RAIs were related to the BPNs, supporting the hypothesis that those with higher levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness would become more intrinsically motivated to create release plans. These results are consistent with the SDT literature (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The next step was to enter the SDT variables into Structural Equation Models to examine how the three Basic Psychological Needs contributed to each of the RAIs, and whether the RAIs then predicted release plan quality. It was hypothesised that all three of the BPNs would be significant predictors of the RAIs. In each of the models, Autonomy was a significant predictor of the RAI and Competence was a significant predictor of the RAI3 (the weighted version of the RAI without extrinsic scores). Overall, these results indicated that the more an offender felt he got to decide what his plans were, the more intrinsically motivated he felt to create good quality release plans. Surprisingly, Relatedness was not a significant predictor in any of the models. These results may reflect the release planning context. For example, while making plans in prison, it may be that offenders feel they have support forced onto them, rather than being able to select it themselves. Alternatively, some offenders may not be able to access support, even though they want to. On a positive note, offenders' levels of reported Autonomy predicted their intrinsic motivation to create release

plans, and we saw that overall the sample reported that they felt high levels of Autonomy.

It was then hypothesised that the RAIs would predict the quality of offenders' release plans. I found a significant result when the RAI2 was predicting release plan quality, but neither the RAI1 or the RAI3 predicted release plan quality. Deci and Ryan (2000) stated that intrinsic motivation leads to improved performance on a task, which was partially supported by these results. The RAI2 results are congruous with a number of studies in which more intrinsic motivation has been linked to better performance on a task (e.g., Kowal & Fortier, 1999; Williams et al., 1996; Williams et al., 2006). The RAI2 was the empirically-based unweighted index representing how intrinsically motivated an offender was to create release plans. This result supports the empirically-supported factor structure that was found in this study, from which extrinsic variables are excluded. There are a couple of possible explanations for the mixed results. One is that the items measuring extrinsic motivation didn't fully capture the possible sources of extrinsic motivation to create release plans. For example, an offender may make good plans for the sake of his family, not the Parole Board. He is still extrinsically motivated but the measure may not pick that up because it emphasises the Parole Board as the external agent. The other explanation is that the stage of an offender's sentence may determine how extrinsically motivated he is to create release plans; meaning it is not the offender themselves but the context they are in that determines their release planning process. This possibility led me to explore two contextual factors that may be influencing the SDT variables during release planning.

Contextual Variables that may Impact on Release Planning

I examined two contextual factors that were possible sources of influence: treatment status, and parole type. First, I hypothesised that treated offenders would report greater levels of relatedness as they have more assistance in creating release plans, and that this relatedness would lead to them feeling more intrinsically motivated to create release plans. I also hypothesized that treated offenders would report reduced levels of autonomy, compared to untreated offenders. I found that treated offenders did report significantly higher levels of relatedness than untreated offenders, but that there was no difference in their levels of autonomy. This result is encouraging; offenders who participate in treatment report that they receive more support with their release planning than untreated offenders but this additional support does not make them feel that they are any less in control of their release plans. Treated offenders were also significantly more intrinsically motivated to create release plans. An interesting finding from the Structural Equation Models was that, for the treated group, Competence was the only significant predictor of the RAI2, whereas for the untreated group Autonomy was the only significant predictor of the RAI2. This result may reflect the pre-existing differences between treated and untreated offenders. Offenders who refuse treatment may be people who personally value autonomy highly and prefer to do things on their own, whereas offenders who accept treatment may be people who value competence and building personal skills. Alternatively, this may be the consequence of participating in treatment (or not) and there may be no pre-existing differences between these groups. Importantly, treated offenders had significantly better quality release plans than untreated offenders, suggesting that treatment is helpful in improving release plans, but also implying that offenders who do not go through treatment need more assistance in creating good quality plans.

Next, I hypothesized that an offender being released early on parole would be more extrinsically motivated to create release plans than an offender being released on conditions at his sentence end date. The results supported this hypothesis and showed that early paroled offenders rated the extrinsic items more highly than offenders who were released on conditions at their sentence end date. In other words, offenders who were not eligible for early parole, or who had been declined early parole, did not endorse items indicating that they were creating release plans to please the NZPB. Offenders who were eligible for parole did endorse these items. These results may help to explain why extrinsic motivation was not related to the other types of motivation in this sample. Offenders' responses to the extrinsic motivation items were determined by the stage of their sentence, not their desire to create good quality release plans. Next, I found that the early paroled group's release plan quality predicted the quality of experiences they had on parole, whereas the release at sentence end date group's release plan quality did not predict the quality of experiences they had after release. One could speculate that the Parole Board sees an offender's plans and then put conditions on the offender that help those plans come into fruition. Offenders released on (standard) conditions at their sentence end dates tend to have fewer conditions given to them upon release than offenders who are given early parole (and receive additional special conditions) and therefore the Parole Board are not able to influence their release as much.

Limitations

In the first part of the study, the lack of significant findings for the motivation to desist pathway of the model may again be the result of the measure of motivation to desist used. A more sophisticated tool may have been more able to accurately explore the role of motivation to desist in reducing recidivism in this sample. Likewise, in the second part of the study, creating a greater number of items for each SDT scale, then using only the most predictive items, may have helped to more accurately assess both the Basic Psychological Needs and the continuum of motivation of the offenders in this sample. The two items dropped from the Basic Psychological Needs in Release Planning scale were the two reverse-scored items, demonstrating that positively worded items appear to be more easy to understand for offender samples.

There were also limitations in the use of the two contextual variables. Both treatment status and parole type were imperfect proxy variables for the quality of release plans. For example, the assumption is that treatment status is an indicator of the amount of assistance an offender receives during release planning. Unfortunately it is not a pure measure because an untreated offender may have received a lot of help and have created good quality plans. As I will discuss in the General Discussion, the quality of an offender's release plans may also reflect what he came into prison with, rather than a dynamic process of creating plans. Likewise, parole status is an indicator of release plan quality because, especially for untreated offenders, those not released early also tend not to be offered help with planning. But an offender may have had help with planning and then not have been granted early release anyway. I have also treated these two contextual variables as independent, but in reality they interact; treated offenders are more likely to be granted early parole than untreated offenders.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to tease out whether release planning leads to reduced recidivism rates through an “internal” or an “external” pathway, or both. The results indicate that the external pathway appears to explain the link between release plan quality and reoffending and is the mechanism underlying the efficacy of release plans. This study also examined the role that Self-Determination Theory may play in the release planning process. I found that Self-Determination Theory can help to explain why some offenders make better quality release plans than others, but it is important to consider other contextual factors related to their prison sentence or treatment status when considering the release planning process.

Chapter Five:

General Discussion

Overview of Thesis

The focus of this thesis was to explore in depth release planning in high-risk, often violent offenders. The literature indicates that this population faces a number of barriers when re-entering the community, for example in finding stable accommodation, employment, social support, and in managing risks in their environment. In New Zealand, one approach the Department of Corrections has taken to address these barriers is to aid offenders in creating good quality release plans (Willis & Grace, 2008). Release plan quality has been found to discriminate between those who go on to reoffend and those who do not (even when controlling for risk; Scoones, Willis, & Grace, 2012) but past research had not explored *how* release plans may reduce reoffending rates in the community. Previous research on release plans had shown only that the quality of planning is related to the likelihood of avoiding further convictions. This thesis explored potential mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of release plans.

Empirical Findings

Study One. Study one explored the external pathway, asking: “Do release plans simply translate into better quality experiences on parole?” Following the work of Sampson and Laub (1993), I hypothesized that better quality plans lead to better quality experiences on parole, strengthening the offender’s bond to society and promoting desistance. Although overall release plan quality was significantly correlated with overall parole experience quality, at the level of the individual scale

items I did not find the expected relationships. Better plans for employment led to better experiences of employment, but in other areas there were indirect relationships. For example, it appeared that making better quality plans for avoiding risk (i.e., release environment and antisocial associate items) led to poorer quality experiences of accommodation or employment. These results indicate that release planning in general leads to better experiences on parole but release plans do not directly translate into experiences as we may expect. I also found that parole experience quality did not add significant incremental validity over release plan quality to the prediction of reconviction, but did add significant incremental validity to the prediction of reimprisonment, over and above release plan quality. Parole experiences were found to significantly mediate the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment, indicating that good quality release plans help to reduce reimprisonment by improving experiences on parole. The mediation, however, was only partial, suggesting that parole experiences did not fully explain the link between release plans and reimprisonment.

A large component of study one was establishing the internal structure of the Release Plan Quality scale because the scale was not found to be internally reliable. Cluster analyses revealed that the scale items clustered into two types of plans: approach-oriented plans focusing on employment, and avoidance-oriented plans focused on managing risks in the release environment. As one type of plan improved, the other became worse, explaining the poor scale reliability. As mentioned in the paragraph above, offenders who made good quality plans to avoid risk tended to have poorer experiences of accommodation and employment. It appears that offenders tended to make either approach plans or avoidance plans, and the plans they made had detrimental effects on their experiences in other areas. However, neither type of plan

was found to be more valuable in terms of reducing reoffending risk; instead the overall quality of plans was most important. In the following two studies, the release plans scale was more reliable; thus appearing to be a unitary construct. These varying results indicate that the sample from TWM (in study one) differed from the more general STU samples (in studies two and three) in their release plans. Historically, the most violent offenders have been sent to TWM rather than the other STUs. It may be that their more violent criminal histories create additional barriers to the types of release plans that the TWM offenders can make. For example, they may be less frequently able to move home with family, or have additional trouble finding employment, meaning that certain types of plans may be unavailable to them and they have to focus on other areas of release planning instead.

Study Two. Study two explored the internal pathway, asking: “Do release plans influence factors internal to the offender?” This question followed from the work of Giordano and colleagues (2002) who posited that cognitive transformations are necessary to promote desistance. I hypothesized that the creation of good quality release plans would increase an offender’s motivation to desist, their levels of self-efficacy, and their identity as a prosocial person. Structural Equation Models demonstrated that good quality release plans led to increased levels of motivation to desist in the community, which in turn led to decreased rates of both reconviction and reimprisonment. Other models indicated that neither self-efficacy nor identity were mediating the relationship between release plans and reoffending in this sample. Thus, the results indicated that one specific internal factor, motivation to desist, underlies the relationship between release plans and reoffending. However, motivation to desist was not fully explaining this relationship, as there was still a significant relationship

between release plans and reconviction when I controlled for motivation to desist (i.e., a partial mediation).

Study Three. Study three aimed first to explore the relative contributions of, and interplay between, the internal and external factors in the prediction of reoffending. Building on the results of studies one and two, it was hypothesised that the relationship between release planning and reoffending would be mediated by both the internal and external experiences in the community and that these two domains would have a positive impact on one another, meaning that both motivation to desist in the community and parole experiences would positively predict each other. The results revealed that when the internal and external pathways were both included in a model, release plan quality's relationship to reoffending was mediated by the external pathway, but not by the internal pathway. These results suggest that release planning helps offenders to have better quality experiences in the community, which reduce their risk of reoffending. When examining the interplay of the internal and external variables, I discovered that better parole experiences led to increased levels of motivation to desist but motivation had no effect on parole experiences.

Next, study three explored the role of motivation to create release plans by utilizing Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) as a potential explanatory mechanism for release planning. SDT looks at different types of motivation on a continuum from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. There are also three Basic Psychological Needs of Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness which, when satisfied, lead to more intrinsic motivation. More intrinsic motivation then leads to better performance on a task, so I hypothesized that offenders who were more intrinsically motivated would create better quality release plans. I created scales to measure the relevant SDT variables, which performed well in this sample (with some

changes). I then included the SDT variables and release plan quality into Structural Equation Models, in order to see how the variables related to one another. The results showed that both Autonomy and Competence predicted the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI; a measure of more intrinsic motivation), but Relatedness did not. The empirically-based, unweighted RAI then predicted the quality of release plans, however the other two RAIs did not, lending partial support to the theory

Finally, study three examined two contextual factors that may impact on the release planning process: treatment status, and type of parole. I found that treatment participation was related to offenders reporting significantly higher levels of relatedness and more intrinsic motivation to create release plans. Treated offenders also created significantly better quality release plans than untreated offenders. Next, I found that offenders paroled early rated the extrinsic items more highly than offenders who were released at the end of their sentence and that the early-parole group's release plan quality predicted the quality of experiences they had on parole, whereas the end-of-sentence paroled group's release plan quality did not predict the quality of experiences they had on parole.

Relationship to Theory

Informal Social Control Theory. Sampson and Laub (1993) stated that early factors such as poverty, poor parenting, and a child's temperament cause weak bonds to family and school. This lack of social control causes delinquency in the child, which will continue over time (i.e. delinquent children become delinquent adults) unless a turning point counteracts the continuity. Events such as a good marriage or a stable job re-bond the individual back to society, increase social control, and cause long-term desistance. External factors, such as employment, can trigger desistance in

an otherwise antisocial individual. I hypothesized that good quality release plans lead to offenders having positive external community experiences (such as employment), which in turn can act as turning points that promote desistance.

Study one revealed that experiences outside of the offenders, such as their experiences of accommodation, employment, social support, and contact with antisocial associates were able to differentiate between those who went on to be reimprisoned and those who did not. Better quality release plans overall led to offenders having these better experiences, which in turn resulted in reduced reimprisonment. These results support the contention that factors external to the individual can act as turning points to support the desistance process. Interestingly, the types of plans that offenders made were not directly predictive of the types of experiences they had. With the exception of employment, plans for a particular domain were not significantly predictive of the quality of life in that domain after two months in the community. However, a few significant individual item relationships were found between release plans and parole experiences, including a significant, positive correlation between the total scores on the two scales. The lack of direct relationships and several unexpected relationships indicate that plans most likely do not translate in a predictable and concrete way into what is happening in the offender's life after two months, probably because items are not independent of each other.

Release plans do not appear to be directly responsible for creating turning points in offenders' lives. For example, creating a plan to have good quality accommodation does not necessarily result in experiencing great accommodation in the community. Release plans do, however, seem to improve experiences in a general way. For example, good plans for accommodation might help the individual to have

better experiences of social support. Therefore, although to state that release plans are a turning point for offenders would likely be overstating their importance, it may be that creating good release plans helps offenders to stay out of prison long enough to encounter turning points in the community. Ideally, good quality release plans are the first step in the process of encountering turning points that promote desistance in this high-risk group.

Another point to note is that within Informal Social Control Theory, Sampson and Laub (1993) state that turning points “re-bond” an individual to society. I did not measure if re-bonding is how positive experiences are causing reduced rates of reimprisonment in this sample. Future research could assess whether offenders describe themselves as feeling more bonded or attached to the community, or feel that they have more to lose because of their positive experiences. It may actually be that they are simply too busy at work or spending time with prosocial peers to offend; this alternative could be explained by Gottfredson and Hirschi’s (1990) theory of crime. Gottfredson and Hirschi proposed that crime is explained by a lack of individual self-control, evidenced by the often opportunistic and short-sighted nature of offending. It may be that reducing an individual’s opportunities to commit crime through increasing external constraints explains this link between external experiences and reduced reoffending rates. Future research could examine the underlying mechanism of the relationship between better quality parole experiences and reoffending, exploring whether it is the increased bond to society or the practicalities of life reducing opportunities to offend that resulted in reduced rates of reimprisonment.

Cognitive Transformation Theory. Giordano and colleagues (2002) proposed that Informal Social Control Theory gave an incomplete picture of the desistance process because it ignores the work an offender does to move towards a

new way of life. Offenders do not simply chance across a turning point, they choose to move towards environments in which such positive influences exist and the individual must latch on to these positive influences for them to promote desistance. Most importantly, the offender needs to be open to the idea of change, and to be able to envision a new prosocial self for the turning point to maintain desistance. I chose three internal factors (motivation, self-efficacy, and identity) from the desistance literature that I believed would enable me to operationalize and explain the transformation that is hypothesised to take place within the offender, as a result of creating good release plans. I hypothesised that creating good quality release plans would lead to an increase in these three internal factors in the community, and support the cognitive transformation necessary for desistance.

Study two revealed that high overall release plan quality was related to increased levels of motivation to desist at two months in the community (when controlling for pre-release motivation to desist), and that high motivation at two months in the community was then related to reduced rates of reconviction. High overall release plan quality was also related to increased levels of self-efficacy and identity at two months in the community (controlling for pre-release levels), but self-efficacy and identity in turn did not predict reoffending. These results support the contention that at least one internal factor (motivation to desist) is responsible for the link between release plans and reoffending. Motivation appears to be important in the process of desistance. These results also suggest that internal variables may be important too in their impact on external variables: being offered a job while on parole may only help to reduce recidivism in an offender motivated to make the most of the opportunity. Study three allowed me to look into this interplay of internal and external variables more closely.

Comparing Informal Social Control and Cognitive Transformation

Theories. Study three allowed me to compare the relative contributions of the external and internal pathways (and therefore the theories guiding them) in explaining the relationship between release planning and recidivism, and to examine the interplay between the pathways. When looking at their relative contributions, the only significant relationships found were those between release plan quality and parole experiences, then between parole experiences and reimprisonment. These results demonstrated that when both internal and external pathways were included in a model, parole experiences explained enough variance that motivation to desist no longer played a significant role. When examining how the two pathways influenced one another, I found that external experiences positively predicted motivation to desist, but motivation to desist did not predict external experiences.

At first glance these results appear to support the “strong social model” proposed by Le Bel and colleagues (2008). This model states that it is social circumstances that determine whether or not someone desists from crime. These circumstances are largely outside of an offender’s control and his mindset is unimportant to the desistance process. The external experiences posited by Sampson and Laub (1993) are what is necessary to promote desistance and Giordano and colleagues’ (2002) cognitive transformations do not play a role. The importance of the external experiences over the internal experiences is also consistent with Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation. Maslow theorized that our needs fall into five different categories (in order of prepotency: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualisation needs) and that only when our most basic of needs are satisfied, do our “higher” needs emerge. In Maslow’s terms, the external experiences of accommodation, social support, and employment involve needs that sit lower in the

hierarchy than internal experiences of motivation to desist from crime (which may reflect a need of esteem or self-actualisation). During the initial few months of life in the community, these external experiences reflect needs that are likely still being met. Put simply, a homeless man will be thinking solely of finding food and shelter. Only after these needs are met will he contemplate satisfying his higher-order need of living a prosocial life.

It could be argued that one implication of these results is that offenders do not need to be involved in the planning process, they could simply be handed a plan and the quality of that plan determines whether they reoffend or not. However, it seems unlikely that offenders would escape any psychological influence from the process of release planning. More particularly, if an offender has participated in treatment that involves working with therapy staff to create a positive plan for life after release, surely he would be more successful at remaining in the community than another offender who is simply handed the same plan. The implication is also not supported by the results of study two, which do not support the model proposed by Le Bel and colleagues. The results of study two demonstrated that motivation levels are increased as a result of good plans, and also predict whether the offender reoffends.

An alternative explanation is that the limitations in the measurement of motivation to desist largely account for the lack of significant findings in relation to the internal pathway. Motivation to desist on its own was found to mediate the relationship between release plans and reoffending, but it was not significant when included in the model with parole experiences. It may be that comparing the single motivation item (measured at just one moment in time) against several external parole experiences (measuring a range of behaviours across time) would have been weighted in favour of finding external experiences to be more important in these models. Future

research ought to use a more robust, better-validated measure of motivation to desist, which could then more effectively explore the importance of motivation in the desistance process.

Self-Determination Theory. Deci and Ryan (2000) proposed that motivation exists on a continuum, varying from extrinsic motivation through to intrinsic motivation. The more intrinsically motivated people are to perform a task, the better they perform, the longer they persist, and the more interested they are in the task. In order to become more intrinsically motivated to perform a task, three Basic Psychological Needs must be met: Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness. If an individual's basic needs are met, they will become more intrinsically motivated. If their needs are thwarted, motivation is diminished.

Study three measured variables operationalising Self-Determination Theory, in the context of release planning. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis supported the resulting Basic Psychological Needs in Release Planning Scale, revealing a good fit between theory and data. The results did not show support for the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) developed by Deci and Ryan. Each of the four types of motivation are theorized to contribute to the RAI but in study three a Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Self-Regulation in Release Planning Questionnaire—constructed to collect ratings for calculating the RAI—demonstrated that the extrinsic variables did not significantly contribute to the overall index. Fit indices demonstrated that there was, however, still a good fit between the theory and the data. Therefore, I used three differently calculated RAIs, to find which would work best in this sample. One of the RAIs (that excluded the extrinsic variables and did not use a weighted formula) then predicted the quality of release plans. Overall, Self-Determination Theory was partially supported because the three Basic Psychological Needs were able to

significantly predict the level of intrinsic motivation an offender would have to create release plans, but only one of the three calculations of intrinsic motivation predicted better release plan quality.

These results imply that, although Self-Determination Theory in general was supported, there may need to be some consideration of the context in which a task is performed. For example, extrinsic motivation to create release plans was not related to other types of motivation, which may be due to the context. Some offenders may have more external pressure, from a variety of sources, placed on them to make good plans than others simply due to the type of unit they are in, how close to their sentence end date they are, or how much (or little) contact they have with their family. For example, an offender who is close to his sentence end date may no longer be eligible for early parole and would therefore not endorse the item that mentions the Parole Board as a source of external motivation. The offender would therefore appear to be less extrinsically (and as a result, more intrinsically) motivated to create release plans; the context in which the offender makes his plans is therefore shaping how motivated he appears. Therefore, in the final section of study three, I looked more closely into how contextual factors may influence SDT variables in release planning.

First, I explored the role of treatment and found that treated offenders reported significantly higher levels of relatedness than untreated offenders, as I had hypothesized. Treated offenders were also significantly more intrinsically motivated to create release plans than untreated offenders. Their reported level of Relatedness did not predict how intrinsically motivated they were to create release plans. Structural Equation Models revealed that, for the treated group, Competence was the only significant predictor of the RAI2 (as a measure of intrinsic motivation), whereas for the untreated group Autonomy was the only significant predictor of the RAI2. The

two groups did not differ on overall levels of Competence or Autonomy. Therefore, although treated offenders receive more support in creating release plans, it is their perceived levels of Competence to create release plans that determines how intrinsically motivated to create release plans they are. As mentioned, this result may reflect the types of people they are: offenders who choose to take part in treatment may be people who value learning new skills and feeling competent, as opposed to untreated offenders who may value their autonomy more highly.

Next, I looked at the impact of Parole type and found that early-paroled offenders were more extrinsically motivated than offenders who were released on conditions at their sentence end date. These results were expected given that the Parole Board was expected to be a greater source of external motivation for offenders who are eligible for parole. Offenders who were granted early parole endorsed the intrinsic motivation items at the same level as offenders who were released on standard conditions at their sentence end date. This result is surprising in light of Deci, Koestner, and Ryan's (1999) meta-analysis that demonstrated that external rewards undermine intrinsic motivation to engage in a task. We would expect that being granted early parole would make offenders less intrinsically motivated to create release plans, but this was not the case. It may be that offenders who were not released until their sentence end date also had sources of external motivation that I did not account for in the measurement of extrinsic motivation, which may also explain why Extrinsic motivation was the least endorsed motivation type. Future research could take a step back and explore what the various external motivations offenders may have for creating release plans, in order to create a scale which better encompasses what factors motivate them. Likewise, further exploratory research into how offenders view the people who help them create release plans may shed some

light onto why increased levels of Relatedness did not predict how intrinsically motivated an offender became.

Other Interesting Findings

This thesis revealed a number of interesting results outside of the scope of initial hypotheses. I will briefly discuss these findings in the sections below.

Approach versus Avoidance Plans. Study one revealed that the release plans offenders made tended to cluster into one of two types: either approach-oriented plans focused on employment, or avoidance-oriented plans focused on avoiding risk. These results were totally unexpected but very interesting because this distinction has a rich history in psychological theory, being represented in every major theoretical approach in psychology's history (e.g., psychodynamic, learning theory, dispositional, social-cognitive, biological, and cognitive; Elliot, 1999). The approach/avoidance distinction is important because positive outcomes are associated with framing goals in a positive light (Coats, Janoff-Bulman, & Alpert, 1996). Interestingly, however, approach-oriented release plans were not related to lower rates of reoffending when compared to avoidance-oriented plans, as would be suggested by the approach/avoidance literature. Another finding of interest was that offenders with avoidance-oriented plans had better quality plans overall than offenders with approach-oriented plans. Although this may be explained by the construction of the Release Plan Quality Scale (one employment item compared to two risk-avoidance items), anecdotally I found that offenders who have plans for employment think of their plans differently to offenders without employment plans. Offenders who have secured employment prior to release do not see much need for avoidance-oriented plans because they imagine they will be protected from potential risk factors by their work. It seems they

understand that work displaces some immediate risks; by working they cannot easily spend time with antisocial associates or hang around in high-risk situations. I controlled for the quality of offenders' release plans, to ensure that it was not just the disparity in the overall scores between the two clusters that led to nonsignificant results. This was not the case; even when controlling for total release plan quality, offenders with approach-oriented plans did not differ in their recidivism rates compared to offenders with avoidance-oriented plans. It appears that both types of plans are equally protective for offenders; however, plan quality could be higher overall if offenders did not just have one or the other. Future research could look into the process of creating release plans: how do therapists or other staff frame release plans when discussing them with clients? If therapists or other staff frame all plans in an approach-oriented light when working with offenders, yet document some as avoidance-oriented in psychological reports and reports to the Parole Board, this may explain why there was no difference found between plan valence and reoffending. On a similar note, the way in which staff frame these plans may impact on how motivated an offender is to create release plans. Studies two and three revealed much better scale reliability for the Release Plans scale, so the cluster analysis was not repeated. It is likely that I would not have found this pattern of approach versus avoidance plans in the later studies due to this improved scale reliability, which indicated that the scale was measuring a unitary construct. As mentioned on page 208, one possible explanation may be the different sample: the more violent nature of the study one sample may have led to more obstacles to creating release plans than the more general offenders in the two later samples.

Risk Assessment Tools. Study one showed that three commonly used measures of risk were not predictive of recidivism. This result was unexpected given

that in our previous study (Dickson, Polaschek, & Casey, 2013), the same three risk assessment tools were related to reoffending. The RoC*RoI, PCL:SV, and the VRS were all found to be significant predictors of both reconviction and reimprisonment in that study. The short follow-up period of only six months is one obvious explanation for the lack of predictive power of the risk assessment tools, given that the follow-up period in the last study was twelve months. The Release Plan Quality Scale was altered from that study, potentially helping to explain why it was also no longer related to the PCL:SV. It is interesting that Release Plan Quality is not related to risk in study one, because one might expect that the same risk factors may underlie risk of reoffending and capacity to make a good release plans. It appears not, however; release plans are capturing something independent of risk, which explains how in previous research they have been found to contribute incremental predictive validity over risk assessment tools when predicting recidivism. Future research could look into the relationship between an individual's dynamic risk factors, and whether their release plans target those risk factors. Do staff working with offenders encourage them to create release plans in domains they deem necessary for that offender, according to their known risks? Or is any release plan considered a good plan for any offender? I will discuss this idea more in the future research section.

Reconviction versus Reimprisonment. In both studies one and three both release plans and parole experiences had a more consistent link to reimprisonment than to reconviction, whereas in study two release plans were more strongly related to reconviction. I did not have any specific hypotheses about these relationships, but had thought the lower base rates of reimprisonment may have rendered the relationships to reimprisonment more likely to be non-significant: however, the opposite pattern of results was true. The pattern of results I found may reflect that, for such high-risk

offenders, minor offending is viewed as a commonplace event and is not necessarily triggered by problems in their lives. Offenders who are dedicated to desistance may choose to give up bigger crimes that can result in reimprisonment (and good quality release plans help them to do this) but may continue to commit minor offences with less severe consequences (Leibrich, 1993). Serious reoffending that leads to reimprisonment may be more likely to be linked to a major life problem. For example, they may drive while disqualified as a matter of course but they may not commit an aggravated robbery unless they lose their job and have no money to support their family. These results beg the question: how do offenders view minor offending? The Parole Project asks offenders that very question, examining whether offenders plan to give up all crimes, no crimes, certain types of crime in particular. Later analysis of these data may help to explain why I did not find such a strong pattern of results for reconviction as I did for reimprisonment.

Probation Officers' Ratings versus Community Probation notes. In this thesis I looked at ratings of the quality of offenders' experiences in the community over the first two months. In study one, these ratings were coded from Community Probation notes written by the Probation Officer throughout the two months following release, and in study three I asked Probation Officers to make these ratings themselves at around two months into the supervision period. The ratings that Probation Officers made themselves explained more variance in the relationship between release plans and reimprisonment (i.e., fully mediated the relationship) than the ratings made from their notes (which only partially mediated the relationship). While this result may be explained by the changes in the Release Plans scale, it may also indicate that Probation Officers are making their Parole Experiences ratings on more (or different) information than what is included in their notes, which is more

accurate than the coding protocol I developed. Probation Officers may be omitting information from their notes that they use when making their ratings or they may be weighting the information differently than the coding protocol did. Alternatively, Probation Officers may be making more holistic judgments about the offender than I did in my structured coding protocol. This result is surprising given that structured risk assessment tools are more predictive of recidivism than unstructured clinician judgments of risk, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis. It may be that Probation Officers need to be encouraged to include more information in their notes or that the coding protocol I created for rating the Community Probation notes needs further development to be more accurate in its prediction of recidivism.

Limitations

Statistical Limitations. An ongoing challenge in this thesis was getting a large enough sample size for the analyses I wished to conduct. In study three, for example, many of the Structural Equation Models had a poor fit to the data and one of the reasons for this may have been the limited sample size. These poor model fits result in caution being required when interpreting the results. A second challenge was the non-normally distributed data. The data in my studies had significant skewness and kurtosis, often because the majority of offenders rated their motivation or Basic Psychological Needs highly. I used non-parametric tests to overcome the problems created by non-normal data, although the pattern of results was found to be the same when parametric tests were used. Next, there were variations in the reconviction rates across the three studies, from a high of 29.9% reconviction in study one to only 14.4% in study three. Likewise reimprisonment rates varied from a high of 17.9% in

study one to only 8.7% in study three. The change in base rates of recidivism will have affected the likelihood of finding statistically significant results across studies.

Another limitation to note is the limited variance explained in outcome in the various models I ran. For example, in study two, release planning explained between 3 and 15% of the variance in the reoffending outcomes. While this is a positive result for release planning—good plans certainly help—there is still a large amount of variance unaccounted for. Zamble and Quinsey (1997) emphasized the importance of the immediate period of time preceding a new offence when examining the process of recidivism. Perhaps by looking at the experiences of the sample at two months, then recidivism at six months, we are ignoring the acute risk factors that could contribute to a new offence in the days or hours leading up to it, such as current mood, cognitions, and substance abuse. Although not the topic of interest in this thesis, these acute factors would likely be contributing to offending as well as the internal and external experiences (perhaps better conceptualised as more stable dynamic risk factors) measured in this study, and the inclusion of such factors may have led to better fitting models. Future research could utilize dynamic risk assessment tools that assess acute risk factors over time, such as the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Reentry (DRAOR; Serin, Mailloux, & Wilson, 2010), and incorporate these acute factors into the model.

Measurement issues. The measurement of both release plan quality and parole experience quality was limited by the quality and quantity of relevant information available. Release plan quality was rated based on file data, such as reports to the Parole Board, psychological reports, and so on. These reports often have limited information on offenders' release plans, not to mention cases in which offenders do not have psychological reports done or reports are unable to be found.

These sources also tend, by definition, to be oriented more to risk-related issues than to more positive and constructive domains, meaning that more positive areas of planning cannot be coded, such as leisure activities or resuming custody of children. In an attempt to keep the coding of parole experiences more objective (in contrast to the inherently subjective measures of motivation, self-efficacy, or identity), I rated them from Community Probation Service Notes or asked Probation Officers to rate the quality of experiences for me. It is likely that prisoners censor the information they provide to probation officers. For example, it is easy to imagine that parolees with release conditions that require them to avoid criminal associates are unlikely to divulge that they are breaking these conditions when to do so could send them back to prison. Therefore these results are also limited by the amount of impression management offenders used when discussing their experiences with their Probation Officers, and the quality of the relationship between them.

Future Research

How Release Plans Were Developed. Although it would be tempting to conclude that the results of this thesis are a sign that actively working with offenders to improve the quality of their release plans can reduce recidivism risk, there is a need for caution in interpreting the results in this way. At this stage there is no demonstration that the planning process itself is protective. It may be instead that offenders with better access to resources are those who are more likely to make plans and have plans made for them. I cannot be certain what I have measured when examining release plan quality because I did not investigate how offenders acquired their plans. Because I simply assessed the quality of plans just prior to release, I cannot tell whether the release plans resulted from the resources a prisoner already

had available to draw on or whether the plans were the result of an active planning process. Furthermore, Self-Determination Theory predicts that release planning should be an active process. The context in which plans are developed can only be important if there is a development process taking place. These questions have led me to wonder whether I have simply measured at the end of a prison sentence what offenders already had in place, or whether a significant amount of plan development is occurring. The design of this thesis did not allow me to identify whether release plan quality is a relatively static, or more dynamic variable. Future research ought to examine the amount of change in plans during a prison sentence (or across sentences) to address this issue and whether input from staff is helping to improve offenders' plans. Future research also ought to focus on the effect on release plan quality of a lack of resources in the community with which to build a plan. I would expect variation in the amount of pre-existing social support, employment opportunities, and background risks already present for the men. No amount of effort put into developing a plan will pay off if there is no achievable way to improve plan quality, because of a lack of available options for accommodation or employment or positive social support.

What is the effect on plan quality of staying in prison after treatment?

Staff working in the Special Treatment Units in New Zealand assist offenders to develop better quality plans for their release. But what if the offenders do not get released for some time after the programme? One potential worry is that men who remain in prison may, over time, lose contact with the supports they had arranged during the programme, forget the skills they learned, or miss out on jobs they had set up because the employer needed someone who could start working more quickly. However, one reason that the Parole Board retains offenders in prison is because their

release plans need further development. Future research could examine whether remaining in prison following treatment is detrimental to the release plans created within the rehabilitation programme, or whether these men are released with improved plans, compared to those they had at programme end, and compared to men who were immediately released after the programme.

How tailored are plans? A final area of potential research relates to the lack of significant relationships between the risk assessment tools and quality of release plans. As described in chapter one, psychologically meaningful variables are individual propensities, or enduring characteristics, that can be recognized during an individual's transactions with others or with their environment. For example, an individual's propensity to be drawn to criminal associates is a distinct, and potentially more accurate, predictor of offending risk than the associates themselves. The results of study one suggested that although an individual may be drawn to criminal associates, he is capable of making plans to avoid them. It would be interesting to look more closely into what particular risk factors an offender presents with, and whether his release plans target his risk formulation. One would hope that, particularly within a treatment setting, staff would identify what idiosyncratic risk factors the individual presents help with, and target their release plan assistance at building up plans in that particular area.

Implications

Study three revealed that offenders who complete a Special Treatment Unit rehabilitation programme are released with significantly better quality release plans than offenders who do not complete one of these programmes. These results may reflect a selection effect; for example, more motivated men choose to do programmes

and more motivated men also make better quality release plans (or reflect other pre-existing advantages treated men may have). These results may also reflect the effort put into developing release plans by staff working with offenders in these programmes. Although offenders who do not go through a STU programme may receive some help from case workers in their release planning (particularly if they are applying for early release on parole), some may miss out. The implication of these results is that additional support is needed for untreated offenders in developing their release plans to ensure that all offenders receive assistance with release planning, particularly those offenders who are not released until their sentence end date.

Study three also demonstrated that early paroled offenders' release plans predict the experiences they have on parole, whereas there is no significant relationship for offenders who are released on conditions at their sentence end dates. As I speculated in the discussion of study three, it may be that the Parole Board sees an offender's plans and puts conditions in place that help those plans come into fruition. For offenders released early on parole, they are able to place additional special conditions on them, whereas offenders released at their sentence end date typically have standard conditions only, resulting in less intensive guidance by the Parole Board. Future research could investigate whether these speculations are correct and, if found to be the case, it would be beneficial for offenders released on (standard) conditions to have some special conditions put in place that assist them in sticking with their plans. Even if the Parole Board were to check off the release plans to ensure they were adequate (and provide extra support for the offender if they are not), they could improve the quality of the plans, and the likelihood that the plans would translate into better quality experiences overall.

Finally, this thesis demonstrated that, although an offender's motivation to desist is important, it is not necessary for a reduction in recidivism rates. In study three, motivation to desist was not predictive of experiences on parole or of reoffending. Whilst these results may be due to the high overall rates of motivation to desist in the sample, taken at face value, working with an unmotivated offender to create good release plans could still help him to have better experiences in the community and make him less likely to reoffend. Whether working with the offender also makes him more motivated to desist, rather than improves his release plan quality alone, cannot be ruled out at this point. This message is an important one for therapists, reintegration workers, case workers, and other staff involved in release planning. Working with an offender who is not highly motivated to desist may not be an entirely pleasant task but it is possibly still an effective one. One way of aiding the release planning process again would involve providing staff with a reintegration checklist when working with unmotivated offenders, to ensure all domains of reintegration are covered in the plans and to improve their quality overall.

Summary/Conclusions

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore the mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of release planning. Specifically, it aimed to find whether release plans led to reduced recidivism rates through their effect on factors external, or factors internal, to the offender. This thesis demonstrated that the strongest effect was through the external pathway: good quality release plans led to better quality experiences on parole which, in turn, led to reduced reimprisonment rates. Internal factors, specifically motivation to desist, was not as strong a predictor but was still a significant mediator of the relationship between release plans and reoffending and

was influenced by the experiences an offender had in the community. Self-Determination Theory also helped to explain the release planning process. The more an offender's Basic Psychological Needs were met, the more intrinsically motivated he was, and the better quality his release plans became. The context in which he plans was important too, for example, whether he engaged in treatment, and whether he was released from prison before his sentence end date. Overall, this thesis provides a strong argument for additional assistance being provided for offenders coming up for release. This assistance may be relatively simple, such as a checklist of reintegration areas to plan for, or someone checking over the offender's plans to ensure they are sufficient. Release plans are an easy target for intervention and, if they can help one man face fewer challenges in the community and prevent one man from returning to prison, then surely they are an important one.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Study One Release Plan Coding Protocol

Safety Plan

0 = No safety plan

1 = Unfeasible safety plan with limited targeting of participant's needs (e.g., all offenders include beliefs such as "entitlement" and "I am the law" in their safety plans under high-risk thinking, as they are given these as examples in the session, but show no evidence of the offender thinking about their own specific beliefs)

2 = Feasible safety plan, targeted to specific needs (e.g., understanding that high stress levels at work lead to increased frustration, resulting in more substance abuse, therefore they must work on creating balance in their lifestyle)

Accommodation

0 = Accommodation post-release is not indicated in release plan

1 = Accommodation post-release is suggested (e.g., a hostel in the Christchurch area) but no specific details (e.g. address) are given

2 = Accommodation post-release is planned and specific details (e.g., address) are given and this is confirmed (e.g., offender's mother agreed that the offender may live there)

Employment/Training

0 = Employment/training options are not indicated in release plan

1 = Potential employment/training options are suggested but no steps have been made towards securing it (e.g., the offender thinks he may be able to get work in the building trade)

2 = Steps toward securing employment/training have been made such as contact with potential employers OR employment/training has been confirmed but is not permanent

3 = Employment/training needs following release have been addressed and are confirmed (e.g., prisoner returning to previous job)

Prosocial Support

0 = No prosocial associates

1 = Prosocial associates who are unaware of offending history

2 = Prosocial associates who are aware of offending history (e.g., family members attended a reintegration meeting where the offender's offence history and risk factors were discussed)

Antisocial Associates

0 = No plans to avoid antisocial associates (e.g., offender has identified himself as a patched member of the Mongrel Mob and has no intention of severing ties with the gang)

1 = Plans to avoid antisocial associates (e.g., he has identified his intention to leave the gang and his old associates)

Release Environment

0 = Offender returning to the same environment in which their offending occurred or another environment judged to be similarly high-risk in file comments (e.g., offender being released to an area with a lot of gang activity)

1 = Offender being released to an area judged to be low-risk, according to comments on file (e.g., offender has decided to move to Wellington, where his family is, in order to keep away from his old associates)

Total Release Plan Score

This was the sum of all release planning scores.

Appendix 2

Study One Parole Experiences Coding Protocol

Attitude to Reporting to Probation

- 0 = Offender has made only negative comments/observations about reporting
- 1 = Offender has made both negative and positive comments/observations about reporting
- 2 = Offender has made only positive comments/observations about reporting

Accommodation

- 0 = Offender is living without any prosocial individuals.
- 1 = Offender is living with prosocial individuals

Release Environment

- 0 = More than one risk factor identified in release environment (e.g. antisocial associates, victim contact, isolation/no prosocial supports, drugs or alcohol)
- 1 = One risk factor identified in release environment
- 2 = No risks identified in release environment

Coping

- 0 = Has not demonstrated any ability to cope with risk factors
- 1 = Has demonstrated an ability to cope with risk factors, but is unable to identify what strategy was used
- 2 = Has demonstrated an ability to cope with risk factors, and was able to identify what strategy was used

Employment

- 0 = No employment
- 1 = Part time employment
- 2 = Full time employment

Contact with Antisocial Associates

- 0 = Offender has reported contact with antisocial associates more than once. Contact was intentional.
- 1 = Offender has reported contact with antisocial associates more than once. Contact was unintentional.
- 2 = Offender has reported contact with antisocial associates on one occasion. Contact was intentional.
- 3 = Offender has reported contact with antisocial associates on one occasion. Contact was unintentional.
- 4 = No antisocial contact reported

Response to Contact with Antisocial Associates

- 0 = Antisocial response (e.g. hanging out with them, picking a fight)
- 1 = Neutral response (e.g. said hello and kept walking)
- 2 = Prosocial response (e.g. told them they do not want to be in contact)

Prosocial Support Networks

0 = Offender has no prosocial support networks

1 = Offender has one network of prosocial support that is corrections staff/other professionals

2 = Offender has one network of prosocial support that is **not** corrections staff/other professionals

3 = Offender has prosocial supports including two or more networks (e.g. family and a community support group).

Types of Support Received

Provide a count of the number of types of support being provided. Includes: emotional support, accommodation, financial support, transport, food/clothing/bedding, assistance in avoiding HRSs, employment, socializing together.

Total Parole Experiences Score

The sum of scores on the following external items: accommodation, release environment, employment, contact with antisocial associates, and prosocial support networks.

Appendix 3

Conditions of Release

Taken directly from www.paroleboard.govt.nz/about-us/standard-and-special-conditions.html

All offenders released on parole are subject to standard release conditions, set out in the Parole Act 2002, which must be imposed for at least 6 months. The Board can also choose to impose special conditions in addition to the standard release conditions.

Special conditions imposed by the Board may not be imposed for a longer time period than the standard release conditions. The Board may suspend some, or all, of the standard release conditions if they are not compatible with the special release conditions that the Board wants to impose.

Standard Release Conditions

1. The standard release conditions are that:
2.
 - a. the offender must report in person to a probation officer in the probation area in which the offender resides as soon as practicable, and not later than 72 hours, after release:
 - b. the offender must report to a probation officer as and when required to do so by a probation officer, and must notify the probation officer of his or her residential address and the nature and place of his or her employment when asked to do so:
 - c. the offender must not move to a new residential address in another probation area without the prior written consent of the probation officer:
 - d. if consent is given under paragraph (c), the offender must report in person to a probation officer in the new probation area in which the offender is to reside as soon as practicable, and not later than 72 hours, after the offender's arrival in the new area:
 - e. if an offender intends to change his or her residential address within a probation area, the offender must give the probation officer reasonable notice before moving from his or her residential address (unless notification is impossible in the circumstances) and must advise the probation officer of the new address:
 - f. the offender must not reside at any address at which a probation officer has directed the offender not to reside:
 - g. the offender must not engage, or continue to engage, in any employment or occupation in which the probation officer has directed the offender not to engage or continue to engage:
 - h. the offender must not associate with any specified person, or with persons of any specified class, with whom the probation officer has, in writing, directed the offender not to associate:
 - i. the offender must take part in a rehabilitative and reintegrative needs assessment if and when directed to do so by a probation officer.

Special Release Conditions

The Board can also impose special release conditions on an offender's release. Under the Parole Act 2002, a special condition can only be imposed to:

- provide for the reasonable concerns of victims of the offender, or

- reduce the risk of re-offending by the offender, or
- facilitate or promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of the offender.

It can be seen from the wording of these phrases that the Board must consider the imposition of special conditions in each case. For example the Board may be required to consider whether a condition will actually reduce the risk of re-offending, or consider whether a victim's concerns could be considered 'reasonable'.

Special conditions may be many and varied and may include conditions relating to:

- Attendance at a post-release Board hearing to monitor the offender's compliance with their conditions (there is more information about this below)
- Residential restrictions requiring the offender to remain at a specified residence at all times or at times specified by the Board (there is more information about these restrictions below)
- Requiring the offender to submit to electronic monitoring of compliance with any release conditions or conditions of an extended supervision order relating to the offender's whereabouts
- That the offender not contacting the victim(s) of their offending
- The offender's finances or earnings
- Requiring the offender to participate in a programme to reduce the risk of further offending by the offender
- That the offender not associating with any person, persons, or class of persons
- Requiring the offender to take prescription medication (see below for more detail)
- Prohibiting the offender entering or remaining in specified places or areas, at specified times or at all times.

Appendix 4

Study Two Release Plan Coding Protocol

Accommodation

- 0 = Accommodation post-release is not indicated in release plan
- 1 = Accommodation post-release is suggested (e.g., a hostel in the Christchurch area) but no specific details (e.g. address) are given
- 2 = Accommodation post-release is planned and specific details (e.g., address) are given and this is confirmed (e.g., offender's mother agreed that the offender may live there)

Employment/Training

- 0 = Employment/training options are not indicated in release plan
- 1 = Potential employment/training options are suggested but no steps have been made towards securing it (e.g., the offender thinks he may be able to get work in the building trade)
- 2 = Steps toward securing employment/training have been made such as contact with potential employers OR employment/training has been confirmed but is not permanent
- 3 = Employment/training needs following release have been addressed and are confirmed (e.g., prisoner returning to previous job)

Prosocial Support

- 0 = No prosocial associates
- 1 = Prosocial associates who are unaware of offending history
- 2 = Prosocial associates who are aware of offending history (e.g., family members attended a reintegration meeting where the offender's offence history and risk factors were discussed)

Contact with Antisocial Associates

- 0 = Offender will be in frequent contact with actively antisocial associates (e.g., living with offenders or working with offenders)
- 1 = Offender will have infrequent contact with antisocial associates (e.g., expects to occasionally see friends who are active criminals)
- 2 = Offender plans to have no contact at all with antisocial associates

Release Environment

- 0 = Offender returning to the same environment in which their offending occurred (or an equally risky environment) and has no plans to manage their risk
- 1 = Offender returning to the same environment in which their offending occurred (or an equally risky environment) and has plans to manage their risk
- 2 = Offender being released to a new area judged to be low-risk (e.g., offender has decided to move to Wellington, where his family is, in order to keep away from his old associates)

Total Release Plan Score

This was the sum of all release planning scores.

Appendix 5

First Information Sheet for Potential Parole Project Participants

The Parole Project

Hi, we would like to invite you to take part in our research study into the experiences men have in prison and on parole. You have been chosen for this invitation because we understand that you are a medium or high-risk offender and that you will be released into the community very soon. We would really like an opportunity to interview you before you get out of prison. We want to know what you think about the experiences you have had in prison, and your plans for your life back in the community.

The aim of the research is to help the Department of Corrections with their rehabilitation, reintegration and parole programmes for medium to high-risk men, so that more men succeed on parole. The research is being conducted by staff and students at Victoria University of Wellington. It is independent of the Department of Corrections, and whether you take part or not is entirely up to you.

We would like to arrange a time to see you in your current unit very soon, before you are released. If you would like to know more about the study, and may be interested in taking part, let your prison staff know, and we will set up a time to talk with one of our research team. You do not need to decide for sure whether you want to take part until that meeting, when we will give you more information about the project. Then you can decide whether to talk to the team member about your experiences and plans.

We hope you will be interested in taking part. If so, one of us will talk to you soon.

Kind regards,

The Parole Project Research Team

Appendix 6
Pre-Release Interview Information Sheet

Prisoner Parole Study
Information sheet for men taking part in the study

You are invited to take part in research led by Dr Devon Polaschek, Associate Professor of Psychology, at Victoria University of Wellington. The overall research project is expected to take 3 to 4 years. As men come up for release, we will be interviewing them and then catching up with them again in the community to see how they are doing. The aim of the research is to help the Department of Corrections with their rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for high-risk men, so that more men succeed on parole.

If you agree to take part today, we will take you through a series of questions covering several different areas. We will ask you for your opinions about your time in prison, your goals and plans for your life once you are released, and what challenges you expect to face. We have quite a lot of questions. Depending on how much you have to say, this interview could take anything from one to three hours, but we can take breaks whenever you need them. We will be writing down your answers on paper, but not recording them in any other way. At the end of the interview, we have some brief questionnaires we also would like you to fill out. We can help you with those if you like, or you can do them on your own.

Dr Polaschek is a registered clinical psychologist, and because she is overseeing this project, she and the other members of the research team are required to follow strict rules about ethical practice in doing this research. This project also has the approval of the Victoria University of Wellington School of Psychology's Human Ethics Committee. The project is independent of the Department of Corrections. Any information you provide is confidential to the Victoria University research team. It will have no effect on how you are treated here in prison or on parole.

We will not talk to anyone outside of the research team about what you say. No information you provide will be given to anyone from the Department of Corrections. The only exception is if you say something to us that indicates that you or someone else is at immediate risk of serious harm. Then we will have to break confidentiality if there is someone we could tell who could help prevent that harm happening.

If you agree to take part, then after the interview we will also invite one of the prison staff to give his or her opinion of how you have been doing in the unit. We will not reveal any information you have given us today, when we talk to custody staff. It is just *their* opinions we are asking them about.

We do not think that participating in this will be harmful to you in any way. In fact we think you might find it interesting. However, if you agree to take part, and then you change your mind later, you can just tell us that, and you will not have to continue the interview. If you *do* change your mind, we will ask you if you are still OK about us keeping the information you have provided up to that point, to help us in revising the interview questions. If you request we do so, we will destroy any information you have provided.

Otherwise, if you agree to take part in the interview today, we will keep the notes we take on your answers in a locked cupboard in Dr Polaschek's lab at Victoria University. The notes will not have your name on them, only an identifying number. Your consent form, which does contain your name, will be kept in a separate locked cupboard.

When we are finished the interview and the questionnaires, we will ask you whether you would be comfortable having us contact you in the first two months after you get out, to take part in the next phase of the study. That part is still being developed at the moment.

Finally, if after taking part in the session today, you have any other questions or concerns about the project, you are welcome to contact Devon Polaschek or Rebecca Bell (the project administrator) using the contact details listed below.

Devon Polaschek, Associate Professor
School of Psychology
Victoria University of Wellington
P O Box 600
Wellington 6140

Rebecca Bell
School of Psychology
Victoria University of Wellington
P O Box 600
Wellington 6140