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THE STORY OF THE DEL: FROM DELINQUENCY TO DESISTANCE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the individual, relational and structural contributions to the desistance process as they occur within and between six individuals in Scotland who comprised a naturally forming group. Contemporary theoretical explanations of the desistance process share a tendency to view social relations as a by-product of, or interplay between, individual action and structure. Equally, contemporary methodological approaches to desistance research tend to study individuals rather than groups, precluding an analysis of the role of the group in shaping and affecting offending and desistance, and thus how individual, relational, cultural and social contexts influence onset, persistence, and desistance. The unique methodological approach of studying a naturally forming group in this thesis has generated new empirical and theoretical insights into the dynamics of offending and desistance. This study has revealed the role of friendship groups, intimate relationships and families of formation and employment in, differently, triggering individuals' reflexive evaluation of concerns, priorities and practices – resulting, variously, in a diminution of the desirability of offending, or in influencing, consolidating and sustaining commitments to desist. Both the manner of relating and the reciprocal and mutual orientation for these individuals-in-relation towards the maintenance of a given social relation emerged as significant in understanding the relational contributions to the change process. This thesis advances an alternative conceptual and investigative framework that gives proper recognition to individual actions, social relations and social systems and their particular inner characteristics, properties and influences. This thesis further extends current theoretical understandings of processes of desistance by elaborating what triggers reflexivity and what different forms of reflexivity entail, both of which have received limited attention in the literature to date.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The study of desistance from crime, the process through which people come to cease offending, is of central concern to penal policy and practice. 'The Story of the Del[1]: From Delinquency to Desistance' explores the individual, relational and structural contributions to the desistance process. The aim of the study is to contribute to and extend criminological understanding as to how and why people give up crime, and who and what supports this process, to inform penal policy and practice.

In 2003, McNeill argued that the implications of the evolving body of research on desistance necessitated a major paradigm shift in probation practice. He argued that understanding and conceptualising how, when and why this process of change occurs should inform how professional interventions might support naturally occurring processes of desistance (McNeill 2003, 2006). He advocated that approaches to practice should be embedded in understandings of desistance and that future research should explore the connections between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity in the desistance process. However, exactly how these interactions should be best conceived, what reflexivity actually entails and how such a paradigm shift in probation practice might be realised remain inadequately understood. This thesis seeks to contribute to and extend current knowledge of desistance by re-examining the relationships between structure, agency, identity and reflexivity in the desistance process to inform how such a paradigm shift can and should translate into practice.

[1] The Del is the name of the group on whom this study is based. 'The Del' is short for 'The Delinquents', a term they appropriated. This is why the phrase 'delinquency' is used in the title.

Empirical and theoretical context to the study

Criminological interest in desistance developed in the 1970s and 1980s (for example Cusson and Pinsonneault 1986; Meisenhelder 1977, 1982; Rand 1987; Shover 1983) and became a significant area of enquiry in criminal career research in the 1990s (for example Graham and Bowling 1995; Maruna 1997; Sampson and Laub 1993). Since this time, desistance research has moved beyond identifying who desists, and when, to propose a range of theories that seek to account for and explain desistance as a process (for example, Bottoms and Shapland 2011; Farrall and Bowling 1999; Giordano, Cernokovich and Rudolph 2002; Laub and Sampson 2003; Maruna 2001; Warr 1998).

Recent research studies have increasingly focused on identifying the contributions of key social relations, such as marriage, parenthood, and employment, to the desistance process. Quantitative studies (see for example Bersani et al. 2009, Lyngstad et al. 2011, Monsbakken et al. 2012 a & b, Skardhamer and Savolainen 2012) have extended current understandings as to when these factors influence the desistance process by identifying the temporal sequencing of these transitions and events and abstinence from crime, often with the purpose of illuminating the extent to which these factors are causative of or conditional on desistance. In so doing they have provided important insights into patterns of behaviour manifesting across broad populations of people. However, they are constrained in their capacity to explain the processes underpinning the behavioural patterns they identify, in terms of elaborating on the effects they document. Qualitative studies, by contrast, have extended understandings of the desistance process by providing nuanced analyses of the process of desistance, and who and what supports it, or otherwise (see for example Edin and Kefalas 2005, Moloney et al 2009).

In elaborating the process of desistance, researchers and theorists generally conceptualise the desistance process as an interaction between, or integration of, agentic and structural factors. These accounts of the desistance process place differing emphases on the role of individuals and their social contexts. Throughout the literature, desistance is represented as the outcome of an individual seeking to alter their socio-structural situation and context, and in so doing acquiring new behaviours and new pro-social roles, or vice versa, variously resulting in associated shifts in the individual's personal and social identity (see for example Barry 2010; Bottoms et al 2004; Farrall 2002; Farrall, Bottoms and Shapland 2010; Giordano et al 2002; Maruna and Farrall 2004; Uggen et al 2004). Within these divergent explanations, while there is a more or less implicit or explicit recognition of the individual as a reflexive subject, limited attention has been given to what processes of reflexivity entail (notable recent exceptions include Farrall et al 2010; King 2012; Vaughan 2007) or to how this contributes to identity formation. Such theories thus fail to consider *how* individuals' reasoning and actions are variously enabled or constrained by the relational, cultural and social contexts within which they are embedded. While many principally agentic theories of the change process elaborate the early stages of desistance, they do not explain what triggers the resultant cognitive transformation or why one social relation at one time rather than another exerts this effect (see for example Giordano et al 2002). Neither can they explain why people stay in relationships or jobs when the meanings of these social relations change over time (Vaughan 2007). While agentically weighted theories are limited in their capacities to explain what triggers reflexivity, structural theories similarly fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions, ignoring or under-analysing how

the individual perceives and responds to such influences (see for example Laub and Sampson 2003).

Rationale for the study

While there is consensus across desistance research that social relations, such as friendship groups, marriage, parenthood, employment and religious communities have a role to play in variously constraining, enabling and sustaining desistance, no desistance studies have adequately analysed the dynamics or properties of social relations, or their relationship to individuals and social structures. Moreover, while, there is increasing consensus that the desistance process is an outcome of the interplay between the agent and their structural context, the methodological focus is generally on individuals rather than groups. Yet, the collective context within much offending takes place has been well documented (see for example Akers 1998; Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Sutherland 1947; Warr 2002). While there has been considerable attention to 'gangs' (Aldridge et al 2007, Bannister and Fraser 2008; Deuchar 2009; Fraser 2010, Klein et al 2006; Pyrooz et al 2010, 2012), there has been scant research revealing the experiences of people who co-offend and on their subsequent processes of desistance. This methodological focus on the individual precludes an analysis of the role of the group, as a social relation in and of itself, in shaping and affecting offending and desistance, and thus of how individual, relational, cultural and social contexts influence onset, persistence, and desistance. There is therefore a significant gap in criminological understanding of the impact that a naturally forming group can exert on criminal careers – both empirically and theoretically.

Research aims and objectives

This study seeks, then, to contribute to the existing body of desistance research by re-examining the relationships between structure, agency, identity, and reflexivity in the desistance process, to inform how a desistance paradigm can and should translate into practice. It seeks to contribute to and extend current understandings of desistance by exploring the role of a naturally forming group in shaping and influencing offending and desistance. In so doing, this study analyses the life stories of six men who formed part of a naturally forming group called 'The Del'. Moreover, in taking the social relation as a central unit of analysis, this study seeks to extend current knowledge by exploring the relative contributions of individual actions, social relations and social systems to the process of desistance.

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

- What can we learn from the diverse life stories of a naturally forming group about the dynamics of offending and desistance?
- What are the individual, relational, and structural contributions to the desistance process as they occur within and between individuals?
- What is the role of social relations in accounting for desistance over time?

Thesis overview

The structure of this thesis broadly reflects the temporal order of the research process. However, while the conceptual framework advanced in Chapter 3 structurally precedes the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), the centrality of social

relations to processes of change and identity formation emerged during the primary analysis of the data; the conceptual framework was used as the theoretical lens informing the 'second order analysis' (Smith et al 2009:166) (discussed further below). To be clear, the decision to study a naturally forming group emerged from a review of the literature; the analysis and specific content were driven by the data and through the primary analysis, the significance of the social relation to processes of change and identity formation emerged from the analysis of the life stories of the men comprising the naturally forming group on whom this study was based. This prompted further investigation of socio-theoretical conceptualisations of the relationship between social relations, agency and structure in order to make sense of the emergent themes. The decision to locate the conceptual framework prior to the methodology chapter was informed by a desire to enhance the structural flow of the thesis.

This chapter has introduced the context within which the rationale for the study emerged. Chapter 2 discusses current knowledge about desistance through an illustrative overview of findings on studies of desistance and the ensuing implications for probation practice. The chapter addresses the various definitions of desistance in the research literature, prior to presenting an overview of theoretical explanations of desistance and the empirical studies that inform these explanations. This literature is categorized under three broad headings that echo the classificatory distinctions drawn by Maruna (1997) and Barry (2010): namely, individual and agentic; social and structural; and interactionist. In particular, the analysis presented in this chapter considers, where applicable, how contemporary understandings of desistance conceptualise the relationships between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity in the desistance process. Chapter 2 concludes with a review of the limited research that examines the role of professional practice in supporting

desistance. The chapter highlights the dearth of literature revealing the experiences of people who co-offend and of their subsequent processes of desistance. It also identifies that how reflexivity is understood, what it entails, and how the interaction between agency and structure might be understood remains inadequately theorized.

In Chapter 3, the conceptual framework underpinning the secondary analysis of the data is advanced. It draws heavily on the complementary approaches of Archer's Critical Realist Morphogenetic Approach and Donati's Relational Sociology, the latter of which has not been used in criminology to date. It is argued that this framework gives proper recognition to the roles both of conditioning structures in the desistance process and of the reflexive individual, who evaluates his[2] own situations and makes his own decisions, as well as examining the relative interplay between the two. It is argued that this conceptual schema enables an analysis of the individual contributions to the desistance process which pertain to the redefinition of personal identity and the exercise of personal reflexivity. Archer's 'Morphogenetic Sequence' applied to the Internal Conversation provided the investigate framework through which to conduct the analysis. However, it is further suggested that Donati's relational sociology, which builds on Archer's Critical Realist approach gives proper weight to individual actions, social relations and social systems where actions, systems and relations are provided with inner characteristics and influences which are peculiar to them. In developing an investigative framework through which to analyse social relations, and, in that, the relational contributions to the desistance process, the researcher used the morphogenetic sequence developed by Archer, to illustrate the conceptual schema progressed by Donati (2011a).

[2] The gendered nature of this discussion reflects the fact that this is an exclusively male sample.

Chapter 4 describes the methods used in operationalising this research. This chapter includes the rationale for the research, a brief introduction to the participants and areas of exploration. Ethical considerations and the fieldwork process and approach to data analysis are also elaborated.

The data analysis is presented in eight data chapters (Chapters 5-11). Chapter 5 presents a group level analysis of the shared lives of a naturally forming group and in so doing discusses the formation of the group, the onset and maintenance of their offending and the nature and dynamics of the group while situating their lived experiences within their shared historical, structural and cultural contexts. The chapter concludes by discussing the fragmentation of the group. Chapters 6 -11 present an analysis of the individual life stories of the six men on whom this study is based. The individual stories chart individuals' lives following the fragmentation of the Del and, with the exception of 'Andy' who has not desisted, these chapters analyse the individual, relational and structural contributions to the desistance process. A summation of the recurrent elements of the change process, manifesting across these individuals' stories, is provided in Chapter 12 through the lens of the investigative framework advanced in Chapter 3.

Chapter 13 concludes the thesis and, in so doing, draws together the preceding chapters. It thus provides an analytic overview of the limitations of the extant body of research on desistance prior to restating the methodological approach underpinning the study and how this generates new knowledge by employing an original methodological approach to the study of desistance as it occurs within and between a naturally forming group. The conceptual framework employed in this study is restated prior to summarizing the findings of this study as they respond to the

original research questions emerging from the literature review. The chapter concludes by elaborating the implications for policy, practice and research.

CHAPTER 2: DESISTANCE: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In 2003, McNeill argued that the implications of the evolving body of research on desistance necessitated a major shift in probation practice. This meant a departure from contemporary practices underpinned mainly by cognitive behavioural psychology focused on changing individual mindsets, to practices attending to the relational and social contexts within and through which desistance occurs. In developing a vision of what a desistance informed paradigm might entail, McNeill (2006) observed that a fundamental problem with preceding probation paradigms (the non-treatment paradigm, the revised paradigm and the 'what works' paradigm) (see Table 1) is that they focused on how *practice* (whether 'treatment', 'help' or 'programmes') should be constructed rather than conceptualising how *change* should be understood.

The non-treatment paradigm	***The revised paradigm***	***A 'what works' paradigm***	***A desistance paradigm***
Treatment becomes help	Help consistent with a commitment to the reduction of harm	Intervention required to reduce re-offending and protect the public	Help in navigating towards desistance to reduce harm and make good to offenders and victims
Diagnoses becomes shared assessment	Explicit dialogue and negotiation offering opportunities for consensual change	'Professional' assessment of risk and need governed by structured assessment instruments	Explicit dialogue and negotiation assessing risks, needs, strengths and resources and offering opportunities to make good
Client's dependent need as the basis for action becomes collaboratively defined task as the basis for action	Collaboratively defined task relevant to criminogenic needs and potentially effective in meeting them	Compulsory engagement in structured programmes and case management processes as required elements of legal orders imposed irrespective of consent	Collaboratively defined tasks which tackle risks, needs and obstacles to desistance by using and developing the offender's human and social capital

Table 1. Probation practice in four paradigms[3] (McNeill 2006:56)

[3] Probation paradigms generally delineate a set of practice ideals which historically include an outline of the form, nature or orientation of intervention; the method or approach applied

The argument that McNeill (2006:55) advanced was:

> 'that desistance is the process that work with offenders exists to promote and support[4]; that approaches to intervention should be embedded in understandings of desistance; and that it is important to explore the connections between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity in the desistance processes'.

Ten years since McNeill's original argument for a paradigm shift, how the interaction between structure and agency in the process of desistance should be conceived and how such a paradigm shift might be realised in practice remain inadequately understood. While some academics have recognised that desistance and a conceptualisation of the individual entails reflexivity, precisely what reflexivity entails and how this contributes to identity formation has been under theorised (although see Farrall et al 2010; Vaughan 2007; King 2011; 2013).

This chapter discusses current knowledge about desistance through an illustrative overview of findings on studies of desistance and the ensuing implications for probation practice. The chapter proceeds by addressing the various definitions of desistance in the research literature, prior to presenting an overview of theoretical explanations of desistance and the empirical studies that inform these explanations. In particular, the analysis presented in this chapter considers, where applicable, how

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to determine the type of intervention to be undertaken; and the basis or rationale for intervention.

[4] Maruna (2006a:16) similarly argued that reintegration properly belongs to communities and to formerly incarcerated persons and that the role of the practitioner is to 'support, enhance and work with the organically occurring community processes of reconciliation and earned redemption'

contemporary understandings of desistance conceptualise the relationships between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity in the desistance process. This chapter concludes with a review of the limited research that examines the role of professional practice in supporting desistance.

Definitions of desistance

There is, as yet, no agreed operational definition of desistance. Debates surrounding definitions of desistance reflect the diversity of theoretical conceptualisations of desistance and the inherent difficulties in measuring desistance for empirical purposes. While the terminology itself infers the state of having 'terminated' offending, criminologists have expanded on this to include consideration of the process by which people come to cease and sustain cessation of offending behaviour (see for example Bushway et al. 2001; Laub and Sampson 2001; Maruna, 2001).

Shover (1996:121) defines desistance as 'the voluntary termination of serious criminal participation', suggesting that the presence of minor incidences of offending does not necessarily negate the process of desistance. Evidently, this is a debatable point but it is also somewhat vague for the purposes of identification and measurement. Most empirical measures of desistance emphasise the state of non-offending rather than the process of desistance, typically identifying individuals who evidence a significant lull or crime-free gap in the course of a criminal career,

essentially redefining desistance as temporary non-offending[5], due to the practical challenges of verifying permanent cessation of offending (see for example Bottoms et al 2004[6]). Indeed, as Maruna and Farrall (2004) argue, the verification of permanent cessation can only be established posthumously (see also Maruna 2001). Bushway et al. 2001 argue that a focus on the final state of non-offending neglects to address the process by which individuals arrive there. Alternatively, they propose that desistance should be construed as the study of change in criminality (defined as propensity to offend), which they suggest is implicit in qualitative accounts of desistance[7].

The process of desistance has been likened to a zig-zag path (Glaser 1964, cited in Maruna 2001) and to a drifting in and out of offending (Matza 1964) and these oscillations between conformity and criminality has been recognised in both empirical studies and theoretical accounts of desistance. The process of desistance has been further conceptualised as encompassing distinguishable phases. Uggen and Kruttschnitt (1998) suggest that desistance has two implicit components: a change from offending to non-offending; and the arrival at a permanent state of non-offending. Although as previously highlighted, this notion of permanency is problematic, the notion of graduated or distinguishable phases in the process of desistance is not without its precedents or antecedents (see for example Fagan

[5] For an overview of operational definitions deployed in a range of empirical studies see Kazemian (2007)

[6] Bottoms et al., (2004) present an argument for the study of desistance to include 'any significant lull or crime-free gap in the course of a criminal career' (ibid: 371).

[7] see Bushway et al., 2001 for further discussions surrounding this conceptual distinction; see also Blumstein et al., 1986, 1988; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1986, 1988; Laub and Sampson 2001.

1989[8]; Loeber and LeBlanc 1990[9]; Weitekamp and Kerner 1994[10]). Laub and Sampson (2001:11) differentiate between 'termination' (the outcome, 'the time at which criminal activity stops' (ibid: 11)), and 'desistance' ('the causal process that supports the termination of offending' (ibid: 11)). Maruna and Farrall (2004) criticise this definition as conflating the causes of desistance with desistance itself, alternatively proposing a dichotomous definition, analogous with Lemert's (1951) conception of primary and secondary deviance[11]. They propose that there are two distinguishable phases in the desistance process: primary and secondary desistance. Primary desistance refers to any lull or crime free gap in the course of a criminal career (see Maruna and Farrall 2004 for discussions of measurement). Secondary desistance is defined as the movement from the behaviour of non-offending to the assumption of a role or identity of a non-offender (Maruna and Farrall 2004). This definition would not require that the process be terminal (ibid), rather, the study of desistance, which they argue should concentrate on secondary desistance, is thus construed as the 'study of continuity rather than change' (Maruna 2001: 27).

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[8]Fagan (1989) defined desistance as the 'process of reduction in the frequency and severity of (family) violence, leading to its eventual end when 'true desistance' or 'quitting' occurs (ibid:380, quoted in Bushway et al., 2001).

[9]Loeber and LeBlanc (1990:409) specified four components of desistance: 'deceleration', 'specialization', 'de-escalation' and 'reaching a ceiling' thus conceptualising desistance overall as a process from more to less serious offending over time (LeBlanc and Loeber 1998).

[10]Weitekamp and Kerner (1994) define termination as the time when the criminal behaviour stops permanently; in contrast, suspension is defined as a break in offending behaviour. They therefore view desistance as a process by which offending decelerates and exhibits less variety.

[11]More fully: 'Primary deviation involved the initial flirtation and experimentation with deviant behaviors. Secondary deviation…is deviance that becomes "incorporated as part of the 'me' of the individual"' (Lemert 1951:76, quoted in Maruna and Farrall, 2004).

Theories of desistance

Significant criminological interest in desistance developed in the 1970s and 1980s (for example Cusson and Pinsonneault 1986; Meisenhelder 1977, 1982; Rand 1987; Shover 1983) and became a major area of enquiry in criminal career research in the 1990s (for example Graham and Bowling 1995; Sampson and Laub 1993; Maruna 1997). Since this time, desistance research has moved beyond identifying who desists, and when, to propose a range of theories that seek to account for and explain desistance as a process (for example, Farrall and Bowling 1999; Giordano et al. 2002; Laub and Sampson 2003; Maruna 2001; Warr 1998).

The theories and studies reviewed in this chapter are not exhaustive of all the literature on desistance; rather the following review is intended to be illustrative of the wider body of work on desistance. Whilst there are commonalities across theories of desistance, for the purpose of classification the theories of desistance are presented under three broad headings that echo the classificatory distinctions drawn by Maruna (1997) and Barry (2010): namely, individual and agentic; social and structural; and interactionist. 'Individual and agentic' theories are based on the established links between age and certain criminal behaviours, locating explanations of desistance within age and maturational reform theories (or 'ontogenic theories'); rational choice explanations for desistance are also subsumed under this category. 'Social and Structural' theories include social bonds and social control (or 'sociogenic') theories which, generally, postulate an association between desistance and circumstances 'external' to the individual (although these include the individual's reaction to, and interaction with, those circumstances). Such theories emphasise the significance of ties to family, employment or educational programmes which are considered to create a stake in conformity. 'Interactionist' theories include those

which combine age and individual rationality with external circumstances. Interactionist theories broadly emphasise the significance of subjective changes in the person's sense of self and identity, reflected in changing motivations, greater concern for others and more consideration of the future although they recognise the mutually influential interaction that occurs between these 'internal' processes and 'external' or socio-structural factors.

Individual and Agentic Theories of Desistance

Criminal careers research suggests that people begin offending in early adolescence, that rates of offending peak in late adolescence or young adulthood and that most people stop offending before reaching 30 or 40 years of age, thus construing offending primarily as an age-related phenomenon (see for example Blumstein and Cohen 1987; Farrington 1986, 1997). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that the 'age-crime curve' has remained virtually static for at least 150 years. The aggregate age-crime curve (which is computed by dividing the total number of arrests of individuals of a given age by the total population size of the specific age) does indeed indicate a sharp increase in the arrest rate in the early teen years; a peak age of arrest in the late teen or early adult years (dependent on crime type); and a decrease in the rate of arrest over the remaining age distribution. Evidence of the age-crime relationship can be found in studies that analyse data relating crime rates to aggregates of various sizes. These studies consistently report that overall the age distribution of any population is inversely related to its crime rate (Cohen and Land 1987; Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Steffensmeier and Harer 1987; Steffensmeier et al 1989.).

The relationship between age and crime is the fundamental cause of the 'Great Debate' in criminology (Vold, Bernard and Snipes 1998: 285). This debate involved a dispute over whether one finds the same relationship between age and crime with individual-level data as that which is observed when analysing aggregate data. Two main factions formed within this debate; one represented by Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1986; 1988; 1990) and the other by Blumstein and others (Blumstein and Cohen 1979, 1987; Blumstein et al 1986; Blumstein, Cohen and Farrington 1988; Farrington 1983, 1986). Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) contend that crime everywhere is inversely related to age at both the individual and aggregate levels of analysis. Thus the relationship between age and crime is considered to be invariant; all people, everywhere, within any historical period tend to commit less crime as they age regardless of any offence type. Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) argue that age specific offence rates increase dramatically from age ten to age seventeen and then continually decrease thereafter, regardless of the individual's criminal propensity.

Blumstein, and others, alternatively argue that age is not inversely related to criminal offending at the individual level of analysis among active offenders. They concede that both participation in criminal activity and the incidence rates of offending vary inversely with age at the population level. However, they contend that Gottfredson and Hirschi confuse changes in participation and incidence rates with changes in the frequency of individual offending among active offenders. In short, one of the major points that Blumstein and others convey is that the shape of the age-crime curve could be the result of a process other than offenders simply committing fewer offences as they age; they indicate that that the age crime curve is driven by two

processes: participation and incidence rates. A change in one of these rates affects the empirical shape of the curve. As long as offenders are still active they may continue to commit crimes at a relatively constant rate independent of their age; thus changes in aggregate crime rates may reflect changes in prevalence (see Farrington 1986; 1997).

'Ontogenic' or 'maturational reform' theories all conclude that over time and with age, young people tend to naturally 'grow out of crime' (Rutherford 1992 quoted in Newburn 2002:541). One of the largest longitudinal studies of crime and desistance was undertaken by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck in the 1930s (Glueck and Glueck 1940[12]). In their theory of 'maturational reform', they argued that '[a]geing is the only factor which emerges as significant in the reform process' (ibid: 1940 quoted in Bushway et al., 2001:492). Their theory of maturational reform proposed that 'the physical and mental changes which enter into the natural process of maturation offer a chief explanation of improvement of conduct with passing years' (Glueck and Glueck 1974: 149, quoted in Laub and Sampson 2001: 38). Thus for the Gluecks, desistance 'cannot be attributed to external environmental transformations' (Glueck and Glueck 1974: 173 quoted in Laub and Sampson 2001: 39) but was normative and expected, with exceptions being explained by a lack of maturity.

Maturational reform is an influential theory of desistance in criminology. Wilson and Herrnstein (1985) argue that none of the possible correlates of age, such as employment, peers or family circumstances, explain crime and criminality as well as the variable of age. Similarly, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) suggest, in a variation

[12]This refers in particular to the Gluecks fifteen year longitudinal study of 1000 juvenile delinquents (see Laub and Sampson 2001).

of the Gluecks approach, that '[s]pontaneous desistance is just that, change in behaviour that cannot be explained and change that occurs regardless of what else happens' (ibid: 136, quoted in Laub and Sampson 2001:40). They attribute decreases in offending over time to biological changes which slow down the individual, thereby reducing the will and capacity to re-offend (see similarly Gove 1985). From this perspective, criminal behaviour is impervious to life-course events or any social, situational or institutional influences. However, Maruna (1997, 2001) has highlighted, in reference to male crime, that although testosterone levels decrease with age, they do so less rapidly than the sharply peaking age-crime curve and that while physical strength tends to peak at age 30, the age-crime curve decreases from the late teens.

Bushway et al., (2001) argue that the identification of desistance as a process rather than a state of termination, particularly in reference to developmental accounts of the desistance process, renders the idea of age as a causal explanation of desistance implausible. They contend that the developmental process occurs with ageing, with age being the dimension along which the behaviour changes; 'age indexes a range of different variables, including biological changes, social and normative transitions, and life experiences, and in itself is not an explanation for change' (Maruna 1997:3). A focus on ageing and maturation as a universal or natural phenomenon thus fails to account for differences in individuals' pathways to desistance. Critically, it abstracts the individual from the context within which these developmental changes occur by eliding the role of relational, social or structural processes. Moreover, such theories neglect to consider the role of cognition, reflexivity or agency in the process of change, or to adequately account for the

development[13] or logistics of such internal processes (Rutter 1989). As such, ontogenic theories are limited in their capacity to explain why or how this change occurs (Maruna 1997). Explanations as to how and why this change occurs can perhaps be better located within what have been broadly classified in this chapter as 'social and structural' and 'interactionist' theories of desistance.

Rational Choice Theories

Theories that place explanatory weight on the individual's agentic role in desistance generally draw on concepts of rational choice (Clarke and Cornish, 1985; Cornish and Clarke, 1986). Often these theories explain that an individual's decisions to desist are motivated by the pursuit of an alternative future that does not involve offending (see for example Paternoster, 1989; Paternoster and Bushway 2009; Piliavin et al. 1986), perhaps as a consequence of exposure to an aversive experience (Haggard et al 2001) or in response to an accumulation of unfavourable experiences (Cusson and Pinsonneault 1986).

The essence of the rational choice framework of desistance is that the decision to desist from offending is based on a conscious reappraisal of the costs and benefits of crime (see Clarke and Cornish 1985; Cornish and Clarke 1986). In this perspective, individuals are conceptualised as 'reasoning decision-makers' (Cornish and Clarke 1986:13). Nonetheless, rational choice theorists recognise that this decision is not made in isolation in as much as it is informed by individuals' experience of, and involvement, in wider social institutions and processes. Critically, however, these authors neglect to elaborate how such processes might exert a

[13] For a discussion of neurological, psychological, and cognitive development, maturity and maturation see Prior et al (2011).

constraint on either offenders' decision making or their capacities to realise these intentions.

Shover (1985), for example, in discussing why some people persist in crime when others largely abandon it in their late teens, suggests that there are two crucial points in the lives of persistent offenders when a more or less rational decision is made about whether to continue: in late adolescence, when the prospect exists of a shift towards more serious, higher risk adult crime, and in early middle age, when anxiety or nerves and diminishing strength become relevant factors in the calculation. He argues that ageing improves offenders' ability and inclination to calculate more precisely and carefully the results of past and prospective criminal involvement and the result is an increasing probability of desistance (see also Shover and Thompson 1992[14]).

Paternoster and Bushway (2009) have developed an 'identity theory of criminal desistance' which is essentially a rational choice, cognitive and individualistic model of the desistance process. They suggest that people make a conscious decision to change based on increasing dissatisfaction with their life, which becomes conceptually linked by the person to an anticipated future, and weighed up against a self as future non-offender. This recalculation induces motivation to change. They view any movement towards 'social institutions' such as marriage or employment, for example, as coming *after* this cognitive process, which suggests that there is a shift in the person's sense of self prior to any behaviour modification. Whilst

[14] It is noteworthy that Shover and Thompson (1992: 92-3) recognise that previous research emphasise the role of social bonds or social ties in strengthening commitment to conformity, however they concede that 'due to the lack of data on the number and strength of post release social bonds and legitimate activities [we] were unable to test this part of the theory of desistance' (ibid: 93).

recognising that social relationships are important, they see this as relevant to the change process after a decision to desist has been made. Critically, their assumption that 'new social networks are approached and mobilised subsequent to the emergence of a new conventional identity' (2009: 1108) elides any consideration of the role of extant social relationships in the process of identity change and any consideration of the role of new social relationships in contributing to the life long process of identity development.

Rational choice or agentic accounts of desistance usefully depart from the determinism implied by accounts of desistance which primarily focus on 'structural influences' such as employment and marriage (discussed below) and which attribute a more peripheral role to concepts of agency. Nevertheless, much of the extant research which emphasises the role of the individual agent in the desistance process draws on rational choice perspectives to reveal how individuals 're-assess and re-evaluate their situations, the impact on their orientations towards criminal and non-criminal behaviour, and the decisions that will ensue (Cromwell et al., 1991; Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986; Leibrich, 1993; Shover, 1983)' (King 2010:110). However, few such accounts of the role of agency in the desistance process elaborate either what the process of reflexivity entails (although see Farrall et al 2010, King 2012, Vaughan 2007) or how this contributes to identity formation. In so doing, such theories fail to consider how individuals' reasoning and actions are variously enabled or constrained by the relational, cultural and social contexts within which these processes are embedded.

Social and Structural Theories

Social Learning Theories /Differential Association

Social learning frameworks, which progress explanations for both involvement in and desistance from offending, suggest that factors associated with onset of offending correlate with those that account for desistance. Factors associated with desistance include, for example, differential association with non-criminal peers and significant others (such as a partner or spouse for example), less exposure to or opportunities to model or imitate criminal behaviour, the development of attitudes favourable to conformity, and differential reinforcement discouraging continued involvement in offending. The most important of these factors for desistance is, according to Warr (1998), disassociation or weakened ties to peer relations as a consequence of the transition to marriage. He contends that involvement in an intimate relationship reduces the amount of time spent with peers although he does not elaborate on how or why this occurs. Rather, his explanation coheres around the outcomes, suggesting that when an individual disassociates from their peer network they may lose both the motivation and the means of committing certain types of criminal behaviour[15]. However, Laub and Sampson (2001) suggest that in the absence of a mechanism explaining desistance from crime in Warr's analysis, alternative explanations for the observed relationship between marriage and desistance could account for this phenomenon (ibid: 47). Laub and Sampson suggest that possible explanations of the marriage effect could include changes in routine activities and, thus, opportunities for crime. They propose social control

[15] Wright and Cullen (2004: 185) replicated Warr's (1998) study but focused on employment rather than marriage. They identified that employment increased opportunities for individuals to interact and associate with pro-social co-workers, which, they reasoned, 'restructure friendship networks by diminishing contact with delinquent peers'. Wright and Cullen (2004: 200) suggest that the effects of employment on desistance can be attributed to the 'quality of peer associations that occur within the context of work'.

theory as a possible explanation, suggesting that spouses 'may limit the husband's number of nights out with the guys' (ibid: 47) and, perhaps alongside new pro-social associates, exert informal social control.

Social control theories

Social control theorists suggest that informal ties to 'institutions of social control', such as family, education or employment, particularly in early adulthood, explain changes in criminality during the life course (Laub and Sampson 2003). Therefore, unlike maturational or developmental theories, such theories suggest that the experiences that lead to desistance are not necessarily universal and they can often, to a greater or lesser degree, be under the control of the individual, in terms of obtaining employment or becoming married for example (Laub and Sampson 2001). The theorist most closely identified with control theory is Hirschi (1969) who identified four aspects of social bonds: attachment (emotional connection to others); commitment (investment in relationships and conformity); involvement (participation in legitimate activities) and belief (acceptance of the rule of law). However, current formulations of control theory can be attributed to the framework delineated by Matza (1964). Matza's (1964) notion of a 'drift' centred on attachment, or otherwise, to social bonds; he suggested that most young offenders are caught somewhere in between the social bonds of adulthood and peer subcultures without a deep attachment to either, and that where adult roles become available, young people are likely to desist from crime (see also Trasler 1979). In this vein, there is substantial research confirming that desistance from crime is correlated with completing education, acquisition of employment and investment in familial and personal relationships particularly in terms of the social control exerted by these factors (see for example Farrington et al 1986; Gibbens 1984; Glueck and Glueck 1940; Graham

and Bowling 1995; Liebrich 1993; Meisenhelder 1977; Rand 1987; Sampson and Laub 1993; Shover 1985; West 1982) (discussed below). Correspondingly, those who lack such attachments or bonds may be more likely to persist in offending because they have the least to lose, for example from the imposition of social sanctions.

Social control theorists (Hirschi, 1969; Laub and Sampson 1993) argue that offending reflects weak social bonds and that desistance are enabled where bonds or ties to mainstream institutions (such as a spouse or a career[16]) are developed or reinforced. Laub et al., (1998) emphasise the 'independent' and 'exogenous' impact of these bonds. They posit that these triggering events occur, at least in part, by 'chance' (ibid: 225) or by 'default' (Sampson and Laub 2004). If these turning points were entirely the result of an individual's rational decision-making or personal preferences, control theorists admit, they could not argue for the 'independent role of social bonds in shaping behaviour' (Laub et al., 1998: 225).

In their age-graded theory of informal social control, Sampson and Laub (1993) argue against the 'ontogenetic' approach dominant in developmental psychology, alternatively suggesting that anti-social behaviour in childhood does not necessarily result in anti-social behaviour in adulthood (for an opposite argument see Farrington 2002), but that the influence of institutions of informal social control accounts for both continuity and change in individual criminal careers. In their view, employment and marriage confer obligations and expectations on the individual that generate informal controls through a network of social bonds, regardless of prior individual differences in criminal propensity. Laub and Sampson (2001), building on their

[16] It is widely accepted that social bonds include significant intimate or personal relationships, responsibilities and 'stakes in conformity' in a wider sense, and are not confined to the formal institutions of marriage or employment as such.

earlier work (Sampson and Laub 1993) present a theory of crime that recognizes the interaction between personal choice, situational context and social control.

> 'The processes of desistance operate simultaneously at different levels (individual, situational and community) and across different contextual environments (family, work and military) (Laub and Sampson 2001: 49).

There is a wealth of research that suggests that key life events such as marriage, parenthood or employment are likely to be correlated with, although not necessarily causal of desistance (although see Sampson et al 2006 discussed below). To date, explanations proffered to explain this phenomenon are conflicting and contingent.

Marriage

Marriage has variously been associated with changes in adult crime (Glueck and Glueck 1940), and reductions in alcohol and drug use (Knight et al.1977; West 1982). Cusson and Pinsonneault (1986) argued that what was important in terms of facilitating desistance, was not marriage in and of itself, but the quality of the relationship and the criminality, or otherwise, of the chosen partner (see also Osborn and West 1979; Ouimet and LeBlanc 1996; Rutter 1996; Shavit and Rattner, 1988; Simons et al. 2002; West 1982). This would suggest that the partner's pro-social attributes, or otherwise, rather than any characteristic of the relationship are more significant in effect.

The various correlations between marriage and desistance are often explained in reference to a variety of criminological theories and, in particular, life course (Farrington 1999; Loeber and Le Blanc 1990), rational choice (Cusson and

Pissoneault 1986), social control (Sampson and Laub 1993; Laub and Sampson 2003; Sampson and Laub 2005) and social learning theories (Warr 1998). Control theorists suggest that these transitions are the effects of interpersonal ties and integration into or social bonds to mainstream, normative institutions (Laub and Sampson 2003, Nagin and Paternoster 1994) which 're-order short-term situational inducements to crime and, over time, re-direct long-term commitments to conformity' (Sampson and Laub 2001:51). At the same time these connections can limit criminal involvement by reducing opportunities for crime or access to offending peers (Osgood and Lee 1993; Warr 1998) or by exerting informal social control over the individual in the form of 'obligations and constraints' (Sampson and Laub 1993:141; Laub and Sampson 2003). These are the most frequently cited explanations for the correlation between marriage and desistance. Other explanations suggest that such life-course transitions can enhance self-control, such that the desister chooses to avoid offending, based on a cost-benefit analysis of short term gains against long term consequences (Forrest and Hay 2011) or that intimate relationships can provoke a shifts in attitudes, values and identities which render offending incompatible with these changes in the self, suggestive of a more agentic dynamic than social control theories generally imply (Giordano et al 2002, 2007).

More recently, however, Sampson et al (2006: 467) have identified various mechanisms to explain the effect of marriage on desistance. They suggest that the influence of the marital relationship can be attributed to the interplay between the creation of 'interdependent systems of obligation, mutual support and restraint that impose significant costs for translating criminal propensities into action'; changes in daily routine activities and patterns of association; informal social control – which they conceptualise as a process of supervision, monitoring and direction; and the acquisition of a 'respectability package' (Giordano et al 2002: 1013). In other words,

the idea of marriage as a developmental process is manifest in deliberate responsibility taking that is emblematic of a conscious and conscientious transition to adulthood. Sampson et al (2006) suggest that marriage is not only correlated with desistance, but has a causal effect, although, as the authors acknowledge, the historical context of their research is relevant here, in terms of cultural and normative expectations surrounding the nature of marital relationships, and the degree to which marriage as an institution exacts this effect, rather than, or compared to, cohabitation, for example.

The socio-historical and cultural contexts of research samples have come under increased scrutiny as a lens through which to understand the impact of normative, transitional or developmental life course events on desistance (see for example Bersani et al. 2009; Giordano et al. 2002; King et al. 2007; Lyngstad et al. 2011; Monsbakken et al. 2012b; Shanahan 2000; Savolainen 2009), reflecting increasing recognition of the distinct socio-economic changes that have occurred in frequencies and patterns of marriage, marriage stability and in normative expectations surrounding marriage and co-habitation. Despite these changes, Bersani et al. (2009) found that 'the influence of marriage on the desistance process is strongest in the most contemporary context' (2009:20) in part as a consequence of pre-marital cohabitation and later marriages, which, they infer, engender increased marital stability, quality and investment in the relationship. Lyngstad et al's (2011) quantitative study of 120,821 Norwegian males similarly revealed a gradual and substantial decrease in offending in the five years prior to marriage, although he observed that marriage was followed by a small but non-trivial increase after the formalisation of the relationship through marriage. He suggests that desistance does not emerge as a consequence of the event of getting married; the emotional

attachment and any behavioural changes this gives rise to occur in the years preceding marriage, particularly in a contemporary context where cohabitation and longer pre-marital relationships is the norm. In contrast to Sampson et al (2006), Lyngstad et al (2011: 2) argue that it is possible to 'treat marriage as an *outcome* of rather than a causal agent in the process of criminal desistance' (see similarly Kiernan 2004; Monsbakken et al 2012b; Savolainen 2009).

There is some evidence to suggest that the impact of marriage on criminality is less evident for women (Giordano et al. 2002; King et al. 2007; Kreager et al. 2010) which may be attributable to important gendered differences in experiences of the marital relationship, reflecting their disparate gender roles within the marriage. Monsbakken et al. (2012b) alternatively hypothesise that the different gendered social control effects of marriage on desistance might reflect the stringent controls emanating from women's friendship and family networks throughout the life course; when seen through this lens, they argue that for women, marriage heralds no new mechanisms of social control and therefore engenders less change promotive effects. On the other hand, as Sampson et al. (2006) these apparent differences might equally reflect the gendered nature of criminal involvement, in so far as men are statistically more likely to marry a pro-social partner than women. Equally, any decrease in women's criminality may be further attributable to the influence of parenthood, which, as the following subsection elaborates, has a greater and more immediate impact on women's lifestyles (Bersani et al. 2009; Giordano et al. 2002; Graham and Bowling 1995; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998).

Building on the foregoing analysis, at the very least, this would suggest that the impact of marriage on offending is both gendered and changeable within and across

different cultural contexts and between different socio-historical eras, as much as it is contingent on the variances within a given relationship, over the life course. However, while the quantitative studies referred to here can provide overview of *what* happens in most cases most of the time, in terms of elaborating on the effects they document, the extent to which they can shed light on the mechanisms and mechanics of the underlying process is constrained.

Parenthood

The effects of parenthood remain a comparatively under-researched dynamic of desistance. While there is some evidence to suggest that parenthood can encourage extrication from gangs (Fleisher and Krienert 2004; Moloney et al. 2009; Moore and Hagedorn 1999) and contribute to desistance (see for example Edin and Kefalas 2005; Kreager et al 2010; Savolainen 2009, Monsbakken et al. 2012a), other studies suggest that becoming a parent has a negligible effect on offending trajectories (Blokland and Nieuwbeerta 2005; Giordano et al. 2002; Giordano et al. 2011; Laub and Sampson 2003; Rand 1987; Sampson and Laub 1993; Warr 1998) or, in the face of financial pressures for example, can even exacerbate offending (Wakefield and Uggen 2008 cited in Savolainen 2009). It is likely that a coalescence of factors will affect the dynamic experience of parenthood (see for example Arendell 2000; Hauari and Hollingworth 2009; Marsiglio and Pleck 2004) and influence its significance and impact including age, gender, maturity, one's experience of being parented, the status, nature and dynamics of the relational context within which a given form of parenting occurs, and individual personal, cultural and socio-economic contexts that variously constrain and enable the realisation of this social role and identity consistent with one's internalised values and beliefs. Perhaps as a consequence of this level of individual variation, numerous explanations as to *how* parenthood contributes to desistance have been

proposed and, in the main, they echo those mechanisms associated with explanations for the marriage effect discussed above (Kreager et al 2010; Monsbakken et al 2012a). In addition, however, Moloney et al (2009:305) found that fatherhood motivated change in triggering subjective and affective modifications which led to changes in outlook, priorities and future orientation. However, the authors also identified that for these shifts to ultimately translate into behavioural change, then changes in the amount of time spent on the streets and an ability to provide for oneself or one's family needed to occur.

Bersani et al. (2009) suggest that parenthood is more highly correlated with female than male desistance because the impact on one's lifestyle of becoming a mother, not only practically, but also in terms of social expectations surrounding 'good mothering' and the assumption of maternal responsibilities is more immediate and consequentially direct in terms of reducing opportunities to offend through changes in routine activities and association with others who offend (see similarly Keizer et al. 2010) and in relation to the perceived impacts of, for example, imprisonment on their children (see also Edin and Kefalas 2005; Graham and Bowling 1995; Keizer et al. 2010; Kreager et al 2010; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998; Monsbakken et al 2012a).

Recognising that some of the social or behavioural effects of parenthood might be attributable to the degree of involvement in parenting, various research studies have revealed conflicting evidence when controlling for the status or context of the parents' relationship - for example whether cohabitating, married or separated - and the timing of pregnancy, birth and behavioural changes (see for example Farrington and West 1995; Giordano et al. 2011; Monsbakken et al 2012a). In general, quantitative research rarely seems to concur with the positive relationships that

qualitative research identifies between parenthood and desistance (see for example, Edin and Kafalas 2005; Fleisher and Krienert, 2004; Giordano et al. 2002; Laub and Sampson, 2003; although see Kreager et al. 2010 as an exception). It might be suggested that these divergences relate to different research objectives. Quantitative research tends to focus on the degree to which intimate relationships or parenthood are causative of or conditional on desistance, in terms of the relative sequencing of relational investments and desistance. In contrast, qualitative analyses tend to focus on revealing the relative contribution of the identified change agent to the outcomes, be it the role of the partner, for example, as change agent (as in social control theories), or the role of the individual as change agent (as in more agentic or cognitive theories of desistance).

Employment

Cromwell et al. (1991:83) argued that 'desistance [is] associated with the disintegration of the adolescent peer group and with employment and the ability to earn money legitimately' (see also Wright and Cullen 2004). Farrington et al. (1986) found that individual offending rates fluctuated in relation to the individual's employment status, with reductions or suspensions in offending attributable to the restrictions employment places on one's available time to offend. Conversely, other authors have observed that employment also provides opportunities for offending (Hirschi 1969; Sviridoff and Thompson 1983; West and Farrington 1977). Nevertheless, whilst employment may reduce the likelihood of re-offending, a lack of employment does not necessarily correlate with an increase in offending. Indeed, as Maruna (1997) observed the connection between unemployment and crime is not sustained when applied to women, who have been historically disadvantaged in terms of employment, but remain marginally represented in crime statistics. Age has also been cited as a factor in determining the impact of employment on criminality

(Hagan and McCarthy 1997); Uggen (2000), in an analysis of data from a national work experiment in the US, found that those aged 27 or older were more likely to desist when provided with employment. Uggen inferred from this that the meaning attached to employment and crime may change as individuals age, indicating a subjective component to desistance. Similarly problematising a social control interpretation of the role of employment in influencing behavioural change is Skardhamer and Savolainen's (2012) recent quantitative research on the timing of behavioural change and participation in employment, which identified that employment emerged *after* individuals had ceased offending. Rather than triggering desistance, Skardhamer and Savolainen suggest that participation in employment emerges as a consequence of desistance.

In this vein, while employment has been generally correlated with desistance (for a review of this literature see Owens 2009; Skardhamar and Savolainen 2012), it is also increasingly acknowledged that employment in and of itself does not produce or trigger desistance; rather it is the meaning and outcomes of either the nature of the work or participation in employment and how these influence an individual's self-concept and social identity and how these interact with a person's priorities, goals and relational concerns that can explain this relationship (Owens 2009; Savolainen 2009; Weaver 2012). Indeed, as Owens states, the impact of work goes beyond getting a pay cheque or even the injection of a daily or weekly routine; 'employment is part of the idea of what is acceptable' (Owens 2009: 50), akin to Giordano et al's notion of the 'respectability package' (2002: 1013), and communicates in itself, that one has a place in the world and a role to play – be it in society or even in one's own family – as a reliable partner and provider or a good parent for example. Indeed, the interaction between employment and investment in significant intimate relations and/or parenthood (which for some people works to encourage and enable change)

has been generally observed (see for example Bianchi et al. 2005 cited in Bersani et al 2009; Edin et al. 2001; Laub and Sampson 2001; Owens 2009; Rhodes 2008; Savolainen 2009). Employment can provide the economic resources, for example, that facilitate both marriage and family formation (Lichter et al. 1991 in King et al 2007) and the realisation of the assumed social role as provider, for example (Bersani et al 2009). Similarly, providing for one's family, (which remains a central aspect of fathering, of identity as a father and, in turn contributes to feelings of self-worth (Pleck 2004)), can be a powerful motivator to obtain and sustain employment (Edin et al 2001; Edin and Kefalas 2005; Savolainen 2009; Tyrer et al. 2005 in Helyar-Cardwell, 2012). However, the absence of employment can generate financial pressures on young families who may resort to offending to resolve (Shannon and Abrams 2007; Moloney et al. 2009; Wakefield and Uggen 2008 in Savolainen 2009) just as participation in employment can itself herald new pressures and challenges which can undermine its potential to bring about change (Weaver 2012).

Religion/spirituality[17]

While religiosity is not among the 'social institutions' that generally attract empirical attention, there is an increasing interest in revealing the mechanisms through which religiosity and affiliations to religious communities might enable change. As with the analyses of the role of marriage, parenthood and employment, the role of religious beliefs and practices in deterring crime has produced varying results and generated varying explanations across a wide number of studies (for an overview see Baier

[17] Schroeder and Frana (2009:2) draw on The Fetzer ([1999] 2003:2) to differentiate between religiosity and spirituality. Religiosity is construed as a social experience 'that involves a system of worship and doctrine that is shared with a group' (ibid). Spirituality is more personal and experiential and 'concerned with the transcendent, addressing ultimate questions about life's meaning, with the assumption that there is more to life than what we see or fully understand' (ibid).

and Wright 2001). Topalli et al. (2012:1), for example, found that his 'hardcore street offenders' referenced their religious beliefs to justify past and current participation in serious offending to counteract 'the deterrent effect that existential and transcendental consequences of anticipated, current, or previous criminal activity typically have' (Topalli et al. 2012:14) – an antidote to, perhaps, or defence against the 'feared self' (Paternoster and Bushway 2009:1103). In this sense, religion can also provide motivation and support for deviant action, crime and violence particularly in extreme forms (Miller 2006). Although until recently (see for example Armstrong unpublished; Giordano et al. 2007; Maruna et al. 2006; Schroeder and Frana 2009) religion and spirituality have not been central units of analysis in desistance studies, it has nonetheless emerged as a salient factor for some people in initiating, enabling and sustaining change, and, in that, constraining or restraining offending (see for example Calverley 2012; Maruna 2001).

Marranci's (2009) anthropological research within prisons and Muslim communities in the UK illustrates how, for a number of interrelated reasons, Muslims often rediscover Islam within prison (see also Marranci 2007). Amongst those reasons is the desire to repent and to make good, presenting an opportunity for change as they 'reconsider their life and link their experience of prison not to human punishment but to an opportunity granted by Allah to change their life' (Marranci 2007: 8) (see also Maruna et al. 2006 on conversions to Christianity in prison). Marranci (2006) elucidates a theory of identity as encompassing two functions – it allows human beings to make sense of their autobiographical self and it allows them to express that self through symbols which communicate feelings that could not otherwise be externally communicated (see also Marranci 2007). Marranci (2007: 8) differentiates between Islam as 'an act of identity' and Islam 'as an act of faith'. He argues that Muslims in prison often see Islam more as an act of identity than of faith.

Nonetheless, drawing on the findings of Calverley (2012) (discussed below), it might be inferred that the rediscovery of Islam has the potential to assist Muslim offenders to reconnect with their religious identities, traditions and culture so as to support their efforts to change[18].

Calverley's (2012) study of the desistance pathways of thirty-three men of Indian, Bangladeshi and Black and Dual Heritage resident in London found that the (re)discovery of Islamic faith was a significant feature of desistance for Bangladeshi participants (n=6/11). Embracing Islam provided opportunities for the establishment of an alternative non-offending identity, but which was contiguous with their past selves, and thus represented a discovery or return to their 'true self' (see relatedly Armstrong, unpublished; Maruna 2001; Maruna et al. 2006). Moreover, Calverley suggested that the narrative and teachings of Islam provided a moral compass, and a resource for emotion coping (see also Giordano et al. 2007[19] and Schroeder and Frana 2009 on Christianity[20]). While religious *faith* was not a significant feature of Indian participants' narratives, participation in religious events and ceremonies was construed as an opportunity for Indian desisters to prove the sincerity of their efforts to desist. Participation in religious practices and institutions had a performative function and association with an alternative community provided not only an important source of social recognition but also enabled the relinquishment of former friendship groups (see similarly Adjorjan and Chui 2011 on Christian faith).

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[18] See relatedly Bracken et al's (2009) study of desistance among Canadian, Aboriginal former gang members.

[19] Giordano et al. (2007) relatedly proposed that religion can provide a 'cognitive blueprint for how one is to proceed as a changed individual' (Giordano et al. 2007: 4); a blueprint found in the prescriptions and teachings associated with that faith, upon which the individual can draw as they embark on the process of desistance and encounter new situations and experiences.

[20] Schroeder and Frana (2009) suggest that religion affords emotional comfort, a distraction from current stressors and contributes to demarcating the transition from deviance to conventionality, arguably symbolizing a shift in one's moral status.

In similar vein, Giordano et al. (2007) found that desisters' new found commitment to Christianity enabled the development of different forms of social capital in terms of the consolidation or reparation of existing relationships, particularly where such relationships reinforced or affirmed their religious commitments, and the development of new relationships and social networks through affiliation to religious institutions or faith groups (see also Chu (2007) in relation to desistance from drug use).

In contrast to the studies which emphasise the significance of internalized faith to processes of change (see for example Giordano et al. 2002; Giordano et al 2007; Schroeder and Frana 2009), Lim and Putnam (2010) suggest that private and subjective dimensions of religiosity are not significantly related to subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction. Lim and Putnam (2010) propose that the positive association between religiosity and life satisfaction resides in the social relationships forged within religious institutions generating a strong sense of religious belonging, which, through processes of mutual identification reinforce religious identities. They concluded that for life satisfaction 'praying together seems to be better than either bowling together or praying alone' (ibid: 927). Of particular relevance here is their suggestion that the effects cannot be reduced to network size or strength of ties, but to the specific context in which these networks are forged and identities shared, and which endows these friendships with particular significance. However, the availability of these specific supports inherent in religious communities depends to an extent on the willingness of faith based communities and institutions to offer support to desisters, and on offender's receptivity to and experiences of engaging with them (for a nuanced analysis of this dynamic, see Armstrong, unpublished).

Taken together, these studies emphasise the significance of internalized faith to processes of change, which can be reinforced through participation in religious practices and communities. Conversely, however, participation in religious observances or externalized faith is, in isolation, insufficient to sustaining change over time (Armstrong unpublished), although, where involvement with a community of believers generates a strong sense of religious belonging, and, through processes of mutual identification, reinforces cultural and religious identities, this can enhance subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction (Lim and Putnam 2010). However, it remains that the extent to which the content of faith or 'the nature of the religion adopted, as opposed to religiosity per se, alters or modifies in some way the trajectory associated with desistance [is] yet, [to be] fully considered' (Calverley 2012: 102 [this author's insertions]) (although see Armstrong unpublished).

This section has reviewed the evidence base surrounding the relationships between desistance and the principle 'institutions of social control' which are generally construed in the literature as 'structures'. What this analysis has revealed is not only the contingent and conditional interaction between these social relations but divergences in results and conclusions as to their effects depending on the methodology deployed and the theoretical explanations progressed. Moreover, while social and structural theories variously recognise and explain the role of social institutions in the desistance process, they fail to illuminate how social structures or institutions shape decisions, under-analysing how the individual perceives and responds to such influences (see for example Laub and Sampson 2003).

Interactionist Theories

The preceding analysis has illustrated that desistance cannot be readily reduced to the influence of either internal or external factors. Indeed, an increasing number of desistance theories conceptualise the desistance process as an interaction between, or integration of, agentic and structural factors which are developed from the perspectives of the offenders themselves, drawing on the subjective perceptions of their lived experiences and the narrative accounts of their individual desistance processes (for example Farrall and Bowling 1999; Giordano et al 2002; Maruna 2001). In these 'interactionist' theories, desistance essentially occurs as the outcome of an individual seeking to alter their socio-structural context, and in so doing acquiring new behaviours and new pro-social roles, or vice versa, variously resulting in associated shifts in the individual's personal and social identity (see for example Barry 2010; Bottoms et al. 2004; Farrall 2002; Farrall, Bottoms and Shapland 2010; Giordano et al. 2002; Maruna and Farrall 2004; Uggen et al 2004). Thus, such accounts of the desistance process place differing emphases on the role of individuals and their social contexts; that difference exemplifies in a desistance focused context, a familiar sociological tension generally known as the 'structure-agency' debate (Bottoms et al., 2004), which concerns the relative primacy of, or interplay between, structure or agency with regard to human behaviour, on which social theories some desistance theorists explicitly draw[21].

In 'Making Good' Maruna (2001) demonstrated the important role that narratives play in structuring offenders' and ex-offenders' understanding of themselves and

[21] For example Barry (2010) draws on Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of capital; Maruna and Farrall (2004), building on Farrall and Bowling (1999) draw on Gidden's (1984) theory of structuration; Giordano et al (2002; 2003; 2007) draw on Mead's (1964) symbolic interactionist perspective; King (2010, 2012) draws on Archer's (2000; 2003) concept of the 'Internal Conversation' (see also Vaughan 2007) and Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) orientations of agency; Bottoms and Shapland (2010) draw on Mouzelis (2008).

their relationships in an exploration of the subjective dimensions of change. He used content analysis to identify different 'mindsets' exhibited by 20 career criminals (offenders who thought they would persist with crime) and 30 desisters (those who expressed a desire to change and had desisted from offending for approximately 2-3 years) who shared similar criminogenic traits and backgrounds and who lived in similarly criminogenic environments. Maruna found that a 'condemnation script' emerged from the persisters in contrast to the 'redemption script' that emerged from the desisters. Both the persisters and the desisters articulated a level of fatalism in their accounts of the development of their criminal careers; however, Maruna interpreted the minimisation of responsibility implied by this fatalism as evidence of their fundamentally normative values and aspirations and of their need to believe in their inherent integrity. Furthermore, in their accounts of achieving change there is evidence that people have to 'discover' agency in order to resist the structural pressures that are favourable to the commission of crime. This is not an entirely individualistic process, however; Maruna observed that people benefited from the supports of significant others in recognising and reinforcing the identity transformations that ensue. In particular, he identified that involvement in 'generative activities' (which make a contribution to the well-being of others) plays a part in testifying to the desister that an alternative agentic identity is being or has been forged. In this vein, McNeill (2006:49) suggested that Maruna's (2001) narrative analysis revealed 'the role of reflexivity in both revealing and producing shifts in the dynamic relationships between agency and structure'.

Farrall and Bowling (1999) draw on life course perspectives (namely Sampson and Laub 1993) and structuration theory, introduced by Giddens (1984) and adapted to criminology by Bottoms and Wiles (1992), to propose a developmental theory of desistance, in an attempt to disentangle 'the role of subjective vs. objective change

as the cause of desistance' (Laub and Sampson 2001:41) The life course perspective aims to combine, in ways compatible with Gidden's theory of structuration, personal histories and experiences within a structural setting: 'structural influences which are beyond the control, or perhaps even awareness, of individual respondents' (Farrall and Bowling 1999:258). Farrall and Bowling, following a review of studies dichotomising structural or agentic influences as explanandums of the process of desistance (1999:261), argue that the process of desistance is 'one that is produced through an *interplay* between individual choices, and a range of wider social forces, institutional and societal practices which are beyond the control of the individual' (emphasis in original). Using the concepts of 'duality of structure', power, social identities and position practices, Farrall and Bowling contend that power differentials within individuals over the life course will influence the 'timing and pace' of desistance (Ibid:265). In two case studies drawn from a wider qualitative sample, they illustrate the influences of significant others and events in individual decisions to stop offending.

Desistance theorists have increasingly started to focus on which changes at the level of personal cognition (see for example Giordano et al., 2002) or self-identity and self-concept (Burnett 1992; Graham and Bowling 1995; Maruna 1997; Shover 1996) might precede or coincide with changes in social bonds (LeBel et al. 2008). In contrast to control theories, cognitive or agentic explanations suggest that role transitions occur 'subsequent to the emergence of a cognitive openness to change that spurs interest in both marriage and reform' (Siennick and Osborn 2008:169-70) (see relatedly Paternoster and Bushway 2009). Using the data set from the Oxford Recidivism Study (Burnett 1992), LeBel et al. (2008) attempted to disentangle the interaction between such 'subjective/agency' factors and 'social/environmental'

factors. They found that subjective states measured before release had a direct effect on recidivism as well as indirect effects through their impact on social circumstances experienced post release. LeBel et al. (2008) reasoned that 'subjective changes may precede life-changing structural events and, to that extent, individuals can act as agents of their own change' (ibid: 155).

Cognitive/agentic theories suggest that 'turning point' events may have a different impact depending on the actors' level of motivation, readiness to reform, or interpretation of, or assignation of meaning to the events. Giordano et al., (2002), for example, develop a symbolic interactionist[22] perspective on desistance as a counterpoint to Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory of informal social control using a mixed method study design which included life history narratives to propose a four-part theory of 'cognitive transformation to 'provide more specificity about mechanisms of change' (Giordano et al., 2002:1004). Giordano et al (2002:1000) argue that the desistance process involves the following four stages:

1. '…a shift in the actor's basic openness to change';
2. '…one's exposure to a particular hook or set of hooks for change' (ibid: 1000) and 'one's attitude toward [it]' (ibid: 1001).
3. The envisioning and fashioning of 'an appealing and conventional 'replacement self'' (ibid: 1001);
4. '…a transformation in the way the actor views the deviant behaviour or lifestyle itself' (ibid: 1002).

[22] Symbolic interactionism suggests that people construct their identities as they evaluate others' attitudes towards them (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934). This process occurs within and through social interactions which are, in particular, communicative exchanges.

Giordano et al., (2002: 1026) state: ‘on a continuum of advantage and disadvantage, the real play of agency is in the middle’; thus, agency is most significant where the objective odds of desisting are evenly balanced. Where this balance is offset other factors appear to be of greater importance. Not dissimilarly, Rumgay (2004:408) considered that an individual has to recognize new social roles as an opportunity to change their identity which ‘marks the beginning of active attempts at personal change’. She suggests that these roles provide a ‘skeleton script’ (similar to Giordano et al’s (2002: 1055) notion of a ‘cognitive blueprint’) providing the individual with behavioural cues as to how to proceed as a changed person. However, while Giordano et al’s (2002) theory, and indeed, many principally agentic theories of the change process, can elaborate the early stages of desistance, they cannot explain what triggers this cognitive transformation, or why one institution at one time rather than another exerts this effect, or why people remain in marriages or in jobs during challenging times when his or her investment in these social relations has dwindled (Vaughan 2007).

Bottoms and Shapland’s (2011) (see also Farrall, Bottoms and Shapland 2010) analysis of their prospective, longitudinal, mixed method study of early desistance among young adult recidivists construes agency as occupying a central role in the desistance process. Drawing on Mouzelis (2008), they situate agency in interaction with individual dispositions (as a result of personal, social and criminal history) and socio-structural dimensions. Bottoms and Shapland’s analysis has led them to progress an interactive model of the early stages of desistance but, due to their prospective study design, they are not yet able to comment how desistance is sustained. They suggest that desistance is influenced by individuals’ dispositions and by their changing social capital (which may trigger desistance), which can

present as an opportunity for change. They suggest that despite taking action towards desistance, failure to maintain these changes in the face of obstacles, temptations or provocations may lead to relapse, although not necessarily back to the individual's starting point. They therefore emphasise the need for reinforcing factors – perhaps emerging from within the individual or their (changing) social relationships. While, then, they recognize that histories, habits and social opportunities influence this process, individual agency is given a prominent role in negotiating a new way of living, breaking habits with the support of significant others, in influencing their changing social contexts.

King (2012) draws on Emirbayer and Mische (1998) to explore the dynamics of agency in the early stages of desistance. His qualitative analysis of 20 people subject to probation supervision concluded that agency is conditioned by an individual's social context which delimits the range of future possibilities available by variously enabling or constraining change, which marks a departure from Paternoster and Bushway (2009[23]). In King's formulation, desistance emerges as an outcome of the interplay between structure and action, and, specifically, the individual's reflexive evaluation as to the extent to which he can realize his positive future self within the constraints and enablements that inhere in his social context. However, while King's analysis offers important insights into the relationships between agency, structure, identity, reflexivity and the desistance process, he is unable to explain what triggers this reflexive process in the first place.

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[23] To recapitulate Paternoster and Bushway (2009:1129) (in a departure themselves from Giordano et al 2002) argue that 'structural supports' provide individuals with an opportunity for realising a new self, already brought into being. In their formulation, agency is conceptualized as 'intentional self-change' (ibid: 1149-50) and it is the individual who creates his or her own future unrestrained by 'external' structures.

Uggen et al., (2004) emphasise both the role of age graded social bonds and roles and the social-psychological process underpinning various role transitions. In addition to employment and family, they stress the significance of 'civic reintegration'. Building on Maruna's (2001:7) contention that desistance is only possible when ex-offenders 'develop a coherent pro-social identity for themselves', and his recognition of the salience of involvement in 'generative activities' as critical to the desistance process, they specify the varieties of civic participation that contribute to such an identity and their associated subjective meanings to desisters. They proceed to show how a symbolic interactionist theory of role transition across socio-economic, familial and civic domains might explain identity shifts over the life course. In this study, they emphasise the reduced citizenship status and the enduring stigma experienced by offenders, resulting in 'the reduced *rights* and *capacities* of ex-offenders to attain full citizenship (ibid: 260) which serve to undermine their commitment to conformity and create new obstacles to desistance and the assumption of pro-social roles. They further highlight that even where ex-offenders articulate a desire to assume such pro-social roles, they 'often lack the resources and social relationships necessary to establish role commitments and solidify new identities' (Ibid: 284-5). These obstacles represent a significant problem because of the important role of societal reaction in supporting (or undermining) new self-conceptions and the reinforcement of pro-social identities (see relatedly Aresti et al. 2010).

The findings of this study resonate with Maruna and Farrall (2004), who propose a theoretical account of the desistance process centering on notions of self-determination and pro-social labeling. They discuss the role of societal reaction in supporting self-conceptions, derived from the experience of self as causal agent,

and the reinforcement of pro-social identities and the significance of the development of human and social capital in fostering desistance (see also Farrall 2002). Maruna and Farrall (2004) suggest that community supervision can be viewed as an attempt to improve the development of human capital in individuals, for example by referring them to employment training initiatives, or delivering programmes underpinned by cognitive psychology or pursuing harm reduction. However, the development of social capital, which may be fostered through employment opportunities for example, is more problematic, and subject to the influence of both meso- and macro- level circumstances, such as employment rates, which have been exacerbated by economic changes which have disproportionately affected already disadvantaged communities (see also Farrall et al. 2010).

Supporting desistance through supervision

McNeill (2003: 151) summarises the desistance process as residing 'somewhere in the interfaces between developing personal maturity, forming new or stronger social bonds associated with certain life transitions, and individual subjective narrative constructions which offenders build around these key events and changes'. However, although there is an ever-increasing body of research investigating the phenomena of desistance, there has been much less research on the role of penal practitioners in supporting the process.

One of the first studies to explore the relationship between probation supervision and desistance was Liebrich's (1993) qualitative study of probationers in New Zealand. The study was based on semi-structured interviews with a randomly selected sample of people who had been placed on probation in 1987 and who by

1990 had incurred no further criminal convictions. The findings of this study, based on 48 ‘desisting’ male and female ex-probationers, presented varied perceptions on the efficacy or role of probation in supporting their desistance. Few people spontaneously cited probation as a factor in their desistance (ibid: 172) and only half of the sample considered probation to have been useful in this regard (ibid: 184). A revision of personal values, reassessing what is important, responding to new family commitments, desire for a better future and the development of self-respect were cited as the reasons for wishing to desist (1993) as were fear of the continued consequences of offending and shame. Interestingly, ‘shame’ was the most commonly mentioned reason for going straight and the most commonly mentioned cost of offending (see also Leibrich 1996). Three kinds of shame were evident: public humiliation, personal disgrace, and private remorse. Private remorse was the most influential and was triggered by an individual offending their personal morality - coming to think that their offending was wrong. What Leibrich seems to be identifying here is a broadly reflexive process, although what this process entails is not elaborated. In addition, participants suggested that desistance was accomplished by tackling personal problems using interpersonal resources, accompanied by a sense of life management, which might be conceptually allied with the discovery of agency (see Maruna 2001). In the context of probation interventions, the quality of the supervisory relationship was cited as pivotal in supporting the process of desistance.

The characteristics which the desisters cited as crucial to the supervisory relationship reflected those which were identified by probation officers and included someone that they could get on with and respect; who treated them as individuals; was genuinely caring; was clear about what was expected of them and trusted them when required (Leibrich 2003: 191). Negative appraisals of the supervisory

relationship were attributed to a sense of being merely 'processed' manifest in a lack of concern.

Rex's study (1999) sought to relate the literature on 'What Works?' (or evidence based interventions with offenders) (see for example McGuire 1995) to why people desist from offending. The findings of this study indicated that most of the probationers considered probation to have assisted the process of their desistance from offending (Rex 1999). This was attributed to the relational aspects of supervision and attempts to support a probationer to sustain a decision to stop offending, discussing past offending, addressing low levels of social ties and pro-social work. In this study, Rex (1999) explored the experiences of 60 probationers and additionally interviewed 21 probation officers. Probationers who attributed changes in their behaviour to probation supervision described it as active and participatory; they conveyed a sense of being engaged through negotiation in a partnership. Probationer's commitments to desist appeared to be generated by the personal and professional commitment shown by their probation officers whose reasonableness, fairness and encouragement seemed to engender a sense of personal loyalty, obligation and accountability. Probationers saw advice about their behaviour or underlying problems as evidence of concern, and were motivated by this interest. Rex found that as many as half of the probationers revealed feelings of personal loyalty and accountability towards their supervisors.

These findings are particularly pertinent to the current context of probation interventions, wherein the role of tools and programmes in the pursuit of 'effective' practice has to some extent marginalized more traditional concerns in social work with offenders surrounding the development of social capital (McNeill 2006) which resides in the relationships through which participation and inclusion in society is

facilitated (Farrall 2004). In Rex's study, it seemed that probationer's could recognize and appreciate efforts to improve their reasoning and decision making skills, perhaps the most common focus of contemporary intervention programmes. However, attempts to exert influence had to be recognized as both credible and legitimate to be effective (Rex 1999) which seemed to relate to the commitment and concern conveyed by the practitioner (see also Leibrich 2003). Another feature of probationers' accounts of positive supervision was practitioners' efforts to reinforce pro-social behaviour (see Trotter 1999). Again, acceptance of such influence was generated by their ability to identify advice in this regard as evidence of concern for them as people (Rex 1999). These findings lend support to the re-emergence of the significance of the practitioner-probationer relationships in enabling change in contemporary discussions of practice (see for example, Burnett 2004; Burnett and McNeill 2005; Holt 2000; Hopkinson and Rex 2003; Leibrich 1993; 1994; McNeill et al 2005; McNeill 2006, McNeill and Weaver 2010), and in enhancing compliance and promoting the legitimacy of interventions (Robinson and McNeill 2008). Beyond the significance of processes and relationships, Rex' findings also relate to the content of probation interventions; her findings suggest that probationers valued guidance concerning their personal and social problems which she summarises as strengthening social ties.

As part of the 'Scottish Desistance Study', Barry (2007) asked young people for their perceptions about what helped them to reduce offending and their opinions on good practice. In relation to the former, addressing personal and social problems through the development of significant relationships with friends or family emerged as a central concern. Participants were particularly receptive to the interventions of practitioners where they had taken the time to develop empathetic and constructive

relationships with them. In particular, Barry's participants suggested that desistance supportive practices would include the provision of advice and guidance surrounding substance use; the provision of individualized interventions that recognize the realities of their lives; and assistance to access opportunities to make positive contributions to their community.

In looking toward the personal and social contexts of desistance, the most wide-scale study of probation and desistance was conducted by Farrall (2002). He explored the progress, or otherwise, towards desistance achieved by a group of 199 probationers. Though over half of the sample evidenced progress towards desistance, Farrall found that desistance could rarely be attributed to specific interventions by practitioners, although assistance in identifying employment opportunities and mending damaged familial relationships appeared particularly important. Yet it was in these areas that practitioners were found to be wary of intervening. The findings indicate that in terms of the identification and resolution of 'obstacles to desistance' only a minority of probationers and practitioners worked in partnership, with strategies to obstacle resolution pivoting around discussions of obstacles rather than more proactive and direct approaches. Successful resolution was perceived by both probationers and practitioners to be contingent on a range of factors often outwith the control of either practitioner or probationer, and no specific method of probation intervention could be credited with successful obstacle resolution. Rather, desistance seemed to relate more clearly to the probationers' motivations and to the social and personal contexts in which various obstacles to desistance were addressed. Changes in employment and family circumstances were related to positive changes in lifestyle and offending and were predominantly attributed to the efforts of probationers.

Based on the findings of this study, Farrall advocates for interventions to be directed towards the community, social and personal contexts in which they are situated (see also McCulloch 2005). After all, 'social circumstances and relationships with others are *both* the object of the intervention *and* the medium through which…change can be achieved' (Farrall 2002:214). Necessarily this requires that interventions be focused not solely on the individual and his/her perceived deficits (McNeill 2002). As Farrall (2002) observes, the problem with such interventions is while they can build human capital, for example, in terms of enhanced cognitive skills or improved employability, they cannot generate social capital, which resides in the relationships through which participation and inclusion in society is facilitated (see also Farrall 2004). Similarly, Shapland et al (2012) commenting on their Sheffield Desistance Study participants' perspectives of the criminal justice system similarly revealed that participants felt that work, relocation, disassociation from peers, and attachments to a partner or a family might enable change. However, like Farrall (2002) they learnt that practitioners were not attending to these desistance enabling factors in their interventions. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, only 9% of participants felt that probation was helpful in enabling change; 45% did not consider probation to be helpful. They propose thus that probation might be more helpful in supporting change if workers engaged with practical issues of concern to participants.

McCulloch's (2005) study, based on twelve semi-structured interviews with probationers and their probation officers in Scotland, drew on probationer and practitioner perspectives to explore the attention given to probationer's social contexts in supporting desistance from crime. In contrast to Farrall (2002) she found that probationers and practitioners had little difficulty in reconciling the apparently

polarised objectives of social support and offence-focused strategies, although, akin to Farrall (2002), she found that direct work in the area of employment was limited; that 'talking methods' were the most frequently cited approach to addressing social problems (see also Rex 1999). Where obstacles to desistance were successfully resolved, participants attributed this both to probation intervention and the wider normative processes that occurred in the probationer's life. While, like Farrall (2002), she advocates an increased level of probation involvement in families and local communities, and a greater focus on integration, she does not elaborate on the kinds of practices through which this might be realized. Beyond suggesting that probation should 'direct its efforts towards developing the individual and community partnerships needed to enable probationers to achieve these goals themselves' (2005:19), she does not elaborate how this might be realized, or how these relationships might be reconfigured.

Discussion

Desistance is arguably a central concern of the criminal justice system yet, as the preceding analysis has illustrated, much of the research on desistance has not been concerned directly with criminal justice interventions. Rather, as Maruna et al., (2004: 11) clarify the desistance literature originally emerged from a 'critique of the professionally driven 'medical model' of corrections' and was concerned with the study of individuals who ceased offending without the assistance of criminal justice interventions. Indeed, the foregoing analysis seems to suggest that desistance occurs in spite of, or at least rarely because of, the interventions of the criminal justice system. Nevertheless, Maruna et al., (2004) argue that, in theory and in practice, desistance and rehabilitation do not need to be viewed as opposites;

indeed ‘desistance (self-change) and rehabilitation (change through intervention) might best be understood, for all practical purposes, as the same thing, or at least part of the same process’ (ibid:12). When behavioural change is understood as occurring through a combination of measures including self-initiated change, professional intervention, informal help, social support and social controls from informal social relationships, then the distinction between receiving professional intervention and not receiving any professional input becomes less important than understanding the actual experiences and processes to desistance (Farrall 2002). In this sense, as McNeill (2003, 2006) argues, it is crucial then to understand not just ‘what works’ in terms of interventions but also *how and why* ex-offenders come to change their behaviours and, in turn, how professional interventions might effectively promote, support and assist these processes (Rex 1999). To this end, Porporino (2010:80) commented that ‘[t]he desistance paradigm suggests that we might be better off if we allowed offenders to guide us…listened to what they think might best fit their individual struggles out of crime, rather than continue to insist that our solutions are their salvation’ (Porporino 2010: 80).

Maruna and LeBel (2010: 81) conclude that ‘the desistance paradigm understands rehabilitation as a relational process best achieved in the context of relationship with others’. However, although the collective nature of much offending has been well documented (see for example Akers 1998, Cloward and Ohlin 1960, Sutherland 1947, Warr 2002) and while there has, more recently, been considerable attention to gangs (Aldrige et al 2007, Bannister and Fraser 2008; Deuchar 2009; Klein et al 2006; Pyrooz et al 2010, 2012) there has been scant research revealing the experiences of people who co-offend, or on their subsequent processes of desistance. Indeed, the literature discussing the role of peers in relation to onset and persistence (see for example Farrington 1992; Haynie 2001, Haynie 2002; Warr

1993, 2002) and desistance (see for example Calverley 2012; Giordano et al. 2003; Graham and Bowling 1995; Massoglia and Uggen 2010; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998) rather polarises peers into 'anti-social' pressures or 'pro-social' influences, with each category representing different people or groups. Discussion principally surrounds the would-be-desister's decisive (Paternoster and Bushway 2009) or developmental (Giordano et al. 2003) disassociation from 'negative' influences and either re-connection with pro-social former associates or development of new pro-social relationships (see for example Giordano et al. 2003; Knight and West 1975) with further explanations principally deriving from social learning, differential association (Akers 1973; Sutherland 1947; Warr 1993) or social control theories (see for example Sampson and Laub 1993). These studies are usually refracted through the lens of the individual desister (see for example Warr 1998; Cromwell et al. 1991) or more infrequently from the standpoint of the individual situated in a structural network of relations in a given context (see for example Haynie 2001). There is, then, a limited understanding as to the ways in which the group, as a social relation, shapes and affects criminal behaviour and desistance, and how individual, relational, cultural and social contexts influence onset, persistence, and desistance, and, thus on precursors, processes and consequences. There is, then, a significant gap in criminological understanding of the impact that a naturally forming group can exert on criminal careers – both empirically and theoretically.

Research aims

The overarching objective of this study is to re-examine the relationships between structure, agency, identity, and reflexivity in the desistance process, to inform how a desistance paradigm can and should translate into practice.

This study thus seeks to address the following research questions:

- What can we learn from the diverse life stories of a naturally forming group about the dynamics of offending and desistance?
- What are the individual, relational, and structural contributions to the desistance process as they occur within and between individuals?
- What is the role of social relations in accounting for desistance over time?

This study does not intend to be construed as a study of gangs, gang behaviour, identities or processes of extrication from gang membership. Rather, this study is concerned to reveal the relational dynamics of offending and desistance through an exploration of the relationships between people who once co-offended and the wider social relations in which they individually and collectively participate. Nevertheless studies of gangs can offer a useful context for understanding the relational dynamics of groups of people who co-offend and processes of extrication, and where relevant, this is drawn on and discussed in Chapter 5[24].

As the foregoing analysis has revealed, the desistance process is generally conceptualised as an interaction between, or integration of, agentic and structural factors. As such, throughout the literature, desistance is represented as the outcome of an individual seeking to alter their socio-structural situation and context, and in so

[24] Current research on desistance or extrication from gangs is limited in terms of providing insights into processes of desistance over time; such studies are principally concerned with revealing processes of extrication from gang membership, affiliations and associated behaviours. By emphasising the collective nature of offending and the individual nature of extrication, such studies primarily focus on severance or continuance of ties to the gang. In general, the literature does not pursue questions surrounding individual persistence in crime beyond the gang, nor processes of desistance beyond gang membership (see for example Bannister et al. 2010; Decker and Lauritsen 2002; Pyrooz et al. 2012; Vigil 1988).

doing acquiring new behaviour and new pro-social roles, or vice versa, variously resulting in associated shifts in the individual's personal and social identity (see for example Barry 2010; Farrall, Bottoms and Shapland 2010; Giordano et al. 2002; Maruna and Farrall 2004; Rumgay 2004; Uggen et al. 2004). Within these various explanations, while there is a more or less implicit recognition of the individual as a reflexive subject, limited attention has been given to what processes of reflexivity entail (notable recent exceptions include Farrall et al., 2010; King 2012; Vaughan 2007), or how this contributes to identify formation. Such theories thus fail to consider *how* individuals' reasoning and actions are variously enabled or constrained by the relational, cultural and social contexts within which they are embedded. While many principally agentic theories of desistance elaborate the early stages of the change process, they do not explain what triggers the resultant cognitive transformation or why one social relation at one time rather than another exerts this effect (see for example Giordano et al. 2002). Neither can they explain why people stay in relationships or jobs when the meanings of these social relations change over time (Vaughan 2007). In turn, structurally weighted theories fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions, under-analysing how the individual perceives and responds to such influences (see for example Laub and Sampson 2003).

Whether placing explanatory weight on either the role of structures or the role of agency, there is, however, consensus that social relations have a key role to play in variously triggering, enabling and/or sustaining desistance, and yet no desistance studies adequately analyse the dynamics or properties of social relations, nor their relationship to individuals and social structures. Rather, the theoretical or ontological assumptions underpinning desistance research tend to view social relations as a product of interplay between individual actions and social structure. In the next

chapter, the conceptual framework progressed in this thesis is introduced. The argument progressed therein is that such ontological perspectives offer a distorted and reductive vision of social relations. It is suggested that social relations cannot be explained by reference to individual action or the effects of social structures; rather the social relation comprises a separate reality to that of agency and the mechanisms of social systems. As the next chapter will elaborate, the social relation cannot then be considered as a contingent by-product, precisely because it has a separate reality that can and should be studied in and of itself – not as a reality dependent on something else.

CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL REALISM AND RELATIONAL SOCIOLOGY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THEORISING DESISTANCE

Introduction

The preceding chapter critically analysed the empirical and theoretical literature on desistance and concluded with a critique of the extant desistance literature in terms of the methodological focus on structure or agency or variations on the inter-relationship between the two. It was argued that contemporary studies tend to forward an epistemological and/or ontological and/or methodological conceptualisation of the process of desistance as being somewhere on a continuum between structure and agency, that is as being influenced to various degrees by external factors and/or internal or subjective factors, with different theories proposing that one or the other is of particular influential significance – often at a given time, or in a given situation – to the process of desistance, with variations further seeking to identify the relative influence of one on another or seeking to understand the temporal process wherein one or other becomes more or less prominent in terms of their relative significance to the desistance process (see Farrall and Bowling 1999; LeBel et al. 2008 for example). What emerges from this are studies that variously emphasise the role of structural factors in the desistance process, and which portray either an over-socialised perspective of the individual (homo-sociologicus), or which emphasise the role of agentic factors, and thus which portray an under-socialised, overly cognitive individual (homo-economicus), who can choose to stop offending at will. Some studies variously integrate, but struggle to disentangle, through an examination of their interplay, structural and agentic factors

but, it is argued here, essentially lose sight of the individual-in-relation, (the homo-relatus); the reflexive individual in his or her relationally and emotionally textured world.

At its most simplistic level, agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to 'construct their actions along lines of their own choosing' (Cheal 2005:187). Structure generally refers to the recurrent patterned arrangements in society, such as class for example, which to a greater or lesser degree influence or constrain the choices and opportunities available to the individual (ibid). Many social theorists however, pursue a balance between the two (see for example Archer 1995; 2003; 2007a&b; 2010; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Bourdieu 1986; 1990; Giddens 1984; Mouzelis 1995). Such theories suggest that structures influence human behaviours and humans are, in turn, capable of effecting change in the socio-structural contexts they inhabit. However, the structure-agency coupling itself leads to a series of generic problems in that they fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions by ignoring how and why agents are reflexive, acting back on themselves in the light of some kind of process of reflection upon the situation before them, such that they seek to influence or alter their socio-structural context.

Archer's critical realist, morphogenetic approach[25] seeks to address these shortcomings. While her approach is more fully explicated below, in brief, she illuminates the way in which structural properties, or conditioning structures, both enable and constrain individual action, elucidating a theory of personal reflexivity,

[25] 'Morphogenesis refers to "those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system's given form, structure or state" (Buckley 1967:58), and morphostasis to processes in a complex system that tend to preserve these unchanged' (Archer 2010:274).

manifest in the 'internal conversation' which she argues is the mediating force between structure and agency (Archer 2000; 2003). Archer argues that reflexivity performs this mediating role 'by virtue of the fact that we deliberate about ourselves in relation to the social situations we confront' (2007a: 42). Personal reflexivity is, in her formulation, the means through which people identify and order the ultimate concerns to which they commit themselves. A concern is regarded as ‘an end that is desired, however tentatively or nebulously, and also a notion, however imprecise, of the course of action through which to accomplish it’ (Archer 2003: 6). The morphogenetic approach is able to account thus for the way in which individuals both receive and respond to conditioning structures. While Archer's morphogenetic approach can offer a richly textured theoretical account of the dynamic relationship between structure and agency, Archer's approach has some significant limitations. In particular, Archer fails to provide an account of from where ultimate concerns arise. This is because her focus remains essentially individualistic and, as such, while she is able to demonstrate that 'who we are is what we care about’ (Archer 2006), she is unable to elaborate on the relational context within which these cares emerge.

It is argued here, following Pierpaolo Donati, that it is our relationships that constitute ‘who we are’ and are thus the context within which our ultimate concerns arise. Thus

> 'We are our ‘relational concerns’, as individuals as well as social agents/actors, since we necessarily live in many different contexts that are social circles (like a family, a network of friends, maybe a civil association, up to a nation) which imply a collective entity’ (Donati 2011a: xvi).

Donati argues, contra to current socio-theoretical preoccupations with the agent or the structure, that it is the social relation which is the key to understanding social reality and social changes. The social relation is conceptualised by Donati as those bonds maintained between subjects that constitute their reciprocal orientations towards each other; it is the 'reality in between', that which exists *between* people, which 'are both the product of concrete human beings and also that which helps to forge them' (Donati 2011a:61), 'which depend on the[m]..., but at the same time goes beyond them and exceeds them' (2011a:26).

Donati elaborates that social relations have become the 'unknown object' (of theory, research and in practice) even though 'thought becomes more and more 'relational'' (2011a:4). 'Everyone speaks of social relations, as do all social theories. But the fact of the matter is that most people, like most social theorists, think of social relations as a product of the Self or as an external constraint impinging on it.' (2011a: xv). Indeed, he argues that

> 'the object of sociology is neither the so-called subject [as in explanations of desistance informed by, for example, rational choice theories], nor the social system [as in explanations of desistance informed by theories that emphasise the role of structures exerting exogenous forces], nor equivalent couplets (structure and agency, life-worlds and social systems) [as in explanations of desistance informed by interactionist efforts that fall short of providing insights into the 'why?' questions so frequently posed by desistance i.e. why do certain 'hooks for change' (Giordano et al. 2002)

present as 'hooks for change'] but...the social relation itself' (Donati 2011a: 4-5 [this author's insertions]).

In order to shed light on social relationality, Donati forwards a relational paradigm for sociology which depends and builds upon the social ontology of critical realism. This chapter will thus proceed to outline Archer's 'Morphogenetic Approach' and her concept of the 'Internal Conversation', which informs the conceptual framework employed in this study with which this chapter concludes. However, while a critical realist framework can be deployed to shed light on the individual dynamics of or analyse individual contributions to the desistance process, the individualistic focus of Archer's approach cannot adequately account for the relational contributions to desistance. The chapter thus progresses a conceptual framework that draws on the complimentary approaches of Archer's critical realist morphogenetic approach and Donati's relational paradigm. The relational contributions to the desistance process are analysed using this researcher's adaptation of Archer's morphogenetic sequence applied to Donati's theory of social relations. In so doing, the theoretical or conceptual framework advanced here gives proper recognition to individual actions, social relations and social systems where actions, systems and relations are provided with inner characteristics and influences which are peculiar to them.

Margaret Archer's Morphogenetic Approach and the Internal Conversation

Archer's morphogenetic approach represents a method of 'conceptualizing how the interplay between structure and agency can actually be analyzed over space and time' (Archer 1995, p. 15). It is essentially concerned with specifying how the causal power of social structures and cultural systems is mediated through agency. Archer's morphogenetic approach is conceptualized as a cycle consisting of three

basic phases: structural conditioning, social interaction, and social reproduction/elaboration (see Figure 1).

Structural Conditioning

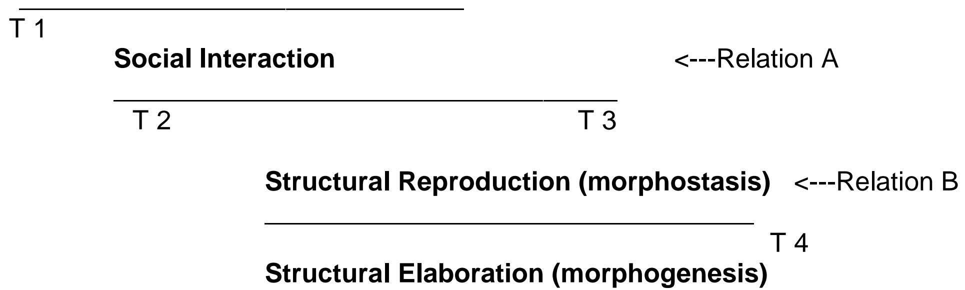

Figure 1. The basic morphogenetic sequence (source Archer 2010).

This three-part cycle of change is underpinned by two basic propositions. These are that i) structure pre-dates the action leading to its transformation (structural conditioning (T1) precedes social interaction (T2-3)), and ii) that structural elaboration (T4) necessarily post-dates the actions that give rise to it (Archer 1995, p. 15-16). Thus, for Archer, whatever the nature of the investigation, the three phase morphogenetic cycle can be utilised to analyse the relationship between structure and agency in a given context. Agency is implicated in and embedded within all phases of the cycle. The structural conditioning phase incorporates the assumption that people act in already pre-defined circumstances, not ones of their own choosing (Archer 2000). However, the structures which represent this pre-defined context are themselves the result of human agency being re/produced by people at a time prior to the particular subjects under investigation at the time of investigation.

The elaboration phase of the model (T4), which emerges from socio-cultural interactions (T2-3) can have one of two characteristics – structural elaboration/morphogenesis (where people and structures are transformed); and structural reproduction/morphostasis (where people and structures are largely

reproduced). Fundamentally, in this formulation, the relationship between agency and structure can only be understood as a relationship that evolves over time, with what happens in particular time periods having causal effects on subsequent events; thus what has happened in the past influences the conditions of possibility in the present.

The conditioning influence of the structural/cultural context in *relation a* works through shaping the situations—from the accessibility of resources to the prevalence of beliefs—in which people find themselves, such that some courses of action would be impeded and discouraged, while others would be facilitated and encouraged. *Relation b* in Figure 1 refers to the process through which conditioning structures are mediated through agency by the application of reflexivity. Archer thus clarifies *relation b* as the kinds of social interaction that result in structural/cultural morphostasis versus morphogenesis (Archer 2010). In other words, *relation b* is decisive for whether or not the conditional influence exerted further down the time line on the next generation of agents (who may or may not be the same people) is much the same as at the initial T1, as would be the case where morphostasis was the outcome (or persistence in offending), or is distinctively different, where the sequence ends in morphogenesis (or desistance from offending).

Social structures and cultural systems ultimately exercise their causal powers by structuring the situation of action through constraints and enablements. However, Archer (2007a) theorises that if constraints and enablements are taken as illustrative of contextual or structural conditioning, then this only accounts for how structural and cultural properties objectively impinge upon agents (*relation a*). This is because there are no stand-alone constraints and enablements, that is, as entities in and of themselves. For anything to exert the power of a constraint or an enablement, it has

to stand in a relationship such that it constrains or enables the achievement of some specific agentic or individual endeavour as subjectively defined (Archer 2003). These endeavours are what Archer refers to as “projects”—put simply, any end or objective that can be intentionally pursued or considered by human beings. In short, the activation of objective constraints and enablements depends upon how individuals or groups respond to these influences, which, being conditional rather than deterministic, are subject to individuals’ reflexive deliberation over the nature of their response, and their personal powers include their abilities to withstand or circumvent them. In this vein, personal reflexivity is the mediating force between conditioning structures and agency and this process of reflexive deliberation (which takes the form of an internal conversation) is the means through which people identify and order the ultimate concerns to which they commit themselves (Vandenberghe 2005). Archer argues that reflexivity performs this mediating role 'by virtue of the fact that we deliberate about ourselves in relation to the social situations we confront, certainly fallibly, certainly incompletely' (2007a: 42). Critically, these concerns need not be honourable, the projects may be illegal and the practices illegitimate or it might be that the inability to order a set of practices, a way of being in the world, is indicative of what Archer (2003) calls a fractured reflexive, buffeted by circumstance and beholden to a life of delinquency and drift rather than explicit dedication to a life of crime. This framework thus permits a conceptual lens that accommodates processes of both persistence in and desistance from crime.

In the interest of clarity, this understanding of social change is distinct therefore from some influential desistance accounts that claim to lend equal weight to both structure and agency (e.g. Laub and Sampson 2001, 2003) but which do not operate with this kind of reflexivity. Rather the role of the agent characteristically remains subordinate to the role of structures which are seen to condition (Laub and

Sampson 2001), if not determine (Laub et al. 1998), human action and thus desistance[26]. As a result, such theories fail to consider 'how the agent originally submitted to these forces and why they remain enthralled by them' (Vaughan 2007:390). While it might be argued that the availability of roles and the accompanying 'scripts' (Rumgay 2004), behaviours and practices attributed to the role might become habitualised, people do not march through life mechanically responding to or animating fixed role structures. The personification or interiorisation of a role, which is neither pre-determined nor fixed, is accomplished by an individual reflecting on their situation through the lens of their ultimate concerns and the range of actions available to them (Archer 2003). According to Archer, it is this reflexive internal dialogue about ourselves in relation to society and vice versa that makes active agents, people who can exercise some governance in or exercise control over their lives as opposed to passive agents to whom things simply happen. It is argued here that this is what Archer's morphogenetic approach offers to understanding individual contributions to desistance.

Deconstructing Archer's Internal Conversation

The Dynamic Process of Reflexivity: Individual Contributions to Outcomes

Archer re-deploys the morphogenetic sequence to illustrate the dynamic process of reflexivity (Archer 2003: 112–16). She distinguishes three phases in the analytical process (See Figure 2).

[26] Laub and Sampson (2001:51), despite promising to integrate structure and agency in their account of the desistance process, conclude that desistance is 'a default' outcome as a result of a series of 'side bets'. Desistance more or less occurs without the desister even realising it. This occurs as a consequence of 'involvement in these institutions - work and marriage – [which] re-order short-term situational inducements to crime and, over time, re-direct long-term commitments to conformity' (ibid: 51).

Structural Conditioning [conditioning structures] **ME**

T 1

Social Interaction [Personal reflexivity] **I**

T 2 T 3

Structural Reproduction (morphostasis)

YOU

T 4

Structural Elaboration (morphogenesis)

Figure 2: The Morphogenetic Sequence applied to the Internal Conversation (based on Figure 1 above)[27]

The conditioning 'me' phase, and the emerging results of previous deliberations, also fed through previous interactions, work to condition an individual's actions at T1. The 'I' phase at T2→T3 evokes an internal conversation, conditioned by the pre-existing self, the ME, which defines a future direction, and in so doing shapes and influences the 'YOU' of the future (T4). In this way we decide on courses of actions by ruminating on ourselves, our concerns and our social contexts, envisioning and pursuing projects that reflect and define who we are, that enable us to realise our ultimate concerns, in circumstances that are to a greater or lesser degree pre-defined. This internal conversation ceases, temporarily (as it is a dynamic process) when the different parts of the self reach an internal agreement about the projected course of action that best reflects the individual's 'constellations of concerns' (Archer 2007a: 42), through which his or her personal identity is fashioned, but which is also realisable within the given social circumstances the individual inhabits.

Discernment, deliberation and dedication are the three fundamental moments of the internal conversation that Archer argues is the reflexive aspect of agents'

[27] Archer distinguishes the internal relationality of the self into the temporal concepts of 'Me', 'I' and 'You'. Generally 'Me' refers to the pre-existing self; 'I' refers to the present self; 'You' refers to the future self.

subjectivity which explains the mediation of structural properties. This is what occupies the middle stage (T2→T3) of each morphogenetic cycle (2000: 231) (see Figure 2).

> 'At any time a life entails the things we are doing, the things we have done and the things we could do, which relate to the 'I', the 'Me' and the 'You' respectively. Discernment is basically about putting together the reflective, retrospective and prospective through a dialogue which reviews by comparing and contrasting them' (Archer 2000:233).

In this sense, 'discernment' (2000:232-5) is essentially an inconclusive moment of review wherein individuals, at T2 (Figure 2), or the 'I', review their current concerns and consider what aspects of their lives, their projects, they are currently satisfied or dissatisfied with, and they clarify their concerns, including desires and objectives, in relation to this consideration. In this phase, the person reviews the possible alternative lifestyle choices available to them, in contrast to their current lifestyle, reflecting a 'willing[ness] to consider different options' (Vaughan 2007:394).

For someone embarking on the process of desistance for example, this may manifest in terms of the individual's increased amenability towards the possibility of an alternative way of life that does not include offending and which may be triggered by various factors, for example, the development of a new relationship, or a role such as worker, which registers with the individual as something desirable, as a personal concern. Where, in this regard, a valued concern is at stake, Archer theorises that the 'You' reproaches the 'I' for endangering it. It says, 'How could you…' and runs through a scenario in which continued offending and potential

imprisonment might fracture a partnership or jeopardise employment for example. But the ‘You’ also challenges the ‘I’ by bringing up an agenda where good is turned into best and new possibilities are explored, such as 'if you care so much about your partner or your job, why are you meeting the boys again?'. Archer supposes that scenarios are reviewed of a life which changes in response to taking certain concerns more seriously.

The second phase of the internal conversation, ‘deliberation’ (Archer 2000: 235-7), comprises an evaluative exploration of the perceived rewards, demands and implications of those concerns deemed worthy of further consideration in the first stage; it is a process of envisioning the way of life this may entail. Yet the self still needs to know whether it really has the 'emotional shoving power' (Archer 2000: 236) to see these through. Thus, the self needs to test its determination and does so through a continuing conversation, between the ‘I’ and the You’, which Archer exemplifies as ‘an exploration of costs’ (ibid). In this phase of the internal conversation, the ‘You’ reflects upon the ‘I’s’ experiences of itself, the ‘Me’, and the ‘I’ assesses the strength of the ‘You’s’ inclinations.

Dedication represents the culmination of the previous two stages. In this phase, in dedicating ourselves to those things about which we are most concerned (such as an intimate relationship), the internal conversation finds the ‘I’ and the ‘You’ conducting their final review which proceeds from a consensus as to whether life envisioned in relation to a particular set of concerns is worth working towards and whether they are capable of both achieving and sustaining it. The dialogue now is about the costs of aligning other concerns; individuals engage in a process of consulting their ongoing projects to assess whether they can achieve them. In turn this may result in the individual adapting or adjusting their projects, or abandoning

them altogether if they decide that they are no longer viable or desirable. This is the process through which people come to commit themselves, or otherwise to desistance, in the pursuit of the realisation of their ultimate concerns with which the maintenance of an offending lifestyle is rendered incompatible (Vaughan 2007). If courses of action prove to be successful, individuals may gain in confidence and may prioritise more ambitious projects, whereas if courses of action lead to undesired consequences individuals may begin to lose motivation and commitment. It is this aspect of agentic subjectivity that enables a more precise exploration of how individuals act, moving beyond empirical generalisations about what most people in similar positions will do most of the time.

The Constraints of the Morphogenetic Approach: A Brief Overview

Archer's morphogenetic framework and conceptualisation of the internal conversation enables an exploration of how agency is exercised by individuals in their interaction with conditioning structures, and it is this framework (reiterated at the conclusion of this chapter) that is deployed in this study to analyse individual contributions to the process of desistance. However, in terms of illuminating the dynamic process of desistance, her work may be lacking in three inter-related respects. Firstly, one might question the extent to which these internal conversations and structural elaborations or transformations are conceivable simply as an individual project; as King observes, 'there is a strange loneliness in her sociology where the agent wanders as an isolated Figure, engaged in private conversation' (2010: 257). Secondly, she doesn't theorise *why* certain hooks for change, to use Giordano et al's (2002) expression, are effective upon the agent. There must be a pre-existing orientation there but Archer seems to take this as a given. Relatedly, she fails to offer an account of from where ultimate concerns arise. This is because

her focus remains essentially individualistic and, as such, while she is able to demonstrate that 'who we are is what we care about about' (Archer 2006), she is unable to elaborate on the relational context within which these cares emerge. Finally, building on this last observation, it may be that it is not just the individual rationality of the would-be-desister that has to change but also the orientation of the social relation itself. For example, individuals-in-relation who are mutually oriented to the maintenance of the relation may initiate changes, perhaps in the manner of their relating and/or their behaviours, to accommodate the concerns of each individual participating in the relation. In this context, it is the social relation (which is not reducible to the individual in question but resides in between individuals-in-relation) that may be invoked as both a constraint upon offending and an enablement for a new way of living. Thus

> 'Archer's theory must be amplified to take into account the fact that we need to locate and activate new forms of reflexivity... that are...applicable not so much to individuals in and of themselves, but to social relations…For this reason I have introduced the concept of 'relational reflexivity' (Donati, 2008, p. 121), to indicate the reflexivity that social agents/actors apply to relations (not to one's own Self) to render their relationships with others and with the world reflexive, bringing to bear one's own personal internal reflexivity' (Donati 2011b: 16).

Donati's Relational Sociology

Donati prioritises the social relation as the key to understanding society, and social changes, contra to current socio-theoretical preoccupations with the agent and/or the structure. In the relational paradigm, social relations reflect an order of reality of

their own with internal dynamics that require theoretical-practical conceptualisation. This is because relationality is not a by-product of the person, but is essential to the person's being.

So far, however, the relational context of desistance has been under-explored and under-theorised (although see Giordano et al. 2007 who focus on the interpersonal effects of intimate and friend relationships). Granted, there are numerous qualitative and quantitative studies that illustrate the effects of certain relational forms on desistance (see Chapter 2). However, in these studies, the relationship between, for example, marriage and desistance is variously explained in relation to differential association (Warr 1998) or the acquisition of social bonds or ties that operate as mechanisms of informal social control that exhibit constraining effects on an individual's behaviour (Laub et al. 1998; Sampson and Laub 1990; 2003). The point here is that despite the widespread recognition of the role of familial or intimate relationships in the desistance process, the majority of accounts of the desistance process retain an individualistic focus and where such accounts recognise the role of relationships, these are dehumanised or decontextualised insofar as they are relegated to the domain of conditioning structures and the dynamics of their particular contributions are rarely disentangled further. It is argued here, following Donati, that if we understand the human as relationally constituted, then scholars of the desistance process can no longer elide the relational context within which the subjects of their enquiries are immersed; a context which requires a more nuanced understanding of the properties of social relations. Understanding the phenomenon of desistance means recognising that for the would-be-desister this process is inescapably relational, in that he himself, his actions and so on 'derive from a

relational context, [are] immersed in a relational context and bring about a relational context' (Donati 2011a: 14).

It is argued here that understanding the relational context of desistance is critical to understanding why a 'hook for change' can dig into an offender's psyche and to understanding the way in which social relations can exercise a restraining influence upon offending, which more individualistic accounts of the desistance process omit. For example, Paternoster and Bushway's (2009) 'identity theory of criminal desistance' conceptualises the process of change as a 'cognitive, internal and individual' process (2009: 1106). They suggest that desistance emerges from a 'crystallisation of discontent' in that people make a conscious decision to change based on increasing dissatisfactions with one's present, which becomes conceptually linked by the person to an anticipated future, and weighed up against self as future non-offender and this induces their motivation to change (2009: 1103). However, they never really elaborate what provokes this discontent and under what conditions this 'growing sense of dissatisfaction' (2009: 1123) becomes a trigger for change at a given time and why it might have sustaining powers. Paternoster and Bushway's desister is in this sense every bit as lonely and isolated as Archer's agent. Putting desistance in a relational light could explain both of these although not in the way a social control theorist might suppose, but in recognising that both the individual and the social relation undergo reflexive change in tandem with each other. This is where Donati's relational paradigm has much to offer our understandings of the desistance process.

The conceptual key to Donati's approach is that it is concerned exclusively with *rel-azione*, that is, reciprocal interaction or 'action which emerges out of mutual

interaction' (Donati 2011a:124) (rather than with *rapporto*, such as the statistical relations established between independent variables at the empirical level (Archer 2011a)). Social relations are conceptualised as both the ‘mediation’ of prior structural and cultural conditioning and have emergent powers of causal consequence in their own right and of their own kind. Significantly they cannot be reduced solely to interpersonal relations. Interpersonal relations are non-emergent because they can be ‘personalised’, that is, downwardly reduced to the influences of ego upon alter, one on another and vice versa:

> 'The relation is made up of diverse components which can be further distinguished by *the effect of ego on the other* (consistency in the behaviour of the ego towards others), *the other on ego* (the responsiveness of a person to different egos), and the effect of their interaction (the behaviour that none of the actors ‘brings’ to the relation, but which results from their mutual conditioning of each other)... These effects can be observed and measured, given suitable methods. The first two effects can be analysed at the level of the individual, the third can only be examined by taking the relation as the unit of analysis' (Donati 2011a: 126).

It is the last element that is of particular relevance with regard to its two components, the ‘refero’ and the ‘religio’. To explain, its symbolic referent (the ‘refero’) is the ‘chains of meaning’ brought to that ‘type’ of relationship rather than another (to a family for example rather than those that exist between church members), and which need not be identical for all participants. Next is the specific *kind of bond* (the ‘religio’) generated between them (Archer 2011a). Thus, the social relation

> 'is not merely the product of perceptions, sentiments and empathy, but it is a fact which is both symbolic ('a reference to', i.e. *re-fero*) and structural ('a bond between' i.e. *re-ligio*). As such, it does not depend on the subject even though it can be actualized ('live') only through the subjects. It is in this activity dependence that the relation assumes its particular sense' (Donati 2011a: 16).

Thus 'the relation cannot be reduced to the subjects even though it can only 'come alive' through these subjects' (2011a:130). Each relation, involving two or more people, has, therefore, irreducible properties arising from the reciprocal orientation of those involved. This notion of reciprocity is central to Donati's conceptualisation of social relations. Donati explains that the social relation 'implies an 'exchange of something', a reciprocal action in which something passes from ego to alter and vice versa, which generates a reciprocal link of some kind between them' (Donati: 2011a: 73). This reciprocity is what he terms the 'generating mechanism of social relations' (ibid), in that it is the practice of reciprocity itself that generates and re-generates the bond of the relationship: of trust or confidence or caring for example. This exchange is what gives the relation its uniqueness. Particular relationships such as employer to employee or wife to husband, mother to daughter, friend to friend - have 'pre-established assumptions that do not depend on them and implies things which go beyond their individuality' (Donati 2011a:66). Put simply, they have supposed certain relational characteristics that define them. Yet the relation itself does not *depend* on the subjects participating in the relation even though it can only be actualised through the subjects. Therefore, the form and shape that the relation takes is not pre-determined but differs between individuals-in-relation depending on how they personify and interiorise the relation; ergo nor is the form and shape the relation takes permanently fixed. Thus social relations are

> ‘that reference – symbolic and intentional – which connects social subjects as it actualises or generates a connection between them expressive of their reciprocal actions (which consist in the influence that the terms of the relation have on one another and on the effect of the reciprocity emerging between them. Being in a relation can have a static or dynamic meaning; it can mean remaining in a context (morphostatic sense) or participating in a generative interaction (morphogenetic sense). It is thus necessary to differentiate between social relations **as a context** i.e. as the cultural and structural connections in a context under investigation) and social relations **as interaction** (as the emergent effects in/of interactive dynamic)’ (Donati 2011a: 88-9, emphasis added).

Taking the case of an intimate relationship as an example, it belongs to neither of the partners but is shared and valued by both. Each orientates themselves to the maintenance of the emergent ‘relational goods’. Relational goods, which may be defined as those outputs of a communicative and affective nature which are produced through interaction (Gui, 2000), are generated from relationships linking those involved and are wholly reliant on the endurance of their bonding. In this sense when a disagreement ensues, the partners may reach a compromise that will allow the relationship between them to endure. This reciprocal orientation is also the source of collective intentionality in larger groups. Hence, no-one can take away part of the relation for themselves; by divorcing themselves from the relationship they destroy the generative mechanism that produces these very goods. Relational goods, such as trust, care or mutual concern, thus reside in the relationships that bond the members concerned.

Donati argues that shifts in the nature and form of social relations can be accounted for by changes in the interpersonal, intersubjective relations between people, i.e. father - son, as well as how these interact with changes in social and cultural structures as well as to how these factors intertwine to generate the 'effectual relation between the individuals' (2011a: 94). Donati deems that social relations are that which connects the micro and the macro, defined as the 'phenomena at the level of events' (2011a: 88) which can be subjective or interpersonal in nature, and the systemic structures (which include the collective-impersonal or institutional). Analysing social life in this context, he argues, means 'understanding and explaining social phenomena in their structural-institutional aspects by linking them to events and/or to the subject/ motives of individuals and vice versa' (ibid). Such an analysis could demonstrate where people experience the greatest difficulties in sustaining desistance, and in so doing it could be possible to intervene in order to modify those characteristics of the network which enable or constrain the intended outcomes (as one of the mutually desired ends of this process). Interventions in this regard would mean

> 'acting on [networks of] relationships to produce changes in both context and in behaviour through the modification of existing relations;… activ[ating] the natural potential of social networks and mak[ing] use of innovative forms… of relationality' (Donati 2011a: 95).

Such a reflexive analysis and modus operandi for intervention is not only necessary but possible because as Donati argues

> 'individuals exist in a context of relations, that is they have referential ties between themselves but, in addition, that 'there is a relation between these ties' (in the words of Raymond Firth, quoted by Forse 1991:259). That which occurs between the two points of the network influences the relations between other points, those close to them (i.e. having direct relations) and those placed further away (having indirect relations). The network is not a grouping of individuals in contact with one another, but rather embraces the entirety of their actions and the repercussions of their actions' (2011a:92).

Donati's relational paradigm provides an account of social integration based upon people's reciprocal orientation to relational goods (at all levels). Social science, indeed criminology, has become so focused on 'market exchange relations and political command relations' that social relations have been at best marginalised and at worst elided (ibid). Yet, the former, proceeding by instrumental rationality in the form of increasing bureaucratic regulation, do not generate the relational good that is characteristic of a friendship, for example, such as trust, but fragment and disrupt human relations (Archer 2011a). Donati instead promotes and advocates for the generation of 'fraternity' (or reciprocity). Its promotion is the pursuit of the common good in society, which is distinct from the Utilitarian conception of the greatest good of the greatest number (Mill 1906). This latter formulation rises where the welfare or rights of some are discarded in favour of maintaining the welfare and rights of the majority and leads to increasing and new inequalities between people and the marginalisation of distinct groups within society. Relational sociology by contrast recognises that the foundations of a civil society are constituted in and by reciprocal relations rather than exchange or command relations, and, thus, by the 'social-

private' (third sector) and the complex of friends and family (fourth sector) (Archer 2011a). The manner of relating characteristic of these relations of reciprocity manifests as mutual helping performed in a certain way. Reciprocity is help concretely given in a context of solidarity – one of common responsibility – and is thus recognized as interdependency. Subsidiarity is a way to supply the means, a way to move resources to support the other without making him or her passive or dependent. It allows and assists the other to do what must be done. Subsidiarity cannot work without solidarity (sharing a responsibility through reciprocity which implies interdependence). Donati proposes that 'everyone must fulfil their roles according to a liberty-responsibility link. Alter must help ego to realize that which ego is committed to doing, as intrinsic to his ultimate concerns' (Donati 2011a: 57). Such an approach, underpinned by Donati's relational theory of reflexivity (below), might be aligned with concepts of co-production and the pursuit of such approaches within criminal justice services (Weaver 2011).

Donati's Relational Theory of Reflexivity

It has been established that to say that we are what we care about is not reducible to a kind of resonance between what ego cares about and what alter cares about. There is something different that resides in between and this is the social relation. However, we need, according to Donati, a relational reflexivity to catch it. In developing his relational theory of reflexivity, Donati draws on Archer's concepts of 'reflexivity', not simply as a mediatory mechanism between structure and agency but also as a mode of collective group orientation, that is, as 'relational reflexivity'. Such reflexivity consists in the subjects orientating themselves to the reality emerging from their interactions by taking into consideration how this reality is able (has its own powers or influence) to feed back onto the subjects (agents/actors), since it

exceeds their individual as well as their aggregate contribution to it by virtue of their personal powers. Donati thus progresses Archer's concept of the internal conversation to address the relation between the internal reflexivity of the person and the social networks he belongs to. In so doing, he argues that Archer's (2000; 2003) emphasis on internal reflexivity needs to be connected to the properties and powers of the social networks in which people live, given that these networks may have their own "reflexivity" (of a different kind). It is suggested here that Donati's theory of relational reflexivity can inform a conceptual framework such that will illuminate the role of (and a potential role for) reflexive relational networks in generating, developing and sustaining the kinds of relational goods relevant to desistance, or conversely, in generating relational 'bads' that might support the persistence of offending or hinder processes of desistance.

Reflexivity is defined by Donati, building on Archer's (2003; 2007a) critical realist formulation, as a social relation between ego and alter within a social context. Reflexivity is conceived as a 'meaningful and consistent way for an entity to refer to itself through/with/within the relationship to the other' (2011a: 193). Personal reflexivity refers to that internal conversation the individual has within him/herself, and which is 'a relational operation on the part of an individual mind to an 'Other' who can be internal (the ego as an Other)' in the case of personal reflexivity or 'external (alter)' (Donati 2011a: 195) in reference to another person or persons, as in social reflexivity, which has an 'interactive character' (Donati 2011a: 193) but who also takes the social context into consideration. Put simply, the process of reflexivity is relational insofar as it is shaped by the relational networks in which it emerges. These sets of relations affect what does and can satisfy an individual and what can be sustained, to which the individual brings his personal reflexivity to bear with regard to his participation in this relational context. In addition, Donati argues that

individual action is guided not only by individual concerns but by the good of the relationships which matter most to them. In this context, compromises by individuals-in-relation are deliberated over and decided upon in order to sustain these relationships and maintain the emergent relational goods. The resultant reciprocal adjustments or modifications to their behaviours made by individuals-in-relation, for example, are the outcomes of relational reflexivity.

An example might be a family trying to keep itself together and ward off criminality of one of its members. The family asks itself 'how can we change in order to stay together', appealing to one of its members through the reciprocal orientation of parenthood. The family must ask itself what adjustments must we make to our individual lifestyles in order to sustain this relation, and maintain the associated relational goods. Here, 'efforts will be made to emerge from the transition producing a new way of 'being' and 'making' the family as a relational good for its members' (Donati 2011b: 17). Thus, the social relation becomes more reflexive as it seeks to accommodate the concerns of all people participating in it; this is "we' reflexivity' (2011b: 16). The emergent goods/structural elaborations are therefore the intentional products of individuals who want to create shared goods. In this sense these goods/structural elaborations are the products of a social/relational reflexivity connected to the personal reflexivity of each individual. Therefore 'the individuals are conditioned by… structures in which shared goods are created as opportunities that they can realise and manage (and to a limited extent guide)' (Donati: 2011a: 196). Thus this can account for the role of social relations in supporting the desistance process, as well as the role (and potential role) of institutions in this regard.

Beyond 'personal (internal conversation) and social (interactive) reflexivity'

(2011a:195) is system reflectivity. 'If ego and alter are parts of a system, we meet system reflexivity' (Donati 2011a: 193). Systemic reflectivity refers to the socio-cultural structures and their interactive parts. Thus 'there is a kind of reflexivity pertaining to socio-cultural structures themselves' (ibid: 194), (conceptualised as relational networks) 'which influences individuals and their interactions via the context in which they find themselves, and is bound to reappear in the outcomes (structural elaborations) of the morphogenetic process' (ibid: 194). These outcomes or structural elaborations are, of course, those structures which emerge from the different types of reflexivity of actors in social interaction.

Conceptual schema for the desistance study

The conceptual schema applied in this study (Figure 3 below) represents the researcher's adaptation of Archer's morphogenetic framework to illustrate the conceptual schema progressed by Donati (2011a). What is to be investigated in this study is the way in which social relations (different from conditioning structures) are configured in the T2-T3 phase. They have constraints and enablements from outside, as well as their own internal network dynamics, which are distinct from what happens inside individuals (individual contributions) (see Figure 4 below) as they autonomously evaluate their situation, take decisions and so on (analysed through Archer's internal conversation). The elaborated structure, or outcomes, (T4) thus emerge as products of both the individual's application of their personal reflexivity (individual contributions) and of the interactive dynamics of their relational network(s) (relational contributions). This is because social relations have their own powers and qualities in contributing to the final outcome.

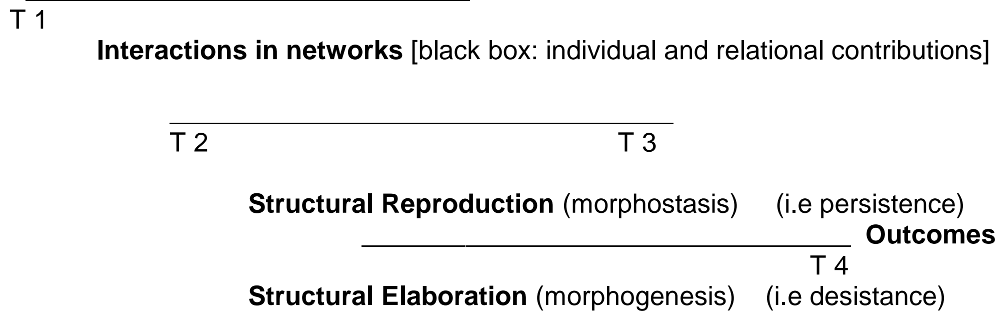

Figure 3: overview of investigative framework

Overview of Investigative Framework

The conditioning influence of the structural/cultural context (T1-2 in Figure 3) works through shaping situations - from the accessibility of resources to the prevalence of beliefs to the sets of relations in which people find themselves - such that some courses of action would be impeded and discouraged, while others would be facilitated and encouraged (Archer 2007a; Donati 2011a). In this manner, they influence the nature and form a given social relation takes. The conditioning structures can thus be understood as the sets of relational rules prescribing how one should behave in a certain way towards others, according to the norms that the context prescribes, which the individual must follow reflexively or the constraints which can be negotiated step by step in a relational way (Donati 2011, Pers. Comm.). What is normatively expected of a person form the constraints and enablements in their conditioning structures, but these are different in different contexts and social spheres and they may be more or less constraining or enabling, more or less explicit or implicit, requiring more or less reflexivity.

In the intermediary phase (T2 – T3 in Figure 3) the researcher will capture the individual (Figure 4) and relational (Figure 5) contributions to the outcomes (at T4 in

Figure 3) (elaborated separately below). The individual contributions (to outcomes, i.e. x does it this way, y that way) pertain to the redefinition of personal identity and the exercise of reflexivity and this will be analysed through Archer's internal conversation (see Figure 4 below). The relational contributions to the outcomes will be analysed to identify/observe what happens in the me-we-you circle of interactions with significant others, using an adaptation of the morphogenetic sequence to analyse social relations (see Figure 5 below).

The outcomes (at T4 in Figure 3) will be conceptualised through a relational theoretical lens, rather than a critical realist one. If one thinks in terms of individuals and their aggregative behaviours (as Archer does in *Realist Social Theory* (1995: 342)) the elaborated structure or outcome depends on the power distribution among the various groups (the proportion of their influence on the process). If one thinks in terms of relational sociology the picture is slightly different (although not contradictory) in that the elaborated structure depends upon the dynamics of the relational network, which means that relations have their own powers and qualities in determining the final outcome, besides the agential power of the actors and the balance in their power relations.

<u>Individual Contributions</u>

The individual contributions pertain to the redefinition of personal identity and the exercise of personal reflexivity and this will be analysed through Archer's internal conversation (see Figure 4 below).

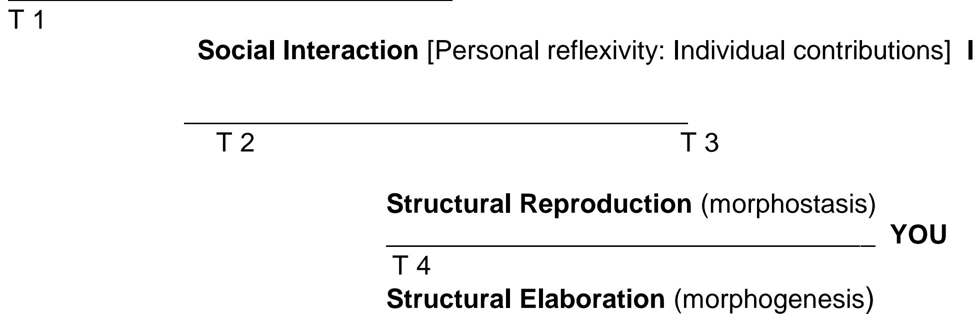

Figure 4: The Morphogenetic Sequence applied to the Internal Conversation (individual contributions)

In terms of the redefinition of personal identity, the ‘Me’ here, following Archer (2000), refers to the identity attributed to a person by force of circumstance, in reference to people’s involuntary placement in the world through which process the individual acquires the properties of primary agents through belonging to particular collectivities and sharing their privileges or lack of them. This is the context of structural or cultural conditions. This ‘Me’ is not however, reducible to the self or the person – there follows the ‘I’ that can reflect on this bestowed identity. Part of this reflection involves a reflection of the wider forces that contribute to the assignment of this identity and this may provide, for example, some of the impetus for the ‘You’ to think about his future in which ultimate concerns come to the fore.

To recapitulate, the process of reflexivity elaborated earlier in the chapter – the conditioning 'me' phase, and the emerging results of previous deliberations, also fed through previous interactions, work (at T1 in Figure 4) to condition an individual's actions. The 'I' phase (at T2-T3 in Figure 4) evokes an internal conversation, conditioned thus by the pre-existing self, the ‘ME’, which defines a future direction, and in so doing shapes and influences the ‘You’ of the future (T4 in Figure 4). In this way we decide on courses of actions by ruminating on ourselves, our concerns and our social contexts, envisioning and pursuing projects that reflect and define who we

are, that enable us to realise our ultimate concerns, in circumstances that are to a greater or lesser degree pre-defined. This internal conversation ceases (temporarily - as it is a dynamic process) when the different parts of the self reach an internal agreement about the projected course of action that best reflects the individual's 'constellations of concerns', (Archer 2007a:42) but which is also realisable within the given social circumstances the individual inhabits.

The Relational Contributions

The relational contributions to the outcomes emerge through interactions in networks, as a context in which personal reflexivity is brought to bear or as the manner in which social relations are configured by those participating in the relation as an outcome of the exercise of their relational reflexivity. The relational contributions to the outcomes will be analysed using an adaptation of the morphogenetic sequence (see Figure 5) to analyse social relations – to identify/observe what happens in the me-we-you circle of interactions with significant others.

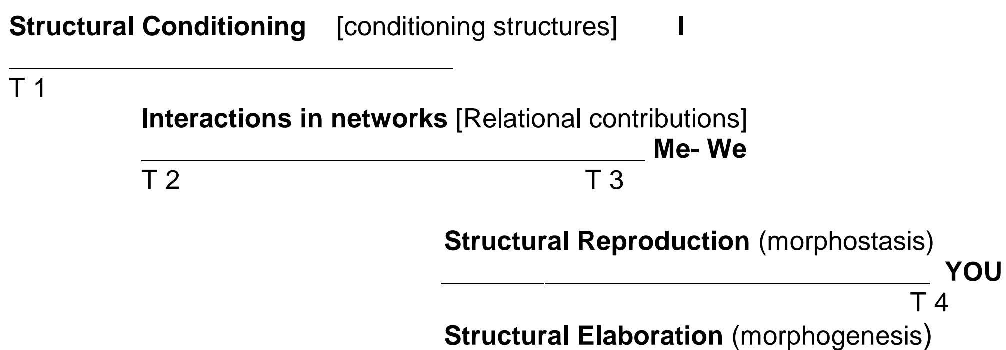

Figure 5: The Morphogenetic Sequence applied to social relations (relational contributions)

'Me' refers to the self as primary agent; this is the identity attributed to him by others, specifically the networks of individuals or primary contacts with whom he associates. 'We' refers to the individual as a corporate agent and his relationships to and with the associational belongings of which he is a part - such as a specific workplace, family, or community of believers (T2-3). When he assumes a social role (or assumes certain tasks in society) he becomes an actor ("you") in as much as he interiorises or personifies a role i.e. as a worker, or parent or husband (T4). In all these relational spheres the individual's ultimate concerns are played through (Donati 2011a). Donati (2011a) clarifies that one's ultimate concerns are progressively defined in relation to how the 'I' (the self) (at T1 in Figure 5) defines his choices when he acts as a 'you' (T4) and must respond both to the demands of his relational contexts and to the deeper demands of his 'I', when he considers whether he is satisfied or not with the 'me' that has been attributed to him by others, when he confronts and compares the meaning of his belonging (the 'we' / us to which he belongs) against that of other membership groups (T2-3). Here, in performing or personifying a role, in carrying out the tasks associated with that role, in acting as a 'you', the self ('I') asks itself if it is gaining satisfaction from its activities, choices, lifestyle or not. Ultimate concerns are the answers given to the existential questions that people ask of themselves when they consider their level of satisfaction and the desire for the 'good life' for themselves. In this vein, Donati proposes that every way of being a self (as I, me, we, you) is a dialogue (an internal conversation) with his own "I", his personal identity. Social identity is formed from the dialogue between the 'I' and the other relational spheres.

In summation, therefore, what is to be investigated is the way in which social relations, different from conditioning structures, get configured in the T2-T3 phase (Figure 5); these too have constraints and enablements from outside as well as their

own internal network dynamics which is distinct from what happens inside the individuals who evaluate their situations, take decisions and so on autonomously (Figure 4). This will recognise thus the reality of social relations as a sui generis reality which can produce relational goods/evils as both a product of individual choices and of the relational order of reality. This conceptual framework facilitates an exploration and recognition thus of the conditioning structures surrounding individuals, of the individual contributions to the desistance process – or otherwise, and to an examination of social relations and the relational contributions to the desistance process – or otherwise.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the principal theoretical explanations for desistance and the empirical studies that inform them. The analysis of this literature examined how contemporary understandings of desistance conceptualise the relationships between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity in the desistance process. This analysis revealed the contradictory and conflicting perspectives and findings emerging from the empirical research into desistance – depending on whether the study adopted a quantitative or qualitative research design. It was reasoned that while quantitative methods provide an insight into patterns of behaviour within and across populations and can identify within that the sequencing of transitional events and behavioural changes, they cannot elaborate on the mechanics and mechanisms underpinning these changes. While qualitative studies enable a more nuanced analysis of the desistance process, the methodological focus on individuals, rather than the group within which context much offending takes place, precludes an analysis of the role of the group, as a social relation, in shaping and affecting offending and desistance, and thus how individual, relational, cultural and social contexts influence onset, persistence, and desistance, and, thus on precursors, processes and consequences. It was identified that there is a significant gap in criminological understanding of the impact that a naturally forming group can exert on criminal careers – both empirically and theoretically.

It was also observed that while there is consensus that social relations have a key role to play in variously triggering, enabling and/or sustaining desistance, no desistance studies adequately analyse the dynamics or properties of social

relations, nor their relationship to individuals and social structures. Rather, theoretical explanations for desistance focus on – and diverge in conceptualising - the interaction between structure and agency. Even within these divergent explanations, while there is a variously implicit or explicit recognition of the individual as a reflexive subject, limited attention has been given to what processes of reflexivity entail or how it contributes to identity formation. In this vein, it was argued that agentically weighted explanations for desistance are constrained in their capacity to elaborate what triggers reflexivity and thus cognitive transformation and how individuals' reasoning and actions are variously enabled or constrained by the relational, cultural and social contexts within which they emerge. While many theories can account for onset or desistance, they are limited in their capacity to elaborate what sustains it i.e. why people remain in marriages or jobs during challenging times or when their investment in the institution(s) has dwindled. In turn, structurally weighted explanations are similarly unable to explain how social structures shape decisions and actions. It was argued that the ontological assumptions underpinning these theoretical perspectives tend to view social relations as a product or interplay between individual action and structure.

The conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3 and progressed throughout this thesis utilises the complementary approaches of Archer's Critical Realist Morphogenetic Approach with Donati's Relational Sociology. This framework gives proper recognition to the role of conditioning structures in the desistance process and the reflexive individual, who evaluates his own situations and makes his own decisions and relative interplay between the two. Archer's conceptual schema enables an analysis of the individual contributions to the desistance process. However, it is suggested that applying Donati's relational sociology gives proper weight to individual actions, social relations and social systems where actions,

systems and relations are provided with inner characteristics and influences which are peculiar to them. Indeed, accepting that the social relation cannot then be considered as a contingent by-product, precisely because it has a separate reality that can and should be studied in itself and not as a reality depending on something else, this study also considered the relational contributions to the desistance process.

While the conceptual framework advanced in Chapter 3 structurally precedes this chapter, the centrality of social relations to processes of change and identity formation emerged during the 'first order' analysis of the data; the conceptual framework was used as the theoretical lens informing the 'second order analysis' (Smith et al 2009:166) (discussed further below). The decision to study a naturally forming group emerged from a review of the literature; the analysis and specific content were driven by the data and through this first order analysis, the significance of the social relation to processes of change and identity formation emerged from the analysis of the life stories of the men comprising the naturally forming group on whom this study was based. This prompted further investigation of socio-theoretical conceptualisations of the relationship between social relations, agency and structure in order to make sense of the emergent themes.

This chapter commences by restating the research questions, delineated in Chapter 2. Thereafter, the methodology adopted in this thesis is elaborated.

Research questions

- What can we learn from the diverse life stories of a naturally forming group about the dynamics of offending and desistance?

- What are the individual, relational, and structural contributions to the desistance process as they occur within and between individuals?
- What is the role of social relations in accounting for desistance over time?

Methodological approach: The Life-Story

Criminological research has largely been dominated by the application of quantitative methodologies and yet such methods have not been as unproblematic as their proponents might suggest. Typically, both the variables and the artificial aggregate categorisation groupings upon which quantitative research designs base their analysis themselves incorporate interpretation and value-laden, subjective assumptions of shared meaning, that belie the objectivity which positivist theoreticians purport to unveil. Moreover, such methods decontextualise, disconnect and fragment meaning as it pertains to individuals' experience and subjectivities and the broad categorisations have no direct or meaningful correlation with real events and individual experiences of them. Despite this, quantitative methodologies that disaggregate data about individuals into variables have long been used to make generalizations, which have had significant implications for both policy and practice (Hollway and Jefferson 2000).

Qualitative methods in general, and the life-story method in particular, is the most appropriate method to elicit the types of data necessary to fulfil the objectives of this research outlined above and thus for gathering information on the subjective essence of one or more person's entire life (Atkinson 1998). Such a method provides access to individuals' interactions and meanings and the various definitions embedded in them, foregrounding participants' accounts of their own lives, which

would not otherwise be available through the application of quantitative methods. Furthermore, adopting this approach, as opposed to a more structured interview format, enabled the participants of this study (discussed below) to narrate their life stories, with a focus on their offending and desistance processes or otherwise, without restricting them to these themes. This avoided the imposition of an order or prescribed route through them, and allowed their own narrative trajectory to emerge. It enabled the participants to convey their way of defining the world and recognised that no fixed sequence of questions was suitable to all the participants. Importantly, it allowed participants to raise important issues not contained in the schedule (Denzin 1970; Jupp 1989). The life history method has the

> 'advantage of…enabling one to locate an individuals' behaviour and attitudes within a broader socio-historical framework and making changes over time (and the reasons for those changes) much clearer…It also allows one to develop a relationship with the offender in which he or she may allow the researcher to probe much more deeply than is possible in 'one off' interviews into issues and incidents that are discussed' (Maguire 2000: 141).

The Origins of Life-Story method

The life-story as a narrative form has evolved from the oral history, life history and other ethnographic and field approaches (Atkinson 1998: 3-4) and has been part of sociological history since the 1920s University of Chicago sociologists. Atkinson (1998: 8) generally defines the method as follows:

> 'A life story is the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it,

and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another'.

As a method of looking at life as a whole and as a way of carrying out an in-depth study of individual lives, the life story stands alone (Atkinson 1998). It is a central element of the narrative study of lives (Cohler, 1988; Josselson & Lieblich 1993) for its interdisciplinary applications in understanding single lives in detail and how the individual personifies various social roles (Cohler 1993; Gergen and Gergen 1993). In a life story interview, the interviewee is a storyteller whereas the interviewer is a guide in the process. The two together are collaborators, composing and co-constructing a life story in an interactive process (Atkinson (1998). Bruner (1986, 1987, 1990, 1991) illustrated that personal meaning is constructed during the telling of one's narrative, that experiences take the form of the narratives that are used to communicate them, and that stories are a way of organising, interpreting and creating meaning from experience while maintaining a sense of coherence and continuity throughout.

The life-story differs from life history and oral history approaches in emphasis and scope. An oral history focuses on a specific *aspect* of a person's life, or what someone remembers about a specific event, issue, time or place. A life-story or history, is, by contrast, a 'fairly complete narrating of one's entire experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects' (Atkinson 1998: 8; see also Denzin 1970; Denzin 1989; Plummer 2001). Roberts (2002) suggests that the 'life history' method broadly refers to the collection, interpretation and report writing of the 'life' in terms of the story told, or as the construction of past experience of the individual, from various sources, to relate to the story. The term life-story is

commonly applied to the narrated story whose life history infers the later interpretive, presentational work of the researcher.

> 'The life-story narrative may be the most effective means for gaining an effective understanding of how the self evolves over time or at least in seeing the subjective perspective on that. The self has been defined, in narrative terms, as an on-going story, or creative interpretation. It is through an examination of the self-narrative process, maintaining an interpretive vigilance, and in looking for possible inconsistencies that the researcher secures useful information and comes to the desired understanding of the self as a meaning maker with a place in society, the culture, and history' (Freeman (1992) quoted in Atkinson 1998: 11)

A Brief Resume of the Life-Story Method: Criminology and Desistance

Although the life (hi)story/(auto)biographical method were placed centre stage in early criminological studies of 'deviance', from the Chicago School (i.e. Shaw 1930) to Edwin Sutherland's life story of Chic Conwell (1956) for example, this research method has largely existed on the fringes of criminological research (Goodey 2000; Maguire 2000; Maruna & Matravers 2007). More recently, the voice of the offender - or at least data from offenders - has been integral to the emergence of "desistance studies", less so in the strand of it that derives from "criminal careers research" (heavily influenced by rational choice theory), more so in the strand influenced by narrative theory, which requires detailed attention to offenders' life experiences (see Chapter 2). Maruna's (1997, 2001) work, in particular, refocused attention not only on narrative-as-data, but also on the significance of a narrative restructuring of one's own self-understanding as a key element in processes of personal change (see also

Maruna 1999). More commonly, however, offender's words have been fragmented, lifted out of context, trimmed to support particular criminological theories or policy initiatives (including those based on rational choice theory) in ways that make nonsense of taking "offender perspectives" seriously, of understanding or respecting the person who lives the life and speaks the words.

The relative neglect of *properly rounded* ex/offender perspectives, (rather than offenders as data subjects) in the desistance literature is surprising if only because narrative, life (hi)story or (auto)biographical method has had an honoured, albeit marginal place in criminology, particularly in the US (Bennet 1981), with whole books being based around one person's account of their involvement in crime (see for example *The Jack Roller* by Clifford Shaw (1930); *The Professional Thief* by Edwin Sutherland (1937); and Klockar's (1974) *The Professional Fence*), some of which were studies of desistance *avant le letter.* Despite the belated discovery of auto/biographical method by British sociologists of deviance in the 1970s, the more widely read accounts of offender's lives by Tony Parker (Soothill 1999), and some influential prisoner autobiographies (McVicar 1974; Boyle 1977) such literature has since became more marginal in criminology (Goodey 2000; Maguire 2000; Maruna & Matravers 2007 - although see Hobbs 1995; Devlin and Turney 2000; Nellis 2002). This mostly reflects its perceived lack of fit with the conventions of scientific method, the belief that because individual subjective accounts (or single case studies) lack validity, reliability and generalisability they have nothing of comparable worth to recommend them to scholars and policy-makers (Stake 1978; Goodey 2000; Maruna 1997; Maruna and Matravers 2007). However, the institutional dismissal of this literature may reflect something altogether different, and although there is a long tradition of "prisoner autobiographies" contributing to debate on penal

reform (Nellis 2012), Garland (1992:419 cited in Morgan 1999:329), is right to suggest that offenders' voices have also been subordinated in the 'criminological monologue', not so much for what they lack methodologically, but because of their potential threat to expert (or even common-sense) discourses:

> ' …if only they were allowed to speak [offenders] might challenge some of the certainties with which we divide the world into normal and abnormal, right and wrong'. (Garland 1992:419).

Yet, as Maruna (1999) suggests, we need to obtain a coherent story of the individual if we are to understand changes in behaviour, such as desistance. To understand the individual and his/her behaviour, one is required to develop an understanding of the world from the perspective of the individual, and to locate that perspective in the wider context of his/her biography, as it is created within a specific community, culture and temporal, historic context. It is this reflexive perception of self that, in part, shapes future choices and thus behaviour (see chapter 3). This requires methodological, empirical and theoretical attention to people's life stories, their narratives of themselves, within which their identity is constructed and reconstructed. Indeed, as Vaughan (2007:390) states: 'desistance can only be grasped through an understanding of the agent's ultimate concerns – the commitments that matter most and dictate the means by which he or she lives', for it is the *meaning* that choices or opportunities to desist hold for the individual which underlie their reasons for action in any direction.

While, then, the narrative, life (hi)story or (auto)biographical method is not a phenomenon peculiar to desistance research, it has occupied a somewhat marginal

place in criminological research. However, the life (hi)story method, long associated with the Chicago School of Sociologists, is making a 'comeback', as Maruna and Matravers (2007:430) put it (see for example Gadd and Farrall 2004; Presser 2004; Steffensmeier and Ulmer 2005).

Research design

This chapter will proceed to outline the purpose of this research, areas of exploration and the research sample on whose life stories this research was based. A review of the methods through which this research was operationalised will ensue, followed by an overview of the research design, sampling process, ethical issues, methodological limitations, transcription and analytical considerations. The chapter concludes by elaborating the themes emerging from the analysis.

Overview of Purpose of Research, Participants and Areas of Exploration

The principal objective of this study was to re-examine the relationships between structure, agency, identity, and reflexivity in the desistance process, emerging from the life-stories of a naturally forming group of people who grew up and offended together. This investigation was intended to produce a multi-layered analysis of the dynamics of offending and desistance by using narrative approaches to elicit the life stories of six men, who comprised part of a naturally forming group (called 'The Del') in their childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. The participants are now in their forties and whilst their origins are both shared and comparable (i.e. socially, geographically, culturally) their lives have resulted in divergent outcomes. One of the central research objectives was to look for commonalties as well as differences across their life stories to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which the

group, as a social relation, shapes and affects criminal behaviour and desistance, and how individual, relational, cultural and social contexts influence onset, persistence, and desistance, and, thus on precursors, processes and consequences. This narrative tradition is not only well recognised across the social sciences but, as previously observed, has some precedence within criminological research in general and also in what has come to be known as the 'desistance literature' in particular (i.e. Farrall & Bowling 1999; Gadd & Farrall 2004; Giordano et al. 2002; Maruna 2001; Sampson and Laub 1993). However, that the participants in this study comprise part of a naturally forming group lends this study a unique angle both methodologically and theoretically.

To obtain a holistic understanding of the individual, and his behaviour, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the world from the perspective of the individual, and to locate that perspective in the wider context of his biography, as it is created within a specific community, cultural and historic context. Thus this research examined the cultural, class and familial contexts of participants as it pertained to their individual biographies. In addition, individual's perceptions of turning points and significant life events, key social relations such as extant and new social networks, intimate relationships and families of formation and employment, parenthood were explored. The research interview was designed to elicit their life stories, focusing on factors related to offending behaviour and where applicable, their persistence or desistance in these behaviours. The areas of interest in relation to participant's offending behaviour were broadly experiential, and sought to reveal the participants' subjective perceptions and understandings of what the various stages of onset, persistence and desistance, or otherwise, meant to the individuals. By collecting the life stories of these men who formed part of a naturally forming

group, the research was designed to reveal the different pathways traversed by each individual given their relatively shared beginnings and explore their different trajectories through life. How this data were elicited is addressed in more detail under 'Interview Design' below.

Interview Design (see also appendix 1)

Data were gathered through the conduct of life-story interviews with six adult males in their forties, who knew each other during early childhood, adolescence, early adulthood; who came from comparable socio-economic backgrounds, who resided in same small geographical location, with equivalent access to education or employment opportunities, with shared class and cultural origins, all of whom have had a history of persistent offending, commencing in late childhood/early adolescence. The life-story interview involved participants in between two and four interviews, which lasted in total an average of 307 minutes (or 5.1 hours) in total with the shortest lasting for three hours, and the longest lasting for eight hours. Interviews took place in participants' private homes with the exception of one participant who, through necessity, was interviewed in a private room in prison.

The interview schedule incorporated elements of the research instruments developed by McAdam at the Foley Center for the Study of Lives, Northwestern University, and in particular, 'The Life Story Interview'; 'Personal Faith, Politics and Life Story'; and 'Guided Autobiography'. The structure of the interview enabled participants to narrate their life stories in relation to relevant themes (see Appendix 1). The interview schedule was divided into three parts. The first part contained thematic enquiry surrounding the context of participants' lives - including familial and

social relationships, environment, education, life stages, significant events, and images of the self. The second part was designed to elicit a detailed account of each individual's criminal careers through onset, maintenance to desistance. The third part was designed to gauge personal ideologies and perceptions of their futures. Using such broad themes avoided restricting participants by imposing an order or prescribed route through them; rather the interview was designed to allow the participants own narrative trajectory to emerge. The interview schedule also contained a range of 'prompt' type questions which the researcher asked where it was deemed relevant and where they were not covered by the participant's initial responses. Interviews were recorded (with permission), fully transcribed and coded into emergent and superordinate themes using the 'Interpretive Phenomenological Analytic' method (Smith et al. 2009) (discussed below).

Sampling

The form of sampling deployed in this study might be conceptualised as a form of snowball sampling[28], insofar as the researcher had prior contact with a member of the sample population who identified other members of the sample population (Francis 2000). Snowball sampling is an effective approach to accessing difficult to locate populations, although the extent to which it is representative is questionable, as broad comparisons to the wider population are difficult, nor is the basis for selection by individuals ordinarily transparent. However, the six individuals in this research were selected precisely because they were part of a "natural" peer group, and as such have not been selected from a wider pool or category of possible respondents. It is their group experience, as well as their individual experience that

[28] Snowball sampling refers to the process of selection of individuals from the population of interest, who in turn identify other members of the population (Robson 2002).

the researcher was keen to research. As such, it might also be construed as a 'self-selected' sample, which is also an acceptable and ethical way of sampling, although, again, there are problems with this method in respect of typicality, representativeness and bias (Jupp et al. 2000; Francis 2000). Issues around representativeness, generalisability, reliability and validity are addressed below.

The inclusion/exclusion criteria were simply that the participants were known to the initial contact and comprised members of said naturally forming group. Participants occupy a shared age range and the naturally occurring central characteristics of the group include shared geographical origins and involvement in persistent offending behaviour. There were no criteria or screening procedures beyond this.

Accessing the Sample

'Adam'[29], who was once part of the group, negotiated access to the participants. He provided the participants with the information sheets and consent forms (Appendix 3) and a letter of introduction (Appendix 4) and emphasised that they were in no way obliged to take part in the study but any information they shared would be kept confidential and used solely for the purposes of this research and publication with all identifying information anonymised. After agreeing to participate, the men met with the researcher and after obtaining informed consent, she emphasised the right to withdraw from the study at any stage prior to proceeding with the interview.

The participants are all white adult males between the ages of 40-50 years old, who have either engaged or continue to engage in persistent offending behaviour. Only

[29] It should be noted that Adam did not participate in this study as a participant.

one of the participants had any 'current' involvement within the criminal justice system and, as stated previously, was in prison. He was contacted by the same method as the other participants although access arrangements necessitated liaison with the Director of the prison, which was granted.

The participants were provided with the researcher's contact details (included in the letter of introduction and the information sheet (see Appendices 3 and 4), so that arrangements could be made for a preliminary meeting with the researcher prior to interview. However, without exception, the participants chose to pass on their contact details to Adam; the researcher then contacted them and the same process of arranging a preliminary meeting ensued. At this meeting, the researcher gave the participants a full account of the aims of the research and emphasised that at no point should they feel pressurised into participating. It also provided the opportunity for the researcher to answer any questions emerging from the information sheet, which they had been provided with prior to this meeting. The preliminary meeting provided the researcher and the participants with an opportunity to discuss the reasons for, and methods used, in undertaking the research; a reiteration of why they had been identified; the intention to record the conversations (with their consent); how portions of the transcripts or quotations were to be used and what the researcher would do with the recordings, transcriptions and final report. All participants consented to the research and at this meeting they signed the consent form. They were also informed that their consent could be withdrawn at any stage in the investigation, in the knowledge that both they and their data would be withdrawn immediately, and that this would be unequivocally accepted without a requirement to explain their decision. Importantly, this process gave the researcher and the participants an initial chance to meet, and it provided an opportunity to build rapport

in advance of the initial interview, and it allowed for time for cooling off and reflection prior to first interview. The intention behind this was not only to enhance informed consent but to further serve to assist the process of narrative and recollection.

Ethical considerations

The University of Strathclyde Code of Practice was drawn on to ensure that the project was mindful of ethical considerations, relating to informed consent (discussed above), confidentiality and anonymity; vulnerability of participants and sensitivity of the topics under investigation.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

As the participants were former or current offenders, it was particularly important to respect and protect their rights to anonymity and control over the use of data. All data were anonymised at the point of collection; the researcher used a digital voice recorder and the recordings were stored on password protected audio files accessible only on the hard drive of University of Strathclyde computers to which access is again secured by personal login and password.

The researcher was cognisant of her duty to minimise harm and that, in this context, exceptions to the confidentiality rule may arise in situations where information is divulged to the researcher that may harm the participant(s) or other people i.e. disclosure of abuse or criminal activity. The participants were advised from the outset and at the beginning of each contact of the researcher's obligation to report any information which suggests significant current risk of serious harm to themselves or third parties. While this proved unnecessary, the researcher had

decided that were a decision made to breach confidentiality, this would have been discussed fully with the participant first. The researcher has considerable professional experience working with offenders and ex-offenders as a qualified social worker. As such the researcher is familiar with addressing issues pertaining to confidentiality and drew on this experience in considering how to handle any such issues that might have arisen[30].

Vulnerability of participants and Sensitivity of the topics under investigation

Taking cognisance of the potential for distress that telling one's life story may have for participants, each participant was advised from the outset that it was their prerogative whether to divulge information or not and that if the researcher were to ask them something that they would rather not answer, then to say so. The researcher advised them that they would not be pressed for information that might distress them. The researcher assessed vulnerability on a case-by-case basis and ensured that participants were genuinely in a position to express free and informed consent to participate. The researcher's professional experience equipped the researcher to assess vulnerability and to identify any signs of distress in any of the participants and handle this sensitively. Although there was no reason to assume vulnerability on the part of the research participants, it was possible that some

[30] If a participant disclosed that he was in immediate danger or had been seriously harmed, the researcher was prepared to pass on that information to a person who could give support to the participant, after full discussion with the participant beforehand, not only to inform them but to elicit from them the nature of the support from which they feel they might benefit. If a participant disclosed that someone else might be in immediate danger or was being seriously harmed by another person, the researcher was prepared to report that to someone who could help that person, and to discuss how the participant could best be supported in the circumstances. If a participant disclosed that he was seriously harming someone or causing an immediate danger to them, the researcher was prepared to report that information. In that situation the researcher was prepared to terminate the interview with the participant, tell the participant that he needed to report the information, and discuss with the participant how he might best be supported in the circumstances.

participants may have been vulnerable, for example in relation to ongoing involvement with the criminal justice system or mental health issues.

The interview format was designed to capture participants' life stories including details of their personal circumstances and offending histories, which the researcher recognised in some instances might have engendered a level of distress for those participants recollecting and reflecting upon potentially difficult periods or events in their lives. However, in all interviews, the researcher remained sensitive to any evidence of distress and when it manifested the researcher paused the interview and offered to terminate the interview. Details of relevant support services (for example, counselling services, professional associations and ex-offender organisations) had been prepared and were available if required, although no participants identified a need for them. The researcher also enlisted an independent, senior social worker, with considerable experience in working with offenders, who agreed to be available to support any participants who may need support, advice, guidance or assistance. While her assistance was offered, all of the participants declined it. The researcher also provided participants with the opportunity to express how they felt during an interview, at the close of each contact. Interestingly, participants expressed that they had enjoyed participating in the interview. No form of payment was offered and, because all participants were interviewed in their place of residence, no travel expenses were required and no financial disadvantages were incurred on participants as a consequence of participating in the research.

Sample representativeness, reliability and validity

Sample Representativeness / Generalisability

There remains the perennial criticism made of qualitative research, but particularly of single case studies, that the individual case is not typical and that therefore one cannot generalise from the findings. Equally, collating six case studies could have the same criticism levied at it. The simplest response to this is that large-scale quantitative methodologies can be used to test how frequently any particular phenomenon occurs but they are limited in their capacity to answer questions surrounding agency, meaning, subjective truth, and the internal complexities of the human self and transformative processes with which this research is concerned. Nonetheless, as the level of data analysis occurs at the level of the individual or individual-in-relation, this places firm boundaries around the generalisability of conclusions that might be drawn from the data beyond this level (Jupp 1989).

'External validity' can, however, extend the problem of generalisability to other units of analysis at the same level i.e. to other individuals beyond those contained in the study. This is possible insofar as the individuals interviewed were broadly typical and representative of other groups of people who offend (Jupp 1989). Indeed, this sample could broadly be classified as 'Street Criminals', a category employed by Maguire (2000: 122) to denote those offenders that make up the bulk of offences recorded annually in criminal statistics – the perpetrators of so-called 'volume crime' (ibid): the thefts, burglaries, assaults, vehicle crime and acts of vandalism. The suggestion put forward here is that, as street criminals, broad inferences can be made to other individuals, which is borne out by the data (in chapters 5-12) and the demographic profiles collated (see chapter 5-13). It may be countered that larger samples using less in-depth methods might enable generalizability although it might also be argued that this is due to the absence of sufficient information that might

contradict the generalisations made. While it might be more persuasive to argue for generalisability from large-scale studies, it does not follow that this is the route to the desired quality. Indeed, the relevance of 'generalisability' as a concern has been questioned. Stake (1994:236) refers to the intrinsic case study 'where this case is of interest…in all its particularity and ordinariness'; no attempt is made to generalise beyond the single case or even to build theories. However, as Mason argued (1996:6) 'qualitative researchers should [not] be satisfied with producing explanations which are idiosyncratic or particular to the limited empirical parameters of their study. Qualitative research should (therefore) produce explanations which are generalizable in some way, or which have a wider resonance' (Silverman 2001).

Reliability

'[Reliability] refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions' (Hammersley 1992:67). It can also refer to the extent to which questioning will yield the same answers whenever and wherever it is conducted (Atkinson 1998). Descriptive narratives and the problems of subsequently categorising the events or activities described can beg the problem of reliability. The issue often arises because shortage of space means that many qualitative studies provide little more evidence than brief persuasive data extracts (Bryman 1988).

Kirk and Miller argue that '[f]or reliability to be calculated, it is incumbent on the scientific investigator to document his or her procedure' (1986:72). High reliability in

qualitative research is associated with what Seale (1999:148) terms 'low inference descriptors' which involves 'recording observations in terms that are as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what people say, for example, rather than researchers' reconstructions of the general sense of what a person said, which would allow researchers' personal perspectives to influence the reporting'. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in full and verbatim extracts have been provided throughout chapters 5-11. All the interviews in this research project were audio recorded and issues pertaining to transcription, analysis and presentation of data are addressed below.

Validity

'By validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers' (Hammersley 1990:57). There are various issues to consider when addressing validity. Firstly, the impact of the researcher on the setting (the so-called 'Halo' or 'Hawthorne' effect (Hammersley 1990). This refers to the issue of reactivity (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Jupp et al. 2000) or reactive effects including respondent bias. Participants may react to being a part of the research and / or knowing what it is about, perhaps by exaggerating or by trying to supply the responses that they anticipate the researcher is seeking. Possible approaches to minimising this risk include prolonged contact with participants (interviews lasted between three to eight hours), triangulation (discussed below), respondent validation (this was done during the interview

process and at the end of the interview by summarising information and asking questions to determine accuracy), deviant case analysis (see data analysis), and transparency of method (contained in Chapter 3 and this chapter). Secondly, issues surrounding the truth status of a participant's account require consideration. This is explored further below, however in brief, narrative analysis is less preoccupied with historical truth; it is the subjective reality, through the interpretative lens of the narrator that is sought.

'Triangulation' refers to the use of different research methods or types of data[31] to examine the same problem and adoption of this approach is commonly assumed to increase the validity of research findings. The underlying rationale is that if they yield the same conclusions then no peculiarity of method or of data has produced the conclusions and the confidence in their validity is increased (Jupp et al. 2000). The use of different methods is argued to maximise the theoretical value of any research by revealing aspects of phenomena which the use of one method alone would miss. However, if it is accepted that actions and accounts are *situated*, this implies that methods, often drawn from different theories, cannot give us an 'objective' truth (Fielding and Fielding 1986). Furthermore, the accuracy of a method comes from its systematic application. The mistake arises in using data to adjudicate between accounts, while failing to attend to the sense of each account in the context in which it arises.

[31] Denzin describes two forms of such triangulation: within-method and cross-method. Within-method triangulation refers to the use of differing strategies within a broad research method, for example, the use of structured questions in a survey to generate statistical data and open-ended questions to generate qualitative descriptions. Cross-method triangulation pertains to the procedure of using dissimilar methods of research to examine the same phenomenon. For example, the use of official statistics, observational methods and life histories to examine deviant sub-cultures as undertaken by the Chicago sociologists. Denzin (1970) argues that the value of this is that it balances the strengths and weaknesses of different methods.

Riessman (1993:64), amongst other narratologists (i.e. Plummer 2001; Roberts 2002), argues that 'prevailing concepts of verification and procedures for establishing validity (from the experimental model) rely on realist assumptions and consequently are largely irrelevant to narrative studies'. Due to the nature of the method, no two researchers will conduct, record, transcribe, interpret or analyse a life story in a completely replicable way. Riessman argues that the 'historical truth' (ibid: 64) (as distinct from narrative truth) of an individual's account is not the primary issue; narrativization *assumes* a perspective. Individuals construct different narratives about the same event (Chafe 1980); Riessman (1993: 64) suggests that '[t]elling about complex and troubling events *should* vary because the past is a selective reconstruction. Individuals exclude experiences that undermine the current identities they wish to claim'. Narratives are further infused with social discourses and power relations, which do not remain constant over time. Thus an individual's narrative will not necessarily remain consistent from one setting to the next. As such, 'traditional notions of reliability simply do not apply to narrative studies, and validity must be radically reconceptualized' (ibid: 65).

Riessman (1993) proposes four ways of approaching validation in narrative work, firstly in what she refers to as the persuasiveness of a narrative. Persuasiveness is greatest when theoretical claims are supported with evidence from participants' accounts; when alternative interpretations of the data are considered; and when existing theoretical interpretations are acknowledged and problematised as potential interpretations. In chapters 5-11, theoretical claims are supported with evidence from the individual life stories and existing and alternative interpretations are acknowledged and considered. Second is Riessman's notion of 'correspondence', akin to respondent validation. Riessman argues that eliciting participants' views of

the data analysis is desirable because their responses can also be a source of theoretical insight, although she questions whether the validity of interpretations can be affirmed by respondent validation (see also Fielding and Fielding 1986:43). An individual narrator cannot evaluate the researcher's theorizing across narratives, moreover, people may not agree with the researcher's interpretations; it is important, then, to clearly distinguish between the researcher's interpretations of participant's lives and their own (Stivers 1993). While individual member checks were conducted, it was not possible in the time frame to present the full analysis of the life stories to participants.

Thirdly, Riessman (1993:67) refers to narrative coherence, termed 'coherence criterion'. Agar and Hobbs (1982) suggested that interpretations should be coherent on three levels – global, local and themal. Global coherence refers to the overall goals a narrator is trying to accomplish by speaking, in terms of justifying a particular action, for example. Local coherence is what a narrator is trying to effect in the narrative itself, such as the use of linguistic devices to relate events to one another. Themal coherence involves content and refers to the recurrent themes that unify text. However, as Riessman argues, it is difficult to apply this framework of interaction in interviews, and the model assumes a rational speaker with a discourse plan, which is not appropriate to all studies. A simpler measure might be that of internal consistency. According to Cohler (1982), the way a personal narrative is recounted at any point in one's life represents the most internally consistent interpretation of the way the past, the experienced present and the anticipated future is understood by that person. This means that what is said in one part of the narrative should not contradict what is said in another. There are inconsistencies in life and people react differently at different times but their stories of what happened

and what they did should be consistent within itself. What is understood here is that an individual inherently sees life events as related or connected in some way, because this is how one's life is ultimately rendered meaningful. This translates into a sense of sequence and direction, which emerges in the narrative (Gergen and Gergen 1984). The narrative must make sense on its own and in order to reveal this internal consistency, the analysis and progression of each life story is presented in individual data chapters. 'External consistency', where what is said conforms to what you already know or think you know about the person telling the story or issue being discussed is less relevant as a measure of validity, insofar that historical truth is not the primary objective of the enquiry, only the story teller's own experience or perspective of what they recall (Atkinson 1998).

Lastly, Riessman refers to a study's 'pragmatic use' which essentially entails the provision of information that will make it possible for others to determine the 'trustworthiness' of the study (Riessman's alternative term for validity). This she suggests involves describing how interpretations were produced (see below); making processes of research at every level visible (see chapters 3 and this chapter); and making primary data available to other researchers.

Data collection

There is no singular method of life-story interviewing, nor is there any prescribed format and the length of a life-story interview can vary considerably (Atkinson 1998). The interview process is led by the research subject, who is guided by the researcher, around key themes relevant to the objectives of the research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) point out that this form of interviewing can impact on and shape what participants say; for example, where the researcher maintains a

minimal presence, asking few questions, this can create an interpretative problem for the interviewee about what is relevant. Moreover, Hammersley and Atkinson reason that the passivity of the interviewer can constrain the participant's confidence. In this study, this was minimised through the establishment of rapport between the researcher and the participants. The researcher drew on her experience of interviewing to ensure a balance 'between guiding and following and knowing when it is more important to let the pace and direction of the process be set by the person you are interviewing' (Atkinson 1998: 28). To facilitate the flow and development of each participant's narrative, the researcher ensured the participants had the freedom to speak for as long as they wished to at any time. Atkinson suggests that this technique facilitates 'a free association of thoughts and therefore, deeper responses'. (Atkinson 1998: 31; see also Hollway and Jefferson 2000).

This approach, eliciting open ended responses and in-depth comments, was deployed to assist participants to convey their subjective experiences through the narration of their life-stories; questions were posed that enabled participants to express their emotions and retrospective reflections about their experiences. In this vein, both the researcher and participants collaborated in the meaning-making process (Holstein and Gubrium 1995).

Anecdotalism

Anecdotalism refers to the way in which research analyses sometimes appeal to a few revealing 'examples' of some apparent phenomenon, without any attempt to analyse less clear or contradictory data (Silverman 1989). Fielding and Fielding (1986) observe a tendency in qualitative research to select data that fits an ideal

pre-conception of the phenomenon and a tendency to select data that stand out because they are unexpected or interesting at the expense of less dramatic but possibly indicative data. Qualitative research can be made credible if every effort is made to falsify initial assumptions about the data and where an analysis of seemingly 'deviant' cases is provided (Silverman 2001). In this thesis, all the life stories were analysed and are presented individually to preclude the possibility of anecdotalism (Chapters 6-11). At the same time, group level analyses are provided in Chapters 5 and 12.

Transcribing Data

Each interview was transcribed in accordance with the guidelines proposed by Smith et al. (2009), proponents of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the analytic method deployed throughout this study. The researcher transcribed a verbatim account of each audio-recorded interview. Unlike other narrative analytical approaches (Riessman 1993) or conversation analysis (Jefferson 1984), IPA transcription does not require the research to record length of pauses or non-verbal utterances (Smith et al. 2009). However, in accordance with IPA the researcher produced a semantic record of the interviews, that is, of each word spoken by both the researcher and the participants.

Analytical considerations

Retrospective studies can be influenced by participants' failure to recall events or the correct ordering of events. Life-stories can be vulnerable to deliberate distortions as narrators attempt to imbue their actions with a rationality which they did not have

at the time, or non-deliberate distortions due to subconscious suppressions of painful memories, for example, or subjective interpretations of events and experiences that may not be echoed by other protagonists involved at the time. Where narratives are gathered retrospectively one cannot ignore questions surrounding memory, or autobiographical memory, about transformations over time in individual's narratives and the accompanying self-reflexive understandings of self and perceptions of significant events that a retrospective gaze imputes into a narrative (Rubin 1995). Indeed, with prospective studies one is less likely to be confronted by such biases, since one has a record of what was said earlier on the same topic. Habermas and Bluck (cited by McAdams 2006: 105) propose that autobiographical memories are shaped by an individual's current goals, which influence how autobiographical information is absorbed and organised in the first place. Thus like the life-story, autobiographical memory is contoured by the person's current goals and anticipations of the future; the life story itself however consists of a more enclosed set of temporally and thematically organised scenes and scripts that together constitute identity. It is contended here that the content of these narratives presented important analytic considerations as to *why* participants' recollect or narrativise as they do, reflecting their interpretations of themselves, the messages they have internalised, their hopes, motivations and goals, and as such this in itself was significant in understanding processes of change over time. Moreover, as the participants comprised a naturally forming group, the cross analysis facilitated the verification, where appropriate, of recollection and sequencing of events. However, as the data analysis chapters reveal, how people experienced and responded to shared events and occurrences differed, and this was of significant theoretical interest in itself. A significant limitation of the methodological approach employed in this study, however, was the researcher's neglect to also include the voices of participants' partners and families of formation, also a means of data triangulation.

As the significance of the relational context of desistance, and thus different social relations, emerged during the first order analysis, the study did not incorporate the voices and views of wider participants in the social relations discussed, namely wives, partners and new social network members.

Analysis

The data were analysed using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analytic method (IPA) (Smith and Osborn 2003, Smith et al 2009). IPA was selected as a method of analysis precisely because it facilitates a finely grained data analysis, oriented to a detailed exploration as to how participants make sense of their personal and social world. The analytic focus is on the meanings that particular experiences and events hold for participants. The approach is phenomenological in that it involves detailed examination of the participant's life-world in its own terms; it enables the exploration of personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself. It is also interpretive in its recognition of the researchers engagement in a double hermeneutic in trying to make sense of how participants make sense of their worlds (Smith et al. 2009). IPA is also idiographic in that it is particularly suitable for small sample sizes which enable the researcher to analyse and reveal the experiences of each participant.

The data were analysed using the procedures outlined by Smith et al. (2009). The aim was to create a comprehensive account of themes which have significance within the original texts. IPA delineates a flexible framework to facilitate an iterative and inductive cycle of analysis (Smith et al. 2009). Each transcript was read several times while listening to the original audio recording to ensure that meaning, conveyed through intonation, was not lost. At this stage, the researcher noted initial

perceptions in the left hand margin. This was a time-consuming process which is conducted through a line-by-line analysis of the transcript to examine semantic content and language use on an exploratory level. What emerged from this was an extremely comprehensive set of comments on the data. Following Smith et al. (2009) using different colour pens on a hard copy of the transcript, the researcher then categorised these perceptions into descriptive, linguistic and conceptual observations. Descriptive comments focused on describing the content of what the participant said, noting key words and phrases used by each participant. Linguistic comments focused on the way that participant use language which reflects the ways in which the content and meaning were presented for example, the use of metaphors and repetition. Conceptual comments operated on a more interpretive and theoretical level.

The next stage of the researcher's analysis consisted of analysing and mapping the inter-relationships, connections and patterns between these initial notes which informed the generation of 'emergent themes' which were noted in the right hand margin (Smith et al 2009:91). Essentially, emergent themes are what Smith et al., (2009: 92) describe as 'a concise and pithy statement of what was important in the various comments attached to a piece of transcript'. Building up the emergent themes from the initial notes, created from a close analysis of the transcript, meant that the emergent themes were characterised both by the participants' words and the researcher's conceptual interpretation.

The next stage in the process of analysis involved making connections between emergent themes and organising them into clusters of related themes. To achieve this, the researcher typed all the emergent themes from each case in chronological order into a list. By studying the list and moving themes around, the researcher was

able to form groups of related themes. The relationship between these themes was captured by the development or identification of a superordinate theme. This process was repeated across each case prior to pursuing a cross-case analysis to identify convergences and divergences within and across emergent and superordinate themes.

While themes were generated inductively, rather than from a pre-existing theoretical position, during the analysis of the individual cases, the frequency with which each individual drew on their relationships with significant people in their lives prompted a theoretical analysis during the process of cross-case analysis. This remains consistent with the hermeneutic phenomenological underpinnings of IPA, in that what emerged was a dynamic relationship between the comparison of individual life-stories and Donati's relational sociology, the latter providing a theoretical framework through which to refract the 'second-order analysis' (Smith et al. 2009: 166) but the analysis and the specific content were driven by the life-stories themselves in the 'first-order analysis' (ibid: 166) and in this sense were inductive in IPA style. The process of analysis yielded four superordinate themes: The Relational Context of Offending; Experience of Punishment (Seth and Andy only); Roles/Religiosity, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance; The Meanings and Outcomes of Work. (Appendix 2 illustrates the subthemes underpinning these superordinate themes).

Conclusion

This chapter has located the methodological approach underpinning this study in its criminological and methodological context and delineated the process through which the study was conducted. The study engaged in an exploratory and qualitative study

of six men comprising part of a naturally forming group, The Del, who once offended together but whose lives have, to varying degrees, since diverged. The main aim of this research was to develop a nuanced and in-depth analysis of the dynamics of offending and desistance and, thus, the individual and relational contributions to the outcomes. This was realised, methodologically, through the depth and length of the successive interviews conducted with each participant, which generated a vast amount of data and which enabled the researcher to assess and analyse internal narrative coherency and the close, detailed, multi-layered analysis of individual transcripts, followed by a process of cross-case analysis.

While it may be suggested that a larger sample might have enabled wider generalisations to be drawn, the focus was on what occurs within and between people in relation who comprised a naturally forming group. To facilitate a larger scale enquiry, a larger naturally forming group and a larger number of that group willing to participate in the research would need to be identified. Alternatively, a number of naturally forming groups from within the same or across different geographical locations willing to participate in the research would have facilitated a broader analysis of the dynamics of offending and desistance within and across naturally forming groups. Indeed, this may be an area for further research. At the point of investigation, the researcher did not have access to alternative groups. Moreover, as suggested earlier, the level of detailed analysis included in this study is better suited to small-scale samples, which may have been forfeited, due to scale, scope and reasons of expedience in a larger study.

As suggested earlier, a more thorough analysis of the role of social relations in the change process would suggest the inclusion of a broader base of participants, including, for example, parents, partners and new social network members, to

understand their experiences and develop a more robust analysis of the relational contributions to the change process. However, the significance of the relational context within and through which identities are formed and lives are played out emerged from the data analysis of this study. Whilst then this is a limitation of the methodological approach of the study, it is simultaneously an implication for new directions in desistance research (see Chapter 13). Notwithstanding this, studying a naturally forming group of people and taking the social relation as a central unit of analysis gives this study a methodological and theoretical distinctiveness, and, as Chapters 5-12 illustrate, extends current knowledge of the dynamics offending and desistance.

The next eight chapters present the findings of this research. Chapter 5 presents a group level analysis of their shared lives within 'The Del' and as such explores 'The Relational Context of Offending'. Individual's stories following the fragmentation of the Del are presented in six subsequent chapters. The final data chapter (12), 'The Dynamics of Desistance' draws together the elements of the change process occurring, albeit differently, across the individual stories in Chapters 6-11.

CHAPTER 5: THE STORY OF THE DEL

Introduction

The previous three chapters discuss the criminological context, and the socio-theoretical and methodological approach of the thesis. Broadly, the thesis seeks to analyse how desistance is accomplished, or otherwise, through the life stories of a naturally forming group of men, now in their late forties, whose lives had shared beginnings and who once offended together, but whose lives have since diverged. This thesis thus seeks to explore the dynamics of offending and desistance as it occurs within and between individuals-in-relation while situating people's lived experiences within their shared historical, structural and cultural contexts.

This chapter represents the first substantive chapter of eight data chapters. This chapter is the story of the group, the Del, from formation to fragmentation and is divided into eight parts. The first part, 'Overview of the Sample', introduces the characters on whose narratives this thesis is based. The second, 'Overview of Context/Conditioning Structures', offers a portrait of the historical, social, economic and cultural context which frame the group and which inform their situations of action and influence group identities and their interactions. The third part, 'Becoming and Belonging', examines the first sub-theme derived from the superordinate theme 'The Relational Context of Offending' and describes how the group met and formed. It explores the significance of the group to the participants in the context of their shared but diverse experience of childhood trauma and disconnection from their families, and observes the various socialising influences on their identities and interactions.

The fourth part examines the second sub-theme derived from the superordinate theme 'The Relational Context of Offending', 'The nature and dynamics of the group, lifestyle and behaviour' and reveals the shifting nature of group dynamics, identities, offending behaviour and lifestyles over time. It pursues a discussion on the nature of friendship and in so doing reveals both the nature and form of the group as a social relation and the relational rules which structure and characterise the nature and form of their interactive dynamics and collective action. The fifth part examines the third sub-theme 'Identity and identification to and with the group'. This part examines the changing meaning of belonging to the group for individuals in the context of their increasingly imprisoning lives. While the group initially met individuals' needs for social interaction and participation, their collective actions and acquired reputations for violence and the ensuing social repercussions constrained opportunities for social participation. This part proceeds to examine how, in this context, the group influenced identity formation and how belonging to the group and participating in their collective actions represented, in the absence of alternative means, a source of respect and social recognition and operated as point of resistance to stigma.

Building on this discussion of reputations and identities, the sixth part discusses the fourth sub-theme 'the individual and relational self in a collective context'. It reveals the heterogeneity of individual experiences of the group and how the group influenced individuals' behaviour. It is suggested that while the perceived need to act in accordance with the expectations of the group is experienced by individuals as a constraint on their autonomy, that acting on the basis of their conviction of the veracity of the relational rules to which they subscribed, not only served to reconcile the ambivalence of agency this engendered in individuals, but can be understood as both an expression of agency and individuals' application of relational reflexivity. The seventh part describes the situational nature of the 'fragmentation of the Del'

and the divergent outcomes for individuals. In so doing it foreshadows the role of the splinter or revised group in mutually supporting the early phases of each other's desistance under the superordinate theme 'Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance'. This chapter thus reveals the story of the Del from formation to fragmentation and serves as a foundation to the individual analyses presented in chapters 6-11.

Overview of the sample

The Webster brothers, Adam (born 1961), Jay (born 1963) and Seth (born 1965), were born and raised in Coaston. Adam occupied a dominant position in the group, which seemed to relate as much to his intelligence as to his capacity for fighting and prowess in football, which as this chapter will illustrate, were construed as valued qualities to possess. Adam's younger brothers, Seth and Jay consider themselves to have been socialised into the group due to Adam's involvement with similarly situated others in the neighbourhood, and Jay and Seth, in turn, formed friendships with the younger siblings of these associates because the group also comprised other sibling formations including the Nixon brothers (Desmond, Dennis and Iain) and the Mackenzie brothers (Barry and Graeme) all of whom were close in age. This 'group' originally developed through friendships formed on the streets of their local neighbourhood, where they primarily associated. Jed (born 1961) lived on the same housing scheme in Coaston as the Websters and formed a particularly close friendship with Adam in early childhood. The 'Del', as they came to be known, also included another set of siblings, the Smiths, (Ben, Jim and James) whose involvement in the group was established when Ben met Adam, Iain and Jed and others at secondary school.

Harry (born 1961) and Andy (born 1961) similarly developed friendships with the Del when they met at secondary school. However, while centrally involved with the group, they occupied a lower status within the group than some of the other boys, with neither one exhibiting the necessary fighting prowess essential to commanding respect amongst one's peers and critical to one's position within the group. Like Evan (born 1965) who moved into Coaston at the age of 12 from an adjoining town, they did not reside on the same housing scheme as the others. There is consensus across the men's narratives that their associations as a group intensified when the older boys reached the age of twelve, coinciding with the commencement of their secondary education. Others, particularly the younger brothers like Seth, were approximately eight years old at this time.

Only some of these people were interviewed for this study. Those people are Jed, Jay, Seth, Evan, Harry, and Andy. Some people's association with the Del was more peripheral or fleeting; they associated with the Del for a while but when the group became more frequently and more seriously involved in offending, they disengaged and drifted away from them. As this chapter will illustrate, groups and the people that comprise them are not fixed, static entities. Given the transient nature of some people's involvement in offending and the Del, tracking them down would have proved a challenge which would not be warranted by what they might be able to contribute to understandings of desistance. Indeed, a few of the men refer to this fluidity in association – in terms of the varying levels of connectedness or attachment between people which were more or less intense, at different times and for different reasons. The people involved here were those who occupied more central and enduring positions within the group. There were, however, other central characters, mentioned above, who declined to participate, for reasons not given; others were inaccessible, living elsewhere or deceased.

Overview of context/conditioning structures

Describing Coaston, Evan said that 'from someone outside looking in, they probably thought it was a nice pretty little seaside town but never understood there was loads of baggage, there were loads of issues going on.' These 'issues' include the impact of de-industrialisation and the attendant economic inequalities and social disadvantage it compounded. In addition, cultural class beliefs and attitudes towards social mobility and gender roles and identities, for example, were significant conditioning influences on the group's developing personal and collective identities, shaping their situations of action through the constraints and enablements they engendered (T1-T2 in Figure 6).

The area in which the Del resided was a small town on the west coast of Scotland whose current population totals approximately 12,000[32]. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Coaston, a predominantly working-class town, had the appearance of a pleasant holiday destination, boasting a number of industries which provided mass employment including shipyards, factories and a local power station. Like many areas, Coaston experienced a decline in heavy industry and manufacturing employment in the 1970s and 1980s, causing unemployment and poverty and aggravating other social problems (McDowell 2003 in Deuchar 2009). Indeed, the west of Scotland was particularly affected by deindustrialisation (Torrance 2009), and 'Scottish industries haemorrhaged jobs' (Craig 2010: 301) resulting in a number of industrial closures. By 1983 around three quarter of a million Scots were dependent on benefits and over a fifth of the population of Scotland were living on or below the poverty line (Finlay 2003). In this era of Thatcherite materialism, where to

[32] General Records Office Scotland

have was to be, the difference between the haves and the have nots, and thus inequality, rose sharply (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010). This was the economic and social context characterising the Del's formative years, their adolescence and early adulthood.

> Evan: [In terms of] employment... I think as the seventies went on things began to decline. The shipyards certainly was going almost very quickly and [factory] - it almost went - late seventies, early eighties - suddenly all the jobs lost were there and that had a massive effect I think on the community... unemployment rose and there was not much hope.

This collective sense of hopelessness emerging from burgeoning inequalities, increasing poverty and diminishing opportunities arose in the context of a Scottish working class culture which exhibited hostility towards social mobility (Finlay 2003) and to those seen to be 'rising above their status'. This phenomenon is echoed in Willis' (1977) '*Learning to Labour'*, where young working class male adolescents held themselves back from progress in school for fear of standing out and losing ties to friends if they rose too far, and in turn, their communities. In 'these practices of daily life, "meritocracy" stands for a threat to solidarity [and]....social mobility carries social costs' (Sennett 2003:98). These cultural constraints on motivation and aspiration contributed to the suppression of people's expectations and to a collective resignation towards the structural constraints on opportunity that the worsening economic context heralded (Craig 2010).

> Seth: There was a total feeling of hopelessness that you could never get a job…that was instilled in me with my Dad not working…there was no hope…you could never get a job and...you could never go to college… It

> wasn't a kind of thing that was done, going back for education…Not to say that nobody ever did but, hey, in our thinking you didnae.

Exacerbated by de-industrialisation, unemployment and poverty framed the economic context for many of the Del, their families and the community, reinforcing their already suppressed aspirations. However, violent crime often linked with poor housing, environmental degeneration, concentrated poverty, educational under-achievement and religious sectarianism are also prevalent in social histories documenting the structural, cultural and social landscape of the west of Scotland of this era (see for example Finlay 2003; Dudgeon 2009; Devine 1999; Craig 2010). Cultural representations portray a dominant "macho" patriarchal culture of a large area of West Scotland, with heavy drinking as normal male behaviour, domestic violence a common linking feature, and frustration an aggravating one as local autobiographies of this era and from this area testify (see for example Galloway 2008; Weaver 2008) and as social histories document (Damer 1990; Craig 2010), to which these men's narratives testify.

As this and the following chapters illustrate, many of the Del were influenced and affected by the nature of the 'relationships' and associated social norms or behavioural 'patterns' they were exposed to. This is not to suggest that they passively responded to social, cultural and structural determinants. Indeed, in echoes of Willis' (1977), the Del actively and self-consciously appropriated elements of an idealised configuration of hegemonic 'traditional' working class masculinity (Connell 2002) in their pursuit of status, respect and social recognition, influenced by and responsive to the social, cultural and economic character of the era and area. This somewhat exaggerated representation of masculinity informed the social relations in which they participated as both a context (the cultural and social

connections) and as interaction (the emergent effects in, and of, interactive dynamics). As this chapter illustrates, their emergent gender identities and associated practices were intricately infused into relational rules influencing the kinds of bonds generated between them and which guided the form and nature of their relationships, interactions and the actions they gave rise to.

This chapter will proceed to illuminate the complexities and subjectivities of their lives as a group – their lived experiences and relationships with each other and to the wider social frameworks within which they participated – including their families, school and community. These interactions, underpinned by an idealised form of masculinity, in part informed the relational rules which structured and characterised their relationships and the nature and form of their interactions with each other and wider social relations. The tensions in what was conveyed to them, and about them, through their relationships to, and experiences of, increasing alienation within the family, school and community are, as this chapter illustrates, partly mitigated (and in turn exacerbated) by their association with the group. The sense of belonging, recognition and solidarity they found in the group operated as an enclave of security and protection and as a point of resistance to these messages (T2-T3 in Figure 6). Herein resides the motivation for individuals' initial and enduring association with the group, the meaning of this association to them and what this represented in the development of their identities, through which lens they ordered and refracted their ultimate concerns as individuals and as a group. In revealing these relational processes, this chapter illustrates the centrality of the relational to the individual and, thus, to processes of change, and illuminates the group trajectory, itself significant to understanding individual trajectories towards desistance from crime.

The chapter proceeds to discuss the dynamics of offending, as it occurred in the context of the conditioning structures elaborated thus far, under the superordinate group theme '*The Relational Context of Offending'.* In so doing, the following sub-themes are elaborated: 'Becoming and Belonging'; 'The nature and dynamics of the group, lifestyle and behaviour'; 'Identity and identification to and with the group' and 'The fragmentation of the Del'.

Superordinate Theme	**Subtheme**
The Relational Context of Desistance	Becoming and Belonging
	The Nature and Dynamics of the Group, Lifestyle and Behaviour
	Identity and Identification to and With the Group
	The Fragmentation of the Del

Table 2: The Relational context of desistance

Becoming and Belonging

Experience of childhood trauma and/or emotional disconnection within the family is a dominant theme across the men's narratives, and was cited as a significant influence on individuals' involvement with the group and their subsequent progression to offending behaviour. The earliest memories Jay and Seth Webster recalled were of their pervasive father's violence; when he was not violent, the ubiquitous threat was as oppressive as the fear, disruption and anguish he engendered during violent episodes.

> Seth: [I remember] my Dad drunk and causing chaos and the violence and that…I remember him smashing the house up constantly when he was

> drunk...You never knew when it was going to happen and … you would have to leave the house.

> Jay: … the domestic violence always sort of hung over us and a lot of our life had been determined round about things like that. Moving out the house at night and… having to get away from an abusive Dad and just dreading him coming in at night.

Both Jay and Seth retrospectively perceive their father's violence as a contributory influence on their involvement in the group, and ultimately, their subsequent involvement in offending behaviour.

> Jay: I wouldn't be looking to blame certain things but, obviously, all the chaos that was going on in the house - eh but, then, that carried on for years so I wouldn't really know. I wouldn't be able to identify that or say it was x, y or z. But when the chaos was going on in the house, it gave you a wee chance 'cos' everybody's mind was on something else. It gave you a window of opportunity to go and do something, I think.

The dubiety manifest in Jay's rumination suggests, in his mind, an uncertain relationship between his experience of his father's violence in the home and his subsequent involvement in offending, one iterated across other narratives where exposure to abuse or trauma was a defining feature of their childhood. However, both here, and across other men's narratives, an absence of parental supervision is construed as an enablement to an offending lifestyle. Additionally Seth and others observe a relationship between this 'chaos' in the home and the need to escape. In this context, the streets provided a place of refuge where he and his brothers

associated with similarly situated friends. Jay and Seth's father's violence in the home thus influenced the physical places and social spaces they occupied which, ultimately, influenced the development of their identities, concerns, projects and practices.

> Seth: The whole unsettledness in the house, my Dad drinking, all the crap, having to get away from the house and things like that – it wasn't a normal life…Then all the trouble going on round about us, guys getting into trouble, and it was easier to have their company then being home…you took comfort in being with your mates.

Both Andy and Evan were subjected to sexual abuse. Andy was victimised in an isolated incident by a male outside the family, heightening his existing feelings of difference and marginality among his peers, which he attributed, in part, to his diminutive physical stature, his red hair and a squint in one eye for which the remedy was to wear an eye patch. Evan perceives that his feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness as a consequence of the sustained sexual abuse he was subjected to by a family member and the emotional disconnection he perceived within his family contributed to his offending behaviour in as much as he, at least in part, perceived that in offending, he was 'acting out'. For these young boys, association with a gang afforded a sense of protection and safety, of control and structure, of belonging and acceptance and, incrementally, power and influence which, to a greater or lesser degree ameliorated the sense of disconnection and powerlessness they experienced and the trauma they endured.

The need for relatedness reflects the human need to mutually and reciprocally relate to and care for other people and 'involves feeling connected (or feeling that one

belongs in a social milieu)' (Vallerand 1997: 300). The need to belong is realised through relationships experienced as combining "stability, affective concern, and continuation into the foreseeable future" (Baumeister and Leary 1995: 500). This emotional drive for social relatedness or connectedness is a motivating force underpinning human behaviour (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Ryan and Deci 2000). Where people experience emotional disconnection or feel a lack of belonging within the family, they are more likely to develop strong bonds to friendship groups as a means of satisfying their need for belonging. For the Del, the insecurity, fear and threat that typified their personal contexts and the frequency and intensity of their associations with each other, transformed their relationships into a stronger more reciprocal, fraternal relationship which served to ameliorate their sense of marginality, powerlessness and isolation (Anderson 2003; Seaman et al 2006).

> Evan: I couldn't really tell anyone [about the abuse]…when I started getting about in gangs who seemed to have some sort of loyalty to one another …that helped in a way… you felt you belonged somewhere …you were a part of a crowd - you felt part of belonging to something. I think maybe just feeling that you belonged to something. … someone… was doing that to me, the abuse, so, [the family] wasnae a sort of happy place… and when you were with a crowd of people… sometimes you felt that was a little bit protective, you were sort of indestructible.

Indeed, much of the research on gangs reveals familial supportive behaviour in explaining the significance of the gang (see for example Vigil 1988, Harris 1988). Some groups/gangs function similarly to a family, providing young people with a sense of belonging, security and identity and a source of social support. Being part of a group also offers new experiences, protection and, among the Del,

opportunities for economic gain and excitement as well as respect, social recognition, fellowship and solidarity. Across the men's narrative, there is consensus that the group provided, or at least represented, a source of support, safety and protection as much as a way of expressing and experiencing belonging and loyalty.

Experiencing trauma, feeling insecure and powerless can also be ameliorated through the adoption and/or expression of exaggerated forms of masculinities, manifesting in risk-taking and violent behaviours which serve as a mechanism for achieving respect, social recognition, influence and power (Matthews et al 2011). When young men experience alienation from the family, school and community, exacerbating existing frustrations and distrust towards the adult world, and in the absence of any influential, pro-social older role models, they can seek status and recognition elsewhere. In such contexts, an aggressive street culture is a viable alternative in the absence of success in conventional areas as an expression of masculinity (Messerschmidt 2000).

This chapter has illustrated the general conditioning structures precipitating individuals' involvement in the group which include exposure to childhood trauma, abuse and/or emotional disconnection within their families. However, the group itself can be conceptualised as a conditioning structure, in that social and cultural contexts (outlined above) influence the nature and form a given social relation takes. This is distinct from what happens during interaction, which can influence the interpersonal, intersubjective relations between two or more people. As illustrated in Chapter 3, conditioning structures include the set of relations in which the individual is involved and on which he must act by reflecting on his position in that context. Conditioning structures can thus be understood as the set of relational rules

prescribing how one should behave in a certain way towards others according to the norms that the context prescribes.

As previously illustrated, the group comprised friend and fraternal relations, which developed through community or educational connections. While some of the men occasionally referred to the group as a gang, unlike some gangs, there was no pre-existing structure which these individuals joined, or what Vigil (1993) calls “established” gangs. The Del was, however, informally allied with an older 'team' who shared the same identifying name and was associated with the same territorial locale. This process of identification with the ‘big team’ was both an internal and external phenomenon in that both groups and people outwith the groups recognised their mutual allegiance. This allegiance was primarily opportunistic as opposed to reflecting a pre-existing structure into which they assimilated. While the relations between the group and the 'big team' was based on norms of reciprocity and exchange the relational goods this association engendered were primarily instrumental and included financial exchanges and physical protection through association.

> Jed: When we got bigger we started mixing with… the big team – Kev and Mugger and all that… They used to be dead friendly with us because obviously they knew we must be useful for something. So we used to hang round them and we were thinking we were in with all these big cunts and it was fuckin’ great. We used to go up and ‘there you go, there's a couple of bob’ and that, you know, but we used to give them money too, when we done a turn, when we broke into a shop or whatever… If we were ever stuck for anything, anything at all, they would help us out.

Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) differential opportunity theory proposes that younger gang members learn how to behave from older members who operate as role-models. Through this process, younger members learn how to perform and enact masculinities by asserting their physical superiority and dominance, through which status is conferred and reputations and identities established. While the 'big team' were one influence, this socialisation process more frequently occurred within the group, between siblings and older and younger members (see also Matthews et al. 2011).

> Evan: [my brother] was tough, he was hard, so I've got to try and do the same as well. And yet deep down I didn't want to be hard and tough and fight but somehow you were kind of moulded into that. And… you would stand a fight, you would do things that got you a bit of reputation…in gangs you have to fight, in a sense that was your street cred and you had to stand firm and even if you couldn't fight, you had a go.

> Seth: I'd three older brothers that were well known locally for fighting, for offending, for violence all that kind of thing, so in a lot of ways I don't think I had a great deal of choice, it was just all there. I just more or less grew into that whole life, same as my brothers and my friends at that time.

Aggressive behaviours associated with a 'working class "tough" masculinity' (Crawshaw 2004: 238) were also shared, if not sanctioned, by men who would not otherwise consider themselves 'offenders'. Most participants described the ubiquity and normality of alcohol-related violence among the general male population.

> Harry: you always heard everyone coming home at night and fights in the

> street and all that and you were up looking out your window to see all the fights … you'd hear them all shouting and bawling and you'd look out the window you know? It was a big thing then wasn't it?
>
> Jay: You would go down the town at night and there would be … fights and we would watch. We knew where [they] were going to happen. Sometimes we started them, and just sat back and watched...Obviously there was another element of [Coaston] – maybe a different sort of social life but to us, this was it. We only seen that kind of side to it.

Craig's (2010) social history of Glasgow echoes these men's observations of the ubiquity, normalcy and acceptability of violence, often exacerbated by alcohol. For the Del, violence within the home, between gangs and within the working class male culture surrounding them was a characteristic feature of their childhood and exerted a powerful socialising impact on their gender identities, on what it meant to be a man and how men should interact in relationships with other men.

The nature and dynamics of the group, lifestyle and behavior

The formation of the Del was largely unstructured and emerged from the informal coming together of various individuals at different stages, and, as with many groups, over time associations within the group shifted and changed reflecting different levels of 'embeddedness' in the group (Hagan 1993 cited in Pyrooz et al 2012) in terms of status, identification with the group and involvement in their collective activities (see also Klein and Maxson 2006). Indeed, some of those who associated with the Del were able to 'resist' involvement in offending (Murray 2012).

> Evan: Know, maybe when …we were going to commit a crime, they would say, 'no, this is not for me'. So some of them knew the certain boundaries that they would go to and they would just go away.

Those who resisted involvement in offending tended to occupy more peripheral positions within the group. Murray (2012:35), discussing the impact on young people of non-involvement in offending, suggests that non-offenders forego kudos, which she defines as 'an appreciation by young people of particular actions, attributes or possessions of their peers'. She argues that the act or state of non-offending influences an individual's status and in her analysis, abstaining from criminal activities was generally portrayed by non-offenders as a social deficit. While Jay reflects such a perspective in his view of how he perceived non-offenders: *'I thought they were gay if you know what I mean, sissy-ish,'* this perception was of non-offenders who *'stayed home and did their homework'* as opposed to non-offenders associating with the Del. While Evan concedes that they would tease their non-offending associates, they were not excluded unless they were perceived as untrustworthy. Thus, the attribution of kudos seemed to also relate to moral character and was not solely a reflection of one's actions, facilitating a distinction between non-offending associates and non-offending non-associates.

> Evan: we would maybe wind them up and say…'ah, what's the matter with you?' – you know what young teenagers are like…we wouldn't say, 'well we're not talking to him again', unless he maybe informed on us.

Kudos is, as Murray (2012) suggests, a measure of status and social recognition, reflecting one's possession of valorised virtues of fearlessness, courage and loyalty, and influences one's position in the group (see also Barry 2006). Non-offenders are

relatively poorly positioned to display virtues of courage, loyalty and trustworthiness, where this emerges from the ties and obligations ensuing from shared involvement in offending. Incrementally, some non-offending or less embedded associates naturally 'drifted' away from the group (Matza 1964) at an earlier stage (on which see Pyrooz et al 2012) as the Del's involvement in criminality and violence escalated over the years.

> Jay: You got some people that dropped off… to get a job. They probably thought enough was enough…They maybe just stopped hanging out with us or they've may be been working away, so maybe just an opportunity arose for them and they took it - but I wouldnae say that was any of the real, real inner circle of pals – that was the ones that were just there or thereabouts.

Relations between people within the core group would similarly oscillate in intensity:

> Evan: There was that many people. Every so often you seemed to make a bond with one of the other people and you … were real close buddies for a couple of months and then maybe something would happen, one of them would maybe get sent to prison…and you would team up with somebody else and you would become close.

These oscillations in associations, or porous network boundaries, contrasts with the formality often associated with images of gangs (Klein et al. 2006). However, in reality, 'gangs are very much like informal friendship networks' (Aldridge et al. 2007:17). Whilst the group in their original form held many commonalties with what

Klein et al. (2006:414) define as 'street gangs'[33] and while occasionally referring to themselves as a gang, they also refuted the label, possibly associating the term with images of highly structured, formal groups, with fixed, enduring and static identities such as those associated with 'American stereotypes' (Klein et al. 2006: 414).

Territorially divided and sectarian gangs and inter-gang violence and conflict are prevalent in social histories (Craig 2010; Sack 1986), fiction (McArthur and Long 1935; Patrick 1973) and research on Scottish gangs (see Deuchar 2009; Holligan and Deuchar 2009; Deuchar and Holligan 2010; Bannister and Fraser 2008; Fraser 2010). While religious identity in West Scotland has historically been a divisive feature among the working class, dictating which school you went to and at times which employment opportunities you could access (Devine 1999), sectarianism was not a theme that emerged strongly in men's narratives. Intertwined with politics, religion and football - sectarianism in Scotland refers to relations between Protestants and Catholics informed by the wider historical context of 'The Troubles' associated with Northern Ireland and the religious identities associated with the two largest football clubs based in Glasgow: Glasgow Celtic and Rangers F.C (Deuchar 2009). Although the Del attended schools which reflected their religious affiliation and while inter-school rivalries gave rise to violence, this was not strictly motivated by sectarianism and nor was religious identity a criteria for gang affiliation in Coaston as it was in Glasgow in the 60s and 70s (see also Holligan and Deuchar 2009). In Coaston, territorial divisions between three adjoining towns influenced gang loyalties, particularly in the early stages of the group's life.

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[33] 'Those gangs that meet the criteria of the Eurogang consensus definition (durable and street-oriented youth groups whose involvement in illegal activity is part of their group identity), groups that may alternatively by called 'troublesome youth groups' (Klein et al 2006: 414)

Kintrea et al. (2008:4) describe territoriality as 'a social system through which control is claimed by one group over a defined geographic area and defended against others'. The meanings and impacts of territorialism are decidedly more complex and multi-faceted than this description directly implies. Territoriality, frequently associated with gangs, disorder and 'anomie' (Merton 1938), masculinity, poverty, deprivation and marginalisation (Glaser 1998; Davies 1998; MacLure and Sotelo 2004; Holligan and Deuchar 2009; Kintrea et al. 2008; The Centre for Social Justice, 2009) can, as Holligan and Deuchar (2009) observe, contribute to social exclusion, which can be reinforced through self-imposed restrictions (Byrne 1999; Kintrea et al. 2008); the development of 'bonding' social capital (Woolcock and Narayan 2000) which can be reinforced through territorial behaviours (Marshall et al. 2004; Reynolds 2007); and the development of personal and collective identity.

Group identities are often embedded in place and identification with place in turn influences these identities (Bannister and Fraser 2008; Fraser 2010; Flynn 2010; Kintrea et al. 2008). For young people, who have limited resources, constrained social and geographical mobility, and who spend a large portion of their time on the streets, territorial spaces become imbued with meaning through individual and collective memory, which informs both personal and collective identities, embedded in and reinforced by the relationships which develop there (Fraser 2010). The 'street' becomes a place, or context, in which identities are negotiated, reputations earned and status conferred.

> Seth: Everybody kind of hung about our street, an area that was rough. There was a lot of poor families in it, so there was a lot of kids hanging about the streets and getting up to things - a kind of gang culture, from an early age… life was on the street then, from an early age, and that was who you

were, that was what we all did.

Shared experiences and territorial locales can be an equalising experience wherein acquired status depends less on material accoutrements and more on one's personal and social resources. Friendship bonds developed in first, the neighbourhood and, later, secondary school are facilitated by not only restricted geographical mobility but by perceptions of similarity and processes of identification; people usually select and identify more strongly with friends who are similar to themselves including similar socio-economic backgrounds (Allan 1989; Cotterell 1996; Giordano et al. 2003; Pahl 2000). This is because by 'building affinities with others who occupy a similar social and economic location, individuals affirm their own position, cement their status and give substance to their identities' (Allan 1998: 693-4). This explains why 'managing ties of friendship when there is status discrepancy can be quite problematic' (Allan 1998: 693) (see also Allan 1996; Allan 1998; Reynolds 2007). Pahl (2000) argues that equality of status is a necessary precondition of a reciprocal friendship characterised by affection and mutuality and the emergent relational goods of reciprocity, solidarity and loyalty, which prompt and guide the actions of those in relation (see also Blau 1964).

Friendships create obligations and are causally influential. Friendship can mitigate negative emotionality and stigma, give confidence and impetus to act in a way an individual might not undertake alone and, in terms of 'relational bads' (Donati 2011a), they can also be exclusionary and divisive (Archer 2011b). There is an instrumental and an affective dynamic in the social relation of friendship. Emotional properties or goods can be categorised under the affective dimension of relationality. Where relational goods can be construed as benefits or resources in terms of providing status and social recognition, they can be categorised under the

instrumental dimension. The presence of relational goods means understanding social capital as a social relation which encourages or discourages certain actions of individuals-in-relation through their mutual orientation towards the maintenance of the co-indivisible relational goods it produces, from which other ends, information or resources can be derived as secondary emergent effects (Donati, 2006). Social capital is not, then, an asset possessed by the individual, nor a collective property of a social structure, but a configuration of those social networks which are shared by people who will not be able to produce such goods outside their reciprocal relations (Donati 2007). The core emergent effects of social capital are the relational goods of social trust, solidarity and social connectedness all of which rest 'implicitly on some background of shared expectations of reciprocity' (Putnam 2000:136).

Pahl (2000) argues that the relational good fraternity, associated with social capital as a social relation, suffuses kin and family relations. Fraternity is not confined to familial relations but denotes a particular type of friendship or social relation based on mutuality and reciprocity; reciprocity is the expression of fraternity. Characteristically friends are viewed as freely chosen and the moral obligations they carry are less binding and important than those relating to kin ties; kin relationships traditionally tend to be more structured and role governed than friend relations (Pahl 2000). However, shared networks across sibling and friendship groups, as with the Del, means sibling relations can operate more like friend relations and vice versa. The relationships between the Del thus suffused kin relations with norms and expectations associated with the role of friendship, and vice versa, which formed a strong social bond.

> Seth: They were more like a family … in the end up than what I was getting in the house I suppose.

As previously observed, in the context of their shared experience of trauma, emotional disconnection within the family and alienation from community institutions, friends become more significant than families of origin to self-concept and identity formation (Pahl 2000; Weeks et al. 1999 cited by Reynolds 2007). All of the men interviewed had high expectations of their friendships in the group and were strongly invested in their maintenance. The significance of these relational goods, of reciprocity, trust, equality, loyalty and solidarity, occurred frequently across accounts and manifested in specific expectations and behavioural obligations – for example - that you would support your friends if they were caught up in a violent incident or that you would take the blame for an offence to offset the impact on someone else, for whom the consequences would be more severe.

> Seth: Some of the older ones would take the younger ones with them and, if they got caught, the younger one would put himself up for it 'cos' he knew he wouldn't get into as much trouble. That's the same if you're doing something with somebody who hadn't been in a lot of trouble or who hadn't been caught – if they got caught or questioned, they would take the blame for it 'cos' they wouldn't get as much of a punishment.

> Jed: Everybody looked after each other. I mean if I went out one night and got a doing, well Adam and the whole lot of them… would be out the next night looking for them, the people who set about me. If Adam got a doing, we'd be looking for them. Nothing ever went unanswered.

This emphasis on, and impact of, leaving nothing unanswered contributed to an escalation in violent offending and, as much as reflecting a commitment to each

other as friends, was underpinned by normative expectations emerging from ‘a culture of honour’. This means defending oneself and others in the group against slights or perceived transgressions and not being seen to be afraid. As previously observed, these virtues of loyalty, courage and fearlessness had the effect of commanding respect, and the degree to which they were exhibited in an individual influenced that individual’s status amongst his peers.

Territoriality lessened as a focal point for identity and identification between the Del in mid-adolescence. Attending a Catholic secondary school meant that people mixed from different areas; bonds were forged through this new spatial connection, which provided an alternative frame of reference and which crystallised their identity as a group, rather than identification with place as a principal source of personal and collective identity. Simultaneously, the territorial emphasis became less pronounced as a direct source of conflict although the historical context of these feuds often underpinned enduring conflicts between the Del and other individuals and groups during early adulthood, exacerbated by the need to maintain a reputation, to ‘let nothing go unanswered’. While, then, the Del as ‘an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously’ over time they ‘then integrated through conflict’ which served to inform their identity and solidify their cohesion as a group (Thrasher 1927: 57).

> Seth: There was a lot fighting then – when you get to that age, in the pubs and you’re all drinking and the territorial squabbles from when yous were kids would be coming up and stupid things. Or fighting with the older ones, you know trying to prove yourself.

> Jed: Most of the time it’s because of what we’ve done… like if we batter some guy… his cousins and fucking brothers are going to get us and then

> we would get them, and then all their fucking mates are going to get in – it just happened all the time, you know what I mean?

These themes are elaborated more fully in the following sub-section; the remainder of this subsection provides an insight into the shifting dynamic of the Del's offending behaviour and their shared lifestyle. Somewhat reminiscent of Whyte's (1943) 'corner boys', the Del's lifestyles did not entirely cohere around criminality and violence, particularly during their earlier years. Rather, as Matza (1964) suggested, the Del drifted between conventional and criminal activities, although as a group, and consistent with their age and developmental stage, their emphasis or concerns were on the collective context of their shared pursuits, being together, echoing Thrasher's (1927:46) gang boys who were

> '…characterized by…meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit...The result of this collective behaviour is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, espirit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness and attachment to a local territory'.

> Seth: There was carefree times… we used to do normal things that kids would do… it wasn't all just hanging about and causing trouble. It was kind of normal things – going to school and … doing just normal things.

> Harry: We used to do things together … we used to go to discos ... with a carry out when you were sixteen and you loved it...we used to go to the youth club and that apart from the streets.

However, while their behaviour 'wasnae all bad', as Jay observed (below), over time, their activities were increasingly characterised by anti-social behaviours including mobbing and rioting, fire-raising and vandalism. As they matured through adolescence, the places and social spaces they occupied similarly changed, from streets to pubs, and so did the nature and intensity of their offending.

> Jay: We'd play football and hang about the park … so it wasnae all bad, but as we got older, most of the time we just spent down the pub, making up plans and drinking. There was loads and loads of fights but I couldn't go into every one of them.

> Seth: Being a wee bit more adult then you were starting to go to the pubs and there were some good times in all of that as well, it wasn't all totally bad but it was all based around trouble. You would go out and get into fights through drink or being in a pub and then you'd spend your money so you'd be breaking into things.

Violent and acquisitive offences typified the Del's offending behaviour, assuming prominence over earlier patterns of delinquent or anti-social behaviour. These broad offence categories reflect a range of offences including fraud, theft, reset, and housebreaking, to violent offences of assault, serious assault, and possession of offensive weapons, armed robbery and attempted murder to public disorder offences of breach of the peace and malicious damage. Across the group, there are variations in people's offending profiles, number of convictions and sentencing outcomes, elaborated more fully in subsequent chapters. Jed, for example, amassed in excess of 80 convictions over two decades, although he surmised that his offending total is nearer 500. Like many of the Del, his convictions were

principally disposed of through the imposition of frequent, short prison sentences of varying durations, resulting in him spending the equivalent of a decade in jail. Although like Jed, Andy committed in the region of 500 primarily acquisitive offences, he obtained only 13 convictions, reflecting the imposition of increasingly lengthy custodial sentences. At the age of 48, Andy had spent 32 years in adult prisons; his longest period in the community in this time lasted seven weeks and his shortest a few hours.

As a group, their offending varied in the extent to which a given offence was planned and unplanned. While there would be some deliberation over how a given offence should be executed, in the main, their offending might generally be characterised as opportunistic, reactive and impulsive as opposed to organised in any meaningful sense.

> Jay: If it was housebreakings it would be sorta planned or semi-planned. If it was serious assaults, it could be planned 'cos' it could be somebody you'd a grudge against or somebody you wanted to get. A lot of times it was just random. It was just a consequence of the gang culture… so you could be fuelled up with anger, or you could be drunk, or it could be a spur of the moment thing - so it could really range.

> Harry: There was no solid pattern to any of them. It was just if it was happening, it was happening you know? So if you were skint, you would say, come on, we will go and tan a house and we done it.

Alcohol also played a significant role in their offending behaviour. Alcohol was intentionally used as a means of overcoming natural inhibitions or reservations to

facilitate offending, particularly acts of violence, or being under the influence of alcohol would inadvertently facilitate offending as a consequence or outcome of reduced inhibitions or increased impulsivity. Often, acquisitive offending was engaged in for the purpose of generating income to acquire alcohol for recreational purposes.

> Jay: We'd either do something because we were drunk or get drunk because we wanted to do something we couldn't do without a drink.

> Andy: It was either we done it to get money to buy drink or we had had a few drinks and that spurred us on, so it was always there somewhere.

Over time, offending became a typical if not definitive feature of their shared lifestyle and, progressively, their individual and collective identities. Of significance here is the apparent near non-reflexivity applied to their offending behaviour at this time, emerging across the men's narratives. Their collective involvement in offending gave rise to an acceptance of the relative normalcy or inevitability of involvement in offending as an emergent effect of their interactive dynamics.

> Harry: In they days that's just the way it was… I didnae look at myself that way you know? I just went with the flow and that was part of it...the people I ran about with…they were always at it so I used to go housebreaking with them but I didnae look at myself and say 'what kind of guy am I?' I didnae, you didnae think in they days.

> Andy: I don't think I was involved with anybody who wasn't into crime so I never gave it much thought. I never ever had any quiet thoughts, or quiet

> moments, where I thought, 'wait a moment, this is not right'. Obviously, I knew it wasn't right but that didn't matter to me really. It was just what we did. I never saw myself stopping it. I don't think I ever thought too far ahead. I just lived from day to day.

Involvement in offending was thus accepted as an outcome of their interactive dynamics. Equally, these excerpts could be read as evidence of low self-efficacy, a reduced sense of agency, or a fatalistic view of the development of their offending careers (Maruna 2001).

> Jay: Looking back I suppose there was always a choice but at the time, no I just felt hooked in with the circle and hooked in with the cycle, if you like, the whole atmosphere, the whole environment, the whole lifestyle.

To be hooked perhaps implies a sense of compulsion, of addiction; however, it is not suggested here that offending is an addiction. The concept of 'being hooked' usefully reveals something of the complexities of the relational context of offending. For the individuals comprising the group, as the next sub-theme illustrates, the relational context of offending represents both the expression and erosion of agency, reflecting a series of compromises on the part of individuals-in-relation that enable the relations between people to endure. Individual reflexivity and action must be understood in the relational context within which it manifests. While relationships between individuals comprising the group were mutually valued, individuals were also increasingly dependent on these relationships – which simultaneously prescribed how each should behave according to what is normatively expected by others in the group. These relational rules (conceptualised as conditioning structures at T1 in Figure 6) and their individual and collective actions (the outcomes of their

interactions at T2-3 in Figure 6) influence outcomes for individuals and the collective (at T4 Figure 6) which represent the conditioning structures (at T1) in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle, influencing their socio-structural contexts, creating new constraints and enablements on both individual and collective action. Issues of both choice and control must be viewed as emerging in the context of the various constraints and enablements in the conditioning structures, discussed above, to which individual reflexivity was brought to bear through the lens of their relational concerns, as the following sub-theme elaborates. The following sub-theme illustrates the primacy of these relationships to individuals and how the maintenance of the emergent relational goods manifested in specific expectations and behavioural obligations which contributed to the maintenance of association with the group and offending.

Identity and identification to and with the group

For narrative flow, this sub-theme has been further sub-divided into: 'Imprisoning Lives, Reputations and Restrictions'; 'On Identity'; and 'The Individual and Relational Self in Collective Context'.

Imprisoning lives, reputations and restrictions

As previously observed, while the group itself offered respite from the trauma and abuse many experienced, the extent to which the group intentionally functioned as a source of security and protection emerged as a consequence of the interpersonal and inter-group conflicts that a life lived on the streets engendered. The group operated as a protective structure, both directly, in terms of exacting retribution and revenge on anyone who was violent towards them, and indirectly through their reputation for violence – a source of symbolic power or 'street capital' (Sandberg

2008) that commanded respect, conferred status and deterred reprisals against them.

> Jay: There was that safety…aspect as well. If you run about with the guys that nobody really kind of messed with … [also] my pals, they meant everything. Not just to me, it was the same fae them as well. We used to call ourselves 'the boys' and if any of us were in trouble – the rest of us would all go. It was a tight group…we had all that commitment to each other.

> Jed: It went to the point that nobody would say a word to us. We used to go in the fuckin' pubs, even if I walked in myself….as soon as they know who you were, they didnae bother their arse … they were scared. They knew if one of them put a hand on me - anyone of them, the whole lot of them would get it the next day …It felt fuckin great man.

As a consequence of their reputation for violence and the cycle of retributive violence this invoked, it was increasingly unsafe for members of the Del to appear in public without the protection of the group which served to intensify their commitments to, or at least dependency on, each other.

> Jed: We never went out ourselves. I mean if I was going to sign on or whatever, I would always make sure there was three or four guys with me, the same as the rest of them…At first you felt, well – fairly chuffed, no cunt's going to say a word to me but then after a while you start going 'man, this is fucking ridiculous'… but .. it became part of your life, you know… you never felt safe unless all your mates were with you.

While it was desirable to maintain the reputation they had developed, reflecting normative expectations emerging from a 'culture of honour' and the relational rules to which they subscribed, the maintenance of this reputation thus gave rise to an increasingly imprisoning and restrictive lifestyle offering little choice or opportunity to be or do anything different. Maintaining a reputation means fulfilling the expectations that others have of you in accordance with an ascribed characteristic, trait, or image. The need to maintain an image consistent with a given social role inhibits and promotes certain courses of action as delineated by the relational rules that circumscribe how one should conduct oneself in a given social context. Maintaining a reputation was incompatible with, for example, certain types of social activities and association with people outside their social milieu. Immersion in the 'gang culture' restricted the development of new social ties and engagement in activities that were incompatible with the specific configuration of masculinity they appropriated (Willis 1977).

> Jay: By that time though I had a sort of reputation to keep so you couldnae be seen going to drama classes or anything like that…I'd get embarrassed about being seen to do certain things, or being seen with certain people if it didnae fit in with the gang culture.

In the context of existing and self-imposed restrictions on their opportunities to access alternative membership groups or social activities, the group thus represented a site of belonging, or an exclusive enclave of inclusion, which met their needs for social interaction and participation. However, at the same time, their offending, the reputations they acquired and the ensuing interpersonal repercussions further constrained the possibilities and opportunities for alternative means of social participation.

> Seth: There was a sense that you were disliked, you know, kind of shunned from normal things. The only place you could really move was in your group. There was certain things you wouldnae do like guys going to cadets and things like that, you just felt you couldnae be part of that. You were getting in to trouble you know and that didn't exactly go hand in hand with things like that.

> Jay: It had an effect on relationships with people – just your reputation…sometimes we would go to people['s]…houses and their mothers wouldnae want them to [be] with us…we had quite a bad reputation about the town.

Significantly, their reputations for, as Harry termed it (below), their 'unruly' behaviour and frequent non-attendance also had repercussions for their experience of school and educational outcomes, which were further compounded by regular periods of detention in assessment centres and approved schools. Seth described being segregated with other people with behavioural issues or learning needs and overlooked, which contributed to their disaffection at school and low educational attainment.

> Harry: As soon as you've got a reputation the teachers lose interest in you… We were flung to the side you know? Probably because we were all unruly. You know what I mean?

> Seth: Because of the reputation I went in with - whether that was because of my family or things I had done - they kind of knew us so, once you were

> pegged in secondary school as a trouble-maker - that was you. You were in all the bad classes…They were done so that the trouble-makers were in the bottom class together. So, even if you done well in tests, you were still never moved out the class where all the trouble-makers were.

Having a reputation thus resulted in restricted opportunities for social participation and education, which, in part, can be construed as an outcome of the totality of their collective actions and interactive dynamics as a group. However, the stigma, prejudice and discrimination they experienced emerged as an outcome of their wider social interactions.

On identity

Adolescence and early adulthood is a period of experimentation with identity and at this stage, the peer group plays a critical role in identity formation (Erikson 1950). Belonging to a group offers a relational web within and through which identities can be acquired, tested, and performed. For the Del, the group also operated as a vehicle which facilitated offending, and their offending operated as a means through which group solidarity was realised (Messerschmidt 1993) and reputations developed. Being able to fight, demonstrating fearlessness in risk taking and exhibiting loyalty are all ways of ‘doing masculinity’ and developing reputational or ‘street capital’ (Sandberg 2008). Reputation can be construed as a reflection of the interpretation of one’s social identity. In this vein, as Jay suggests, identities are intricately infused into relational rules which inhibit and promote certain courses of action, and which are learned and performed, appropriated and negotiated over time, through social interaction.

> Jay: Well certainly from 13 or 14… you are sort of watching people more, idolising all the older gang members…suss[ing] out who was who, what was what, and what you do and what you don't do. So it was a time of learning, about how you were going to get from there to there…They were the years when you were sussing everything out and learning how you were going to be the man you were going to be, basically.

Personal and social identities emerge through social interaction and through processes of internal (how people see themselves) and external identification (how people are categorised by others). Donati argues that 'personal identity, that is, the consciousness of the self, interacts with the social identity that is formed through social interaction' (2011a: 48-9). Every way of being a self, as a primary agent (me), a corporate agent (we) or social actor (you) is a dialogue between one's personal and social identity. Social identity is, then, influenced by processes of *both* internal and external identification in terms of membership of a social category or social role. Social identification constitutes 'a subjective process through which externally assigned category distinctions are accepted [or rejected] and in-group characteristics are adopted to help define and express the self' (Barreto and Ellemers 2003:141 [this author's insertion]). Identification to and with a group thus requires an acceptance and adoption of the norms and rules of associational belonging characteristic of membership of a given group (Hogg and Hardie 1991).

Recognition and acceptance by the group is a form of personal validation and can shape how people come to see themselves. Young people who experience stigma and marginalisation from mainstream society can gain respect and social recognition from their peers through offending behaviour, association with the group and involvement with the criminal justice system, as a means of proving their

masculine attributes (Barry 2006; Messerschmidt 1994). In the early stages, involvement with the criminal justice system represented a rite of passage which served to crystallise identities and consolidate reputations.

> Jay: It was quite a thing in they days if you got lifted and put in the cells at that age, it was an image thing. There was some kudos you know?

> Harry: Well when you're that age, I was only 16, I was coming out and you thought you were great cos you were just out the jail. So it was more of an achievement than anything else you know?

> Andy: I thought I was getting respect fae people…I can remember sitting round the back of the bookies counting the things I had done…I was myself…counting the things I had broken into…I think I was proud of myself, honestly…I was actually feeling good cos I'd done however many things I'd done.

The social recognition (Honneth 1995) and status conferred by their peers both within and outwith the group was also a means of ameliorating and resisting the stigma attributed to their identities in certain public spheres, such as the school and the community. Corrigan and Watson (2002) distinguish between public stigma and self-stigma. Public stigma relates to the negative stereotypes and attributes that society places on the stigmatised individual, which can invoke discrimination and contribute to the stigmatised person's marginalisation. Self-stigma refers to the degree to which individuals internalise and adopt these judgements, stereotypes and attributions (see also Lemert 1951; Markowitz 2001, Shih 2004). Those who closely identify with their group, despite the stigma associated with the group, are

more likely to be able to resist negative attributions which do not correspond with the individual or group's views of themselves (Crocker and Major 1989). Highly identified individuals frequently interact with others from the same group and are more aware of the positive aspects of group membership, which include the imputation of status by association with the group, respect, social recognition and acceptance, which can reinforce related behaviours and the positive aspects of the social identities they inform.

> Harry: Well you are in and about a crowd and they are all the hard men of [Coaston] and you were part of that you know?

> Seth: I think it was the kind of status… and the gang kind of thing - the friendship and the loyalty…that you felt then. You were part of something… I would say that I probably got nothing from it bar the standing in the eyes of my pals round about me – and respect.

> Evan: You got a bit – when you done something notorious – know you were… (gestures) and 'that was good [Evan]', know? …There was one or two lads you would know who were quite handy and I think they enjoyed that notoriety and you didn't mind being about them know cos you … knew this person, this person could handle themselves so you enjoyed that and you encouraged that person into that… 'you're the man' know?

Indeed, the credibility or legitimacy of the person conveying positive regard or social recognition, or conversely attributing stigma, is also relevant to the potency of the attribution or judgement (Ikaheimo and Laitinen 2011; Shih 2004). As observed earlier, Harry and Andy for example were resolutely unconcerned by the views

others outside of the group had of them, at that stage, and rarely considered how they were perceived by non-group members, which related to the primacy of the influence, and thus the perceptions their peers had of them, on their self-concept, rather than the 'reflected appraisals' of the 'generalised other' (Cooley 1956). People adopt various self-protective strategies to resist stigma and preserve their self-esteem (Crocker and Major 1989). Resistance to stigma was also accomplished through the use of rationalisations and justifications or 'techniques of neutralisations' (Sykes and Matza 1957) as a means of externalising behaviour and, thus, resisting the personification or internalisation of negative attributes as a property of the self. In this context, 'neutralizations are probably best understood as ''insulation from labeling'' (Covington 1984, p. 621)' (Maruna and Copes 2005:257).

> Evan: You justify things Beth …and I used to say well I don't steal from my own, know, I am stealing from people who can afford it. So I am not really a bad guy…but, deep down, I knew that what I was doing was wrong…but you justify that and you say 'but I am not a bad guy'.

However, resisting stigma in public spheres is more challenging for an individual to maintain without the protection of the group who can deflect discrediting attributions from the individual. When in the company of the group, for example, Jed's sensitivity to stigma was diffused across the group and therefore diminished in potency and ostensibly depersonalised. He experienced it as particularly troubling outwith the company of the group where perhaps it became more apparent, condemnations were more likely to be articulated or were less easily ignored.

> Jed: Years ago, every cunt knew what you had done…Within a day it was through the whole fucking town and then you'd walk down the town and – I

> can actually hear them – 'fucking bastards, they should be strung up,' … and…I thought 'Oh god man'. There were times I didn't go down the town for months…It was only when we all got together we'd go down the town and then nae cunt would say a fucking word….When you're out with the boys you don't care about anything. Once you're locked up yourself…that's when it all comes…and you wonder what people think of you. You wonder what the woman across the road is saying every time she sees the polis up at your mother's or what they are going to say next time I walk down the fucking town.

The ability to resist internalising a stigmatised self-concept or discredited identity (for a detailed discussion see Crocker and Major 1989) also depends in part on the centrality or importance of the stigmatising 'condition' to one's personal identity and to the significance placed on how that aspect of one's social identity is interpreted and responded to in a given social context. Hall (1966) for example found that increased identification with a delinquent subculture in general was associated with higher self-esteem. Nelson Foote (1951:17 cited in Hall 1966) defined the process of identification as appropriation of and 'commitment to a particular identity or series of identities'. As the individual comes to identify with a group, he differentiates himself from those out with the group. This process of identification and differentiation is, Hall argues, basic to the validation of the identity. By engaging in this process, as Jay suggested earlier, the individual learns who he is and who he is not. Since this learning process constitutes the appropriation of a particular identity and identification with a group, Hall suggests that the individual principally identifies with similarly situated others and evaluates himself against the norms, attitudes and standards of this group. Hall argues that higher levels of identification and conformity to the standards of the group results in higher levels of self-evaluation;

those who have lower levels of identification with the group or higher levels of identification with conventional standards or values can experience internal conflict as a result of these inconsistent and contradictory identities. As the group is not the primary reference point of self-evaluation, more marginally identified individuals will exhibit lower levels of self-evaluation.

This however is an incomplete picture. While this can tell us something about levels of identification with a delinquent sub-culture and the associated levels of self-evaluation, it remains somewhat individualistic in focus, drawing on conceptions of an atomistic individual and their level of identification with the cultural contexts that frame them. It cannot, for example, provide an explanation as to why a given individual with a lower level of identification with, or internalisation of, the norms and standards of the group may nonetheless be more highly 'embedded' (Granovetter 1985) in the group than another highly identified individual. There is, therefore, a crucial distinction to be made between an individual's levels of cognitive identification with a deviant sub-culture per se and experience of embeddedness within a particular group who engage in deviant behaviours, which requires an examination of the group as a social relation.

The individual and the relational self in a collective context

Exploring levels of embeddedness in the group as a social relation allows that similarly situated individuals may arrive at different patterns of identification with their shared culture and to other individuals participating in the social relation. Any grouping of individuals-in-relation will necessarily mean variations in the relationships, status, identification, involvement and levels and meaning of belongingness among individual members of a group, which accounts for the

heterogeneity of experience of participation in a group. In this vein, Pyrooz et al (2012) elaborate and extend Hagan's (1993) concept of embeddedness to explain rates of desistance (or extrication) from gang membership; they argue that those with lower levels of embeddedness exit the gang earlier than those more highly embedded. Pyrooz et al (2012: 4) explain that

> 'Criminal embeddedness is a multidimensional, emergent property encompassing not only conventional network characteristics such as density of network ties or centrality within a deviant network but also the level of involvement in crime, isolation from pro-social networks, positions of leadership within a deviant network, and adoption of deviant values and identities'.

Concepts of identification and embeddedness can facilitate an understanding of the differential experiences of group membership and, arguably, processes of change. To illustrate, Andy exhibited high levels of identification with a deviant subculture[34] and low levels of embeddedness within the group manifesting in a low status within the group, low levels of influence, and a comparatively marginal position within the group.

> Andy: I can remember my Dad sitting saying to me one day 'where do we go from here?' My reply was, I was 16 at the time and I'm in a young offenders', and my reply was 'Barlinnie, Perth' – all these adult prisons I was mentioning. I was too far gone with trying to impress other people and

[34] Hall (1966:149) suggest that a highly identified individual would ' (1) conceive of himself in terms of delinquency-orientated roles (delinquent identities), (2) possess negative attitudes toward parents, (3) place high value on delinquent associates and activities (delinquent peer group orientation), (4) reject middle class success orientations and accept exotic occupations and the "easy life," (5) perceive causes of crime as external to the person, and (6) place an accent on "kicks" and excitement as modes of self-expression'.

live up to any kind of image I thought I had, and by then my Mum and Dad had probably lost me…I was always thinking er easy money, opportunist kind of thieving. I never ever felt I was going to go out and try and get a job and settle down and stuff like that, it never entered my mind…every single thought I had in they days was all thieving. I used to get a kick out of breaking into places and going through drawers and finding things.

Yet, in discussing his relationship to the group:

> Andy: I don't think I had any influence over anybody. I think I was [pause] I used to do things to please them… to keep in with them. I always felt if I didnae do these things I wouldnae be as pally with them or they wouldnae be as pally with me. I think I looked up to quite a lot of them…I felt accepted but I always felt I had to try and prove myself among these boys 'cos' …I just felt a wee bit in awe of them. I felt I would need to do things to prove that I was one of them.

Andy's sense of having to 'please' or 'keep in' with the others reveals his sense of the contingency of his acceptance by the Del and is illustrative of his subordinate positioning and status within the group hierarchy. To an extent, as indicated earlier, this reflects his subordinate status manifest in his inability to fight or command respect through intimidation or assertiveness. However, Andy's involvement in petty offending commenced prior to involvement with the Del and his identification with a deviant sub-culture, realised through his association with the Del, underpinned the significance of his involvement with them and their (albeit contingent) acceptance of him facilitated the realisation of a related identity. By contrast, Seth, assisted by his brother's (Adam) dominant position within the group and, as measured by his own

status and centrality to the group, levels of involvement in criminal activity and isolation from pro-social networks, was highly embedded in the Del. While Seth engaged in offending with the group he exhibited low levels of identification with a 'deviant sub-culture'. For Seth, his relationships within the group[35] and the associated relational goods were more significant to him than any gains derived from offending, generating an enduring sense of feeling like he 'never really fitted in' to the offending culture despite his immersion in the group.

> Seth: I felt that I never really fitted in – even then I kind of knew it was wrong…I was always kind of watching it from the outside and you realised it wasn't right even then.. I just didn't ever feel part of it. …I never got any real thrill from offending or anything, never any buzz.

The sample size and situational nature of the fragmentation of the group (discussed below) precludes making generalisations about whether differences in levels of identification and embeddedness influence an individual's desistance, or whether more instrumental or affective rationales underpinning both offending and relations with the group influence individual trajectories. It is noteworthy, however, that the fragmentation of the group had no bearing on either the nature or frequency of Andy's offending, whereas it had a significant impact on other people's offending trajectories (discussed below and in subsequent chapters). Moreover, while differentiating between and considering levels of identification with a deviant sub-culture per se and degrees of embeddedness within a group can help illuminate differences in individuals' experiences of the group, by respectively prioritising agentic and structural explanations for human behaviour neither concept can offer a

[35] Arguably, relational dynamics require further consideration as a measure of embeddedness alongside the more quantifiable structural indicators discussed by Pyrooz et al (2012)

nuanced understanding of the dynamics of individuals-in-relation or how and why participation in a given social relation has powers to feed back on the individual. It is argued here that taking the social relation as the primary unit of analysis can reveal a more nuanced understanding of human behaviour in general and of the relationship between individual and collective action in particular.

As previously suggested the form of masculinities adopted and adapted by the Del was a blend of stereotypical traditional working class and idealised hard man forms which created a model for social relations between men and between men and women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) and the performance of gender identities. The valorisation of this form (and performance of) hegemonic masculinity was influenced by the social and cultural conditions, values and beliefs from which it derived not least as a means of accomplishing respect and social recognition in the face of broader social inequalities. While never perfectly realised or supposed (each knowing his seeming incongruous vulnerabilities, anxieties, fears and insecurities) a successful performance through acts of bravery, courage and violence is recognised and the desired status conferred, and by mutual agreement unchallenged.

In the aftermath of a particularly violent incident, for example, the Del would be reluctant to discuss with each other how they felt about the incident. However, there are numerous examples across the men's narratives of individuals recalling a level of cognitive and moral dissonance over behaviours they had engaged in as a group, relating primarily to whether the victim had 'deserved' it or the extent to which the victim was injured or equipped to defend themselves. In these discussions emotions of shame, remorse, guilt and fear would be censured in accordance with their normative modes of exchange, where talk of emotions was discouraged. However, these exchanges could perform an important function in suspending or ameliorating

the inner conflicts arising from having engaged in behaviours inconsistent with an individual's beliefs or sense of what is right (Festinger 1957) through the mutual assertion of justifications which could serve as a means of protecting a positive self-image (Cooper and Fazio 1984) and preserving their view of themselves.

> Jed: You start wondering if the person deserved it…but you couldnae tell your mates, cos they would think you'd gone soft… the next day you'd maybe sit for about an hour before anybody would say anything - like 'that was some doing the cunt got' or somebody would come in and say 'oh his ribs are all broken, his jaw's broken' and then you'd start thinking about it...I was always the cunt that said, 'we shouldn't have done that', but the other ones were always like that 'oh shut up, he deserved every fucking blow'.

Given the centrality of the others' views for individuals' self-concepts, mutually agreed and expressed justifications could make it easier for an individual to reconcile or suppress their inner tensions or conflicts by shifting an individual's sense of personal responsibility or accountability for action onto the group and the exigencies of their collective lifestyle. Jed (above) is clearly articulating his own remorse but in the process of doing this is presenting a clear distinction between his reactions and those of the others, which in the context of his own experience of personal shame, allows him to draw a comparison with their seeming unconcern to preserve or protect his own inherent 'goodness' (see relatedly Maruna 2001). Such a position is further rationalised by Jed (below) in locating the impetus and justifications for *his* actions as an individual within the norms and expectations of the group as a means of resolving the ambivalence of agency where one is simultaneously drawn and disinclined towards the same course of action (Ekstrom 2010).

> Jed: Oh I could have said no but most of the time you don't want to say no in case you're called a fucking shitbag… You cannae be bothered with that so to prevent all that carry on you just do it … I always done it. I think it's more pride than anything else.

> Seth: I think once you'd embarked on it you felt there was no turning back… the embarrassment you know if you started and then you were too scared to go through with it. That would have been seen as fear then, a weakness. Although you knew it was wrong…you had the kind of sense of – you had to do it.

These extracts suggest that the group encourages collective participation in behaviours that individuals might not normally undertake alone, partly motivated by fear of 'losing face', status or the respect of their friends as measured against the extent to which individuals behaved in accordance with the norms, attitudes and standards of the group and fulfilled their relational obligations and expectations. Close friendships generate such reciprocated obligations and expectations; it is the desire to maintain the relation and their shared relational goods of trust, solidarity, loyalty, and social connectedness that prompt and guide individual action, also a mode of collective group orientation. However, these normative expectations and obligations were variously experienced as a constraint on individual autonomy, as Seth illustrates.

> Seth: I felt as though I was just swept up in it. I felt I couldn't just step away from it. You were part of the gang, living up to the reputation; you've got to keep going. I just felt that I couldnae step away.

The use of the word ‘you’ can imply a generalised experience, in this case referring to their shared associational belonging, roles and the relational expectations of group members. Seth’s use of the words ‘I’ and ‘You’ in this context also betrays ambivalence, an inner tension between his individual and relational concerns. Briefly, however, if, following Donati (2011a) where ‘I’ represents the Self and ‘You’ represents one’s self as a social actor, Seth’s ‘internal conversation’ is discernible in this extract in which he reflects on his commitments to the group and what he perceives as the constraints this commitment placed on his autonomy. In performing or personifying a role, in carrying out the tasks associated with that role, in acting as a ‘you’, the Self, one’s ‘I’, asks itself if it is gaining satisfaction from one’s activities, choices, lifestyle or not. One’s ultimate concerns are progressively defined in relation to how the Self defines his choices when he acts as a ‘You’ and must respond both to the demands of his relational contexts and to the deeper demands of his ‘Self’. At this juncture, within the limits of the possibilities and opportunities available to him, Seth’s relational concerns pre-dominate as an outcome of his internal conversation, to which he commits himself.

Rather than construing Seth’s commitment to his relational concerns, then, as the erosion of agency, it can be understood as the expression of agency in that he acted on his convictions, in the context of his relational concerns, guided by the relationships that mattered most to them, within the constraints of the cultural context. The individual, while not subjugating himself to the relation, makes adjustments and compromises to maintain the relation and the associated relational goods. This process can thus be theorised as evidence of Seth's application of his personal reflexivity, not simply to himself or to his individual concerns, but to his relationships (i.e. in a context which produced certain relational goods), consistent

with Donati's (2011a) concept of social or relational reflexivity. Issues of both choice and control must thus be understood as emerging in the context of the various constraints and enablements in the conditioning structures, which include the group itself, to which individual reflexivity is brought to bear through the lens of their relational concerns.

The fragmentation of the Del

During their 20s, a violent and enduring feud effectively divided the group. The feud was triggered by Seth having an affair with Ian Nixon's wife while Ian was in prison. Like Adam, Ian occupied a prominent position within the group. Indeed, just as Seth, Jay and Adam were brothers, two of Ian's brothers were similarly involved in the group, which meant that the group was fractured along sibling lines, with other individuals siding with either the Nixons or the Websters, depending on the strength and intensity of existing relationships in the group at that point. Seth's actions were construed by the Nixon side as a betrayal of the relational rules of friendship and this signalled the demise of the original group, necessarily and irrevocably affecting individual relationships.

> Jay: Well [Seth] was going out with one of [the Nixon's] wives and there was bad blood fae then. Then one night, I was in the pub and one of them was arguing – I started arguing with one of them and I hit him, then he hit me and we started a fight and fae there it just …got out of control.

As Jay infers, the violence escalated in frequency and intensity over a two year period. Some people, such as Harry, developed alternative social networks rather

than align themselves with one faction due to fear of a violent reproach by the other party.

> Harry: I never fell out major with any of them because …I didn't want to get involved…I just spoke to them all and … I think they all realised that and they were happier with me. Other ones were getting involved that weren't involved you know?

Harry started associating with his elder brother's friends who were heavily involved in the football culture signalling a shift in his offending towards primarily football-related violence. Evan was in prison throughout this period and retained amicable relations with both factions during periods when they too were incarcerated; on his release he associated with different friends and continued to engage in acquisitive crime. Andy, who had associated with Ian in prison, continued to do so following his release and his return to Coaston. This resulted in a violent reprisal by the Websters and thereafter Andy had no further contact with either faction although, like Evan, he continued to engage in acquisitive crime alone. Jed sided with the Webster brothers with whom he had always been particularly close and supported the Websters in the ongoing violent conflicts.

Although individual narratives of offending and desistance are continued in chapters 6-11, this chapter concludes with an examination of the way in which the Websters' faction (hereafter revised group) supported each other to change the direction of their lives and, ultimately, desist. In general, at this age and stage in their lives, some of the revised group were in committed intimate or personal relationships and acquired new roles as fathers, which, for some, presented as viable alternative means of accomplishing masculinity, identity and social recognition and which, to

varying degrees, triggered a reflexive re-evaluation of their relationships and their lifestyles, through the lens of their ultimate and relational concerns (discussed in individual stories). In the context of enduring economic and structural constraints in the west of Scotland at this time, and as an opportunity to extricate themselves from the seemingly endless and escalating violence, a number of the Del relocated to London to maximise the opportunities presented by the construction boom of the eighties.

From fragmentation to reformation

This section illustrates the role that some of the Del played in triggering a reflexive re-evaluation of their involvement in offending and in mutually supporting the early phases of each other's process of desistance. What follows is a general overview of the role of the revised group in supporting desistance in the context of, and in interaction with, their collective relocation to London. Individual narratives of both continued offending and desistance across the sample are explored chapters 6-11 which provide a more nuanced analysis of the dynamics of desistance.

Adam was the first of the revised group to move to London to extricate himself from the violence and to access employment in steel-fixing. In Adam's case this was informed by a reflexive intention to desist and distance himself from the 'relational bads' (Donati 2011a) emerging from the feud, further underpinned by his emotional connection to his spouse and a desire to maintain those emergent 'relational goods', which continued offending and its outcomes threatened (see Weaver 2008). Concerned to support his friends to start over, Adam encouraged them to relocate and trained them in steel-fixing, sharing and imparting the skills in which he had been trained by his father-in-law. Among those interviewed in this study, Jed, Seth and Jay followed him to London although others not interviewed included the Smith

brothers (Ben, Jim and James) and Mark also moved with them. Adam's concern for his friends can be construed as evidence of his application of his personal reflexivity, not simply to himself or to his individual social mobility, but to his relationships as a way of exercising his leadership in a different way (i.e. in a context which produced relational goods), consistent with Donati's (2011a) concept of relational reflexivity. Re-establishing a revised and collaborative relational network in a new location facilitated the re-emergence of the relational goods of social trust, solidarity and social connectedness threatened by the feud, from which other ends, including new knowledge and skills, employment and economic resources, were derived as secondary emergent effects (Donati, 2006).

For most of the revised group, relocating to London represented an opportunity for a lifestyle free from the violence the feud gave rise to, to an area in which they were unknown, and which yielded opportunities for employment in steel-fixing and, thus, legitimate economic gains, all of which generated further change-promotive outcomes. While economic and social changes to their conditioning structures in the form of employment opportunities were enabled by the construction boom, the recognition and pursuit of such opportunities can be construed as an expression of their individual and collective agency. However, the development of the necessary skills in steel-fixing, and their capacity to *access* these opportunities and settle in a new area emerged from the mutual and reciprocal exchange of support and resources among the revised group. The changes in their conditioning structures were thus, in part, the outcome of the collaborative efforts of the revised group, to which they brought their personal reflexivity to bear. This move thus offered shared opportunities for change, or changes in their conditioning structures, as an outcome of both their interactive dynamics and the diversified relational contexts the move

facilitated, both within and beyond the group, to which individuals responded differently through the lens of their individual and relational concerns.

This new environment, without the legacies of conflict that typified their lifestyle and interactions in Coaston, freed the revised group from the restrictive reputations, imprisoning lifestyles and the cycle of violence that had characterised their lives previously and opened up new possibilities for social participation. Anonymity in a new environment contributed to the development of an alternative social identity for individuals and the group, which, in conjunction with regular employment, represented relative freedom from the restrictions of their former environment, an opportunity to see oneself differently, to be seen differently and to live differently. Relocating to London thus afforded the revised group an opportunity to 'knife off' (Maruna and Roy 2007) the stigma and reputations they had acquired (and required) in Coaston through the anonymity they collectively enjoyed as a consequence of their new environment and the shifting social spaces they occupied.

> Jay: Well when we stayed [in Coaston] we were quite notorious … when we went [to London], nobody knew us, so it was like a fresh start. Also we were used to getting the blame of stuff [in Coaston]. We got the blame of stuff we did do and … stuff we never done. So [in London], we were … breaking free fae the tag, the stigma

Living and working in a new environment afforded the revised group an opportunity to engage in a wealth of new experiences and an opportunity to connect to different people, which contributed to an enhanced sense of agency and an ability to imagine

themselves and their relationships differently, and thus capable of actualising things as yet unrealised.

> Jay: Going to London … opened up a whole new world because I had been cocooned up in here in [Coaston], in my relationships, my friendships … when I moved it was just as if the blinkers were taken away …I met a whole different range of people and I knew that I could move away from [Coaston] and the life I was in and do things I could never have done before … I would say that was definitely a big turning point in my life.

The meanings and outcomes of work for individuals are discussed in chapters 6-11. Across the revised group, however, employment in steel-fixing required the development of employment-based networks to access further work and, thus, the development of 'bridging' social capital. Bridging social capital involves establishing new social relations; these ties facilitate the reciprocal exchange of resources from one network to a member of another network and in this sense are linked to the development of broader identities and social mobility (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). In the steel-fixing industry, where work was obtained through 'word of mouth' and was typically distributed within known employment-based networks, bridging social capital was a critical and instrumental means of access to further contractual work for the group. One person, often Adam, would obtain a contract for work and, as foreman, employed his friends and associates to carry out the work. In addition to sustaining employment, the development of new social relationships through work, comprising a diverse range of people, 'afforded a concrete way of enhancing one's own identity as a respectable person' (Giordano et al. 2003*:* 311), through the development of a constructive reputation as a 'worker', which was necessary for access to further work. Alongside the male-dominated environment and hyper-

masculine, hard-working culture of the steel-fixing industry, work thus represented an alternative means of accomplishing masculinity, and acquiring self-respect and social recognition consistent with their idealised configuration of what it meant to be a man.

> Jed: [Men would] be talking about their work and things like that. We were dead proud of them…that's the way we thought of guys… that were out there working.

> Seth: I think realising that if you do work hard there is hope there and I took a kind of pride in it…It [also] took that thing away, about how are you going to get money… But now it's your working all the hours to buy something good…or to put money away for security for your family or go a holiday. Work definitely had a big impact on me – starting work and realising that you could do it without committing crime; you could have a decent life and feel good about yourself.

Participation in regular employment at this stage also provided the revised group with new weekly routines, new social relationships and employment-based networks, economic stability, and concrete opportunities for new experiences which, as Seth suggested previously - and in the context of the hopelessness they had previously felt - generated hope and an enhanced sense of agency. For those, like Seth and Adam, involved in committed intimate relationships, participation in employment also informed their personal and social identities as providers, consistent with their roles as fathers and relationships with partners, which, again,

simultaneously provided a conventional means of accomplishing masculinity, a pro-social identity and social recognition.

Personal relationships exerted a distinct change-promotive influence on the behaviour of some of those in the revised group and their lifestyle (see Chapters 6-11). Generally, however, the acquisition of new relationships and associated social roles and practices - in conjunction with an increasing disillusionment with their previous lifestyles and the threat continued offending potentially posed to these roles and relationships, to their shifting identities and to employment opportunities - influenced not only individual behaviour but the interactive dynamics of the revised group. The shifting priorities and concerns of individuals away from the group and towards their families of formation and associated shifts in their behaviour exerted a constraint on the behaviour of others, who found they had less support from their desisting peers for engagement in offending behaviour. This reflected a shift in the relational rules in this revised relational context, to which they responded by modifying their behaviour, motivated by a desire to support each other.

People's receptivity to the influence of their friends arose from the reciprocal bond between them; in turn, what emerged from their interactions and combined resources was a transformation in their conditioning structures underpinned by their shared concern with elaborating a new way of being-in-relation as a reciprocal good. The emergent relational goods were the intentional products both of their social reflexivity and of the personal reflexivity of each individual modifying their relations when they no longer produced the desired outcomes consistent with their ultimate concerns (Donati 2011a).

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the characters on whose narratives this thesis draws and delineates the history of the Del, from formation, through their lived experiences, early group dynamics and subjectivities, to the ultimate fragmentation of the group. In so doing, this chapter serves as a foundation and a context to the individual stories that follow.

This chapter illustrated how the Del actively and self-consciously appropriated elements of an exaggerated configuration of 'traditional' working class masculinity influenced by, and responsive to the social, cultural and economic character of the era of their duration. This somewhat idealised representation of masculinity informed the social relations in which they participated as both a context and as interaction. Their emergent gender identities were intricately infused into relational rules influencing the kinds of bonds generated between them and which guided the nature and form of their relations and interactions and the actions they gave rise to. Drawing on Donati's relational sociology, sociologies of friendship and the literature on gangs, the analysis in this chapter illuminated the shifting dynamics of the group, in terms of 'membership' or affiliations, group identities, interactive dynamics and behaviour, and shifts in the meaning of belonging and the operative function of the group over time in the context of existing, self-imposed and emergent or ensuing restrictions on social participation. The chapter concluded by describing the situational nature of the fragmentation of the group and the divergent outcomes this heralded for the men at the centre of this study. Of these outcomes, the role of the 'revised group' in supporting the early phases of each other's desistance was outlined.

Employing the adaptation of Donati's conceptual schema progressed in Chapter 3, this chapter illustrated the way in which the group as a social relation was configured in the T2-T3 phase (Figure 6). Social relations have constraints and enablements from outside, in terms of normative expectations of friendship for example, as well as their own internal network dynamics, influenced by the conditioning structures, which inform the situations of actions (T1-T2) and the relational rules to which they subscribe and their modes of interaction. This is distinct from what happens inside the individuals who evaluate their situations, take decisions autonomously, discussed under 'the individual and the relational self in a collective context' and elaborated more substantially in subsequent chapters. The chapter also revealed how the elaborated structure, the outcomes for individuals and the group (at T4) depends upon and is influenced by the dynamics of the relational network, the totality of their collective actions and the ensuing repercussions, which means that relations have their own powers and qualities in determining the final outcome, besides the agential power of the actors and the balance in their power relations which can influence both persistence in and desistance from offending. The outcomes for the individuals and the group at T4 represent the conditioning structures at T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle, influencing their socio-structural contexts by creating new constraints and enablements on both individual and collective action.

This chapter has further illustrated how both structure and agency are mediated through reflexivity, also a mode of collective group orientation as 'relational reflexivity', to illustrate that both individual and collective action is guided by

individual concerns *and* by the good of the relationships which matter most to them. To this end, this chapter illustrated how social relations operate with their own kinds of reflexivity, oriented to the maintenance of the relation, where it is valued by those participating in it, and thus to the maintenance of the emergent relational goods relevant to desistance, but which equally during the life-space of the group contributed to persistent involvement in offending, even where this invoked ambivalence of agency.

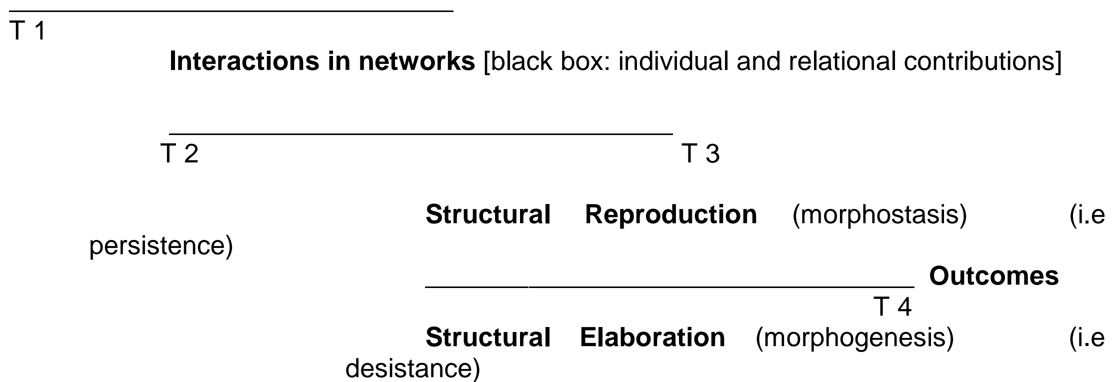

Figure 6: overview of investigative framework

CHAPTER 6: ANDY'S STORY

Chapter 5 introduced the characters on whose narratives this thesis draws and revealed the story of the Del, from formation, through their lived experiences and subjectivities, to the ultimate fragmentation of the group. Chapters 6-11 examine individual's lives beyond the fragmentation of the Del, analysing events and experiences subsequent to the group experience. Each individual story commences with a brief biographical overview of the individual and an explanation of how each individual structures their life story after the fragmentation of the group. The content of each story progresses chronologically, but each story is structured in accordance with the identified superordinate themes (see appendix 2) emerging from both individual and cross case analysis, in accordance with the methodological approach of the study. While superordinate themes recur across individual stories, reflecting both broad thematic categories and higher order concepts (as discussed in chapter 4), some subordinate themes within this vary to reflect the individual experiences they incorporate and, thus, unique idiosyncratic instances.

Andy's story

'All my conversations, all I know, is prison. I've no memories. All my memories is prison'

Introduction

Biographical overview

Andy was born in Coaston in 1961 and, as discussed in Chapter 5, his involvement with the Del began when he commenced secondary school. The impact of Andy's

initial social marginalisation by his peers, as a result of his distinctive physical appearance, was aggravated by his experience of sexual abuse and, while partly mitigated by his association with the Del, was nonetheless evident even within these relationships, manifest in low levels of influence, and a comparatively marginal position within the group, and persists as a prominent theme throughout his life-story. Although Andy was involved in truanting from school and some minor incidences of offending behaviour at a young age, his involvement with the Del marked the acceleration of his offending behaviour. As a physically diminutive man, Andy acknowledges his inability and reluctance to fight, which, whilst contributing to his peripheral status in the group, also accounts for his limited involvement in violent offending compared to others in the group. Indeed, most of his offending between the ages of 13-17 comprised offences of housebreaking or burglary of private houses, pubs and shops.

Following the fragmentation of the group, Andy continued to offend, either alone or with one co-offender on a daily basis. While there were various instrumental and affective reasons underpinning Andy's earlier offending and involvement with the Del, his later offending was primarily motivated by economic gain. From the age of 17, influenced by conversations with people he met in prison, Andy's offending escalated to assault and robbery. While Andy surmises that he committed in the region of 500 offences, he acquired only 13 convictions, which, owing to increasing severity and persistency, resulted in lengthy custodial sentences. At the age of 48, Andy had spent 32 years in prison, with his longest period in the community lasting 7 weeks and his shortest a few hours. At the time of interview, he was nearing the end of a ten year sentence.

Andy's life has been lived in prison, and as a consequence, Andy's delineation of his

life beyond the group comprised a unitary stage '*a life lived in prison'*, perhaps reflecting the 'liminality' and monotony typical of the monolithic experience of long term imprisonment (Jewkes 2005). 'Time in prison is something, which is lived through but not in the real sense lived' (Wahadin 2006:8), but which is rather more of an existence in a state of "limbo" (Sapsford 1978). In this vein, Andy's life story is a narrative of crime and punishment, or, in his words, *'it's all been crime and prison'*. Reflecting this, this chapter discusses his experiences of long-term imprisonment and the various effects this had on him, and his opportunities for resettlement. Andy's story is, thus, structured and analysed under the superordinate theme: Experiences of Punishment, which, as table 3 illustrates, is divided into three sub-themes: Experience of Prisoner community; Effects of Prison; and Experiencing and Anticipating Release.

Superordinate Theme	**Subtheme**
Experience of Punishment	Experience of Prisoner Community
	Effects of Prison
	Anticipating and Experiencing Release

Table 3: Experiencing Punishment: Andy

Experience of prisoner community

The experience of prison has been captured by various autobiographical accounts (see for example Boyle 1977; Collins 1997; James 2003; Weaver 2008) and by numerous academic studies (see for example Clemmer 1958; Cohen and Taylor 1972; Crewe 2009; Jewkes 2005; Sykes 1958; Toch 1975, 1992; Zamble and Porporino 1988). These, and other works, grant insight into how prison is subjectively experienced and how prisoners perceive and respond to the institutional and interpersonal environment of prison. While early writings (i.e. Clemmer 1958, Sykes 1958) sought to reveal the dynamics of socialisation into the prisoner culture

or community[36], Crewe's (2009) more recent work, explored divergences within prisoner populations and their experiences and perceptions of interpersonal interactions in prison. This sub-theme explores Andy's experience of the prisoner community. While, as Crewe and Bennett (2012:xxi) suggest, first-hand accounts of prisoner experience are 'imperfect guides to the general experience of imprisonment', in terms of understanding individual experiences of and adaptive responses to prison, 'a situation-by-person approach' is required' (Bonta and Gendreau 1990:347).

Prisoners enter prison with their existing personalities, values, attitudes, beliefs, experiences, social status and norms of social interactions (Jewkes 2012), and these 'conditioning structures' (Donati 2011a) contribute to differences between prisoners' experiences in terms of their interactions with other prisoners and their responses to the constraints, enablements and expectations that inhere in the 'prisoner society' (Crewe 2009) and the 'formal' prison culture. As previously noted, Andy is a diminutive man who, by his own admission, is unable to fight. Emulating his established patterns of interaction with the Del, Andy learnt to ingratiate himself with other prisoners as a means of avoiding conflict.

> Andy: A prison officer said to me: 'You keep in with the bad ones because the good ones will never do you any harm'. I knew he meant being two-faced…a lot of prisoners cannae reason very well, they don't like to lose arguments so they get showed up in front of other people. So, I developed a skill at learning how to keep in with people.

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[36] Where Clemmer (1958) discussed the conditions determining the degree of socialisation into prisoner culture, such that one can be said to exist, Sykes (1958) discussed the conditions explaining the existence of a prisoner culture (Mathiesen 1966).

Neither disinclination towards conflict nor strategically managing one's social interactions in prison are unusual, although, as Andy infers in relation to other prisoners, defending one's image, particularly in front of other prisoners, is critical to maintaining status and avoiding exploitation, and these tensions structure norms of engagement (Crewe 2009). Prisoners are alert to perceived slights. Allowing expressions of disrespect to pass opens one up to the risk of victimisation; in turn, responding to threats requires a credible capacity to back this up with violence (Edgar and Martin 2002) which 'helps to protect a prisoner from being exploited' (Crewe 2012: 33). How one receives and responds to these interactive dynamics is an important factor in determining one's status in the hierarchical prisoner community. Andy ingratiated himself with more dominant prisoners who could offer him a measure of protection. Instrumental alliances among prisoners are not uncommon; relationships in prison tend to be pragmatic and characterised by 'material and social support with little emotional intimacy' (Crewe 2012: 35). However, status and stigma in prison can be mutually compounding and, as Crewe (2009:282) observes, 'prisoners who could not 'handle themselves'…were generally scorned…and men who succumbed to intimidation or failed to stand up for themselves were vulnerable to more intense forms of victimization' (see also Edgar et al 2003). This was Andy's experience as the following extract illustrates:

> Andy: It probably made me less of a man because I became a kind of 'Yes man'. I just agreed with people simply to keep the peace. I've never ever stood up for myself in prison … I don't think I will ever be able to... I'm terrified of fights…I don't know if that makes you less of a man … but the least wee person… will want a fight with me and… its hard to get by because it's all about images in prison, hard men, and I'm probably known as a wee bit of a daftie…a person of irrelevance…it makes me feel inadequate.

The impact of Andy's subordinate status and his associated experiences in prison, are discussed in the following sub-theme. In terms of managing his experience of prison, in the early stages of his prison life (aged 21), Andy discovered that selling and smuggling drugs into the prison for influential prisoners afforded him a level of protection.

> Andy: I've always been involved… well for the first 20 years … I was always involved in …either selling drugs or bringing drugs into prison. So it was just a continuation from the outside, inside. I was running about with guys I felt would protect me… that's how I got through my time.

By 1986, aged 25, Andy started injecting Heroin and his involvement in the drug scene dominated the first two decades of his prison life. Drug use was a means of psychologically transcending the realities of his existence in prison and suppressing his emotions. In prison, where the performance of a masculine identity is associated with emotional resilience, suppressing the expression of (particularly negative) emotion is central to managing reputations and social interactions (Crewe 2009; Crewe 2012; Sim 1994; Sykes 1958).

> Andy: It [injecting Heroin made] my time go easier and block[ed] out the existence I was having …You know, you very rarely get prisoners opening up to each other and I suppose I've found it very hard over the years. It's an image you've got to uphold in prison as a man - of being in control, and not show any weakness – especially don't cry! Don't talk about things that lassies would talk about. Emotions and stuff like that. It's probably been harder for me because I've never been a macho guy – I've never had any

> fights in my life apart from doings[37]. It's been difficult to maintain for years…I have lost face so many times in prison it's unbelievable, which also knocks your confidence and self-esteem – I probably havenae got any.

While drug use can offer a means of escape, alleviating frustration, boredom and anxiety (Larner and Tefferteller 1964; Pearson 1987; Crewe 2009, 2012), dependency on drugs in prison breeds contempt and compounds the stigma of addiction. Crewe (2012: 33) explains that 'drug users in prison…are disliked in part because of a widespread aversion to the acts that drug addicts engage in outside prison; in particular, exploitation of family members and petty theft' but also because 'drug users breach a number of norms that make collective living more manageable … they scavenge for goods that they can trade for drugs and sometimes steal from other prisoners and they are considered untrustworthy, manipulative and generally unreliable. The debts that they build up create friction' (ibid). These debts can also place additional strain on prisoners' families on whom prisoners' often depend for financial support (see for example Condry 2012; Smith et al. 2007) and, in Andy's case, continual demands for subsidies ultimately severed the only relationships he had outside prison by then.

> Andy: [I was] getting myself into debt… I used to phone my Mum, ask her to send £30 here and £20 there and it got to the stage where they wouldnae answer the phone... I could understand, obviously, and I lost all contact with my family then.

Already vulnerable to exploitation, Andy's dependency on Heroin, loss of financial assistance and rising debts meant that he had to carry out chores for more powerful

[37] Being assaulted

prisoners who supplied drugs as a means of settling his debts and acquiring drugs (see also Crewe 2009). However, such an apparent display of subordination attracted victimisation and the withdrawal of the protection he had previously engineered when his utility diminished and his dependence increased. The form of victimisation Andy endured was years of humiliating treatment, psychological torment and social isolation.

> Andy: Because I've been a drug addict over the years, I've obviously had to chase drugs in prison and … I started getting a bit of a using off a couple of guys. I … collecting their meals for them, bringing it up to their cells and just running after [them] – so as I could get drugs off them. Years ago, a couple of guys [said] to a certain guy I was doing it for - 'Is that your dog running after you?' So, not long after that, people started whistling like a dog to me and clicking their fingers…[then] more people were doing it... I finally said something to somebody…so, it became common knowledge that I would react to this noise - then screws started doing it. It still happens today. Everywhere I go, everybody knows about it [voice cracking]…Years that's been happening Beth. [crying]... Anytime I walk by, every day. I had to put myself in the digger [segregation] just to get away fae it all. Then they started doing it in the digger as well. It's a living nightmare man. I can cope with it but there's times when I cannae and I don't even go out for my meals because I'm too embarrassed to show my face.

While bullying vulnerable prisoners is generally apprehended with contempt, 'prisoners who 'allow' themselves to be bullied receive little sympathy' (Crewe 2012:35). Moreover, suffering as a consequence of addiction and drug debt is viewed as self-inflicted; rarely does anyone intervene as they might otherwise

(Crewe 2009). With a ten year sentence ahead of him in 1993, physically and emotionally spent and desperate and fearful of his capacity to continue to cope with his enduring victimisation, in the absence of alternative coping mechanisms (Jeglic et al 2005) Andy engaged in an isolated incident of serious self-harm. The mental health social worker who subsequently offered him support suggested he engage in '*something creative'*; and this inspired Andy to practice art. Art in prisons offers numerous individual and institutional benefits (see Djurichkovic 2011; McNeill et al 2011) and contributes to better relationships between prisoners and between prisoners and staff (Goddard 2005, Menning 2010, Silber 2005). For Andy, however, it was, initially, a means of escape (Belton and Barclay 2008) a means of transcending the psychological and emotional trauma he was experiencing, and coping with the social environment that caused it (Cohen and Taylor 1972).

> Andy: [Art] served two purposes for me in that … I could just switch myself off – it was an excuse not to listen to people [or]…talk to people… plus I was finding out the more I done it, the more it was making me feel good about myself and I was getting quite good at it.

Art offers numerous therapeutic benefits to people in prison. It offers an acceptable means of emotional self-expression (Johnson 2008), and, as Andy suggests, by building a sense of positive achievement (Heenan 2006; McNeill et al 2011) it can increase self-esteem (see Cohen 2009; Cox and Gelsthorpe 2008, Currie 1989, Dean and Field 2003, Gussak 2004, 2007, 2009, Silber 2005). Critically, his interest and immersion in art and art history also contributed to the development of a more constructive personal identity (Currie 1989, Dean and Field 2003) through, a perhaps seemingly unlikely, identification with the dedication and endurance that

Van Gogh's life symbolised, and in whom he found parallels with his own self-concept and stigmatized social identity in prison.

> Andy: I remember reading about Van Gogh and I felt a wee bit of affinity towards him…people thought he was mad. He committed suicide… but I felt there was a bit of my life in his story. He was a bit of a loner… [but he] never gave up. Although people didn't rate him as a painter, he still painted every day of his life. He had such a hard life …was shunned by the other artists of the time… he was in an asylum, he was depressed for a bit of his life but he was a fantastic artist.

While still 'shunned' by the prisoner community, existing in self-imposed exile on segregation and refusing to attend the workshops, art and his identification with Van Gogh provided a scaffold for Andy to re-frame his self-concept and personal identity. This was further reinforced by other prisoners who sought him out to paint cards and 'scrolls' for their families and by prison staff who requested he paint murals on prison walls, which also provided an 'independent' income. It is important to note, however, that this did not elevate his status in the prisoner community, his victimisation persisted, but it offered a means of coping with, and an alternative lens through which to reframe, this social rejection. In prison, a talent or skill that is valued can be a means of garnering respect. Art, however, is often viewed as a natural ability, rather than a reflection of character, and one that benefits the individual who possesses it, rather than the prisoner community as a whole and is therefore limited in generating respect (Crewe 2009). However, what Sennett (2003: 16) terms 'craft love', or doing something well for its own sake rather than to 'compete with or earn the regard of others' (ibid: 14), provides the individual with inner self-respect; 'it's not so much a matter of getting ahead as of becoming inside'

(ibid: 14). Thus, there is a distinction to be drawn between 'the respect one earns from others for doing something well', and 'the act of exploring how to do something', 'between … being respected and feeling what one does is inherently worthwhile' (ibid:14). It is this latter sense of achievement and mastery that captures the significance of art for Andy, and which provided 'a profound pleasure in and of itself, and a sense of self-worth which didn't depend on others' (ibid:14).

Effects of prison

'Fear, anxiety, loneliness, trauma, depression, injustice, powerlessness, violence, rejection and uncertainty are all part of the experience of prison' (Liebling1999:341), however the extent to which this does lasting harm is disputed (see for example Bonta and Gendreau 1990; Haney 2003; Zamble and Porporino 1988). The effects of prison vary as widely as experiences of prison, and do so in accordance with individuals' characteristics, age at imprisonment, length of imprisonment and the cumulative or progressive effects of repeat or enduring imprisonment (see for example Armstrong and Weaver 2012; Crawley and Sparks 2006, Haney 2003, Liebling and Maruna 2005; Maruna and Toch 2005; Zamble and Porporino 1988). This sub-theme focuses on the psychological and relational effects of Andy's experience of imprisonment.

Andy has been imprisoned almost continuously since he was fifteen years old, in 1977. At this age and stage, an individual's identity is un-established and unformed (Erikson 1950) and those imprisoned at this age, with limited experience of exercising autonomy, choice and control over their own lives, are more susceptible to the psychological and social effects of prison (Haney 2003). Moreover,

research has shown that longer periods of imprisonment are also more likely to exert an enduring impact on individuals' self-identity and self-esteem (Flanagan, 1981) although this conclusion is not consistently upheld (Bonta & Gendreau, 1990). While long-term imprisonment may not necessarily translate into enduring mental health, psychiatric or psychological problems, it can cumulatively and gradually engender negative psychosocial effects. The various psychological mechanisms and behaviours that prisoners develop to adjust to the formal and informal culture of prison become increasingly natural and, in some cases, internalised (Haney 2003), which can have far-reaching effects on self-concept, identity and patterns of interactions, and, ultimately, prospects for desistance. Given the duration of Andy's incarceration, coupled with the age at which he was incarcerated, and the absence of any prior or subsequent alternative social roles, it is unsurprising that Andy defines his 'master status' (Goffman 1968) as that of prisoner:

> Andy: I find it hard to be anything other than a guy who's spent 32 years in prison. I've spent all my adult life in prison. The longest period I been out since the age of 15 is 7 weeks, so I'm institutionalised. I know I am.

The concept of 'institutionalisation' (Goffman 1961) refers to the psychosocial effects of long-term imprisonment, which can include the loss of contact with, or absence, of non-prisoner relationships and loss of prospects outside of the prison (Barton 1966 cited in Liebling and Maruna, 2005).The 'institutionalised' prisoner generally views himself entirely within the institutional context (Ham, 1980). This process of change involves a number of psychological adaptations including an increasing dependence on the structural regime and the internalisation of interpersonal norms structuring

the formal and informal prison culture, which undermine autonomy and incrementally erode prisoners' capacities to make their own decisions and choices, assume personal responsibility and deal with the pressures of life outside prison (Cornwell 2009; Haney 2003). While the effects of long term imprisonment vary, prolonged exposure to, or embeddedness in, the prisoner community can give rise to atypical patterns and norms of social interaction (Haney 2003), which have implications for relationships within prison and following release. Haney (2003:41) observes that 'hyper-vigilance, interpersonal distrust and suspicion', or what Andy refers to as paranoia, underpinned by fear, structure thought processes and interactions (see also Crewe 2009), as a defence against victimisation and exploitation.

> Andy: It's made me feel alienated. I feel … because of what's been happening…it has made me a complete paranoid wreck. I'm going to find it very hard to be in company outside.

In this volatile culture, prisoners regulate, control and suppress their emotions, which over time can result in an 'emotional flatness' or 'emotional over-control' which can be debilitating in future, post-prison relationships (Haney 2003: 42). As Crewe (2012: 35) explains, echoed by Andy below, 'prisoners forced to endure this culture over many years describe losing touch altogether with some emotions and fear that they will never regain the capacity for warmth, trust and intimacy'.

> Andy: I've lost all my emotions in prison. I don't know how I feel at times. I find it very, very hard to express my feelings, my emotions, because I've spent all my life in prison.

Andy's response to his prolonged experience of exploitation and victimisation was self-containment and social withdrawal. While art helped to ameliorate his diminished sense of self-worth, these combined experiences and effects have resulted in a deep seated social anxiety, further compounded as he explains below, by his 'loss of a coherent and satisfactory life narrative' (Crawley and Sparks 2006: 63) as a consequence of the aggregate length of his imprisonment.

> Andy: I feel I don't mix well, I find it hard to talk, simply because all my memories is prison, even with other prisoners who've got a life that they've come fae and are going back to… I find myself sitting in silence most of the time when I'm in company with other prisoners. All my conversations, all I know is prison. I've no memories. All my memories is prison. I just feel so cut off fae the human race.

The loss of a non-prisoner identity, personal relationships, and limited opportunities for personal progression within prison, prolonged periods of isolation from the outside world, in conjunction with the psychosocial effects of imprisonment and the coping or adaptive responses that prisoners can develop pose particular challenges to many former prisoners following release (Crawley and Sparks, 2006, Grounds and Jamiesson 2003; Haney 2003; Harrington and Spohn, 2007, Liebling, 2004). These challenges are particularly acute for long-term prisoners like Andy who have limited experience of 'being in the world' as an adult, for whom the world to which they return is barely recognisable and for whom a substantial part of their life, when they might otherwise have been invested in employment, relationships and raising families, has passed (Grounds and Jamiesson 2003).

Anticipating and experiencing release

At the time of interview, Andy was in the final weeks of his recall to prison, serving out the remainder of his original sentence, which means that he will be released at the age of 48 after thirty-two years in prison without any statutory or formal supports. Andy expressed a strong desire to desist on release, which was informed primarily by the desire to avoid returning to prison. Arguably, long-term prisoners may not only find their lives have been suspended in prison but the specter of the prison wall casts a long shadow over their futures. For Andy, whose life had been lived almost entirely in prison and unable to envisage a life beyond prison, his ultimate concerns or hopes for his release were almost exclusively defined by the avoidance prison, or at least, staying out longer than he had previously been able to.

> Andy: I've never been out longer than 7 weeks, so that's going to be a milestone if I get over 7 weeks. I reckon once that happens things will just get better and better for me …I just want to live outside prison….I would like to just be who I am the now only not in prison. I find it very difficult to talk about the future because I have never been out longer than 7 weeks in the last 32 years and for me all of a sudden to start saying I'm going to be out for five years – it's difficult for me to comprehend. Obviously I want that to happen but because of the life I've led for so long I find it very difficult… to say with belief that it's going to happen.

Andy only made cursory reference to his two periods on parole in 2000 and 2007; given his monolithic experience of imprisonment and his pre-occupation with his existing experiences in prison and his, then pending, release, this is, perhaps, to be expected. On both occasions, motivated to desist, Andy sought to distance himself

from Coaston and any former social networks and temptations that might arise. In 2000, he was released to supported accommodation in a large Scottish town, but, with a long-standing, untreated and undisclosed heroin addiction, within the space of a few weeks, he committed armed robbery to subsidise his addiction and returned to prison.

> Andy: I didn't want to come back to [Coaston]. I just felt …I would always get myself into trouble. I felt that if I was going to try and start a new life that it would need to be somewhere…new but…I hadnae told anyone that I was a drug addict by this time… I ended up robbing the place where I cashed my giros along [and] … got myself six years

In 2007, Andy was again released to supported accommodation in a different town in the same local authority. Although his addiction was, by then, stabilised by Methadone he spent his time drinking in pubs. His lifestyle was so chaotic that he failed to attend appointments and rarely returned to his accommodation. Ultimately he breached the conditions of his licence and was recalled to serve the remainder of his sentence in prison.

> Andy: I got myself involved with alcohol and all the local drinkers…I was actually living in pubs…I got recalled for missing appointments basically and not staying at the address I was meant to stay in… although I didn't re-offend... I walked away from a hit and a chance of robbing a bookies. That's a big step for me because ten year ago I'd have probably have went and done both.

It has been said that 'while men are in prison their outside behavior patterns remain, in effect frozen in time…until their release' (Zamble and Porporino 1988:152). While Andy's behaviour on release mirrors his earlier behavioural patterns, his resumption of alcohol and drug use on release could equally be construed as a means of managing the trauma of years of victimization and suppressing the anxiety and insecurity of an unfamiliar sense of freedom. Equally, in the absence of any significant relationships on the outside, associating with *'all the local drinkers'* might have been his only means of social interaction, or perhaps he simply surrendered to temptation in the sudden absence of external restrictions and controls. Whatever the reasons, to Andy, despite his recall to prison, his resistance of an opportunity to offend during his last period of release represented a significant departure from earlier behavioural patterns and is central to his belief that he will not re-offend on release this time.

> Andy: Although I was drinking I was desperately determined not to re-offend. I knew I was going to get the jail for not going to my appointments but I kept thinking as long as I don't re-offend I am not going to get any added time…I still know to this day, that I'll not re-offend as long as I can curb this drink…My life is over if I get another sentence.

Andy's desire to avoid imprisonment during his most recent period on release resulted in him resisting an opportunity to offend and is, as he suggested, evidence of his articulated orientation towards desistance. Andy's strategies for pursuing a life free from crime and prison are informed by his previous experiences of release and are solely comprised of 'avoidance goals' (Elliot 1999), echoing Burnett's (1992:187) 'avoider-veterans', whose motivation to desist seemed to be rooted in repeated

experiences of imprisonment and the subsequent ramifications. His sole strategies for realising this are the avoidance of Coaston, former associates, involvement in offending and substance use. Critically, however, the desire to avoid further imprisonment does not readily translate into its realisation (Armstrong and Weaver 2010), as Burnett (1992) observed. Indeed, despite the misappropriation of this study by the then Home Secretary, Michael Howard, to claim that 'Prison Works' (see Burnett and Maruna 2004), a ten year follow up study of the same people, over 60 % of whom subsequently recidivated, 'contradict[ed] the easy assumption that a distaste for imprisonment, itself, leads to a lifestyle that avoids repeating the experience' (Burnett and Maruna 2004:401). Leaving to one side that prison might be more accurately described as 'an expensive way of making bad people worse' (Home Office 1990:6 cited in Burnett and Maruna 2004) (see also Gendreau et al. 1999), and even indulging the unlikely possibility that prison might exert a deterrent effect (McGuire 1995), that this might happen for only a few, and even then for some after one or two sentences while for others only after twenty or thirty years makes clear that prison is an expensive and unpredictable technique for triggering reflection and change (Armstrong and Weaver 2010; Burnett 1992). The reality is that, despite a desire to desist, vulnerable prisoners, such as Andy, 'often return to prison quickly between sentences, showing evidence of poor coping in the community as well as in prison' (Liebling 2012: 65).

If, as discussed in Chapter 2, desistance is connected to positive identity transformations, the development of agency, supportive social relationships and concrete opportunities to live differently, then the 'pains of imprisonment'[38] (Sykes

[38] The pains of imprisonment include the deprivation of autonomy, relatedness and security, involve the suppression of emotion and the adoption of dysfunctional norms of social interaction (Sykes 1958) and, in Andy's case, include exposure to systematic and enduring victimization and exploitation.

1958) represent a profound challenge to former prisoners' on release. Moreover, avoiding risky behaviours and associates are generally insufficient to overcome the considerable challenges to social integration that former prisoners face, including obtaining and sustaining accommodation, managing restricted finances and limited supportive social networks or opportunities to develop them (Burnett and Maruna 2004). Long-term prisoners, particularly those imprisoned at an early age, are often released with few independent living skills, limited experience of employment or basic possessions which essentially means that they are 'starting from scratch' (Crawley and Sparks 2006: 75) from a position of significant disadvantage. Unaccustomed to exercising personal responsibility, and with few inner resources or constructive coping mechanisms to deal with unanticipated life challenges, when the external structures and controls they have been accustomed to rely on have been removed, former prisoners can resort to tried and tested behaviours to manage the stress, anxiety and loneliness they experience (Haney 2003).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Andy's life beyond the fragmentation of the Del, which has been lived almost exclusively in prison. His experiences and the effects of imprisonment have thus formed the principal focus of the analysis, concluding with a discussion of his experiences and aspirations for his, then pending, release. In particular, this chapter illustrated that in the early stages of imprisonment, Andy imported the previous norms of interaction that he had employed with the Del, as a means of negotiating the relational rules and modes of interactions that inhere in the prisoner community, all of which, in addition to the formal culture of the prison, comprise 'conditioning structures' in that they shape the situations of action through the constraints and enablements they engender (T1-2 in Figure 7). The conditioning

structures can be further conceptualised, then, as the set of relational rules in the prisoner community, which are informed by, replicate or perhaps exaggerate those characteristic of their interactions outside (Wacquant 2000) which Andy had to follow reflexively or, in other words, the constraints which he negotiated in a relational way. Andy's responses to the relational rules and constraints of the prisoner community contributed to his stigmatized status, which, in turn, influenced the nature of his interpersonal interactions with other prisoners, which then shaped and influenced his experience of prison (T2-3). His involvement in the drug scene and subsequent drug use and the ensuing interpersonal repercussions (T2-3) contributed to the outcomes, his social withdrawal, self-harm and ultimate investment in art (T4), which represent the conditioning structures (at T1) in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle, creating new constraints and enablements.

The experience and effects of long-term imprisonment significantly compromise prospects for desistance but, as this chapter has also illustrated, individual level factors are also important (Burnett 1992). In the early stages of his imprisonment, Andy highly identified with a deviant subculture, and, at an impressionable age, he quickly internalized the norms of the prisoner community (Clemmer 1970); while his method of adaptation to the prison culture contributed to the pains of his experience of imprisonment, this did nothing to 'deter' him or encourage him to realise a lifestyle that avoided a return to prison. Overtime the cumulative experience and effects of a life lived in prison have not only appreciably weakened his prospects for desistance but, while no longer identifying so explicitly with a deviant subculture, in removing all memory or knowledge of another way of living, prison has served to crystallise his implicit identification with prison, where identification in this latter context translates into recognition and familiarity, and where prison represents the only way of being in the world he can tangibly envisage.

Structural Conditioning [conditioning structures]

T 1

Interactions in networks [black box: individual and relational contributions]

T 2 T 3

Structural Reproduction (morphostasis) (i.e persistence)

Outcomes

T 4

Structural Elaboration (morphogenesis) (i.e desistance)

Figure 7: overview of investigative framework

CHAPTER 7: SETH'S STORY

'I'm a hard worker, I like that. I like my work and the fact I do work hard to provide for my family. That's about it'.

Introduction

<u>Biographical Overview</u>

Seth, aged 43, is the younger brother to Jay and Adam Webster. He was born in 1965 and was raised in Coaston, the youngest of six siblings. His father's violence towards his mother was a definitive feature of his childhood and, as discussed in Chapter 5, was a contributory influence on his involvement with the Del into which he was somewhat socialised through his elder brothers' involvement. Seth offended persistently for a period of 13 years between the ages of 9 and 22 during which time he acquired approximately 50 convictions primarily of an acquisitive or violent nature, although as discussed in Chapter 5, his offending was primarily underpinned by expressive, affective rationales. For Seth, who was highly embedded in the Del but who exhibited low levels of identification with a 'deviant' subculture, his relationships to and with the group and the maintenance of the associated relational goods were more significant to him than any instrumental outcomes of offending.

In the aftermath of the fragmentation of the Del, Seth's involvement in offending comprised violent offences directly related to the feud. With the exception of a brief period on probation during his adolescence, his convictions resulted in custodial sentences of varying lengths. Indeed, he pointed out that between the ages of 14 – 22, he '*never had a birthday outside*'; during this period he 'graduated' through

various children's and penal institutions. Between the ages of 22 – 32 Seth did not offend. In his thirties he was convicted for a '*couple of breaches'* of the peace and an assault, for which he was fined. Seth attributes these offences to the unintended outcome of his frequent alcohol binges which characterised this period of his life. In the year preceding the interview, he was convicted for driving whilst under the influence of alcohol. Notwithstanding these lapses, Seth would consider himself to have desisted for over two decades.

Seth met his wife Lesley during his late teens and although they are still married, they separated a few months prior to the interview. The couple has two children; the youngest, a daughter, resides with her mother and the eldest, a son, resides with Seth. Seth continues to work as a steel fixer, the trade he learnt, like many of his friends, in London where he lived with Lesley for three years, between the ages of 22 and 25 before returning to Coaston where he has been resident since. Indeed, Seth's delineation of his life stages following the fragmentation of the Del are structured in accordance with places of residence, namely 'The London Years' (aged 22-25) and 'The [Coaston] Years' (aged 25-42), although his elaboration of these stages are dominated by the significance he placed on work and family.

This chapter commences by describing Seth's response to the feud and his subsequent imprisonment, which is discussed under the superordinate theme '*Experience of Punishment'*. The chapter then proceeds, under the superordinate theme '*Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance'* to discuss the role of Seth's extant familial, social and personal relationships in supporting desistance over time, commencing with his relocation to London, following his release from prison. The significance of employment in Seth's narrative of change is discussed under the final superordinate theme '*The Meanings and Outcomes of Work'*.

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
Experience of Punishment	Making Positive Change In Prison

Table 4: Experience of Punishment: Seth

Making positive change in prison

A Process of Investment in the Self

As discussed in chapter 5, the feud between the Del resulted in a series of violent exchanges. Seth *'went on the run…for six weeks',* when he learned that he was wanted by the police in connection with his involvement in a serious assault on Dennis Nixon. However the fragmentation of the Del, the escalating violence, the threat and fear of recriminations, and associated restrictions on his freedom, in conjunction with his developing relationship with Lesley and the impact this was having on her, triggered a reflexive evaluation of his lifestyle, culminating in his decision to hand himself into the police.

> Seth: These guys were looking for me, the police were looking for me and I was holed up in houses for maybe two weeks at a time and I couldn't get out…then there's the fear as well…in the end up I was relieved to…hand myself in. There was definitely a wee bit of taking charge and…I think that was the first time I had took other people's feelings into consideration, and I realised how much I had hurt [Lesley]…also my mother…I think when I was on the run, I spent a lot of time myself and I had a lot of time to think…I definitely started changing then.

Seth's reflexive evaluation of his lifestyle resonates with the early stages of the desistance process identified by Bottoms and Shapland (2011), who found that shifts in offending were often linked to a triggering event such as the importance of new and strengthening social relationships or negative turning points, for example, associated with criminal acts (Haggard et al 2001), which can influence an individual's motivation to change. Processes of extrication from gangs are often similarly prompted by an accrual of reasons or events interacting to 'push or pull' the individual away from the gang (Bannister et al 2010; Decker and Lauritsen 2002; Vigil 1988). The reflexive process underpinning individuals' responses to these various triggering events is, however, rarely elaborated in the desistance literature (although see Vaughan 2007; King 2012). Archer (2000) suggests that individuals respond to the constraints and enablements that inhere in their conditioning structures by engaging in an internal conversation (personal reflexivity), through which process they deliberate on the social situations they confront through the lens of their ultimate concerns. An ultimate concern is a desired end or goal and a sense, however vague or uncertain, of a course of action that is perceived to be realisable in the given social circumstances the individual inhabits (ibid). At this juncture, in response to shifting conditioning structures influenced by 'between-individual' changes such as the fragmentation of the Del, the increasing interpersonal violence and the development of a new intimate relationship with Lesley, Seth began evaluating his current lifestyle through the lens of his similarly shifting ultimate concerns for a different life. This is not, however, a solely cognitive process, as Seth's extract above suggests; '[e]motional empathy and responsiveness may help initiate a process of self-appraisal from which a different kind of person emerges' (Vaughan 2007: 391; see also Bottoms and Shapland 2011).

Archer (2003) delineates three phases to the process of reflexivity, manifest in an inner dialogue (see Chapter 3). The initial phase is characterised as a period of 'discernment' where the person reviews the possible alternative lifestyle choices available to them, in contrast to their current lifestyle, reflecting a 'willing[ness] to consider different options' (Vaughan 2007:394). Seth was sentenced to three years in prison, which liberated him from the immediate constraints emerging from his relational concerns in the community, and which, in the context of his 'openness to change', he apprehended as an opportunity or 'hook for change' (Giordano et al. 2002:1000). He started taking action towards realising this through what might be described as a process of investment in the self.

> Seth: I started exercising every day, [developing] self-control, starting to do things to take care of myself and start to change. It was the first time I had gone in and done that. I done that through[out] the three year sentence. I think there was a wee feeling of optimism there, that I was going in to deal with it, get it done, and get on with it and that I could come out and do things.

Seth's application of his personal reflexivity to his changing 'conditioning structures' precipitating his imprisonment in turn influenced his responses to the constraints, enablements and expectations that inhere in the 'prisoner society' (Crewe 2009) and the 'formal' prison culture. Where previously Seth's experience of and response to imprisonment was characterised by immersion in the prisoner community and a sense of hopelessness, compounded by the loss of personal control being in prison represented, his response to this period of imprisonment, influenced by his recent experience of the demise of the Del and informed by a desire for an alternative lifestyle, and '*a growing realisation that there was things out there that you could do.*

That you're not stuck in that life. That you don't need to run with the crowd all the time', culminated in his decision to distance himself from the prisoner community.

> Seth: It was the first time I hadn't buckled to peer pressure whereas before I'd always just kind of went with the flow. If my mates were getting into trouble, I'd be getting into trouble…it was around then I realised, well, they're not going to stick by me forever. It was time to start taking care of myself instead of worrying about them.

Seth's process of investment in the self through participation in education and practicing yoga created a routine that enabled him to create this distance and engendered a sense of self-discipline, both of which Seth perceived to be critical to maintaining his resolution to change. In turn, his resolve to change, initiated through the exercise of personal agency and self-reflection, enabled him to resist the provocations that emerged from the prisoner community and to forego the status and social recognition (Barry, 2006) previously conferred on him.

> Seth: To make a conscious decision to stay away fae it… [takes] strength or self-control. You need self-control if you're going to distance yourself fae that and stay away from it – even in the jail…you've got a kind of name to live up to. Some of the guys fell out with me and gave me a hard time because I wasnae hanging out with them or getting into trouble…It bothers you but you don't let it. You know you are not just suddenly going to start running about doing what they do again just because they'd like you to…so there's a wee bit of self-control there and realisation that you are not wanting that in your life.

Implicit in this retrospective narrative is Archer's second phase of reflexivity, deliberation, which is an evaluative process, in which one reviews the perceived costs, benefits and implications pertaining to a given situation or potential courses of action (Archer 2000), in this case, Seth's pursuit of self-change against the pressures and implications of dissociation from his former friends in prison. Evidently, this comparative evaluation is not as solipsistic in focus as Archer's exposition implies; as these extracts have illustrated, the decision to distance himself was the outcome of his personal reflexivity applied not solely to himself but to his relationships. This is because one's ultimate concerns are progressively defined in relation to how the 'I', one's self, defines his choices when he acts as a 'you', as a social actor, and must respond both to the demands of his relational contexts and to the deeper demands of his 'I', when he considers whether he is satisfied or not with the 'me' that has been attributed to him by others, and when he confronts and compares the meaning of his belonging (the 'we' / us to which he belongs) to that of other potential membership groups (Donati 2011a). Critically, however, a resolve to change manifest in 'enhanced internalized control' (Giordano et al. 2002: 1001) does not readily translate into its realisation on release. However, Seth's experience of altruistic work through the *'Training for Freedom'* programme in prison (see below) reinforced his dedication, (Archer's final phase of reflexivity) or commitment to change, through his involvement with a group of community volunteers.

'Training for Freedom': Being Normal

Prior to the end of his three year sentence, Seth was placed on a *'Training for Freedom'* programme which included participation in a voluntary placement in a drop-in café run by SACRO, as a means of preparing longer-term prisoners for

release. Seth identified his experience of volunteering as a 'turning point' which are those 'crucial [processes] in which new lines of individual . . . activity are forged, in which new aspects of the self are brought into being' (Becker 1966: xiv, cited in Carlsson 2012:4), and that hold particular significance for offending and desistance. The understanding of a 'turning point' employed here recognises that it is not a given event or experience in itself that exogenously (Laub et al. 1998) or 'abruptly' brings about desistance, but rather the way such events or experiences under certain circumstances, and, thus in the context of the surrounding processes in which they are embedded, are imbued with significance, or otherwise, and which directly influence their potential to bring about other changes (Carlsson 2012). Understood in this context, a turning point can consolidate or reinforce initial motivations to change and engender, as it did for Seth, Archer's final phase of reflexivity, dedication. In this phase, in dedicating ourselves to those things about which we are most concerned, the internal conversation (personal reflexivity) conducts a final review as to whether a life envisioned in relation to a particular set of concerns is worth working towards and whether they are capable of both achieving and sustaining it. In this vein, reflexivity incorporates notions of transcendence through which we can imagine ourselves and our relations differently from what we/they are and thus capable of actualizing things as yet unrealized (Donati 2011a). This is the process through which people come to commit themselves, or otherwise, to desistance[39].

For Seth, it was the interactive dynamics between him and his co-workers that imbued his experience of volunteering with particular significance, in terms of the

[39] As previously noted in Chapter 3, the internal conversation is ongoing; in the face of setbacks, temptations or provocations (Bottoms and Shapland 2011), or where certain courses of action, events or experiences lead to undesired consequences, individuals may begin to lose motivation and commitment (Archer 2000).

impact this had on his self-concept and social identity. Drawing on his prior experiences of imprisonment and recidivism, Seth was aware of the precariousness of his intentions to sustain the positive self-change he had initiated during his period of imprisonment on release. During the early stages of desistance, early aspirations are often shrouded in uncertainty (Farrall and Calverley 2006). Seth's experience of volunteering however, engendered a realisation that '*I could function'* (see extract below) which served to crystallise his hopes that another way of being was achievable, which consolidated his commitment to desistance. Feeling accepted by 'normal' people enabled him to transcend his stigmatised status as 'an offender' and communicated to him that his aspirations for a 'normal' life were 'a realizable possibility' (Farrall and Calverley 2006: 115; see also Burnett and Maruna 2004; Maruna et al. 2004).

The experience of 'fitting in', of feeling a sense of belonging and being 'normal' (Goffman 1963), was particularly significant to Seth whose narratives of his earlier life (see Chapter 5) were characterised by an acute awareness that not only did he exist on the margins of society but, despite the belonging and social connectedness he experienced in the Del, he never really 'fitted in' with the deviant subculture. Through participation in volunteering alongside 'normal' people who both accepted and respected him, and in experiencing anew the relational goods of social trust and social connectedness that he valued, a new experience of self was brought into being.

> Seth: I would say [volunteering] was definitely a turning point…I had done everything in the jail, the self-control and you're doing all these things, determined to stay away from trouble, but you've always got that doubt when you go out that things aren't going to go well or you'll fall back into it. I think

> working there…in that period I realised that I could function. They were all normal people…and they were taking me home to meet their kids and we'd go to the art galleries and museums…and do all different things together. That was probably about the normalist period, just being in society and just doing normal things that I hadn't done before…It was just being normal after all they years of trouble, you realise that you can fit in…you're not a leper and that was definitely a turning point…[They would] treat you with total respect…and the trust showed in me…You were totally trusted.

Trust is closely related to concepts of responsibility and mutual respect (Edgar et al 2011). Respect essentially implies the mutuality associated with social recognition (Sennett 2003). In turn, responsibility taking and being invested with responsibility is a means of social recognition and is the result of being trusted, which can engender a sense of responsibility on the part of the person feeling trusted. 'Social recognition…expresses the capacity and need that…people have for longer-term *reciprocal* relations of trust and responsibility in the wider society' (Barry 2006:136, italics in original). Actions associated with active citizenship[40] have been constructively associated with desistance precisely because they establish or reinforce notions of reciprocity and mutuality (Drakeford and Gregory 2010) and, in that, social recognition (Barry 2006), which can positively influence an individual's self-concept. In particular, '[a]n emergent pro-social self-conception is…sensitive to 'messages' from others about the self…People may see themselves in a new way in the 'looking glass' that is provided by the views of others, whether through direct comment or via non-verbal responses during interaction' (Burnett and Maruna 2006:

[40] There is no universally agreed definition of Active Citizenship. Crick (2002:2) argues that it represents a focus on 'the rights to be exercised as well as agreed responsibilities'. Activity in this sense is often associated with engagement in public services, volunteering and democratic participation (see for example Crick 2000; Lister 2003).

95; see also Maruna et al. 2004). In this vein, volunteering alongside others in relation with whom these relational goods may emerge can provide a relational web within and through which shifts in identities can be elicited and / or reinforced.

The drop-in café served people who were homeless and experiencing problems with alcoholism. '*Being on the other side of the fence'*, as a helper, also imbued this 'turning point' with significance for Seth. On the one hand, in the act of helping alongside other volunteers, 'whatever status and role differences exist pale into insignificance compared to the contribution the joint effort is making' (Toch 2000: 271), generating 'a sense of belonging and an esprit de corps' (Pearl and Riessman 1965:83, cited in Burnett and Maruna 2006: 89). On the other hand, through the satisfaction of making a valued contribution to the wellbeing of others through engagement in helping (LeBel 2007) or advocacy behaviours (LeBel 2009) people can acquire or recapture self-esteem and satisfaction with life and such behaviours can reinforce or maintain a person's pro-social identity. Moreover, through participation in altruistic endeavours, the person giving help can internalise and express the idea that it is not a contradiction to one's masculinity to exercise or express compassion and that one can feel effective and competent when helping those less advantaged, whose own problems can diminish the salience of one's own (Toch 2000).

> Seth: It was good just being on the other side of the fence helping people …that aren't having a good time of life. It felt good, aye, it definitely did….Some of them were that right far gone with the drink and you could see the hopelessness in their situation, falling in the door drunk, bus passes pinned to their [jackets] so that when they got drunk you just put them on the bus. Just helping them, and the compassion the staff showed to them, was

just unbelievable.

The significance of Seth's engagement in volunteering as a turning point resided in the impact that collaborative engagement in altruistic acts exerted on his self-concept and social identity (Burnett and Maruna 2006; Toch 2000; Uggen et al. 2004). Beyond making a contribution to society, feeling part *of* society and earning the trust of others through the assumption of responsibility were particularly significant in reinforcing his commitment to desistance in the early stages.

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance	Role of extant social networks in supporting desistance
	Role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

Table 5: Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance

The role of extant social networks in supporting desistance

While Seth was in prison, Adam and some of the 'revised group' had relocated to London to extricate themselves from the 'relation bads' emerging from the feud and to access the employment opportunities afforded by the construction boom in London. On Seth's release, Adam encouraged him to join them, which Seth apprehended as an opportunity to consolidate the process of change he had begun in prison, not least because *'it was the first time…that there was a prospect of work in front me. That gave me hope'.* An argument was progressed in Chapter 5 that while employment in a new environment heralded economic and social changes to the 'revised group's' conditioning structures that enabled change, the recognition and pursuit of these opportunities can be construed as an outcome of the exercise

of reflexivity and as an expression of their individual and collective agency. In particular, however, individuals' capacities to access and thus realise and sustain these opportunities emerged from the mutual and reciprocal exchange of support and resources among the revised group, as an outcome of their collaborative efforts, of shifts in their interactive dynamics and the diversified relational contexts the move facilitated, both within and beyond the group, to which individuals responded differently through the lens of their individual and relational concerns. It is Seth's individual experience that this chapter is concerned to reveal.

As part of the *'Training for Freedom'* programme, Seth was granted 'leave' in the community for ten hours a week. He used this to spend time with Lesley who, towards the end of his sentence, advised him that she was pregnant with their first child. The impact of intimate or personal relationships and parenthood is discussed in the following subsection, however, at this stage, some of the revised group had also formed stable personal relationships and become fathers, which further impacted their internal network dynamics.

Individuals comprising the revised group diverged in terms of what was going on in their individual lives, and, thus, in terms of how they responded to the opportunities the move represented. For Seth, who was committed to change, in a stable personal relationship and about to become a father for the first time, the move to London and access to employment presented as an opportunity to realise his desire for a different way of living, to be 'normal', and a means through which he could personify and interiorise this new social role. Critically, for Seth, who was concerned to distance himself from peers that were still offending as a strategy to resist any potentially negative influence they might exert, rather than withdraw from social

interaction as he had in prison, Seth associated with those among the revised group who were similarly situated.

> Seth: Adam was there and Marie, and some of the others and we'd do things with them…may be go shopping for the day…car boot sales and that – just normal things.

Shifts in the interactive dynamics between the revised group were also discernible in the explicit support and reinforcement of efforts to change. Seth described how Adam acted as a type of mentor, using his own experiences to advise him on the possibilities and pitfalls ahead.

> Seth: When I came out of [prison] we went down to London and [Adam] got me work and when we went down there … he'd stepped away fae [offending] and settled down with [Marie]...and he'd say to me about doing this or not doing that ...It's almost as if [Adam] knew ...what sort of ...pressures would come up ... and he could help me overcome that.

In this revised group, then, the desisting friends benefited from the reciprocal support and reinforcement of their efforts to change that their mutual recognition of each other's efforts implied.

> Seth: It's not like you just had to ... not see people ... there was people about you that were wanting the same things, so that helped. We all…got to that point where we wanted out of it round about the same time...we all stayed pretty close and we were working together and living together at different times.

Giordano et al., (2002) suggest that people learn from those whose behaviour represents a contrast to their own. However, it is suggested here that this is particularly so of people whose behaviour previously mirrored theirs and has since changed. They not only have less support from peers for engaging in offending but the observation of change in a credible person is particularly influential where they can identify with the individual and internalize the benefits of responding to this influence (Kelman 1958), in the hope of achieving similar outcomes.

> Seth: I think that [Adam] probably made a significant difference to my situation as well. He always discouraged me from getting into trouble and …I suppose he gave me that insight that you can see that it can be done. As I say, growing up and that hopelessness you felt that you were stuck in it. To see [Adam] getting on and staying out of trouble and go on to work and things like that well it was a good influence.

This *seems* consistent with Giordano et al's (2003) findings that those open to change can make agentic moves to become closer to those within their own networks they believe will be a positive influence while distancing themselves from those who continue to offend. They argue that shifts in receptivity to the influence of anti-social friends (see also Monahan et al 2009) and in the nature of friendship choices, as a movement towards pro-social peers, can explain this progression. However, as observed in Chapter 2, the literature discussing the role of peers in relation to onset and persistence (see for example Farrington 1992; Haynie 2001, Haynie 2002; Warr 1993, 2002) and desistance (see for example Calverley 2012; Giordano et al 2003; Graham and Bowling 1995; Massoglia and Uggen 2010; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998) polarises peers into 'anti-social' pressures or 'pro-

social' influences, with each category representing different groups. Discussion surrounds the would-be-desister's decisive (Paternoster and Bushway 2009) or developmental (Giordano et al. 2003) disassociation from 'negative' influences and either re-connection with pro-social former associates or development of new pro-social relationships (Giordano et al. 2003; Knight and West 1975) with further explanations deriving from social learning, differential association (Akers 1973; Sutherland 1947; Warr 1993) or social control theories (Sampson and Laub 1993). These studies are usually refracted through the lens of the individual desister (Cromwell et al 1991; Warr 1998) or more infrequently from the standpoint of the individual situated in a structural network of relations in a given context (Haynie 2001). However, a focus on individuals who comprised a naturally forming group reveals that consistent with the reciprocal character of peer influence or friendship (Cairns and Cairns 1994, Pahl 2000), the friends benefited from the mutual support the revised group afforded. Moreover, that Adam, in particular, had *become* a positive influence is what imputed his influence with credibility and which in turn generated hope in Seth that he too could realise related outcomes. Where once, then, these relationships and reciprocities contributed to their collective involvement in offending, these particular friends also supported each other, albeit to differing degrees and with different effects and at different stages, to pursue constructive changes in their lifestyles and relationships.

The role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

This sub-theme illustrates the role of intimate relationships and families of formation in the desistance process. The correlations between marriage (or intimate

relationships) and/or parenthood and desistance emerging from empirical studies of desistance were elaborated in Chapter 2; in the process of illustrating the influence that Seth's relationship with Lesley, his partner, then wife, and his role as a father had on his life, this sub-theme will draw selectively on the central arguments emerging from this research.

Sampson et al (2006) suggested that marriage is not only correlated with desistance, but has a causal effect. Lyngstad et al (2011: 2) alternatively argue that it is possible to 'treat marriage as an *outcome* of rather than a causal agent in the process of criminal desistance' (see also Kiernan 2004; Monsbakken et al 2012b). In Seth's case, however, this relationship was not causative of desistance nor was it conditional on his desistance. While both differential association (Warr 1998) and social control theories (Laub and Sampson 2001) suggest that an intimate relationship can limit criminal involvement by reducing opportunities for crime or access to peers (Warr 1998) or by exerting mechanisms of informal social control over the individual (Laub and Sampson 2003), this does not hold true for Seth who acknowledges that during the earlier stages of this relationship, prior to his final period of imprisonment, discussed above, he continued to offend and to associate with the group despite, Lesley's 'normative orientation' which is generally considered to positively influence behaviour (Giordano et al 2003:306).

> Seth: She obviously wasnae happy about [me offending] but we got on that well, we were just happy to be together when we were together. We didn't see it as a problem then. [Offending] just seemed to be a part of life'

Critically, a partner or spouse can only exert influence where the individual is receptive to that influence, consistent with the individual's ultimate and relational

concerns. A control theorist would suggest that “if the marriage is … characterized by weak or non-existent attachment, continued offending will occur” (Laub and Sampson 2003: 44). That Lesley and Seth remained in this relationship for approximately two decades suggests that this relationship was of considerable significance in incremental effect to both of them, and indeed Seth’s narrative emphasises this. As observed, however, in Chapter 5, during the early stages of his relationship with Lesley, Seth’s primary attachments were to the Del, and whilst he was emotionally attached to Lesley, the historical significance and depth of his attachment to the Del meant that he would structure his time in a way that facilitated the maintenance of these two separate relational spheres:

> Seth: We were close but I was still going out and getting into trouble at the same time…I would see [Lesley] to up to maybe 8 o’clock and then I was going out after that and just fighting constantly.

In contrast to control and differential associational theorists, who emphasise the actions of the change agent to explain the significance of transitional events such as marriage, Giordano et al. (2003) progress an agentic and cognitive analysis of this phenomenon as the outcome of motivational and attitudinal changes in the would-be-desister, which they explain in reference to 'developmental changes in the nature of interpersonal ties as actors move into adulthood' and the accumulation of social experiences (Giordano et al. 2003: 297). The developmental perspective they progress attends to the ascendancy of intimate relationships over peer relationships as individuals move into adulthood and thus to distance from and resistance to the negative influence of peer relations and this analysis does have some credence here. Seth recalls how both he and his relationship to Lesley matured and intensified over the years:

> Seth: Realising the hurt I was causing – for yourself as well…going in the jail all the time, and you feel all that hopelessness and loneliness and you just knew you had to get away from it all. With [Lesley] as well...you're definitely starting to think about…what your actions were doing… thinking about other people instead of just yourself. Things that mattered to you, that you thought were important, changed.

This does seem to provide support for the idea that shifts in the direction and nature of interpersonal ties with age, reflective of 'changes in ways of thinking about the self in relation to others', can influence an individual's behaviour (Giordano et al. 2003:307). Indeed there is evidence across the men's narratives people becoming more other-focused in their outlook. However, despite their assertion that their cognitive emphasis provides a more conditional perspective (or context) on change and on the pro-social impact of the specific change agent (Giordano et al. 2011), such an analysis is limited in its capacity to illuminate the internal processes and relational dynamics that contribute to or sustain desistance over time or why someone becomes more or less open to the possibility of change. Applying Donati's (2011a) theory of relational reflexivity can shed some light on these processes. It is the deepening emotional connection and the associated shifts in the dynamic of the relation between Lesley and Seth in early adulthood that is relevant to understanding the shifting significance of the outcomes of his offending on this relationship which threaten the emergent relational goods to which both parties are reciprocally oriented. Crucially, however, these relational concerns need to be positioned in the context of changes in the dynamics of his social network. It is thus changes in the nature of the dynamics of these social relations, in conjunction with a growing dissatisfaction with the outcomes of his offending for both himself and

Lesley, that triggers Seth's reflexive internal conversation and re-prioritisation of his concerns that manifest in a shift in practices such that will enable him to realise these relational concerns. Desistance in this regard emerged from Seth's reflexive evaluation of the outcomes of his current lifestyle choices, which he weighed up against his shifting sense of what mattered to him, reflecting a reorientation of his ultimate concerns as they emerge in their relational contexts which underpin the motivational and attitudinal changes to which Giordano et al. (2003) refer.

The point here is that it is Seth's constellation of relational concerns that triggers a reflexive re-evaluation of what is important to him; his personal reflexivity is brought to bear on the social relations in which he participates and this reflexive evaluation is thus 'derived from a relational context, is immersed in a relational context and brings about a relational context' (Donati 2011a:14). His reflexive evaluation of certain peer relations brought about a realisation that they no longer generated the reciprocal relational goods they once enjoyed, of trust, loyalty and concern. When viewed in the context of a burgeoning intimate relationship which yielded such relational goods, but which were threatened by his continuous imprisonment, Seth became aware that his ultimate concerns resided in becoming a better partner and his continued association with certain friends in the context of the feud could generate relational 'bads' that would undermine this relation.

Becoming a father shortly after his release from prison and relocation to London further cemented Seth's relationship with Lesley and imbued it with additional significance. Seth placed particular emphasis on becoming a father in consolidating his commitment to desistance on his release. Over time, *being* a father emerged as a significant social role identity and his participation in employment (elaborated in the following sub-section) contributed to this. There is a distinct difference between

becoming a father and being a father, between having a child and raising a child. There is also considerable individual variation in how the role of parenthood is both exercised and experienced (Marsiglio and Pleck 2004) such that generalisations about the impact of parenting on one's behaviour, and thus desistance, are inherently problematic. Indeed, both parenting and parenthood are likely to be influenced by the context or form of an individual's relationship to the other parent (see for example Giordano et al. 2011, Massoglia and Uggen 2010, Monsbakken et al 2012a), just as the relational or interactive dynamics between parents will influence the experience of parenting. In turn, becoming parents is likely to influence the interactive dynamics between people in an intimate relation. The father-child relation thus needs to be viewed in the context of a network of mutually interdependent relations within the family, which exert a direct and reciprocal influence through interaction, and an indirect influence, mediated by the behaviour of third parties, such as the mother (Marsiglio et al. 2000). In this vein, one's identity as a father emerges 'as part of a reciprocal process negotiated by men, children, mothers and other interested parties' (ibid:1173).

What it means to be a parent is further influenced by one's own experience of being parented (see for example Hauari and Hollingworth 2009; Moloney et al. 2009). Seth's intention to *'not be like my Dad'* manifested in his desire to be involved in and provide for his family, further reflecting his wider, internalised cultural and class values and beliefs regarding his role as partner and parent, which influenced his appropriation of the 'traditional' nature and form of the social relation of family and the associated sets of relational rules that prescribe how one should behave in certain way towards others according to the norms that the context prescribes (Donati 2011a). As Marsiglio and Pleck (2004: 260) observe, 'the provider role continues to be an important feature of hegemonic images of masculinity and men's

fathering experience'. In this vein, the meaning and experience of fatherhood exists through specific socio-cultural processes, and, thus, is influenced by one's conditioning structures, which shape the situations of actions for individuals to which individuals bring their personal reflexivity to bear. Fatherhood does not, then, represent a static or stable identity, experience or behavioural pattern (Marsiglio et al. 2000). For example, even during episodes of binge drinking (discussed further below), ensuring he did not expose his children to any negative experiences and continued to provide for his family marked a significant departure between Seth's experience of being fathered and his own role and impact as a father.

> Seth: I never brought it home. The weans never seen me drunk or anything…I always made sure there was enough money coming in and that [Lesley] got enough money. It was never a problem there…I wasn't like my father, if I wasn't bringing it home.

Masculinity is negotiated and enacted differently in different situations and different social spaces (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) and is experienced and expressed differently at various stages in an individual's life-course (Collier 1998). Becoming a father represents another way of realising masculinity or brings a new dimension to one's sense of masculinity, which is implied in Seth's discussions of providing for family, and his enduring commitment to ensure *'they never went without'*.

In Seth's case, his experience of fatherhood during the early stages of his release needs to be positioned in the emergence and coalescence of a variety of influences and changes exerting a cumulative effect on his self-concept, his social identity and his lifestyle. While fatherhood undoubtedly afforded Seth a new source of self-respect and an alternative social identity, it was the aforementioned changes in his

conditioning structures that enabled the activation of this new social role. Indeed, the impact of fatherhood on desistance is difficult to disentangle from the influence of wider social relations (Monsbakken et al. 2012a) and is not always direct but is rather mediated through shifts in peer relationships, intimate relationships and employment which interact to open up new possibilities (Moloney et al. 2009). For Seth, investment in a significant intimate relationship, participation in employment, a fresh start in a new environment, and the support of a revised peer group network with similarly established relational attachments enabled his assumption of this new social role. While certain lifestyle changes can ensue as a consequence of the transition to parenthood, in the form of increased responsibilities, perhaps influenced by normative social expectations, these transitional processes cannot sufficiently account for abstinence from offending over time. While Seth places significance on fatherhood in reinforcing his commitment to desistance, his narrative of desistance does not centre on becoming a father in and of itself. Rather, it was the interaction of becoming and being a father, or family man, at this particular time, and in the context of this intimate relationship, which provided an alternative circle of belonging and connectedness, and which was facilitated by shifts in the relational dynamics of the revised group and involvement in stable employment. The mutually reinforcing interaction of these processes thus enabled him to fulfil the requirements of the role, and strengthened his sense of self-efficacy and control in those early years.

> Seth: When [Andrew] was born – that was a turning point. That was probably about the best period of my life…definitely the most settled, the most focused I was. I knew what was happening and I was in control. Then it just seemed to be that if I said I was going to do something, I would do it. That period fae getting out of prison right through to when [Andrew] was a toddler.

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
The Meanings and Outcomes of Work	The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work
	Constraints and limitations

Table 6: The Meanings and Outcomes of Work

As discussed in Chapter 2, while employment has generally been correlated with desistance, employment in and of itself does not produce or trigger desistance; rather it is the meaning and outcomes of either the nature of the work or participation in employment and how these influence an individual's self-concept and social identity and interact with a person's priorities, goals and relational concerns. Moreover, research has revealed some conditional interaction between various transitional events and experiences, such as, for example, the links between employment and investment in significant intimate relations and/or parenthood (see for example Bianchi et al. 2005 cited in Bersani et al. 2009; Burnett 2002; Edin et al. 2001; Farrall 2004; Laub and Sampson 2001; Maruna 2001; Owens 2009; Rhodes 2008; Rumgay 2004; Savolainen 2009; Visher and Travis 2003). The natures of these interacting life transitions further influences the various impacts they exert on people's identities, behaviours and social contexts, which directly or indirectly influence their potential to enable or constrain processes of change, at different stages in a given individual's life (Weaver 2012).

The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work

Informal social networks are the predominant means through which people with convictions access paid employment (Farrall 2002, 2004; Niven and Stewart 2005; Rhodes 2008, Visher and Courtney 2007). As discussed in Chapter 5, Adam was

pivotal in training and affording Seth, and others among the revised group, access to employment in steel-fixing. As foreman, Adam regularly obtained contracts for work and employed his friends and associates to carry out the work, which enabled them to circumnavigate the otherwise exclusionary practices of the labour market (Rhodes 2008), and which Seth suggested '*took that thing away, about how are you going to get money…if you're not earning a wage and going out working, then its crime isn't it?*'. Moreover, working together as a team became a definitive feature of their lifestyles which reinforced a sense of common purpose amongst the revised group and which enabled the internalisation of identities, both individually and as a collective, in which participation in work occupied a central place. However, sustaining employment in steel-fixing also required the development of employment-based networks to access further work and, thus, the development of 'bridging' social capital.

Bridging social capital involves establishing new social relations; these ties facilitate the reciprocal exchange of resources from one network to a member of another network and in this sense are linked to the development of broader identities and social mobility (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). In the steel-fixing industry, where work was obtained through 'word of mouth' and was typically distributed within known employment-based networks, bridging social capital was a critical and instrumental means of access to further contractual work. In addition to sustaining employment, the development of new social relationships through work, comprising a diverse range of people, 'afforded a concrete way of enhancing one's own identity as a respectable person' (Giordano et al. 2003*:* 311), through the development of a constructive reputation as a 'worker', which was also necessary for access to further work.

> Seth: At first, I done a few weeks of labouring and then [Adam] got me a job steel fixing with him. I was earning decent money then, well not at the start but I was learning and … [Adam] set me up with this other guy working – we were working so many different jobs – so I went away with this guy and he was kind of teaching me…Now, my friends are mostly work guys. Some I see regular, outside work as well. You get to know a lot of people in the building trade and they're the ones who will seek you out when there's another job on. I'm seen as quite a good steel fixer and quite a lot of guys seek me out for work.

Employment is not static in nature but denotes a vast array of 'different working conditions, skill requirements, values and rewards' (Owens 2009:58) and, thus, divergences in experiences of participation in work, all of which have a bearing on the potential influence and impact of employment on an individual. Moreover, the employment relation is, as the foregoing analysis and extract imply, constitutive of various networks of social relations (Baron 1988). People's social relationships within their working environment exert a significant influence on their experience of and satisfaction in work (Morgeson and Humphrey 2006; Humphrey et al 2007). This implies that we need a relational vision of work if we are to understand its meaning and outcomes. While some studies have suggested that the quality of employment is more strongly associated with desistance (Shover 1996; Uggen 1999), elsewhere, social relations in work have been shown to be more significant than the nature of the work with regard to job satisfaction (Morgeson and Humphrey 2006).

The four significant social characteristics of work identified by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) are apparent in the steel-fixing industry and are evident in Seth's

extract above, namely social support, interdependence, interaction with people outside of the organisation and feedback from others. Working with existing friends created a sense of camaraderie and along with other co-workers, they collectively created a working alliance and culture within which Seth could access social support, or advice and assistance. Steel-fixing requires the reciprocal interaction with, or interdependence between, co-workers in order to complete tasks which, in turn, facilitated the transmission and sharing of knowledge and skills, which has the potential to realise generative motives and bolster both human and social capital, thus enabling people to feel a 'connection to' or 'embeddedness' in the world (Maruna 2001:119; Morgeson and Humphrey 2006). Moreover, the contractual nature of steel-fixing required the maintenance of work-based networks that increased his access to a broader range of contacts, beyond the revised group, within the wider construction industry. As Seth suggests above, he is '*seen as quite a good steel fixer'* which implies that he internalised constructive messages about his capacities as a steel-fixer, which Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) suggest has a positive effect on people's satisfaction levels and well-being, and, which in turn, may reinforce the internalisation of an identity, in which work assumes an essential role (Rhodes 2008).

The relationship between work, self-esteem and identity is well established (Crisp 2010). Indeed, as Owens states, 'employment is part of the idea of what is acceptable' (Owens 2009: 50), akin to Giordano et al's notion of the 'respectability package' (2002: 1013), which refers to the interdependence of and interaction between employment and investment in significant intimate relations and/or parenthood. Employment and family roles form the basis of 'a general 'law-abiding adult citizen' identity construct' (Uggen et al 2004:263). For Seth, the interaction of these processes provided a 'skeleton script' as to how to proceed as a changed

individual on release (Rumgay 2004:410) and has endured as an identity construct since.

> Seth: I'm a hard worker, I like that. I like my work and the fact that I do work hard to provide for my family. That's about it.

While employment did not motivate or trigger desistance for Seth, it assisted him to sustain it in the context of broader enabling shifts in his conditioning structures, which, in turn, endowed his participation in work with meaning. Just as experiencing a sense of belonging and normalcy imbued his earlier experience of volunteering with particular significance, the 'normalising' and stabilising outcomes of participation in employment were particularly salient for Seth, representing a departure from the chaos and instability that characterised his life previously (see Chapter 5).

> Seth: I would say being settled and working all the time and just doing normal things with my family has been, probably, the most important thing to me.

Seth's concerns for stability and normalcy were both realised through and represented by his participation in employment and his assumed role as provider in his family of formation. Social relationships play a constitutive part of a responsible and legitimate identity and employment represents an important means through which these aspects of one's identity might be performed, realised and recognised (Rhodes 2008). Providing for one's family through participation in employment, then, represents a visible and tangible symbol of change and reformation.

The role of breadwinner or provider remains central to masculine identity for many men; in this vein, fatherhood links the world of work to the world of family (Hauari and Hollingworth 2009; Young 2007). The ability to provide financially for and protect one's dependents have popularly defined working class manhood in Scotland (Young 2007, Craig 2010), and physical work or manual labour in particular is perceived as an expression of masculinity (Willis 1977). Alongside the male-dominated environment and hyper-masculine, hard-working culture of the steel-fixing industry, work thus represented an alternative means of accomplishing masculinity and acquiring self-respect and social recognition consistent with Seth's idealised configuration of what it meant to be a man.

> Seth: I felt proud to go out and earn money and work hard and doing all the hours going and things like that. You felt good when you done seven days and come in and give [Lesley] the money. Even the guys round about me, they were all blowing their money every week…and I'd save the money or just go out buying normal things for our house. I was kind of learning that there was hope, that there was a chance there. I think fae getting out of [prison] to me having bought my own house was only a period of 18 months. It was a good time wi' nae chaos or anything.

The concept of 'hope' emerges as a dominant theme in much desistance research (see for example Burnett and Maruna 2004; LeBel et al 2008) and is considered to be particularly influential in the early stages of desistance (Farrall and Calverley 2006; Lloyd and Serin 2011) although it is equally recognised that unless it is embedded in realistic and tangible social opportunities to change the direction of one's life, it is not sustainable; rather, 'hope, expectation and confidence fade

quickly on an empty stomach' (McNeill and Weaver 2010:4). Hope is further correlated with an increased sense of personal agency and confidence, particularly where people can discern or access the means through which they can realise their goals, and where, as Seth had, they have access to supportive, reflexive relational networks. On release from prison, work thus consolidated Seth's commitment to desistance and provided concrete opportunities through which his hopes for another way of being were realised and through which, in conjunction with his assumed roles within his family of formation, an alternative sense of self was brought into being and reinforced.

Constraints and limitations

A retrospective analysis enables the identification of patterns of continuity and change over time. As previously observed, employment is not static in nature but denotes a vast array of 'different working conditions, skill requirements, values and rewards' (Owens 2009:58) and, thus, experiences. Even within the same job, the perception and value of this job will vary in accordance with an individual's priorities, concerns and experience. Moreover, how a single type of work is experienced by a given individual will vary in different economic contexts reflected, in part, in shifting working conditions. As the recession descended on London in the early 1990s, Seth returned with his family to Coaston. Changes to his conditioning structures generated by the impact of the recession on the construction industry (see for example Gordon 2011), meant that he was increasingly working away from home, no longer principally with the revised group, which ultimately restricted the normalising and stabilising outcomes that his participation in employment initially enabled.

> Seth: If the work wasn't great here or if I came across a job…like in Germany, you could go over there and earn some really good money. I'd be more settled now if I had just done a decent job with less money [rather than] always unsettling yourself, up and down the country.

Seth responded to strains of this itinerant lifestyle and the male dominated, hard-drinking, hard-working and highly competitive culture of the steel-fixing industry (Iacuone 2005) by resuming his use of alcohol, from which he had abstained since his release from prison.

> Seth: I started drinking at first just to show my [work] mates and it was alright at the start…I didn't really get into trouble or anything but I was stating about the pubs again and meeting up with the guys'.

Masculinity is negotiated and performed differently in different situations and in different relational spheres and social spaces (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). The experience and expression of masculinity identity with one's workmates on building sites, for example, differs from that which is normatively expected within the domestic environment with one's wife and children manifest in and accomplished through differing social behaviours. Alcohol consumption has traditionally been symbolic of masculinity (Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Plant, Plant, & Mason, 2002) and the pub performs an important social function as the primary social space for men in the construction industry, who are working away from their families and hometowns, living in crowded, often insubstantial, accommodation in unfamiliar geographical locations (Tilki 2006). Moreover, opportunities for construction jobs are often discussed and negotiated in pubs, further adding to the social pressures to conform to this pub culture; isolation from these social and economic networks risks

jeopardising social connections on which continued access to work is reliant (Tilki 2006).

> Seth: There was periods when I was working away from home and I'd drink … mostly out of boredom…that's the kind of culture…you finish your work and then everyone goes for a pint ...[which led to] a couple of stupid things but nothing major, drink related breaches of the peace and ...an assault.

Seth's involvement in these isolated offences, arising as a consequence of unanticipated interpersonal or situational dynamics did not, however, herald a return to an offending lifestyle. At that stage, in his thirties, his attitudes, values, beliefs, and lifestyle broadly conformed to 'conventional society' where several acceptable conformities, in terms of lifestyles and values, may co-exist (Maruna et al 2004:274). Indeed alcohol related aggression and violence both amongst and by males in the west of Scotland is something of a cultural, if not class, 'norm', as discussed in Chapter 5 (see also Craig 2010). However, over time, Seth's repeated episodes of binge-drinking served as a respite from, and thus a means of coping with, his financial, employment and relational concerns.

> Seth: If things like money and work were getting on top of me or if I wasn't getting on with [Lesley], I would use that as an excuse to stay out the house [drinking] for a couple of days…that's been me right up to the day for at least ten years.

While, as this chapter has illustrated, Seth had embarked on and sustained a process of change, some continuity in his cognitive and behavioural patterns are evident. Alcohol and the pub respectively provided the means of and social space to

which he was able to 'flee' or escape from the pressures bearing down on him. Seth conceptualises the development of these avoidant coping mechanisms as a process that began in childhood which he attributes to repeated experiences of 'fleeing' with his family from his father's violence and his subsequent pattern of repeatedly absconding from various young offender institutions. Echoing research on coping socialisation processes in response to stress internalised during earlier developmental stages (Kliewer et al 1996), Seth suggested, *'that's probably how I flee from things the now'.* Men's desires to regulate and suppress emotionality can also be located in gender socialisation processes, through which young men learn that they should not display 'feminine' traits such as emotionality, vulnerability or weakness (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2002; Doyle & Paludi, 1991; McClure, 2006; Wallace, 2007; White & Cones, 1999). For Seth, alcohol use, conversely associated with expressions of masculinity, had long represented a means of suppressing his unwanted emotions. This behavioural pattern was established in his early years and reinforced in peer interactions at different stages in his life (see also Chapter 5).

In the early stages, then, participation in work enabled change by contributing to a range of desistance promotive outcomes, including the activation and personification of his role identity as a good provider and family man. Subsequent changes to his working conditions manifest in working away from home, and his related immersion in the hard drinking, hardworking culture of the steel-fixing industry, while enabling the maintenance of social relations within his working environment, ultimately interfered with his capacity to sustain direct family involvement. In turn, Seth's pattern of binge drinking in response to various stressors *'got out of control'* and contributed in cumulative effect to his later separation from Lesley.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Seth's life beyond the fragmentation of the Del, and, in that, his process of desistance. The role of the revised group, his family of formation and his participation in employment in enabling and reinforcing his commitment to desistance characterised his narrative of change and has formed the principal focus of analysis in this chapter. What this analysis has revealed is that it was the complex and contingent interaction of these various transitional processes and ensuing opportunities for change (within his conditioning structures) as mediated through the lens of his personal priorities, values, aspirations and relational concerns, which imbued these particular opportunities, events and experiences with significance and which directly influenced their potential to enable or constrain processes of change, at different stages in his life.

In particular, this chapter illustrated how the fragmentation of the Del and the resultant interpersonal conflicts, in conjunction with his deepening emotional attachment to Lesley and the realisation of the impacts of his then lifestyle on the emergent relational goods, triggered his initial reflexive re-evaluation of his lifestyle. This evaluative process continued throughout his subsequent prison sentence, which he had apprehended as an opportunity for change, in so far as it liberated him from the constraints in his conditioning structures, and enabled him to begin a process of investment in himself. His experience of *Training for Freedom*, in particular his relationships and interactions with his co-workers and his experience of helping others, was particularly significant in communicating an alternative experience of self, and in turn, the possibility that another way of being was realisable. This chapter then illustrated the contributions of the revised group, Seth's relationship with Lesley and his family of formation in supporting desistance, and the

centrality of work to his changing self-concept, social identity, and to the nature and form of these social relations and their interactive dynamics.

As discussed in Chapter 2, quantitative research tends to focus on the degree to which intimate relationships or parenthood are causative or conditional on desistance, in terms of the relative sequencing of relational investments and desistance. In contrast, qualitative analyses tend to focus on revealing the relative contribution of the identified change agent to the outcomes, be it the role of the partner, for example, as change agent (as in social control theories), or the role of the individual as change agent (as in more agentic or cognitive theories of desistance). Applying Donati's theory of relational reflexivity allows for a more nuanced analysis. For Seth, it was the incremental significance of his relationship with Lesley in the context of shifts in his conditioning structures (at T1 in Figure 8), triggered by the fragmentation of the Del to which he applied his personal reflexivity, resulting in a reprioritisation of his ultimate concerns (T2-3), manifesting in a shift in practices such that enabled him, in incremental effect, to realise his interconnected individual and relational concerns with which continued offending was incompatible (T4). The mutually reinforcing interaction of becoming and being a father or family man during the early stages of his release and changes in the relational dynamics of the revised group and involvement in stable employment (T4-T1 in the next stage of the morphogenetic sequence), strengthened his sense of hope, self-efficacy and resolve to desist. Assuming and activating the role of family man was enabled by his participation in work (T2-3), which contributed to changes, in cumulative effect, to his self-concept, social identity and lifestyle (T4). Employment essentially represented a concrete opportunity for realising change, through which his hopes for another way of being were realised and through which, in conjunction with his assumed role in his family of formation, an alternative sense of self was once more

brought into being. However, what this chapter has also illustrated is that the outcomes of these processes are not static but are influenced by changes in conditioning structures, which can, depending on the individual's response to these changes, engender constraints and limitations. What this in turn reveals, then, is that desistance can be a complex, contingent, individualised, reflexive and relational process.

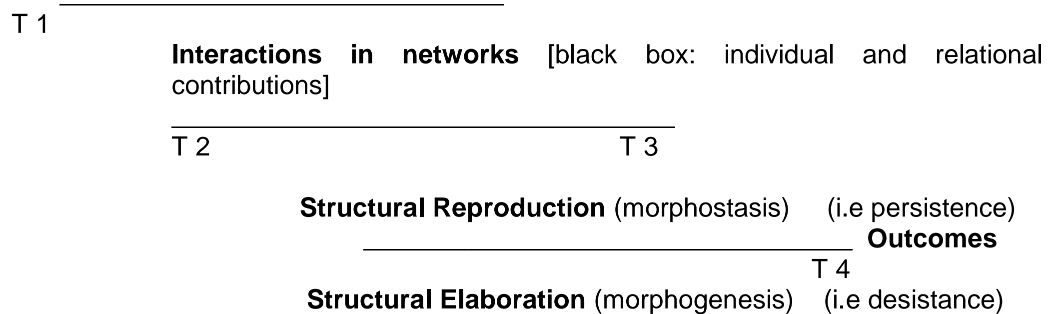

Figure 8: overview of investigative framework

CHAPTER 8: HARRY'S STORY

'To get my son brought up. Once I see him settled, married and has his family, then I will be happy. That's my purpose in life'.

Introduction

Biographical Overview

Harry, aged 47, was born in Glasgow in 1961 but has resided in and around Coaston for the past 39 years. His experience of emotional disconnection within and towards his family during his childhood, discussed in Chapter 5, was a contributory influence on his involvement with the Del. Both of his parents worked every day; his father worked four jobs and his mother worked in a pub and while this meant that they were comparatively financially comfortable they were often emotionally and physically unavailable. His relationship with his family of origin remains fractious and they have limited contact.

Harry offended persistently for two decades (aged 13-33) during which time he acquired an extensive number of convictions *'running to three pages'* primarily of an acquisitive or violent nature, all of which resulted in short prison sentences of varying lengths. Harry's offending was primarily situational, spontaneous and opportunistic and, as discussed in Chapter 5, his high level of identification with the 'deviant' subculture enabled him to resist the public stigma and negative attributions conferred on the Del. However, whilst he exhibited high levels of identification with, or internalisation of, the norms and standards of the group he was less highly embedded in the group than Seth, for example. While exhibiting a willingness to fight afforded Harry a measure of credibility and his association with the Del lent him

'street capital' (Sandberg 2008), his lack of competence in fighting meant that he had a lesser status in terms of his role and position within the Del.

In the aftermath of the fragmentation of the Del, Harry extricated himself from the feud by alternatively associating with his elder brother's friends who were heavily involved in the football culture which heralded a shift in his offending towards primarily football related violence from which he has desisted for fifteen years. Harry met his wife Millie during his late teens and their son was born in 1994, when Harry was thirty-three, shortly after he acquired his first job in a factory, aged thirty-two. He has worked as a side loader driver in a local steel works for the past seven years.

Harry's delineation of his life stages following the fragmentation of the Del are structured in accordance with the salient experiences and concerns constitutive of his identity during these life stages, namely 'The Football Years' (aged 25-33) and 'Fatherhood' (aged 33-47). This chapter commences by describing Harry's response to the feud and elucidates these experiences and concerns under the superordinate theme *'Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance'* which discusses the role of Harry's familial, social and personal relationships in supporting desistance over time. The role of employment in Harry's narrative of change is discussed under the final superordinate theme *'The Meanings and Outcomes of Work'*.

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance	Role of extant familial and new social networks in supporting desistance
	Role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

Table 7: Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance

The role of extant familial and new social networks in supporting desistance

In response to the feud, Harry made a prudential decision to distance himself from the ensuing intra-group enmities.

> Harry: I never fell out major with any of them, because … I didn't want to get involved...so I just spoke to them all and I was happier that way and I think they all realised that and they were happier with me.

His ability to extricate himself from the feud was facilitated by the availability of an alternative social network with whom his elder brother associated and which was deeply immersed in football fan culture. In this sense, while his brother provided a gateway to an alternative social network, football fandom which was the conduit through which Harry developed an alternative personal and social identity.

> Harry: It was the crowd that was next in line … that I went with. My brother…went to football regularly … and initially it was his pals I was jumping about with …they were different kind of friends you know, mostly workers, you know they didn't get into bother. So I gradually started going with them… to every game, home and abroad, and … that was me basically, football was my life from then on.

Football and the associated 'fan' culture and social life structured Harry's social relationships, lifestyle and identity for eight years after the fragmentation of the Del. His new friendship group shared his devotion to Celtic and the intensity of his immersion in this 'associational belonging' informed both his personal and social identity. Personal and social identities emerge through social interaction and, in that,

through processes of internal and external identification in terms of membership of a social category or social role. Social identification constitutes ‘a subjective process through which externally assigned category distinctions are accepted [or rejected] and in-group characteristics are adopted to help define and express the self’ (Barreto and Ellemers 2003:141 [this author’s insertion]). Identification to and with this new group thus required an acceptance and adoption of the norms and rules of associational belonging (Hogg and Hardie 1991) characteristic of the membership of this group manifest in attendance at each football game and an explicit and unwavering support of the club. The football team is the focus of men’s solidarity and relationships with other men are affirmed through their commitment to the team. The time invested in it, according to King (1997), symbolises the values and friendships which exist between supporters in general and the group in particular. ‘Through their communal practice of support’ (King 1997:333) men share a sense of collective identity, community, solidarity, camaraderie and associational belonging (see also Holden and Wilde 2004; Poulton 2012; SIRC 2008; Spaaij 2008) which for these very reasons, in the aftermath of the fragmentation of, and his subsequent extrication from, the Del, was particularly significant to Harry.

In particular, association with the *‘football crowd’* represented a *credible* alternative to association with the Del. Masculinity is substantially defined through football and the ‘world of the football fan is organised around typically male-oriented social spaces – pubs, bars and large-scale sports arenas’ (SIRC 2008:6). Perhaps more pertinently, pride in the club’s success and their support brings social recognition from other men who are football supporters.

> ‘Since masculine relations are substantially concerned with status (Tolson 1997:43), the pride which a lad attains from football is important. It assists

> him in asserting himself in relations with other men in his community. Consequently, a fundamental part of the lads' support is emphasising the rivalry of his club and the superiority of his club over others' (King 1997:334).

One aspect of the norms of football fandom and an unwritten rule of associational belonging is a willingness to defend the honour of one's club (Spaaij 2008). As Harry states in the extract above, while the people he associated with were *'mostly workers, [who] didn't get into bother'* the relationship between football fandom and allegiance to a club, not least in the context of 'Old Firm' rivalries often manifested in violent conflicts with members of the opposing club.

> Harry: I started to get a few more assaults on my card then because I was a Celtic man and that could cause a lot of fights you know? So I got a few [convictions] with that an' all.

In Scotland, football allegiance plays a significant part in the respective social identities for Protestants and Catholics (Holden and Wilde 2004) and 'symbolic pride…is therefore frequently made into a 'matter of honour' (Hognestad 1997:194). Whether this reflects 'substantive sectarian hatred that reaches beyond the confines of football or … merely ritualised forms of abuse intended to 'wind-up' rival supporters' is debatable (Hamilton-Smith and Hopkins 2012:3). Nonetheless, echoing gang-related rivalries (see chapter 5), 'hard masculinity, territorial identifications, individual and collective management of reputation, a sense of solidarity and autonomy…are central to expressions of football-related violence' (Spaaij 2008:369). However, precisely because these violent interpersonal clashes occur between groups of rival supporters, football-related aggression and violence

has historically been viewed by supporters as "doing wrong' rather than 'doing crime" (Presdee, 1994 cited in Poulton 2012:7).

Whilst, then, there is much continuity within Harry's transition from association with the Del to football fandom, not least in relation to the maintenance of alcohol-fuelled violent behaviour, and the defence of associated reputations, the context within which this shift occurred arguably symbolised a shift in his moral status (Gusfield 1967) from offender to fan, reflected in his identity migration from one social network and set of relations to another. His new associates were not typically classed as 'offenders' although they too participated in football related violence. In the 1980s-1990s, attributions of 'deviance' to football-related violence were muted compared to the more recent criminalisation and increasing regulation of sectarianism and associated disorderly conduct occurring in contemporary Scottish football (Waiton 2012). This transition itself reflects a passage from one moral status to another, through which the same behaviour in different social contexts is associated with greater or lesser degrees of deviance (Gusfield 1967).

Prior to the fragmentation of the Del, then, Harry had been immersed in an offending lifestyle to which acquisitive and violent related crime was central. Thereafter, his lifestyle cohered around football fandom in which violence played a part, but which was, at that time, more socially acceptable than the violence he had participated in with the Del. The changes in his conditioning structures manifest in the fragmentation of, and his extrication from the Del and his association with a new group enabled changes in his personal and social identity in the transition from offender to football fan. However, whilst representing a measurable break from his former lifestyle, not least in terms of shifts in the frequency and context of, and thus justifications and motivations for, his offending, there is evidence of some continuity

in terms of his immersion in an alternative sub-culture which afforded him a source of status, recognition, masculinity, community and belonging in which anti-social and violent behaviours were variously tolerated and expected.

Role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

This sub-theme illustrates the role of intimate relationships and families of formation in the desistance process. As observed in preceding chapters, the relative contribution or influence of these social relations on an individual's offending (or desistance) is subject to much debate. In contrast to social control theorists who place explanatory weight on the actions or influence of the partner, Giordano et al., (2003) cast the individual, not the partner, as the primary change agent. In particular they construe shifts in receptivity to a partner's normative influence as the outcome of motivational and attitudinal changes reflecting developmental changes based on the accumulation of experience and the ascendancy of intimate over peer relationships. However, although the constructive influences of a pro-social partner seem self-evident, attachment to a pro-social partner does not explain why someone becomes more amenable to change at one time rather than another, particularly where, as in Harry's case, attitudinal changes do not automatically translate into a re-orientation of values. Despite the disintegration of the Del, his emotional connection to Millie, and her exhortations to change, like Seth, this relationship was neither causative of nor conditional on his desistance. As elaborated above, Harry engaged in football-related violence until he was thirty-three, of which Millie was aware, although he ceased house-breaking in his *'late 20s'* reflecting his deepening concern to maintain the relationship with Millie and to limit the shame and stigma this might afford her.

> Harry: “I didn't want [Millie] to get a reputation... I didn't want [her] to think that she was going with a housebreaker. It would be embarrassing when it was in the paper... When you get more mature you realise it’s an embarrassment to your family... you don't like to see your loved one's hurt”.

Similarly, while Millie disapproved of his offending, her forbearance reflected her concern to maintain the relationship, which challenges a strict social control (Laub and Sampson 2001) or differential association (Warr 1998) perspective.

> Harry: “She put up with a hell of a lot …she tried for years to get me on the straight and narrow but it just didnae happen. She let me know that I should maybe change and start doing this and that...but she stood by me for all they years ...even though I was in the jail regularly…I mean why would she do that?”

What these extracts illustrate are the reciprocal and collaborative adjustments made by both parties to maintain the relationship, emerging from their mutual concern, oriented to the sustenance of the emergent relational goods which they both valued, consistent with Donati’s (2011a) theory of relational reflexivity. Yet, despite their emotional connectedness and the value placed on the relationship, it was fatherhood that encouraged Harry’s desistance, in incremental effect.

> Harry: “I think that made a major difference – being a father you know? That kind of changed my whole life completely. That is when I stopped drinking and...started to settle down...I knew then I had to get my life in order...but it didnae happen overnight”.

For Harry, then, desistance emerged as one among many wider shifts in practices or behaviours, emerging from a re-prioritisation of his ultimate concerns; like Seth, the initial impetus for change was thus consolidated by his continuous reflection. To illustrate, previously Harry had engaged in an internal conversation (personal reflexivity) which acknowledged, but was not significantly altered by, being in a new role position in relation to Millie; it was not until after his son was born that he engaged in a more socially expanded form of reflexivity. At this point, Harry's reflexive evaluation of his lifestyle against his shifting sense of what mattered to him, informed by his own values and beliefs surrounding fatherhood (more on which below), reflected a reorientation of his relational concerns, the realisation of which required a shift in his practices. Desistance was one shift in practice emerging from Harry's perception of the impact his offending would have on this social relation, underpinned by a desire to maintain a constructive paternal image, which was critical to his self-concept.

> Harry: You don't want your child brung up knowing that you're in jail do you? That's the thing that would have hurt me the most. He doesn't know nothing of what I've done in my past – not a thing.

Here, then, it is the social relation of the family (which is not reducible to the individuals involved, as existing explanations of desistance would suppose, but which refers to that which emerges from their reciprocal orientation) that is being invoked as both a constraint upon offending and an enablement for a new way of living. Thus, it is changes in the social relation and how *it* becomes more reflexive that underpins this process of change for Harry.

The impact of intimate relationships and fatherhood on individual behaviour emerges from the nature and intensity of the bond *between* individuals-in-relation and the chains of meanings that these particular types of social relation entail for individuals, who bring their own personal reflexivity to bear in a manner consistent with their ultimate concerns (Donati 2011a). The chains of meanings that characterise the social relations of father and partner are 'the complicated tissue of relations between culture, personality, social norms' and lived experiences (Donati 2011a: 130). As previously observed in 'Seth's story', social and cultural expectations and his own experience of being parented (see for example Hauari and Hollingworth 2009; Moloney et al 2009) influenced his appropriation of the 'traditional' nature and form of the social relation of family. Where Seth's intention to *'not be like my Dad'* manifested in his desire to be involved in and provide for his family, conversely, given Harry's experience of his father as provider, he similarly embraced this aspect of the fathering role echoing his father's economic contribution to family life. However, just as fatherhood is only one aspect of an individual's multiple identities (Kimmel, Hearn and Connell 2004) so fatherhood encompasses multiple roles including breadwinner, good provider, protector and educator (Haurari and Hollingworth 2009) and in this sense, Harry's personification of this social role was more multi-faceted than Seth's. Harry drew on the repository of his personal experiences of being fathered and chose to be intensively and directly involved in raising his son, representing a departure from his father's absence, and a departure from Seth's comparatively more circumscribed and distant role as 'good provider'. He also adopted aspects of his positive experiences of being fathered, which centred on his father's football fanaticism and his own introduction to the world of football at an early age.

Harry: My father was a Celtic fanatic and he run a Celtic supporter's bus in

> Glasgow… Every Saturday we were at the football; me, my father and my brother…And that's the reason my mother moved [us] from Glasgow because she wanted to get him away from the football because that's all he done apart fae work. But it didn't work!

Football fandom is often inherited through a process of socialisation wherein the son is introduced to football by his father (SIRC 2008). In this sense, football is 'strongly rooted in a sense of belonging to a place – and to a people' (SIRC 2008:34). These formative experiences can influence the transmission of social identities from one generation to another, and Harry's family of origin and formation were no exception to this, in that football structured the interactive dynamics between father and son and played an important role 'in the inter-generational relationships between male members of families' (SIRC 2008:35). In addition, Harry viewed his son's engagement in playing football as a means of diverting him from a life lived on the streets which, in his experience, carried with it a risk of involvement in offending.

> Harry: I am hard on [my son] because of his football which is probably wrong…but I don't want him to pack his football in and go back on those streets because I know what lays ahead because I have been through it. I want him to do something in life. I don't want him to have the life I had.

Football is a mechanism for 'perform[ing] elements of 'good fathering', spend[ing] quality time with children (Coakley 2009), and develop[ing] bonds and visibly demonstrat[ing]' support of and nurturing towards children (Jeanes and Magee 2011:275). It provides 'a platform for fathers to perform the 'involved' ideal' (ibid:275) and to form relationships with their sons and, critically, to 'foster communication within a setting in which they are familiar and comfortable (Coakley 2009)' (Jeanes and Magee 2011:279). Being a football father became an intrinsic element of Harry's

fathering as did encouraging his son's participation in education to ensure his son had access to meaningful employment opportunities that Harry considers are unavailable to him due, in part, to his lack of qualifications. This resonates with Maruna's (2001) correlation between generative commitments and desistance. Contributing to the well-being of the next generation provided Harry with a sense of purpose and meaning, allowing him to redress the balance of his past by using his own experiences to inform his approach to parenting to safeguard his son's future, thus shaping or influencing the conditioning structures, and, thus the situations of actions, for the next generation.

For Harry, his role in and experience of fathering, as the principle mechanism supporting his process of desistance, resided in the connection between these individuals-in-relation, the relationships themselves (between Harry and Millie and between Harry and his son) and the chains of meanings that these types of social relation (as partner and father) encompassed. It is not, then, simply the effects of one individual on another; rather it is the application of Harry's (and arguably Millie's) personal reflexivity which is brought to bear on these social relations, consistent with their ultimate or relational concerns that are critical in contributing to the outcomes.

While fatherhood triggered a reflexive reappraisal of his ultimate concerns, resulting in a gradual shift in practices which included abstinence from further offending, it was the centrality of *being* a father to Harry's self-concept and to his life's purpose that is distinct from Seth's experience of becoming a father, which, in the context of his changing conditioning structures, *reinforced* Seth's already established commitment to desist, but for whom desistance was not directly attributable to becoming and being a father in and of itself. To be clear, it is not suggested that

fatherhood was *causative* of Harry's desistance (see for example Monsbakken et al 2012a). As Harry suggested above, *'I knew then I had to get my life in order...but it didnae happen overnight'*. Rather, this gradual shift in practices reflected his concerns surrounding the potential impact and consequences that continued offending would have on this social relation and his assumption of parenting responsibilities, not only as a football father and educator but as a provider to which his participation in employment contributed.

The Meanings and Outcomes of Work

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
The Meanings and Outcomes of Work	The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work
	Constraints and limitations

Table 8: The Meanings and Outcomes of Work

As previously observed, the relationship between employment and desistance resides in the way in which the meaning and outcomes of either the nature of the work or participation in employment influence an individual's self-concept and social identity and interact with a person's priorities, goals and relational concerns. Moreover, the nature of any interaction between employment and wider transitional events and experiences, including parenthood, can affect the various impacts they exert on people's identities, behaviours and social contexts (see for example Bianchi et al 2005 cited in Bersani et al 2009; Burnett 2002; Edin et al 2001; Farrall 2004; Laub and Sampson 2001; Maruna 2001; Owens 2009; Rhodes 2008; Rumgay 2004; Savolainen 2009; Visher and Travis 2003), which directly or indirectly influence their potential to enable or constrain processes of change, at different stages in an individual's life.

The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work

Like numerous people with convictions, Harry's entry into employment, in his early thirties, was facilitated through informal social networks (Calverley 2012; Farrall 2002, 2004; Niven and Stewart 2005; Rhodes 2008, Visher and Courtney 2007). As the following subsection elaborates, his capacity to access employment was constrained by his limited education and absence of experience of employment, further compounded by his criminal record, and therefore employers' attitudes and discrimination, in an area which, having never recovered from the decline in heavy industry and manufacturing employment in the 1970s and 1980s, remains characterised by high unemployment rates (discussed in Chapter 5).

> Harry: I never ever had a chance [to work] until I was in my thirties and that was a friend that got me that job in a factory. I ended up there for ten years.

Initially, Harry's participation in work enabled a reduction in his football-related violent offending consequent to the alteration employment necessitated in his routine social, activities and the social spaces he occupied, which would appear, prima facie, consistent with social control theories and the notion of 'desistance by default' (Laub and Sampson (2003: 278). This line of reasoning implies that people do not make a conscious or deliberate decision to stop offending but desist as a consequence of 'involvement in these institutions - work and marriage – [which] re-order short-term situational inducements to crime and, over time, re-direct long-term commitments to conformity' (Laub and Sampson 2001:51).

> Harry: Getting work was a big thing. I was away in a different environment then. I wasn't going out like normal and meeting [my friends] in the pubs – it

> was just a whole change in my life. I was mostly working weekends and I started going in to my wife rather than going out with the crowd. When you're working you start to take a back seat from all of that because you want to keep your job.

This does not, however, explain why people choose to submit themselves to these institutions in the first place, or why one institution rather than another at one time exerts this effect, or why people remain in jobs or marriages during challenging times when their investment in them has dwindled (Vaughan 2007). While it might be argued that the availability of roles and the accompanying 'scripts' (Rumgay 2004), behaviours and practices attributed to the role might become habitualised, people do not march through life mechanically animating fixed role structures. The personification or interiorisation of a role, which is neither pre-determined nor fixed, is accomplished by an individual reflecting on their situation through the lens of their ultimate concerns and the range of actions available to them (Archer 2003). Indeed, while Harry's participation in employment certainly constrained his participation in social activities within which his offending occurred, it was the meanings and outcomes of participation in employment refracted through the lens of his individual and relational concerns that underpinned his shift in practices.

Participation in work is a normative adult transition in that, 'employment is part of the idea of what is acceptable' (Owens 2009: 50). As the extract below suggests, initially gaining employment was as much about fitting in with what the people that mattered to him were doing at that time, and thus, what they apprehended as 'normal' as he perceived it, through the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley 1922). Even though, as discussed above, his friends were involved in football-related violence, they were all working; without any 'pro-social' practices to counterbalance his involvement in

these behaviours, such that would suggest that one is capable of being more than, for example, a football fan, would be to expand the circles within which one perceives one does not fully belong (see relatedly Massoglia and Uggen 2010). It is precisely through this reflexive evaluative process that we decide on courses of actions by ruminating on ourselves, our concerns and our relational and social contexts, envisioning and pursuing projects that reflect and define who we perceive ourselves to be, that enable us to realise our ultimate concerns, in circumstances that are to a greater or lesser degree pre-defined (Archer 2003). The initial impetus to change his lifestyle through participation in work emerged as an outcome of his individual reflexivity influenced by his relational concerns.

> Harry: I *wanted* to get a job basically. As you get older and all your friends and your wife is all out working, all you want is a decent job with decent money…When you get more mature you realise all that carry on, well, it's an embarrassment to your immediate family and to your friends and you don't want that.

Participation in work, and the sense of personal progression it engendered, provided Harry with a sense of self-respect, self-worth and self-esteem and, as the extract below implies, the formal recognition of his efforts and capacities through promotion communicated to him that his efforts were acknowledged, recognised and respected. Taking responsibility and being invested with responsibility is, as observed in 'Seth's story', a means of social recognition and is the result of being trusted, which can similarly engender a sense of responsibility on the part of the person feeling trusted. 'Social recognition…expresses the capacity and need that…people have for longer-term *reciprocal* relations of trust and responsibility in the wider society' (Barry 2006:136, italics in original), which can positively influence

an individual's self-concept. For Harry, however, it was 'not so much a matter of getting ahead as of becoming inside' (Sennett 2003:14) which is as much about the respect one earns from others by doing something well, as it is about the realisation of self-achievement which provides a 'profound pleasure in and of itself' (ibid).

> Harry: I started off as a machine operator and worked myself up to a supervisor you know, so I took my work serious. It was the first job I ever had and I wanted to do well.

Critically, the meaning of and impetus to sustain employment was further altered by the birth of his son shortly after starting work. Fulfilling his role as a 'good provider' by making a financial contribution to the family reinforced Harry's commitment to maintaining his employment over time even though he derived little satisfaction from the nature of his employment.

> Harry: You learn that when things are important in life you've got to keep them up – like my job's important so I have got to stay in that job although I hate it and I just want to leave the place… money is more important to me now because it is to keep a family whereas when it was to keep myself I didn't bother.

Constraints and Limitations

While fatherhood ultimately triggered Harry's reflexive re-prioritisation of his ultimate concerns manifest in affective changes in his perspective and priorities and effectual changes in his practices, which included abstaining from offending, this process of change was reinforced by continued participation in employment, which enabled him

to provide for his family and thus contributed to his personification of this new social role. People characteristically define themselves in relation to their occupational identity (Deci and Ryan 1985). However, Harry's occupational identity was less embedded than Seth's in his social identity and self-concept, perhaps reflecting the comparatively unskilled and repetitive nature of his employment, which held less meaning and affective satisfaction (Moorman 1993) for him. Where the culture and conditions of Seth's work limited the desistance promotive outcomes of participation in employment, the nature and conditions of Harry's employment constrained both the instrumental and affective outcomes that work can provide, not least in relation to the standard of living it enabled but also with regard to the degree of personal satisfaction and meaningful purposiveness it afforded over time (as the preceding extract makes clear). Moreover, Harry's limited educational and employment experience, compounded by a criminal record, in a geographical location characterised by high levels of unemployment, exerted a significant constraining effect on his occupational mobility and thus his capacities to influence his conditioning structures in this context.

> Harry: I can only go for a job with low wages because I've not got an education and I understand that though there's nae jobs about here anyway. Having a record doesn't help with that mind you.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Harry's life beyond the fragmentation of the Del, and his process of desistance. The interactions between his participation in an alternative social network, his family of formation and his participation in employment in incrementally triggering and enabling his desistance from offending characterised

his narrative of change, the detail and dynamics of which have formed the principal focus of analysis in this chapter. What this analysis in particular has revealed is that it was the interaction of these social relations as mediated through the lens of his personal priorities, values, aspirations and relational concerns, which imbued these particular transitional opportunities, events and experiences with significance and which informed their potential to enable or constrain processes of change.

Unlike cognitive or agentic theoretical explanations of desistance, Harry did not make a conscious decision to desist but nor did he desist by default or react instinctively to structural changes in his conditioning structures, as social control theories tend to infer. Rather, Harry's desistance gradually surfaced alongside other shifts he initiated in his practices or behaviours, in the context of his conditioning structures, which emerged from a reflexive re-prioritisation of his ultimate concerns as a means of actualising his individual and relational concerns with which continued offending was incompatible.

The shifts in Harry's conditioning structures as a consequence of the fragmentation of the Del and his association with an alternative 'subculture' (at T1 in Figure 9) enabled him to continue offending. Collectively, their interactive dynamics and shared projects and practices (T2-3) heralded a diversification in the context in which his violent offending behaviour occurred which represented a transition from one moral status to another. Through his association with this new group Harry became immersed in an alternative culture which influenced his identity, behaviour and lifestyle but one in which violence and anti-social behaviour were tolerated (T4). While Harry's relationship with Millie was neither causative nor conditional on his desistance (T1) as an outcome of his application of his personal reflexivity (T2-3), he desisted from housebreaking (T4), motivated by his concern to limit the shame and

embarrassment this might engender for her. In turn, she tolerated his continued offending and stood by him, despite her normative orientation, whilst continuing to attempt to influence his behaviour. This illustrates that it was the reciprocal and collaborative adjustments (T2-3) made by both parties to maintain the relation, emerging from their mutual concern, oriented to the maintenance of the emergent relational goods (T4), which they both valued, consistent with Donati's (2011a) concept of reflexivity. Harry's concerns surrounding the shame and embarrassment that his offending might incur for those who mattered to him is in itself an outcome of the application of his (relational) reflexivity, not applied solely to himself but guided by the good of the relationships which mattered to him. Previously, as noted in Chapter 5, Harry was unconcerned by the views others outside the group had of him, which related to the primacy of the influence of the Del, who were, then, his primary reference group. Where once this reputation was an asset to him, as his attachments shifted it became a liability, to which he responded by making adjustments to his behaviours. In similar vein, it was Harry's reflexive evaluation of himself against his new friendship group (the football crowd) and how he perceived they might view him that had initiated his pursuit of employment.

Ultimately, it was fatherhood (T1) which provided the impetus to initiate and sustain changes in his practices (T4) as an outcome of his concern surrounding the potential impact that offending and its outcomes would have on this social relation and the assumption and realisation of his parental role and responsibilities (T2-3). While Harry attributes a central role to fatherhood in his narrative of desistance, to differing degrees, the various relational spheres in which he participated contributed to changes in his conditioning structures and his identity and behaviour at different stages. The relational contexts within which Harry's desistance was both triggered, enabled and sustained, then, is not analytically reducible to the effects of one

individual on another; rather it is the application of Harry's (and arguably others') individual and relational reflexivity which is brought to bear on these social relations, consistent with his/their ultimate or relational concerns that are critical in contributing to the outcomes.

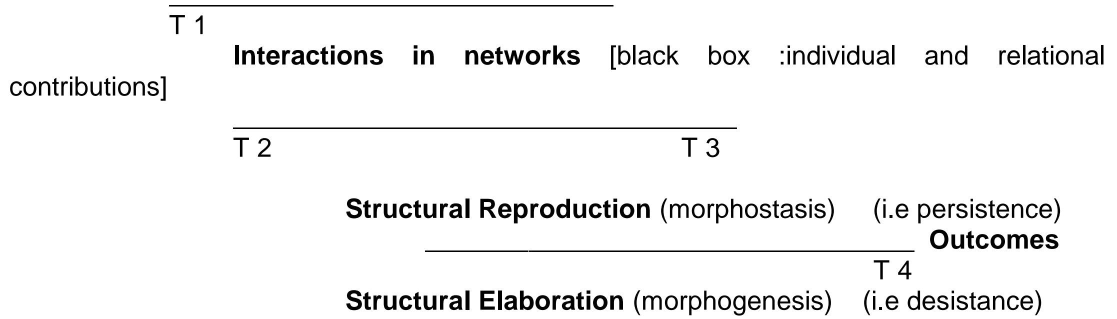

Figure 9: overview of investigative framework

CHAPTER 9: JED'S STORY

'It [desistance] takes other people, Beth. If you're [by] yourself, you'll always think of yourself as a nobody. The more people you've got round about you that care about you…people that's interested, well that's when you start thinking, well, fuck it. I'm just the same as that guy over the road…'

Introduction

Biographical Overview

Jed, aged 48, was born in Coaston in 1961 into a working class family of six. His upbringing was marked by significant deprivation and social disadvantage, even relative to his friends. For the main part, his family was dependent on benefits as their sole income and, although he was raised in a loving family, he experienced limited parental supervision. Jed committed his first offence of shoplifting at 14. Over the course of his offending career, he amassed in excess of 80 convictions over a period of two decades. However, he surmised that the number of offences he committed is nearer 500. The majority of Jed's offending behaviour occurred in the context of the Del and ranged from acquisitive offences (of fraud, stealing, and housebreaking) to violent offences (of assault, serious assault, and attempted murder) to public disorder offences (of breach of the peace and malicious damage). Jed exhibited high levels of identification with the 'deviant' subculture[41] and was highly embedded in the group as measured by his status and centrality to the group,

[41] As discussed in Chapter 5, Hall (1966:149) suggested that a highly identified individual would '(1) conceive of himself in terms of delinquency-orientated roles (delinquent identities), (2) possess negative attitudes toward parents, (3) place high value on delinquent associates and activities (delinquent peer group orientation), (4) reject middle class success orientations and accept exotic occupations and the "easy life," (5) perceive causes of crime as external to the person, and (6) place an accent on "kicks" and excitement as modes of self-expression'.

levels of involvement in criminal activity and isolation from pro-social networks. The instrumental outcomes of offending in terms of the acquisition of money, material goods and social status were of equal significance to him as his relationships within the group and the emergent relational goods.

Jed's convictions were primarily disposed of through the imposition of frequent, short prison sentences of varying durations. As he put it, *'I was always in the jail. I used to go home for a couple of days at a time and then I was back in'.* Jed desisted from offending completely for a period of 14 years, approximately between the ages 30-44. For most of this period he resided in London, where he had relocated to join the 'revised group' in his late 20s, and where, for the most part, he lived with his partner, Rachel, and their two children. This relationship concluded when he was in his mid-forties and he currently has no contact with either Rachel or their children. Prior to this, however, the family returned to Scotland for a brief period before Jed returned to London alone. Jed was convicted four times over the three years prior to interview for Breaches of the Peace (primarily domestic); he had not offended in the year preceding the interview. At the time of interview, Jed had been unemployed for a couple of years; his prior occupation was, like Seth, as a steel-fixer and construction worker.

Prior to interview, Jed was hospitalised with cirrhosis of the liver and chronic pancreatitis; his arrest on an outstanding warrant was the reason for his recent return to Coaston, although his subsequent hospitalisation and ill-health was his reason for remaining. He described himself as being in the early stages of recovery from a prolonged period of alcohol abuse. At the time of interview, he lived alone in temporary local authority accommodation in Coaston. Although his family of origin,

with whom he has daily contact, resides within close proximity, he has no contact with his five children (from his two marriages).

Jed's delineation of his life stages following the fragmentation of the Del are structured in accordance with the salient places and experiences structuring these life stages namely 'The London Years with Rachel' (aged 30-44) and 'The Drinking Years' (aged 44-47), although his elaboration of these stages is dominated by the significance he placed on work and family. This chapter commences by describing Jed's response to the feud and elucidates these experiences and concerns under the superordinate theme '*Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance'* which discusses the role of Jed's extant familial, social and personal relationships in supporting desistance over time. The significance of employment in Jed's narrative of change is discussed under the final superordinate theme '*The Meanings and Outcomes of Work'*.

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance	Role of extant social networks in supporting desistance
	Role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

Table 9: Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance

The role of extant social networks in supporting desistance

Jed, like Seth, Adam and Jay, became heavily embroiled in the feud, however, he did not relocate to London with 'the revised group' for a further 18 months. Jed was married at the age of nineteen to Mary and, by this time, they had three daughters. Following the relocation of the revised group to London, Jed associated with other friends who engaged in low level alcohol-related offending which constrained his

involvement in acquisitive offending due to differences in the interactive dynamics of this alternative friendship group and their collective concerns. With the subsequent demise of his marriage, and after a brief period in prison, Jed relocated to London, and in this sense his story echoes that of Seth's in that he too drew on the mutual and reciprocal exchange of support and resources among the revised group to resettle in a new environment and enter the steel-fixing trade.

> Jed: Everybody had moved…to London and I was in [Coaston]. It was just me and [Red] and a few others. We started hanging out together but it wasn't the same, they were a bunch of fucking alkies. They would … drink all day long and cause mayhem and I wasn't into that. I wanted to go and get money. Then I got the jail. I got five months for something… and then the day I got out I met [Ben] and he told me to come down to London. He said 'I've got a job for you; you can stay with us.' So…I went down and that was when it all changed.

The revised group were instrumental in enabling licit opportunities for conformity in the form of employment, accommodation and the development of both human capital, in the form of a trade, and bridging social capital, in the form of employment based networks, which, as discussed in Seth's story, were critical to maintaining employment in the steel-fixing industry. In the initial stages, 'opportunities' were exactly what these developments represented. At first Jed continued to get involved in unplanned, alcohol-related violent offending, although he *'didnae get lifted once'.* The extent to which the move to London was initially apprehended as a 'hook for change' (Giordano et al. 2002: 992) towards desistance thus varied across the group. Unlike Seth, Jed had no conscious intention to desist on his relocation to London.

> Jed: I went down to London and I started work the next day. I thought 'Fucking hell, its fucking knackering' and I was thinking then, 'cos' I had five warrants out on me, 'I wonder if I should just hand myself in, and go back to the jail' 'cos' it's a lot better in the jail than it is here, you know, working like a cunt.

Although on his relocation to London, Jed was not *'planning on stopping getting into bother'*, incrementally, the economic outcomes of participation in employment were sufficient to trigger a process in which he began reflexively weighing up the pros and cons of engaging in offending and the consequences of a jail sentence on the opportunities he had acquired, through a review of new opportunities for an alternative lifestyle that had been previously unavailable to him.

> Jed: I wasn't planning on stopping getting into bother. I went down at first and I wasnae giving a fuck … and I just started thinking 'wait a minute I'm getting 5 or 600 pound a week here, I've got a cracking wee place to live, what the fuck am I wanting to get the jail for?' … You could see the bigger picture and you'd start thinking, 'oh I could make money down here without stealing it'. You start thinking about going on holiday. I'd never been on holiday in my life.

Participation in employment thus presented, in Giordano et al's terms (2002:992) as a 'hook for change'. Giordano et al. suggest that hooks for change 'serve well as catalysts for lasting change when they energize rather fundamental shifts in identity and changes in the meaning and desirability of deviant behaviour itself' (ibid). Arguably, what Giordano et al. (2002) is signifying is the individual's reflexive response to the constraints and enablements that inhere in their conditioning structures. It is through this process that they deliberate on the social situations they

confront, through the lens of their ultimate concerns (Archer 2003) and which, necessarily challenges the 'exteriority and constraint assumptions implicit in a control approach' (Giordano et al. 2002:992).

The initial phase of Archer's (2003) process of reflexivity (elaborated in Chapter 3) is characterised as a period of 'discernment' where, as Jed's retrospective narrative above illustrates, the person reviews the possible alternative lifestyle choices available to them, in contrast to their current lifestyle, reflecting a 'willing[ness] to consider different options' (Vaughan 2007:394). This phase is essentially a commentary on current and potential concerns in the light of other possibilities and opportunities which evoke a review of possible future scenarios and their outcomes. For Jed, both relocation and employment reduced any perceived need to engage in acquisitive crime, and diminished the 'desirability' of this type of offending (Giordano et al. 2002:992), although these changes to his conditioning structures did not in and of themselves engender any significant identity transformations at this stage[42]. They did however, provoke a prudential 'openness to change' (Giordano et al. 2002:1000), consistent with Giordano et al's first phase of cognitive transformation. What this suggests then, is that one does not necessarily have to be open to change to be receptive to a hook for change[43] in the way that, for example, Seth was. For some people hook[s] for change can be apprehended as an opportunity (or triggering event) that engenders an openness to change (as Bottoms and Shapland's (2011) model of the desistance process would allow) by triggering a period of discernment (Archer 2003), which can, as it did with Jed, lead to a

[42] The changing meanings and outcomes of employment are discussed under the superordinate theme: *The Meanings and Outcomes of Work*

[43] Giordano et al (2002:1002) argue that ' the various cognitive transformations … relate to one another …[in] an ideal typical sequence: an overall "readiness" influences receptivity to one or more hooks for change, hooks influence the shift in identity, and identity changes gradually decrease the desirability and salience of the deviant behavior'.

diminution of the desirability of the offending behaviour in the early stages of change, thus generating a shift in a person's priorities and practices. Ultimately, however, it was the shifting priorities, practices and relational dynamics among the revised group and the eventual dissolution of these significant relationships that was a significant catalyst in Jed's change process, provoking Archer's (2003) second phase of reflexivity 'deliberation'.

> Jed: Once all your mates go their separate ways get married off and do all different things and then you start thinking you know? That's when it starts hitting you and you go, well, right, fuck it. It's my turn now. If they can do it so can I.

Archer's second phase of reflexivity, deliberation, is an evaluative process, in which one considers the perceived costs, benefits and implications pertaining to a given situation or potential courses of action against sticking with what one knows (Archer 2000). 'What ultimately emerges is a comparison of selves – who one is and who one wishes to be' (Vaughan 2007:394). This process also includes envisaging how one's current identity is perceived by others. Unlike Adam and Seth's desire to desist manifest in intentional and deliberative shifts in their practices, Jed's initial abstinence from acquisitive offending was conformist with that of his friends, resonant with the concept of primary desistance (Maruna and Farrall 2004). Jed's relocation to London and the acquisition of employment had the effect of constraining his desire to offend while simultaneously enabling a new lifestyle, one within which *'going out all the time and in pubs fighting'* was a part. The shifting priorities and concerns of individuals away from the group and towards their families of formation and associated shifts in their behaviour similarly exerted a constraint on the behaviour of others like Jed, who found they had less support from their

desisting peers for engagement in offending behaviour reflecting a shift in the relational rules and expectations in this revised relational context. Just as Harry had reflexively evaluated his lifestyle against that of his football friends, Jed's rumination on the changes occurring within and between individuals comprising the revised group was a catalyst for change which he apprehended as such (Giordano et al 2002), as an outcome of his reflexivity influenced by his relational concerns which provided a 'framework for the construction of a new kind of lifestyle, and [in time] a new kind of self' (Giordano et al 2002:1002-3). However, after a short period in London, Jed's involvement with the revised group abruptly concluded over a disagreement over wages, fracturing the trust and norms of reciprocities on which their relationships had been founded and this ultimately led to his disengagement from them.

> Jed: I had a big fall out with them…That was that finished and we all went on to different things.

Critically, what this sub-theme has revealed, then, is that differences between individual's responses to these similar changes in their conditioning structures cannot be explained in terms of external forces exerting an exogenous effect; rather it reflects their varying receptivity and response to these changes as reflexively mediated through the lens of their individual and relational concerns.

The role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

Explanations of desistance as ensuing from life-course transitions such as marriage or parenthood are often theorised as structures or institutions in that they are

considered to be 'external' to the individual. These transitions are thought to alter the socio-structural context of an individual's life, sometimes rendering offending incompatible with the acquired lifestyle and roles that the individual occupies; or the individual is cast as perhaps yielding to a new set of routines that inhibit offending behaviour (see for example Farrington and West 1995; Gleuck and Gleuck 1940; Hirschi 1969; Laub and Sampson 1993; 2001; 2003). However, such explanations fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions by ignoring how individuals perceive and respond to such influences (Vaughan 2011). Other explanations that give prominence to the role of agency in desistance suggest that these relationships can provoke shifts in attitudes, values and identities which render offending incompatible with these changes in the self (see for example Giordano et al., 2002). While such theories explain the onset of desistance, they do not explain how it is sustained (Vaughan 2011). Moreover, by conceptualising spousal contributions as interactional effects, they elide an analysis of the dynamics or properties of social relations, and thus cannot adequately account for the role that social relations play in variously enabling or constraining change. Taking the social relation as the primary unit of analysis facilitates exploration of the shifting meanings and influences of these social relations both over time and in interaction with other social relations. This yields interesting differences as to how, when and why these relationships are significant in supporting an individual's desistance. This subordinate theme thus explores the role that Jed's relationship with Rachel and their family of formation played in supporting and maintaining his desistance from offending over approximately 14 years.

Jed met Rachel within about four years of his relocation to London and they went on to have two children together. His emotional connectedness to Rachel was reciprocated and his desire to spend time with her manifested in a shift in his routine

social activities and the social spaces he occupied. In turn, this enabled the development of an alternative lifestyle which constrained his opportunities to offend. As suggested above, differential association and social control theorists argue that these lifestyle changes exert a grounding effect, which, over time, with an individual's increasing investment in these relationships, renders involvement in crime (which might threaten their investment) less likely (see for example Horney et al 1995; Laub and Sampson 2003; Warr 1998). This process is thought to be particularly encouraged by the normative orientation of the spouse (Sutherland 1937). However, as Jed's extract suggests below, it was the bonds forged between him and Rachel that constituted their reciprocal orientation towards each other, itself a source of their mutual intentionality towards the maintenance of the ensuing relational goods, of love, support and loyalty for example. It was, then, the pursuit and maintenance of these relational goods that prompted and guided their actions, a process reflexively guided not only by individual concerns but by the good of the relationship, in which compromises by the individual are deliberated over and decided in order to sustain these relationships and maintain the associated relational goods (Donati 2011a).

In Archer's (2003) final phase of reflexivity, in dedicating ourselves to those things about which we are most concerned (such as an intimate relationship or an associated role), the internal conversation conducts a final review which proceeds from a consensus as to whether the life envisioned in relation to a particular set of concerns is worth working towards and whether the person is capable of both achieving and sustaining it. This is the process through which Jed came to commit himself to desistance, in the pursuit of the realisation of his ultimate concerns, towards the maintenance of this significant relationship, through which lens going out to pubs and fighting was rendered undesirable.

> Jed: Once you get people round about that care about you and you care for, then that makes a difference. I think if you live yourself, you just want to go out all the time but if you've got a partner or a wife or something, there's always somebody there for you, there's always somebody to talk away your problems and they give you their problems and you try and sort things for them.

Yet, as previously observed, Jed had been married previously, to Mary, at the age of 19. However, although the marriage lasted for several years, he had no emotional investment in the marriage. Throughout the duration of the marriage he continued associating with the Del, uninhibited by any marital expectations that his wife might have held, reflecting the then primacy of these relationships to his individual concerns. Indeed, his decision to marry was the outcome of his comparative positioning of himself against the Del, his primary reference group, through the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley 1922). It was through this process that he concluded that 'being married' performed a symbolic function as a normative adult transition and status to which he should similarly progress but to which he was weakly attached. Thus he was unreceptive to its influence.

> Jed: Everybody was getting married… so I thought I might as well join the fuckin' club and get married – so I did. I can barely remember even spending a whole week with her. I'd been married for three weeks and she was pregnant and I got six months. Then, I got out after the six months and I was out for two weeks and then I got another four months. Every time I got out of the jail she would moan at me… and I couldn't be bothered with her.

Similarly, Jed conceptualised his progression to fatherhood at this time as a further normative, developmental transition that he should aspire to. Again, however, Jed did not interiorise or personify his role as a father any more than he did that of husband; his ultimate concerns continued to cohere around maintaining his shared lifestyle with the Del, and his family of formation were at worst a burden and at best of little consequence to him.

> Jed: Well when I first had the weans I wasnae really interested in them, it was just a thing you do…It's a horrible thing to say when you think about it… messing about with a life like that - I'll have a wean 'cos every other cunt's got weans… I went to the first one [the birth]. The others were just like too many sweeties in the pack – you're like that 'oh fuck, what am I going to do with these ones?'... I was too busy going out, I wanted to enjoy myself all the time and do what all the boys were doing.

There is a clear distinction, then, between the meanings and outcomes of the intimate relationships Jed held with Mary and Rachel, and in his transitions to fatherhood in both contexts, a role that in his second marriage, Jed interiorised into his personal and social identity. Critically it was the interaction of becoming a family man, at this developmental stage, and in the context of this significant intimate relationship, which provided a sense of social connectedness, against the backdrop of the dissolution of his relationships with the revised group. The mutually reinforcing interaction of these processes coupled with his involvement in stable employment enabled him to fulfil the requirements of the role. However, it was not simply the birth of their children that facilitated the interiorisation of the role, but the dynamics of the relationship itself and the 'chains of meanings' that these particular types of social relation entail for those participating in it (Donati 2011a). Jed's relationship

with Rachel was demarcated along traditional gender roles; by working to acquire the necessary economic capital to provide for his family, like Seth and Harry, Jed was able to perform and personify the role of partner and father consistent with his internalised views as to what this role constituted, specifically fulfilling the masculine role of "good provider" (Messerschmidt, 1993:70).

> Jed: That's the way we were all brought up and that's the way women see men… it was always your father went out to work and your mother done all the housework and the men had to just go out there, do your work, come in and fling the money on the table...You felt great then. I've done my bit.

In turn, Rachel's adoption and personification of her role as a homemaker reinforced his role, and these interactive dynamics further informed his role and identity as a traditional family man. Where he provided for the family, she took care of him consistent with their shared expectations of this social relation.

> Jed: She wanted to do everything right you know? … Every week, every time you woke up there was hundreds of electricity, hundreds of gas, the fridge was always full – she done everything, know what I mean? I thought 'this is fucking great man'. It was like hundreds of Maws all piled into the one Maw.

Jed's association, through Rachel, with a new social network further consolidated the emergence of a non-stigmatized identity as a "*normal guy"* based on his perception of how others viewed him in his role of *"family man",* consistent with the notion of secondary desistance which refers to 'the assumption of the role or identity of a 'changed person'' (Maruna et al. 2004:19). Whereas personal identity refers to the consciousness of the self, social identity is formed in relation with others. Social

identity is our capacity to express what we care about in social roles and it is one's personal identity that personifies it. Thus, the relationship between personal and social identity is a dialectical one, underpinned by the self-consciousness of the individual (Donati 2011a).

Although Jed's new social networks reinforced his shifting self-concept, as a way of managing his social identity, on which his self-concept was contingent, Jed concealed his past offending. This reflects his consciousness and internalization of negative social discourses surrounding offenders (discussed in Chapter 5) and the perceived contingency of his acceptance by others on the presentation of a self as a non-offender.

> Jed: I made loads and loads of fucking mates and I knew every single person in the street that we stayed in… they just thought I was…out working all the time and buying the weans lovely clothes… and they just thought I was a great guy. [If] they don't know your past, they've got nothing to judge you on ... They can just take you as they see you...You could never tell people... They wouldn't talk to you again... they [would] just see you as some kind of thug.

For Jed, maintaining his social identity meant distancing his present self from his past self in interaction with others and in so doing separating who he had become from his former 'spoiled identity' (Goffman 1963). Rather than experiencing a process of 'de-labelling' (Maruna et al. 2004: 275), his self-presentation as a non-offender in a new relational sphere might reflect a process of re-labelling. His acceptance by people on the basis of his present self implies that he experienced a shift in societal reaction towards him based not on the recognised change in his

behaviour but (in a new social network where he was free from his history) on the basis of his changed behaviour alone.

While Giordano et al., (2002:1055) suggest that particular roles can provide 'a fairly elaborate *cognitive blueprint* for proceeding as a changed individual', this provides a relatively short-term perspective that neglects to attend to shifting dynamics in relations and the meaning of a given social role to an individual over time, as a result of individual dispositions and/or changing conditioning structures, and individuals' responses to them, which can, in turn influence the relational dynamics between a couple and/or within a family. Where Jed once appreciated that Rachel was like '*a hundred maw's piled into the one maw'*, over time, he became increasingly disillusioned with this relationship and the routine and pressures of parenting, which he increasingly experienced as a constraint on his autonomy.

> Jed: The reason it changed was because of her - Rachel, and the weans. I was right into going [abroad] every year and I was getting pissed off. For the last two or three years … I was like that, I cannae be fucked with this… You'd walk in the door and the weans would be all running about and 'know what he done', 'know what she done', 'know what he done' [imitating Rachel] and she is up like that [makes nagging impression], I felt like going back out the fucking door you know? I couldn't be bothered with it.

Jed's disillusionment with family life was further compounded by their relocation to Scotland at this time, instigated by Jed's longstanding desire to return. However, the changes to his conditioning structures that this engendered manifested in a series of losses for Jed, notably in relation to employment (discussed below) and with that his role as 'provider', which in turn negatively influenced his sense of self-worth. Given

the centrality of employment to his role in providing for the family, and thus to his sense of masculine identity, the accumulating strain and pressures had a profound effect on Jed, who, overwhelmed by constraints over which he felt he was unable to exert control or influence, reverted to acquisitive crime, which, in the context of an increasingly fractious relationship, ultimately heralded the demise of his marriage.

> Jed: That's just when it all went downhill. I came up here and I couldn't get a job, it was back to living without any money, going out stealing things you know just to do us. I was out trying to get a job all the time, I was out looking for work and I couldn't get a job. I wanted to get back to the way it was but I just couldn't get it.

Superordinate Theme	**Subtheme**
The Meanings and Outcomes of Work	The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work
	Constraints and limitations

Table 10: The Meanings and Outcomes of Work

The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work

As discussed under the preceding superordinate theme, the meaning and outcomes of Jed's participation in work shifted over time and this superordinate theme builds on the foregoing analysis. It is suggested that it is the meaning and outcomes of either the nature of the work or participation in employment, and how these influence an individual's self-concept and social identity and interact with a person's priorities, goals and relational concerns, that influence how, when and why employment is more or less meaningful or facilitative of desistance.

Following his relocation to London, it was the initial economic outcomes of

participation in employment that were significant in contributing to Jed's abstinence from acquisitive crime. Employment represented an alternative, licit and less risky means of acquiring economic capital, and, as discussed, this provoked his reflexive deliberation on the pros and cons of involvement in acquisitive crime, through the lens of the alternative opportunities and lifestyle that a frequent and substantial income offered. Yet, for Jed, given the primacy and significance of his attachment to his peers and his enduring tendency to compare his progress and measure his behaviour against that of his friends, the meaning of working alongside them played a significant role in his openness towards and motivation to sustain this particular work, despite the challenges he encountered and the limited personal satisfaction he gained from the nature of this work.

> Jed: I couldnae get the hang [of steel fixing] but everybody else got it dead quick…but I said, right, I'll keep going. I used to go every day and people would [say] 'Ah you've fucked it up' … and you felt dead degraded. I could've just walked off but I said, no, fuck it, and every day I went in there and I was making a cunt of it and building things wrong and – for fucking months… but eventually… I got the hang of it. I was all chuffed… it's the only thing I've ever known how to do but I hate it.

As noted in 'Seth's story' working together as a team became a definitive feature of the lifestyles of the revised group which reinforced a sense of common purpose and which enabled the internalisation of identities, both as individuals and as a collective, in which participation in work occupied a central place (Rhodes 2008). In the early stages, working alongside the revised group in steel-fixing represented an important means of re-establishing his sense of identification with and belonging and conformity to the revised group, which, in view of their shifting priorities, practices

and relational dynamics, further exerted a constraining effect on his offending behaviour. As previously observed, however, a disagreement over wages led to Jed's disassociation from the revised group, although he continued working in steel-fixing. At this stage, he continued to abstain from acquisitive crime, but his partying lifestyle led to frequent alcohol-fuelled fights. However, the meanings and outcomes of participation in work were imbued with further significance when his children were born, enabling his role of 'good provider' and, in turn, his personification of his identities as a man, a father and a partner, with which his former lifestyle and offending was both undesirable and incompatible. However, the meaning of employment was so integral to the performance and maintenance of these identities that subsequent shifts in his conditioning structures on his return to Scotland, manifest in his inability to obtain work, heralded his return to acquisitive crime as a means of sustaining his role of provider and alleviating the pressures this engendered (see also Moloney et al. 2009; Wakefield and Uggen 2008 cited in Savolainen 2009).

Constraints and limitations

This sub-theme examines the constraints on and of employment, or the lack thereof, in enabling change. As the foregoing analysis suggests, unemployment undermined Jed's capacity to provide financially for his family and, as a consequence, he reverted to acquisitive crime. However, the meaning and outcomes of worklessness in this context extend beyond the financial pressures this engendered to the psychological and affective outcomes that unemployment exerted on his self-concept. It posed challenges to his masculine identity, itself informed by his internalisation of cultural representations of the 'successful man' as measured by his participation in employment and his capacity to provide for his family (Willott and

Griffin 1997). As the extract below illustrates, Jed experienced his sudden financial dependency on Rachel as disempowering and shameful and, as such, as a threat to his masculine pride, which for Jed was intimately connected to a man's capacities for economic independence, autonomy and self-sufficiency. As previously observed, he also believed that was *'the way women see men'.*

> Jed: I felt like a tramp because I never had any money and she was having to supply all the money because I couldn't sign on because the [police] were looking for me.... but there was never enough... We were arguing all the time, and I was out trying to get a job and I couldn't... so if I needed anything I would just steal it.

Following the demise of his marriage to Rachel, and despite acquiring further employment in London, the meaning and outcomes of participation in employment changed again. The economic outcomes that had, in his late twenties, been a motivation to sustain employment were no longer sufficient; given his dissatisfaction with the nature of the employment, participation in employment represented nothing more than engagement in a purposeless and cyclical routine that generated money that he didn't know what to do with. This suggests that an individual's priorities and relational concerns, influenced by the pre-existing self, have a significant bearing on the meaning and outcomes of work.

> Jed: I was working … but I couldn't be fuckin' bothered. I was going to work in the morning and I thought I'm working here like a cunt and when I get my money on Friday night I'm always skint by the Sunday cos I bought hundreds of clothes and all that – I just kept buying things to get rid of the fuckin' money

> and, eh, once the money was gone it was gone… So I went to work, another week's money, and I said right, here we go again.

At this stage, where work was previously imbued with the meaning and purpose of providing for his family, participation in employment for its own sake or for economic or material gain was rendered meaningless. Following his separation from Rachel, Jed relied on employment as a means of accessing new social networks. Jed returned to share an overcrowded flat with nine men who were similarly occupied and immersed in the steel-fixing social culture. However the hyper-masculine, hard-drinking culture of the construction industry brought its own challenges for Jed, manifest in a prolonged period of chaotic alcohol use, that ultimately threatened his health, and which, necessarily, constrained his capacity to continue working.

> Jed: I moved into this place, it was full of fucking guys. It was a flat but there was 4 rooms in it and it was all these labourers and … [I was] just bevvied all the time. I was working but every night I was drunk… It got to a point that I was being sick and there was blood and all that and I wasn't eating or fuck all.

Although now unemployed and with limited financial resources, Jed managed to avoid offending in London due to the reciprocal exchange of resources between him and his flatmates which facilitated a continuous supply of alcohol, which was their collective primary concern. However, this period too came to a conclusion when he was arrested for drinking in the street and was returned to Scotland to answer outstanding warrants for breaches of the peace (domestic) for which he received fines. Initially he continued drinking, but in the absence of employment and an established network with whom he could share resources, Jed reports that he

robbed a man, for which he did not get caught, but which evoked in Jed a sense of personal shame and self-disgust.

> Jed: I set about him, took his fucking ring and his chain and everything but see when I was doing it, I felt fucking rotten. Years ago I'd have gone 'money, money, money' but this guy, he was a dead nice guy and I felt that size [gestures]…I said 'I shouldnae have done that'. It was an absolute mistake. It was the stupidest thing I have ever done in my life. It was just I'll need to get some fucking money somewhere…then this clown walked by with a handful of money.

Shortly afterwards, Jed was hospitalised with advanced cirrhosis of the liver and pancreatitis which triggered a period of reflexive assessment of his current concerns through the lens of the past, and, in particular, the litany of loss he had experienced over the years. Through this lens he reviewed possible future scenarios and their outcomes, reminiscent, to an extent, of Paternoster and Bushway's (2009) 'identity theory of criminal desistance'. This resulted in a reprioritisation of his concerns and a shift in his practices, and, now 'in recovery', Jed views both his former lifestyle and offending to be incompatible with his sense of who he now is, which he likens to the person he was when he was with Rachel.

> Jed: See the way I am just now, that's the way I was with her and I couldn't go back to [offending]…I'll never go back to that, never. I've lost too many things through it…I've lost a lot. I keep thinking about all the guys we hung about with. Most of them all lying in that graveyard the now. You think 'am I going to be fucking next?' Then you think, there's too much to do …there's too many things you want to do… You start thinking things a lot clearer.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Jed's life beyond the fragmentation of the Del, and, in that, his process of desistance. The contributions of and interactions between the revised group, his family of formation and his participation in employment in incrementally triggering and enabling his desistance from offending characterised his narrative of change, the detail and dynamics of which have formed the principal focus of analysis in this chapter. What this analysis in particular has revealed is that it was the interaction of these social relations as mediated through the lens of his personal priorities, values, aspirations and relational concerns, in response to the constraints and enablements inhering in his changing conditioning structures, which imbued these particular transitional opportunities, events and experiences with significance and which informed their potential to enable or constrain processes of change at various stages in his life.

Contrary to cognitive or agentic theoretical explanations of desistance, Jed did not make a conscious decision to desist on his relocation to London. Neither did he desist by default, or react instinctively to structural changes manifest in the availability of employment nor, in turn, marriage and family life, as social control theories tend to infer. Rather, Jed's desistance gradually surfaced alongside other shifts he had initiated in his practices or behaviours, in the context of his conditioning structures, which emerged from a reflexive re-prioritisation of his ultimate concerns as a means of actualising his individual and relational concerns with which continued offending was variously undesirable and incompatible.

The shift in Jed's conditioning structures following his relocation to London and his participation in employment (T1-2 in Figure 10) both constrained his participation in offending and enabled a new way of living to which, in the context of the shifting priorities and practices (and interactive dynamics) of the revised group, he applied his personal reflexivity (T2-3), responding by refraining from acquisitive offending and modifying his behaviours (T4). While Jed attributes a central role to Rachel and to his role as a family man in his narrative of desistance, a retrospective analysis enables an understanding of how shifting dynamics in social relations and the meaning of a given social role to an individual over time (at T2-T3), as a result of individual dispositions and/or in response to changing conditioning structures (at T1), influence the outcomes (T4) and thus shape the conditioning structures (at T1) in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle, creating new constraints and enablements. Moreover, the significance of Jed and Rachel's relationship to his self-concept and on his behaviour and social identity cannot be reduced to the effects of one individual on another but rather are the outcome of the application of their relational reflexivity. As this chapter has illustrated, the bonds forged between Jed and Rachel constituted their reciprocal orientation towards each other and, in turn, their desire to maintain the emergent relational goods prompted and guided their actions in which compromises by the individuals-in-relation were deliberated over and decided in order to sustain these relationships and maintain the associated relational goods (Donati 2011a). Jed's increasing disillusionment with family life over time, however, compounded by their eventual return to Coaston, generated new constraints and pressures as a consequence of his inability to obtain employment (T1), to which he responded by reverting to acquisitive crime as a means of sustaining his role as provider and alleviating the pressures this engendered, but which, cumulatively, led to the emergence of relational problems, including interpersonal conflict and distrust (T2-3) and which contributed to the demise of his

marriage and the loss of these social roles (T4) and his return to London alone (at T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle). Such an analysis thus marks a departure from current explanations for desistance that fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions, ignoring how the individual perceives and responds to such influences. But it also extends agentic and cognitive explanations by moving beyond their explanations of the onset of desistance, and offering an elaboration of how relations sustain or hinder desistance over time.

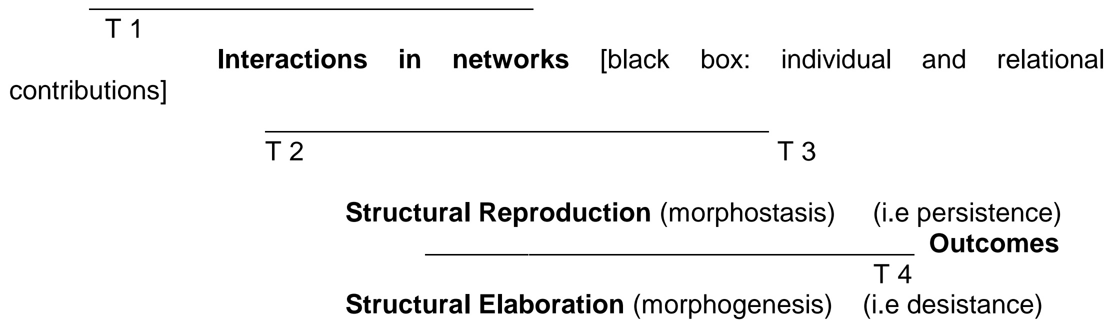

Figure 10: overview of investigative framework

CHAPTER 10: JAY'S STORY

'The whole way I looked at everything, my outlook on life, of what I thought about everything round about me, and what I thought about myself took on a different slant when I became a Christian… everybody round about me became different… one of the biggest things I felt a change in was how to treat people… and it was really about caring about people.'

Introduction

Biographical Overview

Jay, aged 46, is Seth's elder brother. He was born in 1963 and was raised in Coaston, the second youngest of six siblings. His father's violence towards his mother was a definitive feature of his childhood and, as discussed in Chapter 5, was a contributory influence on his involvement with the Del, influenced by his elder brothers' involvement. Jay offended persistently for a period of 12 years (aged 13-25) diminishing in both severity and frequency thereafter. While his 20 convictions are significantly less in number than those of Seth and Jed, he surmises that his offending total is nearer to 300. Like the rest of the Del, Jay's offending was primarily of an acquisitive or violent nature. Assisted by his elder brother's (Adam) dominant position within the group and, as measured by his own status and centrality to the group, levels of involvement in criminal activity and isolation from pro-social networks, Jay was highly embedded in the Del and exhibited high levels of identification with a deviant subculture[44]. In this vein, his relationships to and with

[44] Hall (1966:149) suggest that a highly identified individual would ' (1) conceive of himself in terms of delinquency-orientated roles (delinquent identities), (2) possess negative attitudes toward parents, (3) place high value on delinquent associates and activities (delinquent peer group orientation), (4) reject middle class success orientations and accept exotic

the group and the maintenance of the associated relational goods were as significant to him as the instrumental outcomes of offending in terms of the acquisition of money, material goods and social status. Jay's involvement in the criminal justice system, however, is substantially less but more varied than that of Jed, Seth, Harry, Andy and Evan, comprising a period on supervision under the Children's Hearing System, a deferred sentence and fines and around nine periods of imprisonment, which include periods on remand.

Jay met his first wife Harriet at the age of 17; two years later they were married and they had one daughter together. This relationship was characterised by conflict and violence and ended abruptly when Jay was 25 at which time he went to London to join the 'revised group'; this marked the conclusion of his contact with his first wife and their daughter, Sarah. Following his relocation to London, Jay desisted from violent and acquisitive crime but his discovery of Amphetamine at this time led to a four year addiction, and, progressively, his involvement in drug dealing and poly-drug misuse which he maintained upon his return to Scotland a couple of years later. Jay considers his conversion to Christianity, aged 29, to be the principal mechanism triggering and sustaining his desistance from offending. Although he acquired no convictions following his relocation to London, he considers himself to have desisted from offending for approximately 17 years prior to interview. He currently works in a residential school with young offenders. Jay remarried in his 30s and he and his wife Peggy, who is also a 'born again Christian', have a daughter together, Emily, aged 8.

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occupations and the "easy life," (5) perceive causes of crime as external to the person, and (6) place an accent on "kicks" and excitement as modes of self-expression'.

Jay's delineation of his life stages following the fragmentation of the Del are structured in accordance with the principal experiences that characterised each period, namely 'The Work, Drugs and Terrorism Years (aged 23-29) and 'The Enlightened Years' (aged 25-42). Spanning these eras, this chapter discusses the role of Jay's extant familial, social and personal relationships in supporting desistance over time, commencing with his relocation to London under the superordinate theme '*Religiosity, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance'*. The role of employment in Jay's narrative of change is discussed under the final superordinate theme '*The Meanings and Outcomes of Work'*

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
Religiosity, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance	Role of extant and new social networks in supporting desistance
	Role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

Table 11: Religiosity, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance

The role of extant and new social networks in supporting desistance

Like Adam, Jed, and Seth, Jay became heavily embroiled in the feud. Following the demise of his marriage to Harriet (discussed under the following sub-theme), Jay relocated to London to join the 'revised group' and in this sense his story echoes those of Jed and Seth in that he too drew on the mutual and reciprocal exchange of support and resources among the revised group to resettle in a new environment and enter the steel-fixing trade. Like Jed, Jay had no conscious 'intention' to desist at this juncture. However, not only did a regular and substantial income remove any need to engage in acquisitive offending, his introduction to amphetamines reduced his tendency to engage in alcohol-related violence while similarly offering an

alternative 'buzz' to that which he had previously obtained from offending (Katz 1988). While Jay would not suggest he had 'desisted' at this stage, his offending comprised the possession, purchase and consumption of illicit drugs, which marked a significant shift in the nature of his offending and the end of his involvement in the criminal justice system.

> Jay: I was always violent on the drink but somebody introduced me to Speed…and then that was me fae then. Every weekend I got full of it but I didn't want to fight with anybody…the whole violent thing went away. It was just party time. I still did get into situations… with certain things. So although the speed stopped me fighting and being aggressive and stuff, it didn't stop me getting into other forms of crime.

Both the move and participation in employment created new constraints and enablements in Jay's conditioning structures which, in (re-)structuring his situations of action, enabled opportunities for an alternative lifestyle. In particular, Jay's reflexive deliberation over the economic outcomes of participation, which he weighed up against the outcomes of offending, reduced both the need for and desirability of participation in acquisitive crime. Jay's receptivity to the possibility of a new lifestyle thus diminished the appeal and significance of participation in certain types of offending behaviour while enabling participation in an alternative form of 'deviant' behaviour, which itself diminished his tendency to participate in violent offending. Moreover, living and working in a new environment afforded Jay an opportunity to participate in new experiences and an opportunity to connect to different people, which, as Jay implied in the extract below, contributed to an

enhanced sense of agency and in that, the ability to imagine himself and his relationships differently, and thus capable of actualising things as yet unrealised.

> Jay: London… opened up a whole new world because I had been cocooned up in here in [Coaston], in my relationship, my friendships and when I eventually moved it was just as if the blinkers were taken away… I met a whole different range of people and I knew that I could move away from [Coaston] and the life I was in and do things I could never have done before… I would say that was definitely a big turning point in my life. We tasted a lot of money there with they jobs. It was good money as well and realising that all that [offending] didn't get you anywhere. It didn't get you what that [steel-fixing] could get you. You had a chance of something better.

As Jay explains below, this new environment, without the legacies of conflict which typified their lifestyle and interactions in Coaston, freed the revised group from the restrictive reputations, imprisoning lifestyles and the cycle of violence that had characterised their lives previously and opened up new possibilities for social participation. Their relative anonymity further enabled the development of an alternative social identity for individuals and the group, which, in conjunction with regular employment, represented relative freedom from the restrictions of their former environment, an opportunity to see oneself differently, to be seen differently and to live differently. Jay, in particular, developed ties to a group of Irish Republican sympathizers. Taken together, these co-occurring shifts enabled Jay to develop a 'framework for the construction of a new kind of lifestyle, and [in time] a new kind of self' (Giordano et al. 2002:1002-3), which at this stage, and for the following two years, was principally characterized by participation in work, frequent recreational

drug use and his association with and support of a group of Irish Republican sympathizers.

> Jay: Well when we stayed [in Coaston] we were quite notorious … when we went [to London], nobody knew us, so it was like a fresh start…So [in London], we were … breaking free fae the tag, the stigma… I developed a wider group of friends through the pub so there was a bit of intermingling [between the revised group and the new friendship group] 'cos' some of the pubs we went to were Republican pubs in north London and then we went to a certain pub and we met these guys and we just got to know them fae there as a friendship group. Then I went over to Ireland a few times and I got into supporting terrorism.

While some of the 'revised group' remained in London, Jay, like Seth and Adam, returned to Coaston when the recession descended on London in the early 1990s, On their return, Seth and Adam's ultimate concerns, and thus lifestyles, cohered around employment and their families of formation. On Jay's return, although, he sporadically participated in employment, his drug use became increasingly chaotic, and for the following two years, subsidising and sustaining his addiction was his ultimate concern.

> Jay: Over a period of time, my life just got worse and worse and I ended up injecting speed and it escalated…and that was me – hooked.

Peter, a close friend of Jay's who associated with the Del in their late teenage years, converted to Christianity while living in London. Like Adam, Seth and Jay, he too

had returned to Coaston. As a new convert to Pentecostal Christianity, he was keen to share the story of his conversion with others, and played a pivotal role in Jay's conversion two years later.

> Jay: [Peter] was a significant person earlier on in my life – maybe 17, 18 onwards... He had had an experience in the jail and he had become a Christian. I couldnae believe it… He was a very violent person [before]. He came down fae Glasgow and I was sort of intrigued by the way he used to run about with swords…and…I was took on with him and I wonder if, because of that, God chose him specifically to share with me or… to help me because I used to listen to him a lot as well. There was something about him, even in… that violent circle. I always trusted him. As much as he was a nutcase, stabbing and slashing people, he cared about people as well. I think if any of my other pals told me about God – I would probably have just laughed. I just watched him over a period of time and there was something totally dramatically changed about him… He definitely had a big influence on me.

In echoes of Seth's receptivity to the influence of his elder brother Adam, Jay was particularly receptive to Peter's testimony or narrative of conversion due to the existing reciprocal bond between them. As previously observed, the recognition of change in a credible person is particularly influential where an individual can identify with the change agent and internalize the benefits of responding to this influence (Kelman 1958) in the hope of achieving similar outcomes. Peter's concern for Jay, whose narrative of this period is characterized by his addiction and the desperation this progressively engendered, can be construed as evidence of Peter's application of his personal reflexivity, not simply to himself, but to this relationship, consistent with Donati's (2011a) concept of social or relational reflexivity. Informed by his own

faith, Peter's concern for and 'ministry' to Jay was further underpinned by Christian relational ethics of subsidiarity (to relate to the other in a manner that assists the other to do what must be done) and solidarity (sharing a responsibility through reciprocity) (Donati 2009). These principles consign mutual responsibilities on each person for supporting change and in taking responsibility for personal change.

> Jay: [Peter] took me to a church…and the guy that was speaking…I felt as if he was preaching just to me alone. I told him I wanted to become a Christian and I felt great for a couple of days but that's when I ended up worse. When I went away again I ended up injecting… but [from that time] I kept asking people – do you believe in the Bible? I suppose I was kind of searching. I just felt I was either going to die or something like that if I didnae find what I was looking for.

While Jay had an 'openness to change' (Giordano et al. 2002: 1000), such was the nature of his addiction that the initial fervour inspired by his identification with the speaker's message waned and his addiction accelerated. It was only after he was (literally) stabbed in the back by his, then, similarly chaotic partner that he asked Peter, with a sense of urgency, to take him to Church again. It was then that Jay made a public declaration of faith (discussed below) and it was his *internalization* of this faith, reinforced by his subsequent immersion in Bible study, ministry and association with the Christian community, which heralded a rapid transformation in both his personal and social identity; a transformation with which continued offending and substance use was incompatible.

Pentecostalism emphasizes the importance of conversion, construed as a transformative experience in which one's life is dedicated to God and one is 'born-

again' (van Klinken 2012), often necessitating and symbolizing a complete break with the past (Meyer 1998). The structure of Jay's narrative of transformation, of salvation from a sinful past following a traumatic event, echoes that of Pentecostal conversion narratives in general[45] (van Klinken 2012). The traumatic event is the catalyst that provokes or compounds a sense of existential loneliness and lostness, a deep seated dissatisfaction with the person they have become and an isolation from the person they feel they are or would like to be, often characterized by, or narrated as, a fear of dying (van Klinken 2012). In similar vein, Maruna et al (2006:177) suggest that the:

> 'catalyst for conversion may be not so much a life crisis as an identity crisis: being forced to question who one really is. According to Gillespie (1973), "Wishing you were one thing and knowing you were another is severe and produces tension that may find release in the religious conversion experience" (p. 93)… James (1902/1985) described the "sense of dividedness" that dominates the pre-conversion phase… as the contrast between what is and what might be me'.

This is, however, distinct from the cognitive theory of identity change progressed by Paternoster and Bushway (2009). While they similarly suggest that dissatisfaction with life may be a precursor to change, they argue that the impetus for change is motivated by an aversion to a projected 'feared self' (Paternoster and Bushway 2009:1106). However, as the preceding extract from Maruna et al (2006) infers and as Jay clarifies above and below, his motivation to change was in anticipation of a

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[45] The structure of conversion narratives are broadly contiguous with Alcoholics Anonymous testimonial narratives (see for example Warhol and Michie 1996; Marsh 2011) and the 'redemption scripts' of the reformed ex-offender self-narrative (Maruna 2001).

hoped for self (on which see Barry in press[46]), of *'what I wanted to become'* inspired by the positive change he had witnessed in Peter. Jay's process of reflexivity was, then, triggered by existential doubt, and refracted through the prism of the promise of salvation; through discussions on Christianity with Peter, Jay became aware of the presence of another Being, close to him (immanence), yet also other (transcendence) (Fawcett Pers. Comm). The spiritual connection that is forged between the believer and God is experienced as a personal relationship which transcends all others. He who was lost is found. In the act of repentance for their sinful past, the convert is forgiven and is born again in Christ and the world is experienced anew[47].

> Jay: The whole way I looked at everything, my outlook on life, of what I thought about everything round about me and what I thought of myself took on a different slant when I discovered Christianity. Because my outlook on life then became different – everybody round about me became different and then obviously I was different because I was changing fae what I had been in the past to what I wanted to become and to what I felt I would need to become. I think I valued things more, valued people more, valued life more – just valued even the simple things in life – like even looking at nature, seeing it different. But one of the biggest things I felt a change in was how to treat people. To treat people differently and view them differently fae what I did before. I just started to see things on a whole different level and it was really about caring about people.

[46] In particular, Barry's (in press) Scottish study of desistance revealed that people 'gave up crime *in anticipation of* something *constructive* happening in their lives rather than *in response to* something already having happened' [the latter italics are this author's emphasis].
[47] See for example The Parable of the Lost Sheep; The Parable of the Lost Coin; The Parable of the Lost Son. Luke 15.

This transformation through conversion, characterized by a 'change in subjectivity' (Maruna et al, 2006: 166) is then commonly narrated and communicated through public testimony, which has its roots in Biblical teachings[48]. The Christian testimonial is a powerful expression of God's redemption and an opportunity to bear witness to one's experience of transformation to others. In so doing, the establishment and identification of shared values and beliefs provides a basis for social trust, mutual respect and social recognition among the community of believers. In particular, the act of giving testimony can be regarded as a 'rite of passage' (Maruna 2011:21) or a ritual of redemption (Maruna 2001) wherein 'some recognized member(s) of the conventional community must publicly announce and certify that the offender has changed and that he is now to be considered essentially non-criminal' (Meisenhelder 1977: 329). In the context of faith-based communities, the individual is redeemed or saved. However, the act of testifying had particular significance for Jay. On the one hand, as the extract below illustrates, in testifying to his commitment to God, and in realising God's forgiveness for past wrongs, Jay dedicated himself to this new identity and faith and through this process, his perception of himself altered. On the other hand, drawing on his own prior preconceptions of and attitudes towards religiosity, how his identity transition from addict and offender to that of the differently stigmatized identity of 'Christian' would be apprehended by his peers had preoccupied him; it was only in the act of making a public declaration that he testified to himself that he could withstand the risk of social rejection and ridicule that this might engender.

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48 See for example Mark 5:19 'And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."'

> Jay: …and that's when I made a public sort of commitment. I felt I had to do that because… I'd had all they sort of thoughts, what will people think. I'd always been embarrassed [being seen] with certain people or doing certain things and knew then if I done that – if I stood up in front of everybody – I knew that was real to me. If I was ever going to be a Christian, I had to declare it in front of everybody else. Then that was me, I felt God was in my life; he'd forgave me and I was born again. I knew then that I was changed.

The term 'born-again' represents the 'displac[ement of] the relationship one had with the world and a former self, the person in the flesh. The moral identity is then constituted of a different kind' (Bielo 2004: 277), and expressed 'as a process of "dying to self."… [in which] the person they were in the flesh dies, and they are born again… To be born again means a separation from the old self' (Bielo 2004:277-8), which for Jay was expressed through his immediate initiation of significant lifestyle changes, as the extract below suggests.

> Jay: I stopped overnight hanging with all my pals but I didnae feel pulled towards them and I didnae feel I had to pull myself back from them. I just thought I don't like what they are doing. It's not right to do it. So I just made a conscious choice not to go there. I met a lassie a couple of years later and she said 'It was as if you'd died'. She said 'We used to see every weekend, at every party, you were there, and it's just as if you'd died' and I said 'Well I did die. I died to my old life' – and that's the only way to describe it. When I became a Christian I stopped drink and drugs, swearing, watching the telly, offending, everything. I just stopped everything.

Jay's internal changes in his beliefs, values and attitudes were thus expressed in external lifestyle changes characterised by the relinquishment of what he had come to regard as his past sinful behaviours, in pursuit of a moral or 'good life'. However,

> 'some scholars indicate that becoming born-again for men can be a threat to their male identity. By giving up drinking... and other activities that—according to the dominant norms of masculinity… are considered 'manly', born-again men run the risk of being labelled as 'sissies' (Brereton 1991, 98-101; Gooren 2010, 103-105)' (cited in van Klinken 2012:222).

Indeed, such concerns may have informed Jay's initial reservations or concerns surrounding how he might be seen by his peers. However, van Klinken's research (2012) suggests that Pentecostal Christian males redefine masculinity through the exercise of self-control, self-discipline, the resistance of temptations and the assumption of responsibility for oneself and for others. Thus, in the process of being born again 'not only a new moral subject but a new male gendered subject is created, inspired by an alternative understanding of masculinity' (van Klinken 2012:225). As the following sub-themes illustrate, this is connected to notions of leadership, whether within the family or in ministry.

Jay recalls that he was immediately welcomed by the church wherein he developed new and enduring social relationships through his affiliation to various Christian groups and organisations. The common bond of Christianity can serve to dismantle some of the social barriers that (ex-)offenders can encounter and the Christian ethic of fellowship and mutual obligation can offer access to relational networks which can generate crucial emotional, spiritual and practical supports (Giordano et al., 2002; 2007).

> Jay: People were open, warm, friendly, loving and caring… I met policemen, doctors and lawyers and they treat you just the same as everybody else... any questions I ever had...they would help me and also financial assistance at times... as well as spiritual support there was emotional support.

His capacity to relate to this broad church of people from markedly different social backgrounds was enabled by a sense of social 'equality…the idea that there were no "grades" of wrongdoing, that all people have sinned and all people need forgiveness' (Maruna et al 2006:178), and further the idea that all men are created equal under God. The emotional, spiritual and practical assistance they provided communicated acceptance and social recognition and reinforced a sense of belonging which was critical to sustaining his commitment in the early stages, and which reinforced his shifting self-concept as someone of worth. Conversion stories are often seen in and of themselves as success stories (van Klinken 2012). However, there is a significant difference between *becoming* and *being* a Christian; being a Christian is a dynamic and evolving project of the self that requires maintenance and ongoing reflection. Jay's recent experience of a diminution in the intensity of his religious zeal after sixteen years manifest in a temporary withdrawal from church attendance, reinforced to him the centrality of his participation in religious practices and involvement in church in sustaining and maintaining his faith.

> Jay: I didnae stopped believing…but I would say that I wasnae as enthusiastic and I wasnae as kind of going out and doing some of the things that I would do as a Christian… I don't think I can explain it totally, but … I was in a place I

> know I don't want to go back in again. It was a kind of cold period for a few months but …I got back to church and I just started getting rekindled again.

Jay's experiences reinforce the findings of previous studies (discussed in Chapter 2) that emphasise the significance of internalized faith to processes of change, which can be reinforced through participation in religious practices and communities (see for example Armstrong unpublished, Schroeder and Frana 2009). However, for Jay, continued association with a community of believers with whom he can identify and among whom he feels a sense of belonging was as important as the internalisation of his faith in sustaining his religious zeal and subjective wellbeing over time (Lim and Putnam 2010). Jay's immersion in the Christian faith through evangelism and ministry following his conversion is discussed further under the final superordinate theme *'The Meaning and Outcomes of Work'.* The following subtheme discusses the dynamics of Jay's involvement in his families of formation and intimate relationships and their role in constraining and/or sustaining change.

The role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

In Jed's chapter, it was suggested that taking the social relation as the primary unit of analysis facilitates an exploration of the shifting meanings and influences of the social relations of marriage and family over time and yields interesting differences as to how, when and why these relationships are significant in constraining, enabling or sustaining desistance. This subordinate theme explores the differences in the role of Jay's two significant intimate relations and their families of formation in constraining or sustaining change at different stages in his life.

Jay met his first wife Harriet at the age of 17; two years later they were married when Harriet became pregnant with Jay's first child. Unlike Seth's, Jed's and Harry's partners, Harriet, whose family of origin were involved in the criminal justice system, was similarly involved in offending behaviour. There is a wealth of empirical evidence that suggests that the partner's participation in criminality constrains the more desistance promoting effects that investment in an intimate relationship can generate (see for example Cusson and Pinsonneault 1986; Giordano et al. 2002; Osborn and West 1979; Ouimet and LeBlanc 1996; Shavit and Rattner 1988; Simons et al 2002). Unlike Harry's partner Millie, far from discouraging Jay's involvement in offending, Harriet would herself, at times, participate in offending alongside Jay.

> Jay: [Harriet] was brought up… round about stuff… certainly her brother was a violent character and got into trouble…I suppose like everybody else, she didnae want to see you getting caught [but] she was a shoplifter and she was with me a couple of times, fighting and stuff like that.

Nonetheless, while, as previously noted, Jay did not desist from offending at this stage, his investment in this relationship did influence his attitude towards offending at this time.

> Jay: When I [was with Harriet], I still offended but I had a different outlook on things and I tried to be responsible. I just wanted to be what I seen as normal. Just, like, in a relationship, settle down, stuff like that. I wouldnae consciously [offend] then, just if I was drunk, whereas [before that] I would say a lot of it just came instinctively. I just think the relationship to me was more of a goal and I didn't want anything to interrupt that if I could help it.

While, then, at this stage, Jay did not desist from offending, in the early stages of the relationship, his reflexive orientation towards the maintenance of his relationship with Harriet emerged as Jay's ultimate concern, which lead to a diminution of the desirability of offending in this relational context, to which he responded by initiating adjustments in his behaviours, in accordance with his shifting priorities. In this sense, despite her participation in offending, being in this relationship provoked a desire in him to change his behaviours. While he recognised the 'desirability of changing' (Giordano et al. 2002: 1000), this did not, however, ultimately translate into cessation of offending. What this seems to suggest is that the impacts and outcomes (intended and actual) of social relations are not solely reducible to interpersonal effects. Despite her participation in offending, the relationship still generated in Jay an 'openness to change' (ibid). However, as the preceding extract infers, Jay's orientation towards this relationship, and, thus, openness to change, was in anticipation of the realisation of an ideal type relationship which would bring about a sense of normalcy. While her participation in offending is not irrelevant, critically the ideal type relationship to which Jay initially oriented himself never materialised. Rather Jay and Harriet's relationship was mutually experienced as divisive and destructive. The asymmetry of their attachments and expectations of the relationship influenced the nature of their interactive dynamics which progressively emerged as reflexively oriented towards actions which generated the emergent 'relational bads' (Donati 2011a) of jealousy, betrayal, conflict and violence.

> Jay: I was violent in that relationship, just the same as what my Dad was…Although I did do it I really find it hard to accept. Neither one of us was faithful but I was obsessed with her. It was one of they ones, you're not really

> in control... You think its love but she was domineering – do you know what I mean – but I just thought she was the best thing.

The point is that it is not simply Harriet's participation in and attitudes towards offending that constrained change, but the dynamics of the social relation itself. The social relation is conceptualised here as those bonds maintained between subjects that constitute their reciprocal orientations towards each other; it is the 'reality in between', that which exists *between* people, which 'are both the product of concrete human beings and also that which helps to forge them' (Donati 2011a:61), 'which depend on the[m]..., but at the same time goes beyond them and exceeds them' (2011a:26). Thus, 'social relations are those maintaining *between* agent-subjects that – as such – 'constitute' their reciprocal orientations and actions as distinct from all that characterizes single actors' (Donati 2011a:60). The impact of a given social relation on individuals' behaviour thus emerges from the nature and intensity of the bond *between* individuals-in-relation and the chains of meanings that these particular types of social relation entail for individuals, who bring their own personal reflexivity to bear in a manner consistent with their ultimate concerns (Donati 2011a). As observed in preceding chapters, the chains of meanings that characterise a given social relation can be conceptualised as 'the complicated tissue of relations between culture, personality, social norms' and lived experiences (Donati 2011a: 130). As with Seth, Jed and Harry, Jay's internalised configuration of hegemonic 'traditional' working class masculinity (Connell 2002) influenced his expectations of the marital relationship and their associated gender roles; expectations which were not reciprocated by Harriet. When his efforts and expectations were frustrated, he drew on the repository of his personal experiences of his father's violence towards his mother as a means of exercising his control and asserting his masculinity. Ultimately, the relationship concluded when he was 23.

After Jay's conversion to Christianity, he met and married Peggy after six months of dating, to whom he remains married and with whom he has a daughter, Emily. Peggy is also a born-again, Pentecostal Christian.

> Jay: I just wanted to marry somebody with shared values and the same beliefs as myself which I thought was very important because my thinking was that if we'd had any children, that I would want my children brought up in the faith.

As previously stated, leadership and the assumption of responsibility for oneself and for others are definitive features of Pentecostal Christian interpretations of and discourses on masculinity. Fatherhood and the husband role in Pentecostalism is thus associated with being the head of household and the principal provider (van Klinken 2012) which for Jay marked some continuity with his previously internalised beliefs surrounding cultural norms of masculinity relating to gender roles. In turn, Peggy's adoption and personification of her role as a homemaker enabled his personification of his role. Where he provided for the family, she took care of the family and, in the main, recognised his assumed authority in accordance with their shared beliefs, values and expectations of the nature of this social relation. In this context, compromises between them were deliberated and decided in order to sustain these relationships and maintain the emergent relational goods (Donati 2011a).

> Jay: I think the man is the head of the house, should be, even though at times to stop arguing…you give up the role from time to time, but I would say the man is the authority figure. There's a place for men, there's a place for women. I think the man's got more responsibility. I would say it should come

> naturally to a man and I think it should come naturally to a woman to let the man.

Despite the intimacy, strength and endurance of their relationship, Peggy barely features in Jay's life story, which may, in part, be attributable to the impact that being 'born again' can exert on peoples' personal and social identities, and their relations with their partners, in that God becomes the relationship of ultimate concern (see also 'Evan's Story'). The marked differences in the meanings and outcomes of Jay's relationships with Harriet and Peggy are thus attributable to a variety of factors, not least differences in age and maturity, differences in the nature of these social relations and their interactive dynamics and differences in Jay's shift in identity and behaviour as a consequence of his conversion to Christianity. In similar vein, Jay's approach to fathering his daughter Emily is a significant departure from his approach to parenting Sarah (his daughter with Harriet).

> Jay: I used to get [Sarah] to swear and…shout at the polis… I still loved her and looked after her for those first 2 or 3 years that I was with her, but I was just – I don't know, but with [Emily] just now, I'm more protective. I think Emily was my second chance…I try and shield her from things. From anything I've learnt from the past negative. I always tell her wee stories about people doing good, with good values, and I'm trying to instill good values into her… because I feel that's important, but I would never ever want her to go down any of the roads that any of us have been down.

Like Harry, Jay's approach to fatherhood now encompasses multiple generative roles including breadwinner, good provider, protector and educator (Haurari and Hollingworth 2009). As the extract above suggests, in shielding her from harm and

teaching her the ways of his faith, Jay apprehends this both as an opportunity to practice his faith and an opportunity to redress the balance of his past by doing things differently this time around. Moreover, by using his own life experiences to inform his approach to parenting to safeguard his daughter's future and spiritual development, he is actively and intentionally shaping and influencing the conditioning structures, and, thus the situations of actions, for the next generation.

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
The Meanings and Outcomes of Work	The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work
	Constraints and limitations

Table 12: The Meanings and Outcomes of Work

The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work

In preceding chapters, it has been suggested that the relationship between employment and desistance resides in the way in which the meaning and outcomes of either the nature of the work and/or participation in employment influence an individual's self-concept and social identity and interacts with a person's priorities, goals and relational concerns. As previously observed, Jay's first significant experience of participation in employment was in London when, like the rest of the revised group, he entered the steel-fixing trade. While neither the nature of the work, nor participation in work were causative of desistance, the economic outcomes diminished any perceived need to engage in acquisitive offending, and his introduction to amphetamines, at this time, reduced his tendency to engage in alcohol-related violence. That said, while he did not need to offend to procure drugs, and while he obtained no convictions, Jay considers his procurement, possession and consumption of drugs to be contiguous with his offending lifestyle, and a

precursor to his later involvement in dealing drugs. Thus, while participation in work enabled behavioural and lifestyle changes, he experienced no significant pro-social shift in his values or in his personal and social identity that altered his attitude to offending, which only occurred later - following his conversion to Christianity.

Jay's faith permeates every aspect of his life; it informs his relationships with his wife and daughter, and his role within the family. Since his conversion, it has also been expressed through the nature of the work in which he has participated, which has been oriented to supporting individuals and communities in need. Jay conceptualises his work as an expression of his faith, in terms of a life lived in service to others, informed by the Christian relational ethics of subsidiarity and solidarity referred to previously. Jay's impetus for participation in generative works of this nature, then, was and is informed less by a desire to make good on his past in a reparative sense, and more by a desire to minister or be of service to others, by trying to divert others from the life he has lived, and in so doing fulfilling the word of God. In this sense, Jay's participation in this work, most of which has been of a voluntary nature, neither directly constrained nor enabled his desistance in a causative sense; rather, it is the meaning and outcomes of the work that is of enduring significance in consolidating his new, 'born-again' identity and thus his subjective well-being.

> Jay: I [volunteered in a Christian Rehabilitation Centre] for between 3 and 4 years. I also went into a lot of prisons speaking to prisoners, telling them about Christianity… so I was involved in that for a couple of years as well. And there was a local drop-in-centre and I used to help [Evan] and we worked in the local community with young people…just trying to point young people in the right direction and away from trouble. It felt very fulfilling and also it could

> get people away fae going down the same roads that [we] went down. I also done some street work…in [Coaston]. So, I worked voluntary until I was 37 and that's when I went to college and done my HNC in social care and since then I've worked in [a residential school for young offenders].

Jay not only engaged in generative works, then, but practiced evangelistic outreach, which is the preaching of the Christian Gospel to others with the object of converting them and is an expectation of participation in the Pentecostal church (Anderson 2004). While his faith imbued the nature of this work with meaning, participating in this work thus contributed to and realised his religious identity. His participation in these works, then, can be construed as an outcome of both his conversion and of desistance; both of which have shaped his generative commitment to diverting others from offending. Moreover, as Jay suggests below, the visible nature of some of this work had the unintentional effect of operating as a tangible symbol of his reformation to the wider community, which, through the social recognition of change this implied, contributed to his changing personal and social identity.

> Jay: Word got about because I was… well-known… me and [Peter] and [Dennis Nixon] went to a church in [Coaston] and people used to come, people that were maybe troubled or in trouble and they used to come to the Church to see us because they heard that we became Christians. I think then they knew we were serious about it.

Constraints and limitations

Where the culture and conditions of Seth's work limited the desistance promotive outcomes of participation in employment, the nature and conditions of Harry's

employment constrained both the instrumental and affective outcomes that work can provide, not least in relation to the standard of living, but also with regard to the degree of personal satisfaction, meaning and purpose it afforded over time. Jay identified no significant constraints or limitations in these areas and experienced both the nature and conditions of his work as enabling and empowering both in terms of his role as provider within the family, and in terms of practicing his ministry. Nonetheless, while drawing on his prior experiences of offending to inform his approach to practice, Jay considers that the professional nature of his current occupation places a constraint on the use of self-disclosure in his work with young people, which would seem to suggest that a professional (rather than a religious) identity is harder to reconcile with a previously spoiled identity (Goffman 1963). Anticipating the judgements and negative stereotypes that people with convictions are often subjected to, Jay considers that others' perceptions of his past may diminish his professional standing and authority, which he suspects would unnecessarily obstruct or distract from the contributions he can make to their outcomes.

> Jay: I do believe that my experience can help me in how I deal with these boys and I feel with the experience I've had it can be helpful, but… I don't say to them [about my past], not that I'm trying to hide it but I just want to be the person that I'm are with the boys. I mean, they could go to a Children's Hearing and they could turn round and say 'aye, he done that as well' so there's a professional side of things where if you're trying to work with somebody they could try and bring it back on you. Or their family could – like 'what's he doing working with my boy and he's been charged with assault' or whatever.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Jay's life beyond the fragmentation of the Del, and, in that, his process of desistance. What this analysis in particular has revealed is the centrality of Jay's conversion to Pentecostal Christianity and his internalisation of the Christian faith to his narrative of change. His initial conversion was reinforced and sustained by his participation in Christian relational networks and through religiously informed practices which enabled the expression of his faith and generative commitments and which contributed to the transformation in his personal and social identity with which continued offending was incompatible. In concert with the preceding individual stories, this chapter has illustrated the ways in which desistance is co-produced between individuals-in-relation, foregrounding a conceptualization of a reflexive individual whose ultimate concerns emerge from, are immersed in and shape their relational worlds. Where Jed's, Seth's and Harry's desistance emerged as a means to realising their relational concerns with, to varying degrees, their families of formation, in which participation in employment played a part, Jay's relationship of ultimate concern was of a spiritual form and his principle role identity emerged as a Christian.

Although Jay considers his conversion to be the catalyst to change, Jay's earlier participation in employment in a new environment heralded a shift in Jay's conditioning structures (T1-2 in Figure 11) which constrained his participation in offending and enabled a new way of living to which he applied his personal reflexivity (T2-3) and responded by refraining from acquisitive offending and modifying his behaviours, assisted by his introduction to Amphetamine (T4). Following his subsequent return to Coaston, although Jay sporadically participated

in employment, Jay's addiction and association with similarly situated others structured the situations of action (T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle) and generated new constraints and enablements. In the context of his increasing desperation about his escalating drug use and its outcomes, he became progressively receptive to Peter's faith-based intercessions. His internalisation of the teachings of Pentecostal Christianity influenced by his interactions with Peter (T2-3) ultimately shaped his identity, behaviour and lifestyle (T4), and, in turn the sets of relations in which he was involved (at T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle), which, bringing his personal reflexivity to bear with regard to his position in this new relational context (T2-3), motivated his participation in evangelism and ministry (T4).

The analysis progressed in this chapter thus marks a departure from current explanations for desistance that fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions, ignoring how the individual perceives and responds such influences. But it also extends agentic and cognitive explanations by moving beyond their explanations of the onset of desistance, and offering an elaboration of how relations sustain or hinder desistance over time. In particular, 'Jay's Story' builds on and contributes to the burgeoning, yet limited, literature on the contributions of religiosity and spirituality to desistance. The existing literature places emphasis on the significance of internalized faith to processes of change, which can be reinforced through participation in religious practices and communities (see for example Armstrong unpublished, Schroeder and Frana 2009). However, for Jay, continued association with a community of believers with whom he could identify and among whom he felt a sense of belonging was as important as the internalisation of his faith in sustaining his religious zeal and subjective wellbeing over time (Lim and Putnam 2010). In particular, and in recognition of Calverley's apposite observation, this

analysis has examined the ways in 'the nature of the religion adopted, as opposed to religiosity per se, alters or modifies in some way the trajectory associated with desistance' (Calverley 2012: 102) and in particular, the way in which Pentecostal Christianity shaped Jay's personal and social identity, and, in turn, his interactions, behaviours and lifestyle.

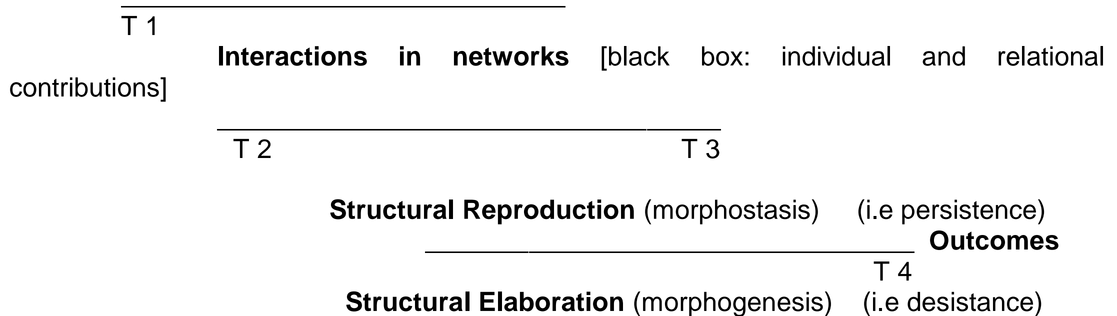

Figure 11: overview of investigative framework

CHAPTER 11: EVAN'S STORY

"For the first year [post conversion to Christianity] ... they were always with me night and day, people like Peter and Jay...they almost sort of mentored me and gave me good advice….they were very influential in the early days".

Introduction

Biographical Overview

Evan, aged 43, was born in 1965 in a small town neighbouring Coaston where he and his family remained until he was 12 when they relocated to Coaston. Evan's father worked overseas as a pipe-fitter and whilst this meant that the family were relatively affluent Evan's contact with his father was sporadic during his childhood. Evan recalls experiencing limited parental supervision while his father was away, as his mother struggled to raise five children single-handedly. As discussed in Chapter 5, Evan perceives that his feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness as a consequence of the sustained sexual abuse he was subjected to by a family member, along with the emotional disconnection he perceived within his family, contributed to his offending behaviour in as much as he, at least in part, perceived that in offending, he was 'acting out'. In the Del he found a sense of belonging, security, protection and acceptance and incrementally power and influence, which, to a greater or lesser degree, ameliorated the sense of disconnection and powerlessness he experienced and the trauma he endured.

Evan was highly embedded in the Del as measured by his status within and centrality to the group, levels of involvement in criminal activity and isolation from pro-social networks. He also exhibited high levels of identification with a 'deviant'

subculture[49]. In this vein, his relationships to and with the group and the maintenance of the associated relational goods were as significant to him as the instrumental outcomes of offending in terms of the acquisition of money, material goods and social status. The majority of Evan's offences were acquisitive in nature, and included safe-breaking, housebreaking, theft, fraud and shoplifting. In total, he surmised that he acquired in the region of 100 convictions although he speculated that his offending total was '*probably at least twice that amount'*. While his early offending took place in the context of the Del, following the fragmentation of the Del he tended to offend alone for the sole reason that any economic gains he made would not have to be distributed amongst co-offenders. In the early stages, his offending was motivated by the acquisition of money to facilitate what he refers to as *'a party lifestyle'*. However, following the fragmentation of the Del and owing to his later involvement in substance misuse, over time, he diversified into selling drugs and offending to acquire the necessary economic capital to finance his addiction. As with Jed, Andy, Seth, Harry and Jay, Evan's convictions primarily resulted in custodial sentences of varying lengths. In total, between the ages of 14–28, he spent twelve years in prison serving short prison sentences. Like Jay, Evan considers his conversion to Christianity, aged 29, to be the principal mechanism triggering and sustaining his desistance from offending. He therefore considers himself to have desisted from offending approximately 14 years prior to interview. He currently works as an evangelist in London where he resides with his wife, Evie, to whom he has been married since he was aged 31. Although they have no children, Evan has two children from two previous relationships.

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[49] Hall (1966:149) suggest that a highly identified individual would ' (1) conceive of himself in terms of delinquency-orientated roles (delinquent identities), (2) possess negative attitudes toward parents, (3) place high value on delinquent associates and activities (delinquent peer group orientation), (4) reject middle class success orientations and accept exotic occupations and the "easy life," (5) perceive causes of crime as external to the person, and (6) place an accent on "kicks" and excitement as modes of self-expression'.

Evan's delineation of his life stages following the fragmentation of the Del are structured in accordance with the principal experiences that characterised each period, namely 'The Prison Years' (aged 22[50]-29) and 'The Christian Years' (aged 29-43). Spanning these eras, this chapter discusses the role of Evan's extant and new social networks and intimate relationships in supporting desistance over time under the superordinate theme '*Religiosity, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance'*. This chapter thus commences at the stage of his release from prison, aged 22, after serving a three and a half year prison sentence. The role of employment in Evan's narrative of change is discussed under the final superordinate theme '*The Meanings and Outcomes of Work'*

Superordinate Theme	**Subtheme**
Religiosity, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance	Role of extant and new social networks in supporting desistance
	Role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

Table 13: Religiosity, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance

The role of extant and new social networks in supporting desistance

Like Harry, Evan made a prudential decision to distance himself from the ensuing intra-group enmities that the feud between the Del gave rise to, which was assisted by his imprisonment during this period for three and a half years. By the time he was released, the revised group had moved to London. Following his release from prison, aged 22, Evan sought out and acquired temporary, short-term employment

[50] This chapter tells Evan's story following the fragmentation of the group and thus from the mid-1980s, when Evan was 22. In his narrative, the years in custody extend from aged 14-28, during which time he served twelve years in short-term prison sentences of varying lengths in various penal institutions (including list E schools, Assessment Centres, Detention Centres, Young offenders Institutions and prisons).

in a local power station. At this stage, the impetus for his pursuit of employment was both prudential and instrumental. It represented an alternative yet licit means of acquiring the economic capital he required to maintain the *'party lifestyle'* he enjoyed. This did not so much reflect a desire to desist as a desire to avoid further imprisonment; '*I was very consciously thinking let's be careful'*.

Participation in work enabled Evan to abstain from acquisitive crime and to sustain his first significant relationship with Monica, whom he met at this time and which consolidated his desire to avoid re-imprisonment and the potential outcomes this might have on their relationship. This period of 'primary desistance' (Maruna and Farrall 2004) thus emerged as an outcome of Evan's reflexive evaluation of the effects of continued offending and imprisonment, mediated through the lens of his shifting individual and relational concerns, which were progressively oriented towards the maintenance of the relational goods emerging from his relationship with Monica (discussed below). However, within several months, and following the conclusion of his employment and his temporary separation from Monica, he *'got involved in the drug scene'* and his poly-drug use progressively spiralled into a chronic addiction that endured for a further seven years. In this sense, Evan's early attempts to desist correspond with Bottom and Shapland's (2011) model of the desistance process which recognises that despite taking action towards desistance, failure to maintain these changes in the face of obstacles or temptations, may lead to relapse (see also Burnett 2004).

Evan developed new friendships through his involvement in the 'drug scene' most of whom were similarly experimenting with various 'Class A' drugs. Evan temporarily desisted from acquisitive crime and diversified into drug dealing as a means of subsidising his own drug use, which was, at that time, his ultimate concern. Drug

dealing presented as a viable course of action that would enable him to realise this concern, one that carried less risk of apprehension than housebreaking, for example, and which enabled him to maintain his lifestyle while avoiding imprisonment.

> Evan: I began to just get involved with more drugs and began to sell and deal in drugs and use [drugs]. I think probably that's what kept me out of prison because I didn't have to do so many crimes because…I was making money from [drugs] and I didn't have to take as much risks to live that lifestyle.

Over time, however, as his drug use escalated, and he consumed more than he was selling, he reverted to acquisitive crime to fund his increasingly chaotic drug use and the cycle of repeat imprisonment that had characterised his earlier life resumed. By his mid-twenties, Evan believed that he had knifed off any opportunities to be anyone other than what he had become (Caspi and Moffitt 1993). Like Harry and Jed, as the extract below illustrates, Evan engaged in a reflexive process in which he compared and measured his own progress and behaviour against his friends' desistance from crime and normative developmental transitions. It is worth noting that by this time, Evan had fathered two sons. However, unlike Harry and Jed, this did not provide the impetus to initiate change. Resonating with Maruna's (2001) notion of a 'condemnation script', Evan felt powerless to influence his conditioning structures and exercise control over his behaviour. Such is the nature of addiction that it can progressively lead to a sense of diminished agency and self-efficacy (Tieu 2010). Reflecting Archer's (2010, 2012) concept of fractured reflexivity, his internal conversation reinforced to him that positive change was unlikely. In this context, then, the internal conversation does not lead to a purposeful course of action and

only intensifies personal distress leading to (albeit temporarily) passive agents who feel unable to effect change in their conditioning structures[51].

> Evan: I thought [prison] was an occupational hazard, this is what I did. This is who I was. The majority of my friends have got themselves jobs, and by their 20's, marrying, settling down…I used to wonder, where have I gone wrong? …and I would say to myself why am I still doing time? Why am I still doing crime? And I would think maybe this is who I am meant to be… I didn't know anything else and by this time I am 26 / 27. I am thinking who is going to employ me? I was kind of losing it completely, thinking…'Who is going to give me a second chance?' …I thought I had the break at first when I finished that three and a half year and I met [Monica] and I thought this is it, this is what I want, this is what I am going to do with my life… and I think after that I thought this is me, this is what I've to be, this is it, this is my sort of destiny in life and I'm going to be a criminal.

Evan's narrative of this era is characterised by his involvement in chaotic poly-drug use, acquisitive crime and frequent short prison sentences. His continuing substance use led to a significant deterioration in his physical and mental wellbeing, and he became increasingly isolated. Peter and Jay, who had become 'born again' Christians, persistently tried to engage Evan by sharing their experiences of personal transformation through their conversion to Pentecostal Christianity and by offering him support. In Pentecostal Christianity, new converts are encouraged to testify about what they have experienced – both as a means of consolidating their faith and to encourage others to convert (Anderson 2004). At this stage, Evan tolerated their interventions but he was not receptive to their testimonies. Jay and

[51] This leads to morphostasis or structural reproduction at T4 – see Figure 12.

Peter nevertheless continued to support him and show him compassion, consistent with the Christian relational ethics of subsidiarity (to relate to the other in a manner that assists the other to do what must be done) and solidarity (sharing a responsibility through reciprocity) (Donati 2009).

> Evan: [Peter], [Jay] and Tom would always talk to me in the street and show me some compassion and care because by this time I'm an addict and not many people want to know addicts. Most of my old friends would just steer clear of me. By this time I'm a mess Beth. I'm 9 stone. I'm out my face all the time and they would constantly show me some friendship and take me for a meal and talk to me.

Evan was released from another short prison sentence on Hogmanay 1993; these co-occurring events, both of which can generate reflection and self-examination, combined to create the conditions which triggered Evan's rumination over the direction in which his life was heading. At first reading, the extract below might appear to resonate with Paternoster and Bushway (2009) who suggest that a perception of 'the positive possible self' can influence a desire to change, but reason that the 'feared self', 'what one does not want to become rather than a sense of what one wants to become' (ibid: 1116) provides 'the initial motivation to change the self' (Paternoster and Bushway 2009:1103)' (see relatedly Harris, 2011). However, like Jay, Evan's motivation to initiate change ultimately emerged from his desire to realise a hoped for self, triggered by his association with and observations of change in his friends. As with his earlier reflexive self-evaluations, however, at this juncture, despite his anticipation of an imminent 'feared self', Evan felt powerless to initiate such change.

> Evan: 1993 must have been the worst year of my life because I was using Opiates, Heroin, anything, I was using any kind of drug to get high…I was just losing it completely, totally, and really in a mess. I wasn't really caring, my appearance was gone, I was lying, stealing, anything to get a fix. I remember I got out from another prison sentence on Hogmanay, 1993 going into 1994. Everybody was partying and I'm sitting there with a can of beer thinking what am I going to do in life? … I'd began to lose a few of my friends from overdoses and I'm thinking I'm either going to be next or there's going to be a long prison sentence. And I was thinking those things through, but the drugs were controlling my life.

Of particular significance and echoing Jay's narrative of transformation, the structure of Evan's narrative (above and below) reflects those of Pentecostal conversion narratives in general (Cartledge 2010; Rambo 1993; van Klinken 2012). To recapitulate the observations developed in 'Jay's story', in the pre-conversion phase a traumatic event or series of crises (Rambo 1993) compounds a sense of existential loneliness and lostness, a deep seated dissatisfaction with the person they have become and an isolation from the person they feel they are or would like to be, often characterized by, or narrated as, a fear of dying (van Klinken 2012). There is a cumulative effect of events (which for Evan further included the death of his best friend to an overdose four days prior to him committing himself to Christianity) and interactions with people (primarily Jay and Peter) which precede conversion. The traumatic events or 'crises' (Rambo 1993) create an 'openness to change' (Giordano et al. 2002:1000), or 'quest' for meaning, aided by 'encounters' with an advocate of the faith and 'interactions' with the religious community which precedes the individual's 'commitment' and its 'outcomes' (Rambo 1993; see also Cartledge 2010).

Indeed, Evan's association and interactions with Jay and Peter in the context of these cumulative events and experiences imbued Christianity with plausibility as 'a hook for change' (Giordano et al. 2002: 992) through his observation of the effects of their transformation following their conversion to Christianity. As observed previously, the recognition of change in a credible person is particularly influential where an individual can identify with the change agent(s) and internalize the benefits of responding to this influence (Kelman 1958) in the hope of achieving similar outcomes. Jay and Peter's continuing compassion, support and recognition of him as someone of worth had the effect of triggering a process of personal reflexivity through an appraisal of *their* behaviour and how different they and their lives had become, which created in him an increasing openness to their encouragement that he accompany them to church. This is distinct, then, from more cognitive or individualistic accounts of the desistance process that place explanatory weight on the *individual's* agentic role in fashioning an alternative identity, and which suggest that social relationships 'are not accessed until after offenders *first decide to change*' (Paternoster and Bushway 2009: 1106, italics in original). In the context of his experiences of powerlessness, hopelessness, loss, suffering and social rejection, Evan was particularly receptive to the empowering Christian discourse that through God he could be forgiven, find hope and a new direction. The *'compassion and care'* conveyed by this community of believers made him feel that he could belong amongst them.

> Evan: It was the 29th of January 1994 [aged 29]…a preacher spoke… about Jesus… and he says that he came so that we could be forgiven…and he came so that he could give us direction and hope. And I thought that's what I need… I looked at Tom and [Jay] and [Peter] and I looked at their lives. I had

> examined their lives, I had watched their lives and I knew they were different… their lives were in order… they weren't just saying something, I had seen it had an impact on their life so I thought I need this Jesus that they are talking about… I went to church the next day … and I remember walking into church and… a big massive guy… gave me a massive hug. He says 'John welcome to the family of God' and I felt I had come home. I felt I would belong somewhere.

The next day, Evan was sentenced to four months in prison for an outstanding conviction of fraud. Like Jay, Evan's internalisation of his faith was expressed through his immediate initiation of significant lifestyle changes, in particular his detoxification from Heroin, which he considered was enabled by his immediate incarceration.

> Evan: Looking back on those 4 month in prison I thank God for them, I really do. I think that in that time I was able to deal with big issues – I could walk away [from provocation], I stopped swearing and smoking. I dealt with my, with God's help, I dealt with my drug addiction because I had to go cold turkey.

Religion traditionally encapsulates particular beliefs, values, attitudes and practices that, in conjunction with the relational ties formed through religious institutions and communities, creates a new world for the convert to inhabit (Rambo 1993). The reflexive practical reasoning involved in the process of change, or conversion, from *becoming* to *being* a Christian, heralded a re-prioritization of Evan's ultimate concerns. This process of reflexivity, through which projects (courses of action) and practices (a way of being in the world) (Archer 2007a) are decided on, realized and

sustained, is relational in so far as it is shaped by the relational networks within which it emerges. These sets of relations affect what does, and can, satisfy the individual and what can be sustained by each, on which the individual brings his/her personal reflexivity to bear with regard to his/her position in this new relational context (Donati 2011a). In the first year following Evan's conversion and subsequent release, Peter and Jay assumed what might be construed as an informal 'circle of support'[52] in terms of socializing Evan into Pentecostal Christian values, beliefs and practices and providing an informal helpful and encouraging environment to reinforce his fledgling Christian identity. In so doing, this 'helping collective' role-modeled Pentecostal Christian identities and generated the relational goods (of love, friendship, devotion, caring) through which this process of re-socialisation was enabled. As Donati observes:

> 'There is a certain correspondence between personal identity ('who I am is what I care about') and collective identity (who we are is what we care about)… this correspondence does not mean that we – as individual persons – are subjugated or subordinated by any holistic entity whatsoever….[We] are what we care about not because we (as a group, network or any collective entity) think in the same way or because we share external commitments, or because we have mutual intentionality, or because we are conditioned by the same structures, but because we are in a special relation, and *that* relation is what makes us reflexive in a social, instead of an individual way' (Donati 2011a:xvi).

[52] The term 'circle of support' is an allusion to a specific restorative practice operating across the world, variously named Citizen Circles (in Ohio) or Circles of Support and Accountability for example (i.e. Armstrong et al 2008). Essentially, the circle is comprised of volunteer community members who provide a network of social support to an individual to help prevent re-offending and enable reintegration.

It is thus through these relations of reciprocity which recognise the dignity of the human person that those participating in it find a shared intrinsic commitment to '[their] communal experiential basis as beneficiaries of worth [in reference to the relational goods these relationships produce] unobtainable in any other way' (Archer 2010: 10 [this author's insertions]). Moreover, drawing on Maruna and LeBel's (2009: 66) research which suggests that when a person is voluntarily involved in a helping collective he/she is 'thought to obtain a sense of belonging', or solidarity, through the 'sharing of experience, strength and hope', it might be inferred that through the experience of supporting Evan, Jay and Peter also benefited from the reinforcement of their Christian identities and evangelistic roles that their mutual recognition of each other's transformations implied.

> Evan: for the first year [post conversion] ... they were always with me night and day, people like Peter and Jay... we would meet together... they almost sort of mentored me and gave me good advice… These guys put a lot of time into me, encouraged me and supported me until I almost could stand on my feet myself in a sense, until I could walk as a Christian and make the right choices and the right decisions; they were very influential in the early days.

Having this circle of support following his conversion was particularly important to Evan whose relationship with Monica and his former networks concluded because he had become a Christian. Evan described this series of rejections as a significant challenge, whilst simultaneously recognising the challenges that living in a criminal milieu without participating in it would have represented in the early stages of desistance and recovery.

> Evan: I didn't say to my friends, 'I am not talking to you because I'm a Christian', I suddenly realised that because I had become a Christian, people almost kept away from me. Nobody seemed to come and visit me after that… I was disappointed…[but] I don't know if it would have been wise to hang about with the same people at that time because I might have been vulnerable at that time, just coming off drugs and doing things and falling back into that kind of lifestyle, but it still hurt.

Like Jay, Evan developed new social relationships through his association with and involvement in various faith-based organisations and institutions. The contribution of these new social relationships in enabling Evan's participation in employment, and the contribution of employment in supporting his process of change are discussed further under the superordinate theme *'The Meanings and Outcomes of Work'.* The following subtheme discusses the dynamics of Evan's involvement in his families of formation and intimate relationships and the individual and relational factors which variously influenced his experience of these roles and relationships.

The role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

This sub-theme explores differences in the role of Evan's two significant intimate relations in constraining or sustaining change at different stages in his life and the constraints that a range of factors exerted on the impact and significance of his experience of becoming a father at the ages of 17 and 25.

As discussed in Chapter 2, it is likely that a coalescence of factors will affect the dynamic experience of parenthood (see for example Arendell 2000; Hauari and

Hollingworth 2009; Marsiglio and Pleck 2004) including age, maturity, one's experience of being parented, the status, nature and dynamics of the relational context within which a given form of parenting occurs, and individual personal, cultural and socio-economic contexts - all of which variously constrain or enable the realisation of this role and social identity. Evan's first son, David, was born when Evan was seventeen years old, the outcome of a very brief relationship with David's mother, Jane. As previously noted, at this point in his life, Evan's lifestyle cohered around socialising with his friends and engaging in acquisitive crime, interrupted only by the imposition of frequent short prison sentences, all of which necessarily curtailed Evan's level of involvement with his son. At this stage, Evan's ultimate concerns surrounded the acquisition of money and the pursuit of this lifestyle, with which both intimate relationships and fatherhood were incompatible. Although he had seen David as a baby, by the time Evan was released from his three and a half year prison sentence, aged 22, his son was aged five.

> Evan: I had seen him once or twice when he was a baby but I had been in prison for the last three or four years …I didn't want to have the responsibility of the relationship but I would go up and demand to see the baby at inappropriate times. I lived for the weekend and… I wasn't going to be nailed into that relationship. I didn't have any real concern for [Jane]… so that probably had an effect on me not taking responsibility for [David].

For Evan, then, becoming a father at this time, in the context of his relationship with Jane (or lack thereof), engendered no reflexive re-orientation of his ultimate concerns, nor did his subsequent abstinence from offending influence his inclination towards assuming parental responsibilities towards his son, which were overshadowed by his disinterest in Jane. Rather, Evan's disengagement from

offending at this time was motivated by his aversion to further imprisonment and was enabled by his participation in temporary employment which restricted his perceived need to engage in acquisitive crime. His relational commitments to Monica, in turn, further diminished the desirability of offending behaviour, and its consequences. Moreover, spending time at work and with Monica had a significant impact on his formerly routine social activities and the social spaces he occupied, which further enabled his abstinence from crime. While, then, these self-initiated changes to his conditioning structures had the effect of enabling his abstinence from offending, it was Evan's reflexive re-prioritisation of his individual and relational concerns, which motivated his pursuit of a different lifestyle, underpinned by his desire to maintain the relational goods emerging from his relationship with Monica, to which they were mutually oriented. Evan observed that this was his first experience of stability and normalcy and maintaining this significant relationship became his ultimate concern.

> Evan: It was the first time in my life I'd had any stability and I felt I had found my soul mate. I'd found somebody I could really express love [with] and [who] I really cared about and really wanted to be with and I'd poured out my heart. She was the first person I had told about the abuse… It was good, it was great that I could share that… That went on for 7 month … then the bombshell came when she told me at Christmas time that she wanted me to move out.

In the context of the termination of both his employment and this relationship, Evan responded by immersing himself once more in *'the party lifestyle',* through which he was introduced to recreational drug use. What this seems to suggest then is that Evan's initial abstinence from offending at this stage was contingent on the maintenance of this relationship, which had triggered a re-prioritisation of his

ultimate concerns and which, in turn, underpinned the ensuing changes he initiated in his projects and practices. While the separation between Monica and Evan was short-lived it had an enduring effect on their interactive dynamics and on the nature of the bond between them which, for Evan, diminished the salience of this relationship in the context of his shifting constellation of concerns.

> Evan: something happened and I think I lost trust … so that was [1988] and by this time I had started dabbling in drugs and by September had mainlined… I felt the relationship was never really the same again and I was playing away from home, taking drugs, selling drugs and I was clubbing Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

Evan remained in a relationship with Monica for several years thereafter, but the nature and form of the relationship had been altered by his experience of betrayal and loss, and while the relationship was of significance to him, it was no longer his relationship of ultimate concern. He was associating frequently with others who were similarly involved in recreational drug use and its attendant social scene, which, as previously explained, ultimately heralded his resumption of offending. The diminution of the relational goods he had been motivated to maintain thus influenced the meaning and significance of this relationship, which irrevocably diminished the satisfaction he had initially derived from this relationship (Donati 2011a).

In 1990, Evan and Monica had a son, Jake. In this markedly different relational context, Evan's involvement with Jake was thus more intense than his involvement with David. However, by this time, Evan had developed an addiction to Amphetamine, which, resulted in increasingly frequent periods of imprisonments, diminishing his capacity to parent and to personify this role identity. While as

previously discussed, he engaged in an internal conversation (personal reflexivity) at this time, particularly during periods of imprisonment, his concerns acknowledged but were not altered by being in a new role position in relation to either Jake or Monica.

> Evan: I loved [becoming a father] but I knew I was an addict… I did try and make a go of it but I was losing it… the drugs were controlling my life…

Ultimately, Monica terminated the relationship with Evan, following his conversion to Christianity. Monica did not share his faith, and the alteration in his attitudes, expectations and behaviours, and the disjuncture between their ultimate concerns, compounded by the cumulative effect that his addiction and frequent imprisonment had exerted on the nature of the bond between them, contributed to the demise of the relationship.

A year after his conversion, Evan met and married Evie, to whom he remains married. Evie is also a 'born-again' Christian, and as such she shares his religious commitments to be of service to others. The recognition and reinforcement of Evan's transformation that his relationship with Evie implied, and her encouragement to realise these generative concerns contributed to his personification of his religious identity. While, then, his relationship with Evie was not causative of desistance, she was a critical support to him following his conversion and remains central to his emotional well-being.

> Evan: I think we married quickly [because] we had the same passion; we had the same drive in life; the same goals; we wanted to be effective Christians, reaching out to be people, particularly the marginalised, and she encouraged

me all the way… Knowing there's a girl here who's committed herself to me, loves me, supports me, was there for me when life was tough as well and I am there for her, to love and support her.

Despite the intimacy, strength and endurance of their relationship, like Peggy in Jay's story, Evie barely features in Evan's narrative, which may, in part, be attributable to her involvement in his life subsequent to his conversion and the impact that being 'born-again' can exert on peoples' personal and social identities, and their relations with their partners, in that God becomes the relationship of ultimate concern.

Superordinate Theme	Subtheme
The Meanings and Outcomes of Work	The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work
	Constraints and limitations

Table 14: The Meanings and Outcomes of Work

The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work

As previously observed, Evan's first significant experience of participation in employment occurred following his release from a three and a half year prison sentence at the age of 22. At this stage, the economic outcomes diminished any perceived need to engage in acquisitive offending, which, in the context of his relationship with Monica, enabled behavioural and lifestyle changes. However, as previously observed, the maintenance of these changes was primarily contingent on his commitment to this relation of concern. Despite his temporary abstinence from offending, at this stage, he experienced no significant pro-social shift in his values or in his personal and social identity, that altered his attitude to offending, which only occurred later - following his conversion to Christianity.

Like Jay, Evan's faith is expressed through the nature of his work, which, since his conversion to Christianity has been oriented to supporting individuals and communities in need. Evan conceptualises his work as an expression of his faith, in terms of a life lived in service to others, informed by the Christian relational ethics of subsidiarity and solidarity referred to previously. For both Jay and Evan, it is the meaning and outcomes of the work that is of enduring significance in consolidating their new, 'born-again' identity and thus their subjective well-being. While Evan's faith imbued the nature of this work with meaning, participating in this work contributed to and enabled the realization of his religious identities. His participation in these works, then, can be construed as an outcome of both his conversion and of desistance; both of which shaped his generative commitments.

Evan obtained work alongside Jay which was oriented to supporting individuals and communities in need and which generated access to a broader network of Christians. Within two months of his conversion to Christianity, Evan began volunteering for the Prison Fellowship with which he continued for the next two years. In the early stages, his involvement in a 'helping collective' with other volunteers, enabled the generation of new social relationships and provided 'a sense of belonging', or solidarity, through the 'sharing of experience, strength and hope' (Maruna and LeBel 2006: 66).

> Evan: We used to do things like have barbecues and away days for families of prisoners ...and some of their friends. And you got the volunteers who came together as well ... we would try to support [each other].

As a prison mentor, like Jay, Evan shared his story of personal transformation. McAdams (2008) conceptualizes the life-story as a narrative of personal identity, which is realized in the telling. In particular, the Christian testimonial provides an opportunity to bear witness to one's experience of transformation to others, which, for Evan, also facilitated a shift in his social identity. Thus, unlike Jed's suppression of his past self, this narrative [re]construction of the self supports the integration of a past self into one's present self (Maruna 2001) which can itself be empowering and therapeutic in certain contexts, particularly when it enables one's past to be reconceptualised as a strength.

> Evan: I began to go into prisons ...to share ... how God had changed my life – and it was offering hope to some of the guys and... I got that little bit more respect 'cos' they knew I had been in their shoes ... [I] enjoyed it because I felt I was being effective, people were listening to me and I came back feeling... I had helped someone.

His involvement in this 'generative' role (Maruna 2001) thus not only reinforced his own process of change but was oriented to supporting others as he had been supported. However, during this period, Evan married Evie and, in *this* relational context, the constraints of not generating an income surfaced. As observed in 'Jay's Story', leadership and the assumption of responsibility for oneself and for others are definitive features of Pentecostal Christian interpretations of and discourses on masculinity and are associated with being the principal provider (van Klinken 2012) which, as the extract below suggests, marked some continuity with his internalised beliefs surrounding cultural norms of masculinity relating to gender roles.

> Evan: Evie was working [and] I had that sense that I need to work, know she shouldn't be working herself, I should be working know -- that's a prominent mentality for the West of Scotland, you know, you should be the provider and the woman should be the home nester or whatever know.

Sharing his frustration, the Church leaders employed him to engage in community outreach and to attend a theological college. Over several years, Evan established a drop-in centre and a food and furniture bank for distribution to people in need and engaged other young people, who he had been mentoring, to assist him in his ministry. However, while both his participation in paid employment and the nature of the work had a significant role in, respectively, contributing to his position of provider, and in realising his religious commitments, the constraints of working in Coaston exacted particular constraints and limitations on his sense of, and opportunities for, personal progression from which he only felt liberated following his relocation to London in 2005, where he continues to reside.

Constraints and Limitations

Evan currently works as an Evangelist in London, which, in particular, he considers has enabled him to '*grow and develop and to be the person you are really meant to be'.* Despite the recognition of his transformation he received through his association with a community of believers, and despite the recognition of change he experienced from people in the community, the enduring proximity of a previously 'spoiled identity' (Goffman 1963) embedded in this sense of place, and in the memories of the community, constrained his sense of personal progression. While, on the one hand, he was recognised as a reformed individual, he perceived that the recognition he received reflected the distance he had travelled from his past self,

which remained the dominant identity through which lens the positive social recognition he received was refracted. Moving to a new location enabled him to be recognised as the person he had become, as an Evangelist.

> Evan: I felt I was a bit restricted in [Coaston]…I tried to become transparent and say 'well you know where I have been people… I have blown it and I have done this and I've done that - however this is who I am now and this is what I do and this is what I believe'. But, since coming to London, I feel like I don't have … the baggage of the community. I have grown up in [Coaston], [and everyone knows] what is going on – it's such a small community. The issues of people are so well known. I don't have that [now]. Sometimes it smothers you. I think in London it's as if I had been given wings and I could fly in a sense – really blossom and grow and develop.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Evan's life beyond the fragmentation of the Del, and, in that, his process of desistance. Echoing Jay's narrative of change, this analysis has revealed the centrality of his conversion to Pentecostal Christianity and his internalisation of the Christian faith both to his narrative of change and to every aspect of his life. His initial conversion was supported, reinforced and sustained by his extant social relationships with Peter and Jay and his participation in new Christian relational networks, which enabled the expression of his faith and generative commitments and which contributed to the transformation in his personal and social identity with which continued offending was incompatible. In concert with the preceding individual stories, this chapter has illustrated the ways in which desistance is co-produced between individuals-in-relation, foregrounding a

conceptualization of a reflexive individual whose ultimate concerns emerge from, are immersed in and shape their relational worlds. Where Jed's, Seth's and Harry's desistance emerged as a means to realising their relational concerns with, to varying degrees, their families of formation, in which participation in employment played a part, like Jay, Evan's relationship of ultimate concern was of a spiritual form and his principle role identity emerged as a Christian.

Although Evan considers his conversion to be the catalyst to change, Evan's earlier participation in employment following his release from prison, in the context of a significant intimate relationship (T1-2 in Figure 12) enabled a new way of living. The significance of Evan's relationship with Monica in diminishing his desire to offend cannot be reduced to the effects of one individual on another but rather is the outcome of the application of their relational reflexivity. As this chapter has illustrated, the bonds forged between them constituted their reciprocal orientation towards each other (T2-3) and, in turn, their desire to maintain the emergent relational goods prompted and guided their actions in order to sustain this relationship and maintain the associated relational goods (Donati 2011a) to which Evan applied his personal reflexivity and responded by refraining from acquisitive offending and modifying his behaviours (T4). His separation from Monica, the loss of his employment, his participation in an alternative social network and addiction combined to influence his conditioning structures (T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle).

In the context of the increasing deleterious outcomes of his addiction on his physical and mental wellbeing, his frequent imprisonment, and increasing social isolation (at T4 – T1), he became progressively receptive to Peter and Jay's faith-based interventions and testimonies of change. His internalisation of the teachings of

Pentecostal Christianity influenced by his interactions with Peter and Jay (T2-3) ultimately shaped his identity, behaviour and lifestyle (T4), and, in turn the sets of relations in which he was involved (at T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle). Bringing his personal reflexivity to bear with regard to his position in this new relational context (T2-3) motivated his participation in evangelism and ministry (T4).

As with preceding chapters, this chapter thus marks a departure from current explanations for desistance that fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions by ignoring how the individual perceives and responds to such influences. But it also extends agentic and cognitive explanations by moving beyond their explanations of the onset of desistance, and offering an elaboration of how relations sustain or hinder desistance over time. In particular, 'Evan's Story' – like Jay's - builds on and contributes to the burgeoning, yet limited, literature on the contributions of religiosity and spirituality to desistance.

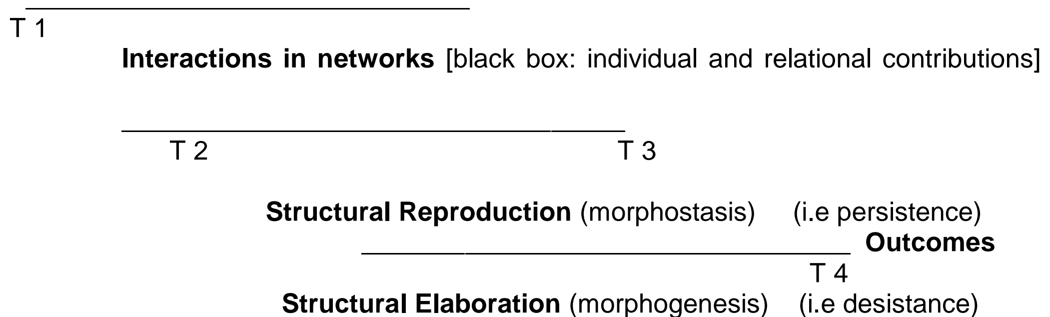

Figure 12: overview of investigative framework

CHAPTER 12: THE DYNAMICS[53] OF DESISTANCE

This thesis has sought to analyse how desistance is accomplished (or not) through the life stories of a naturally forming group of men, now in their late forties, whose lives had shared beginnings and who once offended together, but whose lives have since diverged. In so doing, Chapter 5 and the individual stories comprising Chapters 6-11 reveal the dynamics of offending and desistance as they occurred within and between individuals-in-relation while situating their lived experiences within their shared historical, structural and cultural contexts. Donati's relational sociology (2011a) was the conceptual lens through which the roles of different social relations in variously constraining or enabling change were investigated and thus, through which individual and relational contributions to desistance were analysed.

The conceptual schema applied in this study (see Figure 13) represents the researcher's adaptation of the morphogenetic framework as theorised by Archer, to illustrate the conceptual schema progressed by Donati (2011a) (see Chapter 3). In so doing, the analysis has demonstrated how social relations (different from conditioning structures) are configured in the T2-T3 phase (see Figure 15 below) to observe what happens in interactions with significant others. They have constraints and enablements from outside, as well as their own internal network dynamics, which are distinct from what happens inside individuals (individual contributions) (see Figure 14 below) as they autonomously evaluate their situation, take decisions and so on (analysed through Archer's internal conversation). The elaborated structure, or outcomes, (T4 in Figure 13) thus emerge as products of both the

[53] The term 'dynamic' refers to a) the distinct elements of the change process and b) the processes through which desistance are enabled. It recognises thus the influence and interaction between the elements that contribute to desistance as well as the activity and change that occurs within and between those elements over time.

individual's application of their personal reflexivity (individual contributions) and of the interactive dynamics of their relational network(s) (relational contributions). This is because, as the preceding chapters have illustrated, social relations have their own powers and qualities in contributing to the final outcome.

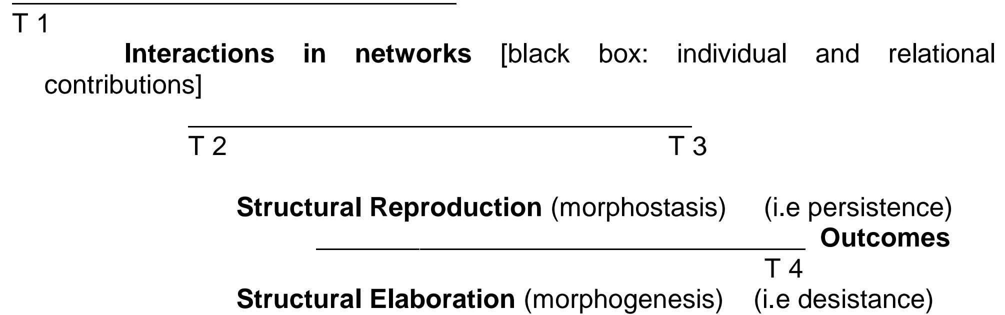

Figure 13: overview of investigative framework

Drawing on Donati's (2011a) relational sociology in general and his theory of relational reflexivity in particular, and therefore taking the social relation, rather than the individual or the structural, as the primary unit of analysis, the individual stories have illuminated how desistance is co-produced between individuals-in-relation. Each story foregrounds a conceptualisation of a reflexive individual whose ultimate concerns emerge from, are immersed in, respond to and shape their relational worlds. In revealing these relational processes, the individual stories have illustrated the centrality of the relational to the individual and thus to processes of change in a broad sense, and to desistance from crime in particular. Taken together, what the individual stories have revealed is an understanding of desistance as a complex, individualised, reflexive and relational process. This chapter represents the final substantive chapter of these eight data chapters (5-12), and examines the dynamics of desistance as they emerge across these stories.

This chapter commences with a brief collective biographical overview and then proceeds to explore the recurrent elements across individuals' narratives of change elaborated under the superordinate themes: *'Religiosity/Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance'* and *'The Meanings and Outcomes of Work'* through the lens of the conceptual framework deployed throughout this thesis.

Brief Collective Biographical Overview

	Born / age	Offence Type	No. of self-reported Convictions	Age at onset[54]	Age at desistance[55]	Length of offending career: years
Andy	1961 / 48	Acquisitive	19	13	N/A	35
Seth	1965 / 43	Acquisitive &Violent	50	9	22 (1987)	13
Harry	1961 / 47	Acquisitive &Violent	3 pages	13	33 (1994)	20
Jed	1961 / 48	Acquisitive &Violent	80	14	30 (1991)	16
Jay	1963 / 46	Acquisitive &Violent	20	13	29 (1992)	16
Evan	1965 / 43	Acquisitive	100	14	29 (1994)	15

Table 12: Overview of offending trajectories

While noting Andy's persistence in offending, there is nothing remarkable about the age-graded trajectories of these individuals' offending careers. However, as the preceding individual stories have illuminated, there are significant points of convergence and divergence across these men's pathways out of crime, following the fragmentation of the Del.

[54] Age at onset refers to onset of an established pattern of offending.
[55] Age at desistance refers to the age at which an individual considers they desisted. It is noteworthy that both Seth and Jed offended again at a later date, although, as discussed later in this chapter, they regard this as conceptually different from their earlier offending.

The fragmentation of the Del and its consequences influenced the dynamics of each person's offending behaviour and their relational networks. Following the fragmentation of the Del, Seth, Jed and Jay relocated to London, and, alongside others who comprised one side of the warring Del, formed a 'revised group'. Of these three, only Seth relocated with the intention of desisting. Seth saw the move, his pending fatherhood and participation in employment as an opportunity to consolidate the process of change he had already begun in prison. For Jay, his participation in employment, enabled by the mutual support and exchange of resources among the revised group, diminished the desirability of participation in acquisitive crime and his use of Amphetamine reduced his participation in violent crime. However, his recreational drug use progressively led to his participation in drug dealing and poly-drug misuse which he ultimately ceased following his conversion to Christianity, to which he attributes his desistance from crime. Jed similarly had no intention to desist following his relocation to London but, like Jay, the economic outcomes of his participation in employment diminished the desirability of involvement in acquisitive crime while enabling the maintenance of a lifestyle that included participation in alcohol-related violence. Jed desisted for a period of 14 years after he met his partner Rachel, although following his return to Coaston and his inability to acquire employment, he temporarily reverted to offending.

Following the feud, Andy associated with the Nixons in prison (the opposing 'side' of the Del) and continued to do so following his release and his return to Coaston. This resulted in a violent reprisal by the Websters, and from this juncture, Andy had no further contact with either faction although, like Evan, he continued to engage in acquisitive crime alone and has spent a total of thirty-two years in prison. Unlike the

others, Harry and Evan prudentially avoided positioning themselves with either side of the warring Del. They both remained in Coaston and both continued to engage in offending behaviour enabled by their participation in alternative relational networks. For Harry, his involvement with 'the football crowd', with whom his brother associated, influenced his diversification into football-related violent offending. With his deepening connection to his partner Millie, however, he eventually relinquished housebreaking but it was not until he became a father that he ultimately desisted. After a brief period of abstaining from acquisitive crime following his release from prison, Evan, echoing Jay's story, diversified from acquisitive crime into drug dealing, reflecting his involvement in drug use with an alternative friendship group. Like Jay, he desisted from offending following his conversion to Christianity.

Despite differences in their responses to the fragmentation of the Del broad commonalities across their individual pathways emerged relating to the role of extant and new social networks, intimate relationships, families of formation and employment in variously triggering, enabling or constraining desistance. However, what the individual analyses particularly revealed were distinct differences in *how* these social relations variously enabled or constrained desistance. Taking the social relation as a central unit of analysis facilitated an exploration of the shifting configurations, meanings and influences of these social relations both over time and in interaction with other social relations. This yielded interesting differences as to how, when and why these social relations variously enabled or constrained an individual's process of change, which can be broadly attributable to important differences in the nature, form and meaning of these different social relations, and in individual responses to them, refracted through the lens of their individual and relational concerns. It is, however, a summation of the recurrent elements of the

change process, manifesting across these individuals' stories, which this chapter is concerned to reveal.

Roles, Religiosity, Relationality, Reflexivity and Desistance

The role of extant and new social networks in supporting desistance

In elaborating the role that extant and new social relationships play in variously constraining or enabling desistance, Chapter 5 and the individual stories comprising chapter 6-12 illustrated that the outcomes cannot be reduced to the effects of one person on another. Rather it is the application of the reflexivity of an individual or of individuals-in-relation's, brought to bear on social relations, through the lens of their individual or relational concerns, that is critical in contributing to the outcomes. Thus the impact of friends and friendship groups, intimate relations, families of formation and employment (discussed in turn) on individual behaviour are attributable to the bonds maintained *between* people; bonds that constitute their reciprocal orientations towards each other and the chains of meaning that these particular types of social relations entail for individuals, who bring their own reflexivity to bear in a manner consistent with their ultimate concerns (Donati 2011a). The chains of meanings that characterise a given social relation are 'the complicated tissue of relations between culture, personality, social norms' and lived experiences (Donati 2011a: 130).

Conditioning structures enabling change: friendship groups (T1 Figure 13)

This sub-section offers an illustrative overview of the way conditioning structures (T1) shape the situations of actions for individuals and their friendship groups, and the ways in which these individuals and collectivities in turn influence and shape their conditioning structures (T4-T1).

The conditioning influence of the structural/cultural context (T1-2 in Figure 13) works through shaping situations - from the accessibility of resources to the prevalence of beliefs to the sets of relations in which people find themselves - such that some courses of action would be impeded and discouraged, while others would be facilitated and encouraged (Archer 2007a; Donati 2011a). In this manner, they influence the nature and form a given social relation takes. The conditioning structures can thus be understood as the sets of relational rules prescribing how one should behave in a certain way towards others, according to the norms that the context prescribes, which the individual must follow reflexively or the constraints which can be negotiated step by step in a relational way (Donati 2011, Pers. Comm.). What is normatively expected of a person form the constraints and enablements in their conditioning structures, but these are different in different contexts and social spheres – for example, among the 'revised group', 'the Christians' and 'the football crowd' – and they may be more or less constraining or enabling, more or less explicit or implicit, requiring more or less reflexivity.

Notwithstanding the divergent responses among 'the revised group' to the shift in conditioning structures that their collective relocation to London engendered (see Jed's, Seth's and Jay's stories), they shared a desire to extricate themselves from the 'relational bads' (of betrayal, mistrust, and interpersonal violence) (Donati 2011a) emerging from the feud, as well as a desire to access the employment opportunities afforded by the construction boom in London. Employment in a new environment heralded economic and social changes to the 'revised group's' conditioning structures that enabled change (however differently manifest) (T1 in Figure 13). The recognition and pursuit of these opportunities can be construed as an outcome of the exercise of reflexivity and as an expression of their individual and

collective agency (T2-3). Critically, re-establishing a revised and collaborative relational network in a new location facilitated the re-emergence of the relational goods of social trust, solidarity, and social connectedness; goods that had been threatened by the feud and from which other goods including new knowledge, skills, employment and economic resources were derived as secondary emergent effects (Donati 2006). These secondary effects in turn necessarily shaped the collective conditioning structures of the revised group (T1 in the next morphogenetic cycle).

While the divide within the group triggered an individual and collective reflexive re-evaluation of their relationships with each other and their associated and shared practices, some of the group members' (such as Adam and Seth) individual relational concerns with their intimate partners (T1) (discussed further below) also impacted the internal network dynamics within the group. Personal relationships exerted a distinct change-promotive influence on the behaviour of *some* of those in the revised group[56] and their lifestyles. However, the acquisition of new relationships and associated social roles and practices exerted a significant influence not only on individual behaviour but on the interactive dynamics of the revised group. This operated in conjunction with an increasing disillusionment with their previous lifestyles and the threat continued offending potentially posed to these new roles and relationships, to their shifting identities and to employment opportunities. The priorities and concerns of individuals shifted away from the group and towards their families of formation. Associated changes in their behaviour then exerted a constraint on the behaviour of others, who found they had less support from their desisting peers for engagement in offending behaviour. This reflected a change in the relational rules in this revised relational context, to which they responded by

[56] The contributions of different social relations are separated out for analytic purposes but, as preceding chapters have illustrated, there is considerable interaction between the various social relations which necessarily influence outcomes.

reflecting on their position and modifying their behaviour, motivated by a desire to support each other. Their individual and relational contributions (T2-3 in Figure 13) to the outcomes (T4) are discussed further below. Critically, individuals' capacities to access and thus realise and sustain these opportunities emerged from the *mutual and reciprocal* exchange of support and resources among the revised group, as an outcome of their *collaborative* efforts, of shifts in their *interactive* dynamics and in the diversified *relational* contexts the move facilitated, both within and beyond the group. Individuals responded differently to these changes in the group through the lens of their own individual and relational concerns. I have suggested that individual responses to these changes in their conditioning structures illustrate that the outcomes cannot be explained in terms of external forces exerting an exogenous effect; rather they reflect individuals' varying receptivity and response to these changes, reflexively mediated through the lens of their individual and relational concerns (discussed further in the following sub-sections).

The shifts in Harry's conditioning structures as a consequence of the fragmentation of the Del (T1 in Figure 13) and his association with an alternative 'subculture' ('the football crowd' (at T4-T1) enabled him to continue offending. Collectively, the interactive dynamics and shared projects and practices he moved into (T2-3) heralded a diversification in the context in which his violent offending behaviour occurred. Identification to and with this new group necessarily required an acceptance and adoption of the norms and rules of associational belonging (Hogg and Hardie 1991) characteristic of the membership of this group (T1). These norms or rules included attendance at each football game and an explicit and unwavering support of the club which was often expressed through violent conflicts with members of the opposing club. The changes in Harry's conditioning structures

manifest in his extrication from the Del and his association with a new group thus enabled changes in his personal and social identity, and moral status, in the transition from offender to football fan or 'hooligan'. However, whilst representing a measurable break from his former lifestyle, not least in terms of shifts in the frequency and context of, and thus justifications and motivations for, his offending (the nature of which was also altered as an outcome of his relationship with Millie), there is evidence of some continuity in terms of his immersion in an alternative sub-culture which afforded him a source of status, recognition, masculinity, community and belonging in which anti-social and violent behaviours were variously tolerated and expected. Football and the associated 'fan' culture and social life structured Harry's social relationships, lifestyle and identity for eight years after the fragmentation of the Del.

Following the fragmentation of the Del, both Jay and Evan (independently from each other) participated in recreational drug use. Ultimately, their addiction (and the lifestyle it engendered) created the conditions which, differently, shaped and influenced their offending behaviour, lifestyles and subjective well-being, as the pursuit of drugs manifested as their ultimate concern. Independently, their addiction and association with similarly situated others structured their situations of action (T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle) and generated new constraints and enablements. As an outcome of their increasing desperation about the deleterious consequences that their addiction produced for their physical and mental wellbeing, relational contexts and lifestyles (at T4 – T1), both Jay and Evan became progressively receptive to their friends' faith-based interventions and testimonies of change. Their internalisation of the teachings of Pentecostal Christianity influenced by their interactions with friends from the Del who had converted (T2-3), ultimately

shaped their identities, behaviours and lifestyle (T4), and, in turn the sets of relations in which they were involved (at T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle).

Religion traditionally encapsulates particular beliefs, values, attitudes and practices that, in conjunction with the relational ties formed through religious institutions, creates a new world, and thus shapes the conditioning structures, for the convert to inhabit (Rambo 1993) (T1 in the next phase of the morphogenetic cycle). As both Jay's and Evan's stories illustrated, in the process of being 'born again' both 'a new moral subject [and] a new male gendered subject is created, inspired by an alternative understanding of masculinity' (van Klinken 2012:225) which, together, shaped their identities, behaviours and lifestyles and created the conditions in which a new way of living was realisable and a new experience of the self was brought into being.

Critically (and as implied in the foregoing analysis) conditioning structures can only exert constraints and enablements *in relation to* something for someone – thus the extent to which they constrain and enable is dependent on how the individual receives and responds to them, which itself cannot be disconnected from the way in which significant others receive and respond to them, and thus which influences their interactions. The following sub-section offers an overview of what this process of individual reflexivity entails before situating it in the relational context in which it arises.

Individual/Personal reflexivity and the change process: friendship groups T2-3 (Figure 13 & Figure 14)

Archer (2003) specifies that personal reflexivity is the mediating force between conditioning structures and agency; further, this process of reflexive deliberation is

the means through which people identify and order the ultimate concerns to which they commit themselves. Archer argues that reflexivity performs this mediating role 'by virtue of the fact that we deliberate about ourselves in relation to the social situations we confront, certainly fallibly, certainly incompletely' (2007a: 42). The process of reflexivity is conceptualised by Archer as an 'internal conversation'; she argues that it is this dialogue about ourselves in relation to our social worlds that makes active agents, people who can exercise some governance in, or exercise control over, their lives as opposed to passive agents to whom things simply happen. The activation of the causal powers of the conditioning structures depends on the individual's ultimate concerns and in turn the projects and practices (broadly, the means through which people intend to realise their ultimate concerns) that they commit themselves to. In turn, actors can be said to actively mediate their own social and cultural conditioning in that 'reflexive deliberations have causal powers, that is intrinsic ones which enable us to monitor and modify ourselves, and extrinsic ones which allow us to mediate and modify our societies' (Archer 2003: 46).

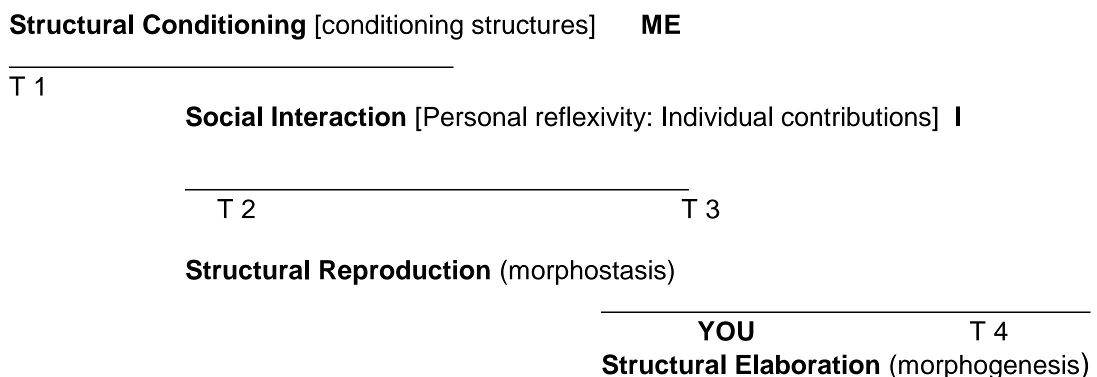

Figure 14: The Morphogenetic Sequence applied to the Internal Conversation (individual contributions)[57]

[57] Archer distinguishes the internal relationality of the self into the temporal concepts of 'Me', 'I' and 'You'. Generally 'Me' refers to the pre-existing self; 'I' refers to the present self; 'You' refers to the future self.

Figure 14 illustrates Archers morphogenetic sequence applied to the internal conversation. The conditioning 'me' phase, and the emerging results of previous deliberations, also fed through previous interactions, work to condition an individual's actions at T1. The 'I' phase at T2-T3 evokes an internal conversation, conditioned thus by the pre-existing self, the ‘ME’, which defines a future direction, and in so doing shapes and influences the ‘You’ of the future (T4). In this way we decide on courses of actions by ruminating on ourselves, our concerns and our social contexts, envisioning and pursuing projects that reflect and define who we are, that enable us to realise our ultimate concerns, in circumstances that are to a greater or lesser degree pre-defined. This internal conversation ceases (temporarily - as it is a dynamic process) when the different parts of the self reach an internal agreement about the projected course of action that best reflects the individual's 'constellations of concerns', (Archer 2007a:42) but which is also realisable within the given social circumstances the individual inhabits. Discernment, deliberation and dedication[58] are the three fundamental moments of the internal conversation that Archer argues is the reflexive aspect of individuals’ subjectivity which explains the mediation of conditioning structures (see in particular Jed and Seth’s stories). This is, in part, what occupies the middle stage (T2-T3) of each morphogenetic cycle (2000:231).

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[58] For a discussion of Archer’s Internal Conversation see Chapter 3. Briefly, ‘discernment’ refers to a process whereby the person reviews the possible alternative lifestyle choices available to them, in contrast to their current lifestyle, reflecting a ‘willing[ness] to consider different options' (Vaughan 2007:394). ‘Deliberation’ is an evaluative process, in which one reviews the perceived costs, benefits and implications pertaining to a given situation or potential courses of action (Archer 2000). In the final phase, in dedicating ourselves to those things about which we are most concerned, the internal conversation (personal reflexivity) conducts a final review as to whether a life envisioned in relation to a particular set of concerns is worth working towards and whether they are capable of both achieving and sustaining it. In this vein, reflexivity incorporates notions of transcendence through which we can imagine ourselves and our relations differently from what we/they are and thus capable of actualizing things as yet unrealized (Donati 2011a).

As elaborated across the individual stories, individual responses to the changes in their conditioning structures that the feud heralded illustrate that the outcomes cannot be explained in terms of external forces exerting an exogenous effect; rather these outcomes reflect individuals' varying receptivity and responses to these changes reflexively mediated through the lens of their individual and relational concerns. Upon their relocation to London, neither Jed nor Jay had the intention of desisting. However, their reflexive response to the changes in their conditioning structures engendered by the move, participation in employment and association with the revised group (T1 in Figure 14), triggered a reflexive process in which they reviewed the possible alternative lifestyle choices available to them (discernment), in contrast to their 'current' lifestyle (T2-3). Both relocation to a new environment and participation in employment diminished the desirability of acquisitive crime in the early stages of change as an outcome of their review (deliberation) of the perceived costs, benefits and implications of participation in work and the attendant lifestyle changes (contra offending) this necessitated in a new environment and a revised relational context. At this stage, Jay and Jed both 'dedicated' themselves to these changes in their projects (courses of action) and practices (ways of being in the world) (Archer 2007a). Whilst this did not in itself manifest in desistance, it did result in the relinquishment of acquisitive crime and contributed to their decision to modify their behaviours and lifestyles (T4).

Not all 'internal conversations' necessarily result in morphogenesis (or change). Evan's frequent imprisonment during his mid-twenties (T1 in Figure 14) triggered a period of reflexivity in which he compared and measured his own progress and behaviour against his friends' desistance from crime and normative developmental transitions (T2-3). However this did not provide the impetus or motivation to initiate change; his addiction had led to a diminished sense of agency and self-efficacy

such that Evan felt powerless to influence his conditioning structures and exercise control over his behaviour[59] (T4). Reflecting Archer's (2010, 2012) concept of fractured reflexivity, his internal conversation reinforced to him that positive change was unlikely. In this context, then, the internal conversation does not lead to a purposeful course of action and only intensifies personal distress leading to (albeit temporarily) passivity among agents who feel unable to effect change in their conditioning structures, producing morphostasis (T4-1) and a continuation of existing projects and practices.

Implicit in these examples of the exercise of reflexivity are individuals comparative positioning of themselves against their primary reference groups. This would suggest, as indeed Donati (2011a) argues, that Archer's (2000; 2003) formulation of the 'internal conversation' needs to be expanded by connecting it to the properties and powers of the social networks in which people live, given that these networks may have their own "reflexivity" (of a different kind). Donati theorises that personal reflexivity refers to that internal conversation the individual has within him/herself, and which is 'a relational operation on the part of an individual mind to an 'Other' who can be internal (the ego as an Other)' (Donati 2011a: 195) in the case of personal reflexivity or 'external (alter)' (Donati 2011a: 195) in reference to another person or persons, denoting a more socially expanded form of reflexivity, which has an 'interactive character' (Donati 2011a:193) but which also takes the social context into consideration (see Figure 15). He argues that social networks can be a context wherein personal reflexivity takes place, but that social relations can themselves have their own reflexivity of a different form to personal reflexivity (which he terms relational reflexivity – discussed further below).

[59] Arguably, imprisonment often exerts similar effects (see Andy's story).

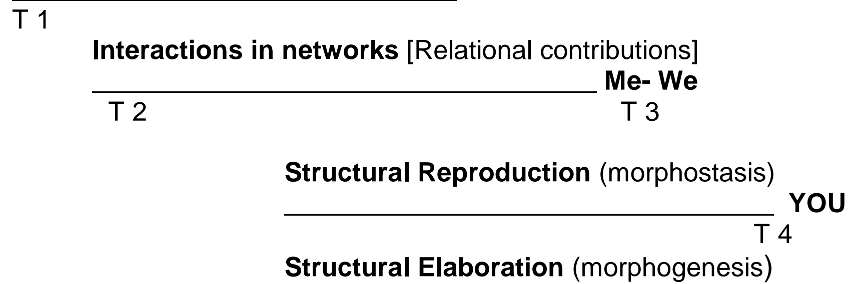

Figure 15: The Morphogenetic Sequence applied to social relations (relational contributions)

The process of reflexivity, through which projects and practices are decided on, realised and sustained, is relational in so far as it is shaped by the relational networks in which it emerges. These sets of relations affect what does and can satisfy the individual and what can be sustained, on which the individual brings his/her personal reflexivity to bear with regard to his/her participation in this relational context (Donati 2011a). To illustrate, in response to the shifting conditioning structures influenced by 'between-individual' changes such as the fragmentation of the Del, the increasing interpersonal violence and the development of a new intimate relationship with Lesley (T1 in Figure 14), Seth began evaluating his current lifestyle through the lens of his similarly shifting ultimate concerns for a different life (discernment phase). During his subsequent imprisonment, he conducted an evaluative review of the perceived costs, benefits and implications of pursuing individual self-change, which included relinquishing past associates in prison, against the interpersonal conflicts and pressures that this would generate (deliberation phase). Evidently, this comparative evaluation is not as solipsistic in focus as Archer's exposition implies; the decision to distance himself was the outcome of his personal reflexivity applied not solely to himself but to his relationships. In turn, Seth's experience of altruistic work through the '*Training for Freedom'* programme (see Seth's story) reinforced his commitment to change (dedication phase) through his association with a group of community volunteers

(T2-3). In particular, his relationships and interactions with his co-workers and his experience of helping others, was particularly significant in communicating an alternative experience of self, and in turn, the possibility that another way of being was realisable. This change process that began in prison was consolidated following his relocation to London (T4-1).

It should be noted that people's ultimate concerns need not always be honourable; the projects may be illegal and the practices dishonest and, further, can be an outcome of fractured processes of reflexivity, as in Andy's case, in which the individual feels buffeted by circumstance and beholden to a life of criminal activity. Reflecting on his subordinate position in the prisoner community (T1 in Figure 14), Andy drew on his repository of personal experiences in the Del and, emulating established patterns of interaction with them, Andy decided to ingratiate himself with dominant prisoners (T2-3) for whom he smuggled and sold drugs, thereby ensuring a level of personal protection (T4) which, ultimately created further constraints in his conditioning structures (T4-1) (see Andy's story).

In this vein, then, social networks can be a context in which reflexivity can take place in triggering, through 'the looking glass self' (Cooley 1922), a reflexive, evaluative process. However, this process of reflexivity is of a more socially expanded form than Archer's concept of personal reflexivity would admit insofar as it is applied not just to oneself, but to one's relationships as a context in which reflexivity takes place. For Harry, the initial impetus to initiate deliberate changes to his lifestyle through participation in work emerged as an outcome of his individual reflexivity triggered by his comparative positioning of himself against his friends comprising 'the football crowd' all of whom were in employment (T1 in Figure 14). His desire to fit in with what they apprehended as 'normal' as he perceived it thus informed this

reflexive process (T2-3) and his motivation to pursue and subsequently personify this new social role as 'worker' (T4).

Similarly, Evan's association and interactions with Jay and Peter prior to his conversion had imbued Christianity with plausibility as 'a hook for change' (Giordano et al. 2002: 992) through his observation of the effects of their transformation following their conversions to Christianity. Indeed, as similarly observed in Jay and Seth's stories, the recognition of change in a credible person is particularly influential where a given individual can identify with the change agent(s) and internalize the benefits of responding to this influence (Kelman 1958) in the hope of achieving similar outcomes. Jay and Peter's continuing compassion, support and recognition of him as someone of worth at the height of his addiction (T1 in Figure 14) had the effect of triggering a process of personal reflexivity through an appraisal of *their* behaviour and how different they and their lives had become (T2-3), which created in him an increasing openness to their faith based interventions and which prompted, in part, his own conversion (T4).

Relational reflexivity and the change process: friendship groups T2-3 (Figure 13 & Figure 15)

What emerges from the life stories of these men is that individual and collective action is guided not only by individual concerns but by the good of the relationships which matter to them. In this context, compromises by individuals-in relation are deliberated over and decided upon in order to sustain these relations and maintain the emergent relational goods. This is what Donati (2011a) refers to as relational reflexivity. The reciprocal adjustments or modifications to their behaviours and related compromises made by individuals-in-relation are the outcome of relational

reflexivity which is motivated by a mutual concern to maintain the social relation, in this case of friendship, and the emergent, co-indivisible relational goods. This is distinct, then, from reflecting on one's own position in a network or comparing one's self to others within one's primary reference group.

The social relation is conceptualised, following Donati, as those bonds maintained between people that constitute their reciprocal orientations towards each other; it is the 'reality in between', that which exists *between* people, and which ''constitute' their reciprocal orientations and actions as distinct from all that characterizes single actors' (Donati 2011a: 60). The impact of a given social relation on individuals' behaviour is, attributable to the bonds maintained *between* people that constitute their reciprocal orientations towards each other, the emergent effects of their interactive dynamics, as well as the chains of meanings that a given type of social relation, as opposed to another, entails for individuals, who bring their own personal reflexivity to bear in a manner consistent with their ultimate concerns (Donati 2011a). It should be noted that this is distinct from the idea of social relations *as a context* (i.e. as the cultural and structural connections in a context under investigation) (see chapter 5) and social relations *as interaction* (as the emergent effects in/of interactive dynamic)' (Donati 2011a: 88-9, emphasis added). Social relations as interaction can be further understood as a) a context in which personal reflexivity is brought to bear, as discussed above and / or b) the manner in which social relations are configured by those participating in the relation as an outcome of the application of their relational reflexivity.

It is the relation between people, their reciprocal orientation to the maintenance of that relation that makes them reflexive in a relational, instead of merely in a personal way. To be clear, the emergent relational goods cannot be produced outwith the context of the relation, and it is to the maintenance of these relational goods that

individuals-in-relation orient themselves. In order to maintain the relational goods, people make adjustments and compromises in their own behaviours towards each other motivated by a concern to maintain the social relation on which the maintenance of the relational goods depends. It is precisely because of the relation, the bond between them and the emergent relational goods of trust, of care and of concern for example, that such relations have their own powers to feed back on, or influence, the subjects participating in the relation, since it exceeds their individual and combined contribution to it. It is concerned with elaborating a new awareness of 'we', a new way of being in relation as a relational good for each person participating in the relation and thus is concerned with reshaping the relation as a reciprocal good in which each member finds a sufficient measure of trust and collaboration in himself because there is a sufficient measure of trust and collaboration with others (Donati 2011a).

In summation, 'the relation cannot be reduced to the subjects even though it can only ‘come alive’ through these subjects. It is in them that the relation takes on a peculiar life of its own' (2011a:130). Each relation, involving two or more people, has, therefore, irreducible properties arising from the reciprocal orientation of those involved. This notion of reciprocity is central to Donati's conceptualisation of social relations. Donati explains that the social relation 'implies an 'exchange of something', a reciprocal action in which something passes from ego to alter and vice versa, which generates a reciprocal link of some kind between them' (Donati: 2011a:73). This reciprocity is what he terms the 'generating mechanism of social relations' (ibid), in that it is the practice of reciprocity itself that generates and re-generates the bond of the relationship.

Concerned to support his friends to start over, Adam encouraged 'the revised group' to relocate and trained them in steel-fixing (see Chapter 5). Adam's concern for his friends can be construed as evidence of his application of his personal reflexivity, not simply to himself or to his individual social mobility, but to his relationships as a way of exercising his leadership in a different way (i.e. in a context which produced relational goods). Moreover, in 'Seth's story', for example it was observed that the desisting friends among the revised group, benefited from the reciprocal support and reinforcement of their efforts to change that their mutual recognition of each other's efforts implied. Seth, for example, described how Adam acted as a type of mentor, using his own experiences to advise him on the possibilities and pitfalls ahead. In particular, as previously observed, the shifting priorities and concerns of some of the revised group (including Adam and Seth) away from the group and towards their families of formation and associated shifts in their behaviour similarly exerted a constraint on the behaviour of others, who found they had less support from their desisting peers for engagement in offending behaviour, reflecting a shift in the relational rules and expectations in this revised relational context. Individuals' modifications of their interactive dynamics, as an outcome of their reflexivity applied to this revised relational context, were thus underpinned by their shared concern with elaborating a new way of being-in-relation as a means of maintaining their shared relational goods.

In echoes of Seth's receptivity to the influence of his elder brother Adam, Jay was particularly receptive to Peter's testimony of conversion, as in turn Evan was to Jay and Peter, due to the existing reciprocal bond between them. Peter's concern for Jay, (and in turn Peter and Jay's concern for Evan), can be construed as evidence of Peter's application of his personal reflexivity, not simply to himself, but to this relationship. Informed by their faith, these friends' concern for and means of relating

to their friend in trouble, were further underpinned by the relational ethics of subsidiarity (to relate to the other in a manner that assists the other to do what must be done) and solidarity (sharing a responsibility through reciprocity), analogous to the manner of relating between 'the revised group' (Donati 2009). These principles consign mutual responsibilities on each person for supporting change and in taking responsibility for personal change (see Jay and Evan's stories).

It is through these reciprocal relations, or relations of reciprocity, which recognise the human dignity of the person, that those participating in them find a shared intrinsic commitment to 'their communal experiential basis as beneficiaries of worth [in reference to the relational goods produced] unobtainable in any other way' (Archer 2000: 10). In terms of friendships, those which were most causally influential were characterised by fraternity, which denotes a particular type of friendship based on mutuality and reciprocity (Pahl 2000) (elaborated in Chapter 5). Reciprocity can be conceptualised as the expression of fraternity and this forms a strong social bond, particularly where the means or manner of relating express solidarity and subsidiarity, however informed. Subsidiarity and solidarity are two ways of relating to others in such a way as to acknowledge the human dignity of the other. Reciprocity can therefore be conceptualised as mutual helping performed in a certain way (Donati 2009), i.e. given in the context of solidarity – one of common responsibility. Subsidiarity is the means or the ways in which this help is offered such that enables the other to do what must be done to realise his ultimate concerns. Where once these relationships and reciprocities contributed to their collective involvement in offending (see Chapter 5), these particular friends also supported each other, albeit to differing degrees and with different effects and at different stages, to pursue constructive changes in their lifestyles and relationships.

This section has summarised the elements of the change process for individuals in the context of their interactions with their extant and new social networks. As previously noted, this differentiation between social relations is for analytic purposes; as the individual stories revealed, there is considerable interaction between the different social relations in which a given individual participates. This section, however, illustrated the role of conditioning structures in variously constraining and enabling change, to which individuals apply their personal reflexivity (which is the mediating force between conditioning structures and individual or collective action) which, in turn, shapes the conditioning structures at the next phases of the morphogenetic cycle. In particular, this section further demonstrated that the application of individual reflexivity needs to be positioned in the relational context within which it arises, and, critically, that social relations can operate with their own, distinct, kind of reflexivity, which Donati (2011a) termed relational reflexivity. In so doing, this section concluded by revealing that it is the nature and intensity of the bond between individuals-in-relation, and the manner of their relating that is of further significance in understanding the relational contributions to the outcomes.

The role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance

This section illustrates the recurrent elements of the change process pertaining to the role of intimate relationships and families of formation in supporting desistance, theorized through the conceptual schema deployed in this study and elaborated above.

Conditioning structures enabling change: intimate relations and families of formation (T1: Figure 13)

As previously noted, intimate relations have constraints and enablements from outside which influence the nature and form the social relation takes, but they also have 'pre-established assumptions that do not depend on them and implies things which go beyond their individuality' (Donati 2011a: 66). Nevertheless, the form and shape that the relation takes is not pre-determined but differs between individuals-in-relation depending on how they personify and interiorise the relation; ergo neither is the form and shape the relation takes permanently fixed. Thus social relations are:

> 'that reference – symbolic and intentional – which connects social subjects as it actualises or generates a connection between them expressive of their reciprocal actions which consist in the influence *that the terms of the relation have on one another* and on the effect of the reciprocity emerging between them' (Donati 2011a: 88, emphasis added).

This symbolic reference, the terms of the relation, denote those 'chains of meanings' brought to that 'type' of relationship rather than another (to a family for example rather than those that exist between members of a church). What emerged across the individual stories was the centrality of the men's internalised configuration of hegemonic 'traditional' working class masculinity (Connell 2002), later refracted through the lens of Pentecostal Christianity by Jay and Evan, in influencing their expectations of their marital relationship and their associated gender roles, and thus the shape and form of this social relation.

To illustrate, the contingent interaction between Jed's role of provider and his participation in employment meant that changes to his conditioning structures (T1 in Figure 13), notably as an outcome of the loss of his employment on his return to Scotland, threatened his sense of masculine identity, particularly when Rachel assumed the role of economic provider. Jed responded to the accumulating strain and pressure he experienced by reverting to crime (T4 in Figure 13) as an outcome of his reflexive evaluation on the different means through which he might maintain this role (T2-3 in Figures 13/14) which ultimately contributed to the demise of his marriage (T4). In this vein, economic and cultural dynamics influence both the nature and form the social relation takes and, in turn, the interactive dynamics between individuals in relation. Indeed, the conditional interaction between the social relation of family and the social relation of employment in shaping the meaning and outcomes of work (discussed below) emerged as a recurrent element across the individual stories. The interaction between these social relations and their combined influence on individuals' personal social identities, as mediated through the lens of individuals' priorities, goals and relational concerns, directly or indirectly influenced their potential to enable or constrain processes of change, at different stages in a given individual's life.

In similar vein, the meaning and experience of fatherhood exists through specific socio-cultural processes, and thus are influenced by a given individual's conditioning structures (T1 in Figure 13), which shape the situations of actions for individuals on which their personal reflexivity is brought to bear (T2-3 in Figures 13/14). For both Seth and Harry, the meaning of fatherhood was further influenced by their own experiences of being parented (T1 in Figure 13). These meanings manifested differently in their desires to be involved in and provide for their families, further reflecting their wider, internalised cultural and class values and beliefs regarding

their roles as partner and parent. These values and beliefs influenced their appropriation of the 'traditional' nature and form of the social relation of family and the associated sets of relational rules that shaped their interactive dynamics (Donati 2011a).

Moreover, changes in individual's conditioning structures (primarily in the form of employment, but also in relation to the wider sets of relations in which they participated) (see for example Jed, Seth and Harry's stories) variously enabled their personification and realisation of this social role, or, alternatively, constrained it (see for example Evan's story). Indeed, the experience (and influence) of fatherhood is often mediated through shifts in peer relationships, intimate relationships and employment which interact to open up new possibilities (Moloney et al. 2009) (T1 in Figure 13). These enabling elements for Seth, for example, included investment in a significant intimate relationship, participation in employment, a fresh start in a new environment, and the support of a revised peer group network with similarly established relational attachments.

Individual/Personal reflexivity and the change process: intimate relations and families of formation T2-3 (Figure 13 & Figure 14)

Life-course transitions such as marriage or parenthood are often thought to alter the socio-structural context (or conditioning structures) of an individual's life, rendering offending incompatible with the acquired lifestyle and roles that the individual occupies. Alternatively, the individual is cast as perhaps yielding to a new set of routines that inhibit offending behaviour (see for example Farrington and West 1995; Gleuck and Gleuck 1940; Hirschi 1969; Laub and Sampson 1993; 2001; 2003). However, such explanations fail to illuminate *how* conditioning structures shape

decisions by ignoring how the individual perceives and responds to such influences, and vice versa (Vaughan 2011).

In Evan's story, it was revealed that his period of primary desistance (aged 22) was enabled by his participation in temporary employment, motivated by his desire to avoid further imprisonment, which enabled his abstinence from acquisitive crime (T1 in Figure 14). However, in this period, his relationship with Monica emerged as his ultimate concern; one which further diminished the desirability of offending behaviour, and its consequences (T2-3). Moreover, spending time at work and with Monica had a significant impact on his formerly routine social activities and the social spaces he occupied, which further enabled his abstinence from crime (T4). While, then, these changes to his conditioning structures had the effect of enabling his abstinence from offending, it was Evan's reflexive re-prioritisation of his individual and relational concerns which motivated his pursuit of a different lifestyle, underpinned by his desire to maintain the relational goods emerging from his relationship with Monica, to which they were mutually oriented (T2-3). As elaborated more fully in his individual story, Evan's initial abstinence from offending at this stage, then, was contingent on the maintenance of this relationship, which had triggered a re-prioritisation of his ultimate concerns and which, in turn, underpinned the ensuing changes he initiated in his projects and practices (T4). These changes were not sustained following their temporary separation (T1) which itself had an enduring effect on their interactive dynamics and on the nature of the bond between. For Evan, this diminished the salience of the relationship in the context of his shifting constellation of concerns (T2-3).

The 'normative orientation' of the spouse is also considered to exert a positive influence on individual behaviour (Giordano et al. 2003:306). However, attachment to a pro-social partner does not explain *why* someone becomes more amenable to change at one time rather than another, particularly where, as in Harry's case, attitudinal changes do not automatically translate into a re-orientation of values (see also Seth's story). Like Seth, despite having in Millie a 'pro-social' partner, Harry's relationship was neither causative of nor conditional on his desistance. As elaborated in his individual story, however, Harry had engaged in an internal conversation (personal reflexivity) which acknowledged, but was not significantly altered by, being in a new role position in relation to Millie (T2-3 in Figure 14). While he continued to engage in football-related violence, his concern for Millie and his desire to maintain their relationship meant that he ceased house-breaking to limit the shame and stigma this might cause her (T4). It was not until he became a father, however, that he engaged in a more socially expanded form of reflexivity (discussed below).

In echoes of the relationship between Monica and Evan, Jay's reflexive orientation towards the maintenance of his relationship with Harriet emerged as Jay's ultimate concern, which lead to a diminution of the desirability of the offending behaviour in this relational context, to which he responded by initiating adjustments in his behaviours, in accordance with his shifting priorities (T2-3 in Figure 14). Unlike Millie, however, Harriet engaged in offending behaviour, which, some control theorists might identify as a causal explanation for Jay's continued offending despite his aspirations to desist. As previously observed, however, the process of reflexivity, through which projects and practices are decided on, realised and sustained, is relational in so far as it is shaped by the relational context in which it emerges. To recapitulate, the impact of a given social relation, in this case, intimate relationships,

on individuals' behaviours are attributable to the bonds maintained *between* people that constitute their reciprocal orientations towards each other, the emergent effects of their interactive dynamics, (T2-3) *and* the chains of meanings that these particular types of social relation entail for individuals (T1), who bring their own personal reflexivity to bear in a manner consistent with their ultimate concerns (Donati 2011a). As with Seth, Jed and Harry, Jay's internalised configuration of hegemonic 'traditional' working class masculinity (Connell 2002) influenced his expectations of the marital relationship and their associated gender roles (T1). However, Jay's reflexive orientation towards this relationship, and, thus, openness to change, was in anticipation of the realisation of an ideal type relationship which would bring about a sense of normalcy. While Harriet's participation in offending is not irrelevant, critically the ideal type relationship to which Jay initially oriented himself never materialised. When his efforts and expectations were frustrated, he drew on the repository of his personal experiences of his father's violence towards his mother as a means of exercising his control and asserting his masculinity. The asymmetry of their attachments influenced the nature of their interactive dynamics (T2-3) which progressively emerged as reflexively oriented towards actions which generated the emergent relational bads (Donati 2011a) of jealousy, betrayal, conflict and violence (T4), and ultimate heralded the demise of their relationship, and Jay's reunion with the revised group in London (T4-1).

<u>Relational reflexivity and the change process intimate relations and families of formation T2-3 (Figure 13 & Figure 15)</u>

As previously observed, neither Seth's nor Harry's intimate relationships were conditional on or causative of desistance (see also Jay and Evan's stories). As their individual stories illustrated, it was the reciprocal and collaborative adjustments

made by both parties to maintain the relationship, oriented to the sustenance of the emergent relational goods which they mutually valued. This in turn generates a more socially expanded form of reflexivity (relational reflexivity) as people make adjustments in their own behaviours towards each other motivated by a concern to maintain the social relation, in this case of intimate relationships, and the emergent relational goods. Those intimate relations that exerted the most influence were those in which the relation was characterised by mutuality and affective concern, to which each party oriented themselves to the other in such a way that enabled both to realise their individual and relational concerns (see also Jed, Jay and Evan' stories with regard to their later relationships). In this vein, the manner of their relating (subsidiarity) in the context of solidarity is also significant in understanding the relational contributions to the outcomes.

Harry was the only individual whose role and identity as a father occupied a central place in his narrative of change. For Seth, for example, his experience of becoming and being a father, in the context of his changing conditioning structures, reinforced his established commitment to desist but unlike Harry, desistance was not directly attributable to becoming a father (see also Jed). For Harry, fatherhood (T1 in Figure 15) provided the impetus to initiate and sustain changes in his practices (T4) as an outcome of his concern surrounding the potential impact that offending and its outcomes would have on this social relation (T2-3 in Figure 15). At this point, Harry's reflexive evaluation of his lifestyle against his shifting sense of what mattered to him, informed by his own values and beliefs surrounding fatherhood, reflected a reorientation of his relational concerns, which required a shift in his practices if it was to be realised. Desistance (T4 in Figure 15) was one shift in practice emerging from Harry's perception of the impact his offending would have on this social

relation, underpinned by a desire to maintain a constructive paternal image, which was critical to his self-concept. Here, then, it is the social relation of the family that is being invoked as both a constraint upon offending and an enablement for a new way of living. Importantly, the social relation of the family here is not reducible to the individuals involved, as some existing explanations of desistance would suppose; rather, it refers to that which emerges from the reciprocal orientation of those in the family. Thus, it is changes in the social relation and how *it* becomes more reflexive that underpinned this process of change for Harry.

This section has summarised the elements of the change process for individuals in the context of their involvement in intimate relationships and their families of formation. In so doing, it has illustrated the role of conditioning structures - such as the influence of shared, internalised configurations of hegemonic 'traditional' working class masculinity in shaping expectations of their marital relationship and associated gender roles. It has also revealed the significance of the conditional, contingent and mutually influential interaction of assumption of these social roles and identities with participation in employment; and the constraints and enablements in the form of economic and cultural processes - all of which influenced the shape and form of the social relation of the family. Moreover, the analysis has revealed the roles of intimate relationships and families of formation in triggering individuals' reflexive evaluation of their ultimate concerns – resulting, variously, in a diminution of the desirability of offending, suspension of offending, or in consolidating and sustaining commitments to desist. In particular, as with the social relation of friendships, both the manner of relating and individuals-in-relation's reciprocal and mutual orientation towards the maintenance of the emergent relational goods emerged as significant in understanding the relational contributions to the change process.

The Meanings and Outcomes of Work

The desistance promotive meanings and outcomes of work

Across the individual stories it was revealed that the relationship between employment and desistance resides in the way in which the meaning and outcomes of either the nature of the work and/or participation in employment influence an individual's personal and social identity and interact with a person's priorities, goals and relational concerns at various stages in a given individual's life.

As observed in Jay's and Jed's stories, following their separate relocation to London, it was the initial economic outcomes of participation in employment (T1 of Figure 13) that were significant in contributing to their abstinence from acquisitive crime (T4). Employment represented an alternative, licit and less risky means of acquiring economic capital, and, as discussed, this provoked their reflexive deliberation on the pros and cons of involvement in acquisitive crime, through the lens of the alternative opportunities and lifestyles that a frequent and substantial income offered (see similarly Evan's initial experience of employment) (T2-3 Figure 13 and 14). Moreover, as noted in both Jed's and Seth's story, working together as a team (T1 Figure 13 and 15) became a definitive feature of the lifestyles among 'the revised group' which reinforced a sense of common purpose and which enabled the internalisation of identities, both as individuals and as a collective, in which participation in work occupied a central place (Rhodes 2008) (T2-3 Figure 13 and 15). In the early stages, working together in steel-fixing represented an important means of re-establishing a sense of identification with and belonging among the revised group, which, in view of their shifting priorities, practices and relational dynamics, further exerted a constraining effect on individuals offending behaviour

(T4 Figures 13/15).

Over time, however, the meanings and outcomes of participation in work were imbued with further significance when Jed, Seth and Harry's children were born, enabling their roles of 'good provider' and, in turn, their personification of identities as men, fathers and partners. Indeed, as Owens states, 'employment is part of the idea of what is acceptable' (Owens 2009: 50), akin to Giordano et al's notion of the 'respectability package' (2002: 1013), which refers to the interdependence of and interaction between employment and investment in significant intimate relations and/or parenthood. Employment and family roles form the basis of 'a general 'law-abiding adult citizen' identity construct' (Uggen et al. 2004:263).

While employment did not motivate or trigger desistance for Seth, Harry, Jed, Evan or Jay, it assisted all of them to sustain it in the context of broader enabling shifts in their conditioning structures (which includes the sets of relations in which they participated), which, in turn, endowed their participation in work with meaning. Social relationships play a constitutive part of a responsible and legitimate identity and employment represents an important means through which these aspects of one's identity might be realised, performed and recognised (Rhodes 2008). For Seth, Jed and Harry, in particular, the role of breadwinner or provider was, to varying degrees, a dominant component of each of their adult masculine (and, in that, desisting) identities; in this vein, fatherhood links the world of work to the world of family (Hauari and Hollingworth 2009; Young 2007).

Laub and Sampson (2001:51) argue that desistance emerges as an outcome of the interactions between the social relations of marriage and/or family and employment in so far as they 're-order short-term situational inducements to crime and, over

time, re-direct long-term commitments to conformity'. This does not, however, explain why people choose to submit themselves to these institutions in the first place or why people remain in jobs or marriages during challenging times when their investment in them has dwindled (Vaughan 2007). While it might be argued that the availability of roles and the accompanying 'scripts' (Rumgay 2004), behaviours and practices attributed to the role might become habituated, people do not march through life mechanically animating fixed role structures. The personification or interiorisation of a role, which is neither pre-determined nor fixed, is accomplished by an individual reflecting on their situation through the lens of their ultimate concerns and the range of actions available to them (Archer 2003, Donati 2011a).

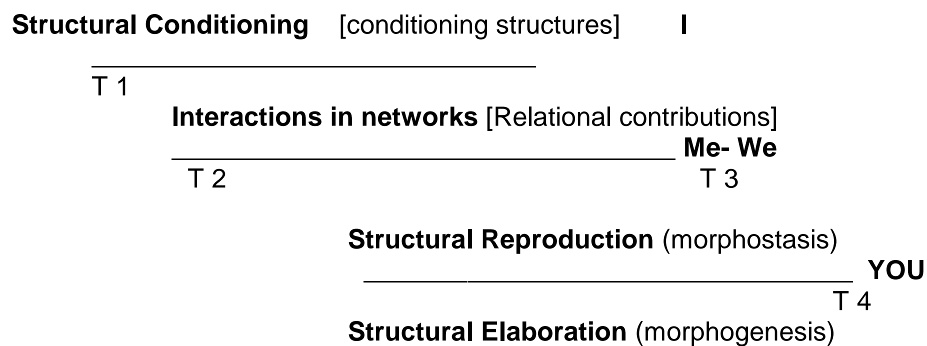

Figure 15: The Morphogenetic Sequence applied to social relations (relational contributions)

Returning to Figure 15 (reinserted above): ‘Me’ refers to the self as primary agent; this is the identity attributed to him by others, specifically the networks of individuals or primary contacts with whom he associates. ‘We’ refers to the individual as a corporate agent and his relationships to and with the associational belongings of which he is a part - such as a specific workplace, family, or community of believers (T2-3). When he assumes a social role, (or assumes certain tasks in society) he becomes an actor (“you”) in as much as he interiorises or personifies a role i.e. as a worker, or parent or husband or Christian (T4). In all these relational spheres the individual’s ultimate concerns are played through (Donati 2011a). Donati (2011a)

further clarifies that one's ultimate concerns are progressively defined in relation to how the 'I' (the self) (at T1 in Figure 15) defines his choices when he acts as a 'you' (T4) and must respond both to the demands of his relational contexts and to the deeper demands of his 'I', when he considers whether he is satisfied or not with the 'me' that has been attributed to him by others, when he confronts and compares the meaning of his belonging (the 'we' / us to which he belongs) against that of other membership groups (T2-3). Here, in performing or personifying a role, in carrying out the tasks associated with that role, in acting as a 'you' (T4-1), the self ('I') asks itself if it is gaining satisfaction from its activities, choices, lifestyle or not. Ultimate concerns are the answers given to the existential questions that people ask of themselves when they consider their level of satisfaction and the desire for the 'good life' for themselves. In this vein, Donati proposes that every way of being a self (as I, me, we, you) is a dialogue (an internal conversation) with his own "I", his personal identity. Social identity is formed from the dialogue between the 'I' and the other relational spheres.

To illustrate, while Harry's participation in employment certainly constrained his participation in social activities within which his offending occurred, it was the meanings and outcomes of participation in employment refracted through the lens of his individual and relational concerns which were significant in enabling his desistance. Initially, Harry's desire to fit in with the football crowd motivated his pursuit of employment (T2-3 in Figure 15). His initial experience of participation in work, and the sense of personal progression it engendered, provided Harry with a sense of self-respect, self-worth and self-esteem and the formal recognition of his efforts and capacities through promotion communicated to him that his efforts were acknowledged, recognised and respected (T4-1). Taking responsibility and being invested with responsibility is, as observed in 'Seth's story', a means of social

recognition and is the result of being trusted, which can similarly engender a sense of responsibility on the part of the person feeling trusted. 'Social recognition…expresses the capacity and need that… people have for longer-term *reciprocal* relations of trust and responsibility in the wider society' (Barry 2006:136, italics in original), which can positively influence an individual's self-concept (T1 in Figure 15). Critically, the meaning of and impetus to sustain employment for Harry was further altered by the birth of his son (his relationship of ultimate concern) (T2-3) shortly after starting work and fulfilling his role as a 'good provider' by making a financial contribution to the family reinforced Harry's commitment to maintaining his employment over time, even though he derived little satisfaction from the nature of his employment (T4-1). Conversely, Jed's separation from Rachel and the children, and thus the loss of this social role and identity, rendered his subsequent participation in work meaningless. The economic outcomes that had, in his late twenties, been a motivation to sustain employment no longer satisfied him (T4-1); given his dissatisfaction with the nature of the employment (T2-3), participation in employment represented nothing more than engagement in a purposeless and cyclical routine that generated money that he didn't know what to do with. This suggests that an individual's priorities and relational concerns (configured in T2-3), influenced by the pre-existing self (T1), have a significant bearing on the meaning and outcomes of work (T4-1)

Both Evan and Jay's faith is expressed through the nature of their work, which, since their respective conversions has been oriented to supporting individuals and communities in need. Both men conceptualise their work as an expression of their faith, in terms of a life lived in service to others, informed by the Christian relational ethics of subsidiarity and solidarity referred to previously. For Jay and Evan, it is the meaning and outcomes of the work that are of enduring significance in consolidating

their new, 'born-again' identity and thus their subjective well-being (T4-1 in Figure 15). While their faith imbued the nature of this work with meaning, participating in this work thus contributed to and enabled the realization of their religious identities (T2-3). Their participation in these works, then, can be construed as an outcome of both their conversion and of desistance; both of which have shaped their generative commitments.

Constraints and limitations

Employment is not static in nature but denotes a vast array of 'different working conditions, skill requirements, values and rewards' (Owens 2009:58) and, thus, divergences in experiences of participation in work, itself a social relation, all of which have a bearing on the potential influence and impact of employment on a given individual. As illustrated in the foregoing analysis, even within the same job, the perception and value of this job will vary in accordance with an individual's priorities, concerns and experience.

A significant constraint emerging for both Seth and Jed, albeit manifesting differently, related to the hard drinking, hardworking culture of the steel-fixing industry. As observed in 'Seth's story', the pub performs an important social function as the primary social space for men in the construction industry, who are working away from their families and hometowns, living in crowded, often insubstantial, accommodation in unfamiliar geographical locations (Tilki 2006). For Seth, while enabling the maintenance of social relations within his working environment, which was critical in terms of accessing further work, the hard drinking, hardworking culture ultimately interfered with his capacity to sustain direct family involvement and heralded his return to alcohol use, which in turn placed a strain on his marriage.

Similarly, following the conclusion of his relationship with Rachel, Jed's co-residence and association with similarly situated men in the construction industry contributed to a prolonged period of chaotic alcohol use, that ultimately threatened his health, and which, necessarily, constrained his capacity to continue working.

As observed in Chapter 5, association with a friendship group, however formed, encourages collective participation in, or an amplification of, behaviours that individuals might not normally undertake alone, motivated both by fear of losing the respect of their friends (or colleagues), as measured against the extent to which individuals behaved in accordance with the norms of the group and by their need to belong. The need for relatedness reflects the human need to mutually and reciprocally relate to other people and 'involves feeling connected (or feeling that one belongs in a social milieu)' (Vallerand 1997: 300). This was particularly acute for Jed against the backdrop of the dissolution of his relationships with Rachel, their children and their mutual friends.

While Harry considers his past, in particular his limited education and employment experience and criminal record, to exert constraints on his social mobility, Jay utilizes his prior experiences of offending to inform his approach to his current role in social care. Nevertheless, he considers that the professional nature of his current occupation places a constraint on the use of self-disclosure in his work with young people, which would seem to suggest that a professional (rather than a religious) identity is harder to reconcile with a previously spoiled identity (Goffman 1963). Anticipating the judgements and negative stereotypes that people with convictions are often subjected to, Jay considers that others' perceptions of his past may diminish his professional standing and authority, which he suspects would

unnecessarily obstruct or distract from the contributions he can make to their outcomes.

In similar vein, despite the recognition of his transformation that Evan experienced through his association with a community of believers, and despite the recognition of change he experienced from people in the community, the enduring proximity of a previously 'spoiled identity' (Goffman 1963) embedded in this sense of place, in Coaston, and in the memories of the community, constrained his sense of personal progression. While, on the one hand, he was recognised as a reformed individual, he perceived that the recognition he received reflected the distance he had travelled from his past self, which remained the dominant identity through which lens the positive social recognition he received was refracted. Moving to a new location enabled him to be recognised as the person he had become, as an Evangelist and not just as the reformed version of the person he had been (see similarly Jed's story).

The constraints and limitations on the constructive outcomes of employment variously cohere around the degree to which the nature of, or experience of participating in, employment creates an environment of and resource for social recognition. For Jay and Evan, their consciousness and internalization of negative social discourses surrounding offenders and their perceptions of stigma located in their working environments, in its broadest sense, implied a form of misrecognition of who they had become. For Jed and Seth, their desire for recognition, to fit in and belong within a given social milieu, generated constraints in other areas of their lives. While the social relation of employment can enable or support desistance, the relational space and social places of work can manifest as sites of recognition and misrecognition that are more or less enabling or constraining. While, then,

individuals' self-relations are, to greater or lesser degrees, dependent on the ways that others see them and treat them (Laitinen 2003), simultaneously, the credibility or legitimacy of the person conveying positive regard or social recognition, or conversely attributing stigma, is also relevant to the potency of the attribution (Ikaheimo and Laitinen 2011; Shih 2004). In each case, the emergent constraints related to the desire for recognition by their primary reference group[60], which for Jed and Seth were their workmates and for Evan and Jay were the individuals and communities on whose behalf they worked.

Conclusion

What this analysis has revealed is that desistance is variously enabled or constrained by the interaction of the social relations of friendship, intimate relations, families of formation and employment as mediated through the lens of an individual's personal priorities, values, aspirations and relational concerns. It is these concerns that imbue these particular transitional opportunities, events and experiences with significance. Their potential to enable or constrain processes of change at various stages in an individual's life is, thus, mediated through an individual's more or less reflexive response to the constraints and enablements inhering in their conditioning structures. Such an analysis thus marks a departure from current explanations for desistance that fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions, ignoring how the individual-in-relation perceives and responds to such influences. But it also extends agentic and cognitive explanations by moving beyond their explanations of the onset of desistance and by offering an elaboration of how social relations sustain or hinder desistance over time.

[60] Relatedly, Harry's primary reference group was the family and he chose not to disclose his offending past to his son.

As discussed in Chapter 2, quantitative research tends to focus on the degree to which intimate relationships or parenthood, for example, are causative of or conditional on desistance, in terms of the sequencing of relational investments and desistance. In contrast, qualitative analyses tend to focus on revealing the relative contribution of the identified change agent to the outcomes, be it through the role of the partner, for example, as change agent (as in social control theories), or the role of the individual as change agent (as in more agentic or cognitive theories of desistance). Applying Donati's theory of relational reflexivity allows for a more nuanced analysis. However, what this chapter also illustrated was that the outcomes of these processes are not static but are influenced by changes in conditioning structures, which can, depending on the individual's response to these changes, engender constraints and limitations. What this in turn confirms, then, is that desistance can be a complex, contingent, individualised, reflexive and relational process.

CHAPTER 13: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter draws together the preceding chapters. It commences by providing an analytic overview of the limitations of the extant body of research on desistance prior to restating the methodological approach underpinning the study and how this generates new knowledge by employing a somewhat original methodological approach to the study of desistance as it occurs within and between a naturally forming group. The conceptual framework employed in this study is elaborated and it is suggest that this presents an alternative way of conceptualizing the relationship between structure, agency and reflexivity, one that gives proper weight to the properties and powers of social relations. The findings of this study are elaborated as they respond to the original research questions emerging from the literature review prior to discussing the implications for policy, practice and research.

Mapping the terrain: an analytical overview of the research literature

As observed in Chapter 2, McNeill (2003) argued that the evolving body of research on desistance necessitated a major shift in probation practice towards attending to the relational and social contexts within and through which desistance occurs. In this vein, he advocated that approaches to practice should be embedded in understandings of desistance and that future research should explore the connections between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity in the desistance process. However, exactly how these interactions should be best conceived what reflexivity actually entails and how such a paradigm shift might be realised remain

inadequately understood. This thesis has sought to contribute to and extend current knowledge of desistance by re-examining the relationships between structure, agency, identity and reflexivity in the desistance process so as to inform how such a paradigm shift can and should translate into practice. In so doing, Chapter 2 provided an analytical overview of the existing body of desistance research with a particular focus on examining how previous scholars have conceptualised the relationships between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity in the desistance process.

My review suggested that while there is consensus that social relations have a key role to play in enabling and/or sustaining desistance, no desistance studies have adequately analysed the dynamics or properties of social relations, or their relationship to individuals and social structures. Rather, theoretical explanations for desistance focus on – and diverge in conceptualising - the interaction between structure and agency. Within these divergent explanations, while there is a more or less implicit or explicit recognition of the individual as a reflexive subject, limited attention has been given to what processes of reflexivity entail (notable exceptions include Farrall et al 2010; King 2012; Vaughan 2007) or to how this contributes to identity formation. It was argued that, in so doing, such theories fail to consider *how* individuals' reasoning and actions are variously enabled or constrained by the relational, cultural and social contexts within which they are embedded. While many principally agentic theories of the change process elaborate the early stages of desistance, they do not explain what triggers the resultant cognitive transformation nor why one social relation at one time rather another exerts this effect. Neither can they explain why people stay in relationships or jobs when the meanings of these social relations change over time (Vaughan 2007). While agentically weighted theories are limited in their capacities to explain what triggers reflexivity, structural

theories similarly fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions, ignoring how the individual perceives and responds to such influences.

The analysis progressed in Chapter 2 also revealed the contradictory and conflicting perspectives and findings emerging from empirical research on the desistance process – depending on whether the study adopted a quantitative or qualitative research design, which itself reflects divergent research aims and objectives. Quantitative desistance research tends to focus on the degree to which various social relations are causative of or conditional on desistance in terms of the relative sequencing of relational investments and desistance, variously measured in terms of reductions in frequency of offending or abstinence from offending. It was reasoned that while quantitative methods provide a useful insight into patterns of behaviour within and across populations and can identify within that the sequencing of transitional events and behavioural changes, they cannot elaborate on or explain the mechanics and mechanisms underpinning these changes. While quantitative studies are concerned with providing an overview of what happens in most cases most of the time, any explanation as to cause and effect is simply inference and as such, the extent to which they can shed light on the nuances of the desistance process is constrained.

Qualitative studies enable a more nuanced analysis of the desistance process, but, in general, they tend to focus on revealing the relative contribution of the change agent to the outcomes. In social control theories for example, the change agent is generally conceptualized as something 'external' or other to the individual, and in that classified as socio-structural force. In agentically weighted or cognitive theories, the individual is cast as the agent of their own change process. It was argued that in both instances, while more recent studies have recognized an interaction between

the subjective and the social, the agent and their structural context, the methodological focus on individuals rather than groups, within which context much offending takes place (see for example Akers 1998; Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Sutherland 1947; Warr 2002), precludes an analysis of the role of the group, as a social relation in and of itself, in shaping and affecting offending and desistance, and thus how individual, relational, cultural and social contexts influence onset, persistence, and desistance, and, thus on antecedents, processes and outcomes. More specifically, I identified a significant gap in criminological understanding of the impact that a naturally forming group can exert on criminal careers – both empirically and theoretically.

In recognition of these gaps in criminological understanding, and as a new lens through which to re-examine the relationships between structure, agency, identity and reflexivity in the desistance process, this study sought to address the following research questions:

- What can we learn from the diverse life stories of a naturally forming group about the dynamics of offending and desistance?
- What are the individual, relational and structural contributions to the desistance process as they occur within and between individuals?
- What is the role of social relations in accounting for desistance over time?

An alternative methodological approach: a natural group

The principal objective of this study was to re-examine the relationships between structure, agency, identity, and reflexivity in the desistance process, emerging from the diverse life-stories of a naturally forming group of people who grew up and offended together but whose lives to a greater or lesser degrees diverged following the fragmentation of the Del. There has been limited research revealing the experiences of people who co-offend, or on their subsequent processes of desistance, and thus the original methodological approach of studying a naturally forming group has generated new empirical and theoretical insights into how and why people desist. This approach has generated a reconceptualisation of the relationships between agency, structure and social relations in the desistance process (discussed below). Moreover, rather than studying an aspect of, or stage in, the desistance process, by eliciting the men's life stories, this study examined the process through which the group formed, the onset and maintenance of their individual and collective criminal careers, and the onset and maintenance of their disparate but comparable pathways to desistance, as it occurred within and between individuals-in-relation.

The use of narrative approaches to elicit the life stories of six men study produced a rich, nuanced analysis of the dynamics of offending and desistance and, in that, the individual, relational and structural contributions to the desistance process, as they occurred within and between individuals (discussed further below). This was realised, methodologically, through the depth and length of the successive life-story interviews conducted with each participant, who generated a vast amount of data, and the close, detailed, multi-layered analysis of individual transcripts, followed by a process of cross-case analysis (see chapter 4).

The significance of the social relation to processes of change and identity formation emerged from the analysis of the life-stories of the men comprising the naturally forming group on whom this study was based. This prompted further investigation of socio-theoretical conceptualisations of the relationship between social relations, agency and structure in order to make sense of the emergent themes emerging from the data analysis. It was through the lens of the conceptual framework elaborated in Chapter 3, that the second order analysis was conducted.

Re-conceptualising the relationship between social relations, agency and structure

The analysis of the theoretical frameworks utilized within the existing body of desistance research illuminated that they share a tendency to view social relations as a by-product of, or interplay between, individual action and structure. The conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3, and progressed throughout this thesis, drew on the complementary approaches of Archer's Critical Realist Morphogenetic Approach and Donati's Relational Sociology. The ensuing conceptual schema, underpinning the second order analysis of the data, gave proper recognition to the role of conditioning structures in the desistance process and to the reflexive individual, who evaluates his own situations and makes his own decisions, as well as to the interplay between the two. This conceptual schema thus enabled an analysis of the individual contributions to the desistance process which pertain to the redefinition of personal identity and the exercise of personal reflexivity. Archer's 'Morphogenetic Sequence' applied to the Internal Conversation provided the investigative framework through which to conduct the analysis.

Furthermore, the application of Donati's relational sociology in particular gave proper recognition to individual actions, social relations and social systems and the inner characteristics and influences which are peculiar to them. Indeed, following Donati (2011a), it was reasoned that the social relation cannot be considered as a contingent by-product, precisely because it has a separate reality that can and should be studied in and of itself and not as a reality depending on something else. In developing an investigative framework through which to analyse social relations, and, in that, the relational contributions to the desistance process, the researcher used the morphogenetic sequence developed by Archer, to illustrate the conceptual schema progressed by Donati (2011a).

Research Outcomes: A summation of the analysis

The data analysis was presented in eight data chapters. Chapter 5 and the individual stories comprising Chapters 6-11 revealed the dynamics of offending and desistance as they occurred within and between individuals-in-relation while situating their lived experiences within their shared historical, structural and cultural contexts. Chapter 5 presented a group level analysis of their shared lives as a naturally forming group. The individual stories charted individuals' lives following the fragmentation of the Del and a summation of the recurrent elements of the change process, manifesting across these individuals' stories, was provided in Chapter 12. A summation of the analysis in response to the research questions delineated in Chapter 2, and restated in Chapter 4 and above, is progressed here. It is perhaps worth observing that there is some overlap in the research findings that relate to these questions, but for the purposes of clarity, a separate summation of each is progressed.

- What can we learn from the diverse life stories of a naturally forming group about the dynamics of offending and desistance?

From an analysis of the life stories of these men who comprised a naturally forming group, it was revealed that consistent with the reciprocal character of friendship (Cairns and Cairns 1994, Pahl 2000), the friends benefited from the mutual support and reinforcement of their efforts to change that their mutual recognition of each other's efforts implied. Moreover, that key people from within their existing or original friendship group (Adam, Jay and Peter for example) had *become* positive influences is what imbued their influence with credibility and which, in turn, generated hope in others (Seth, Jay and Evan for example) that they too could realise related outcomes. Where once these relationships and reciprocities contributed to their collective involvement in offending, later these particular friends also supported each other, albeit to differing degrees and with different effects and at different stages, to pursue constructive changes in their lifestyles and relationships. This adds a new perspective to the literature discussing the role of peers in relation to onset and persistence (see for example Farrington 1992; Haynie 2001, Haynie 2002; Warr 1993, 2002) and desistance (see for example Calverley 2012; Giordano et al. 2003; Graham and Bowling 1995; Massoglia and Uggen 2010; Uggen and Kruttschnitt 1998); a literature which tends to polarise peers into ‘anti-social’ pressures or ‘pro-social’ influences, with each category representing different people or groups. Discussion principally surrounds the would-be-desister’s decisive (Paternoster and Bushway 2009) or developmental (Giordano et al. 2003) disassociation from ‘negative’ influences and either re-connection with pro-social former associates or development of new pro-social relationships (see for example Giordano et al. 2003; Knight and West 1975). These studies are, however, usually refracted through the lens of the individual desister (see for example Warr 1998; Cromwell et al. 1991) or

more infrequently from the standpoint of the individual situated in a structural network of relations in a given context (see for example Haynie 2001). The findings of this study give impetus for alternative methodological approaches to conducting future research in this area (discussed below).

In particular, what the life-stories of these men revealed was the centrality of the relational to the individual and thus to processes of persistence and desistance. Association with a friendship group (whether The Del, The Revised Group, or with colleagues or fellow religious believers) encourages collective participation in, or an amplification of, behaviours that individuals might not normally undertake alone, motivated by fear of losing the respect of their friends or colleagues, as measured against the extent to which individuals behaved in accordance with the relational rules and norms of the group and by their need to belong. The need for relatedness reflects the human need to mutually and reciprocally relate to other people and 'involves feeling connected (or feeling that one belongs in a social milieu)' (Vallerand 1997: 300). Belonging was a theme that emerged through the men's narratives of the days of the Del but the desire to belong, to fit in, to be accepted within different relational spheres emerged as a dominant theme throughout the men's life-stories. The desire for recognition is not peculiar to the men who once comprised the Del. However, what this seems to suggest is a conceptualisation of the individual as a reflexive being whose individual and relational concerns emerge from, are immersed in, respond to and shape their relational worlds. The implications of this for how we understand and respond to people are discussed further below.

Individuals' identities are, in this sense, shaped by the sets of relationships in which they participate and the associated social roles they personify and interiorise (whether as a member of the Del, as a father, as worker or as a Christian). But this

shaping of identity depends on the extent to which the individual recognises or imputes credibility and legitimacy to the person(s) conveying positive regard or social recognition, or conversely attributing stigma. Credibility and legitimacy influence people's receptivity to influence and, in that, affect the potency of others' judgements of the individual (Ikaheimo and Laitinen 2011; Shih 2004). In 'The Del', for example, Harry and Andy were unconcerned by the views of others outwith their primary reference group, at least partly because of the potency of the influence of their peers and the importance they attributed to the perceptions their peers had of them, which were more significant to their self-concepts rather than the 'reflected appraisals' of the 'generalised other' (Cooley 1956). However, following the fragmentation of the Del, shifting relational contexts influenced individuals' perception of how they were perceived through 'the looking glass self' (Cooley 1922) to which they variously responded by making adjustments to their behaviours. For example, Harry relinquished housebreaking in order to limit the shame this might cause Millie; Jed and Jay modified their behaviours in alignment with the relational expectations of the revised group.

The relationship between personal and social identity is a dialectical one underpinned by the consciousness of the self (Donati 2011a). The consciousness of the self is influenced by the reactions of and recognition (or mis-recognition) conveyed by others, particularly those whose perceptions are of personal significance to the individual. While Harry, Jed and Jay in certain relational spheres elected not to disclose their pasts, Evan ultimately relocated to London and (in the context of his religious conversion) was more open about his history. His transformation was recognized among the community of believers with whom he associated. Yet despite the recognition of change he experienced from people in this community, the enduring proximity of a 'spoiled identity' (Goffman 1963),

embedded in the memories of the community in which he had previously offended, constrained his sense of personal progression. While on the one hand he was recognized as a reformed person, he perceived that the recognition he received reflected the distance he had traveled from his past self, which somehow remained the dominant identity attributed to him. Remaining in the same location thus ultimately constrained the social recognition of the person he had become, rather than of the reformed version of the person he had been. In this sense, social relations can be sites of recognition or misrecognition.

Identities are thus tried, tested, performed and negotiated in different relational spheres which are more or less constraining or enabling to the extent that these (changing) identities (whether as a worker, father, provider, husband or as a man) are realized and recognised by those participating in the relation. In similar vein, people's behaviour is necessarily shaped by the relational networks, or sets of social relations, in which they participate. But, critically, behaviour is also an outcome of the individual's reflexive evaluation of the meaning that these relations (and conformity to the relational rules that inhere in these different relational spheres) have for them, as reflected through the lens of their individual and relational concerns. In this way, shifting social relations can motivate individuals to behave in a way that they might not otherwise have done.

What the analysis of these men's life-stories revealed, then, is that desistance is variously enabled or constrained by the interaction of the social relations of friendship, intimate relations, families of formation, faith communities and employment as mediated through the lens of a given individual's personal priorities, values, aspirations and relational concerns at a given stage in an individual's life. Ultimately, desistance emerged for these men as a means to realizing and

maintaining their individual and relational concerns with which continued offending became (sometimes incrementally) incompatible. What this study in particular has revealed is that desistance occurs primarily within and through social relations and the reciprocal informal exchanges that take place between family and friends and the social relations that manifest through work and (for some) faith. Desistance, in this sense, occurs in the context of shifting engagements with, commitments to and reflexivity about different facets of civil society. The implications of this are discussed further below.

This study has also revealed that while social relations have their own powers, or rather capacity to influence, enable or constrain processes of change, it cannot be said that one social relation rather than another exerts particular desistance promotive effects. Rather, as this study has revealed, it is the meanings and significance of the social relation to individuals-in-relation, and the emergent effects of their interaction, which can be influenced by their interface with other social relations, that are critical to understanding the outcomes (elaborated further below). It was, for example, Seth's constellation of relational concerns that triggered his initial reflexive re-evaluation of what was important to him, in the shadow of the feud. Relatedly, following his release from a subsequent prison sentence, it was the interaction of becoming and being a family man in the context of his intimate relationships with Rachel which provided him with an alternative circle of belonging and source of social connectedness, which was enabled and reinforced by shifts in the relational dynamics of the revised group and involvement in stable employment. In this vein, as discussed below, it is also the manner of relating and, in turn the emergent effects of the reality in-between those individuals in relations, which is central to understanding how social relations have their own properties, powers and influences.

It is also misleading to suggest that social relations are causative of or conditional on behavioural change. Social relations can only exert influence where the individual is receptive because of their individual and relational concerns and their desire to maintain the relationship so as to maintain emergent relational goods that cannot be produced outwith the relation (Donati 2011a). The nature, form and meaning of the social relation and its emergent effects are dynamic, and the related reflexive processes and subsequent outcomes are not static but are influenced by changes in conditioning structures, which can engender new constraints and enablements. Individuals' reflexive responses to these new constraints and enablements can motivate a realignment or reprioritisation or reorientation of their ultimate concerns, and in turn a shift in their projects and practices, which in turn, influences their conditioning structures. What emerges from this study then, is a conceptualization of the desistance process as a complex, contingent, individualised, reflexive and inherently relational process. The dynamics of desistance (and offending) thus have to be understood in the individual, relational and structural contexts within which these behaviours are embedded and sustained (or otherwise).

- What are the individual, relational and structural contributions to the desistance process as they occur within and between individuals?

The individual, relational and structural contributions to the desistance process as they occur within and between individuals were elaborated fully in Chapters 6-12. What follows is a summation of the recurrent elements of the change process with regard to the individual, relational and structural contributions to it. For conceptual clarity, building on the analytical discussion elaborated in chapter 12, the properties

and powers of conditioning structures will be outlined prior to illustrating the individual and relational contributions to the desistance process.

The conditioning influence of the structural or cultural context works through shaping the situations of actions for individuals and individuals-in-relation, be it intimate relationships, family or friendship or religious or work-related groups. Situations of actions are conditioned in multiple ways - from the accessibility of resources (for example the availability of employment), to the prevalence of beliefs (for example surrounding masculinities and gender roles) to the sets of relations in which people find themselves - such that some courses of action would be impeded and others enabled (Archer 2007a; Donati 2011a). In this way, conditioning structures can also be understood as involving the sets of relational rules prescribing how one should conduct oneself in a certain way towards others, and which will be different in different contexts, as well as being more or less explicit and more or less constraining and enabling (for example between the Del and the Revised Group). Critically conditioning structures can only exert constraint and enablement *in relation* to something for someone or some people. The extent to which they constrain or enable is dependent on how the individual receives and responds to them (discussed below) which, this study has revealed, cannot be disconnected from the way in which others receive and respond to them, in turn influencing their interactive dynamics.

The individual contributions are broadly conceptualized as the decisions and actions of an individual as an outcome of the application of their personal reflexivity. Following Archer (2007a) personal reflexivity is the mediating force between conditioning structures and agentic action. People exercise reflexivity in their deliberations about themselves in relation to the social situations they confront,

which, Archer (2007a and b) illustrates through reference to an internal conversation. It is through this process that people decide on courses of action by ruminating on themselves, their concerns and social situations, imagining and pursuing projects and practices that define who they are and enable them to realize their ultimate concerns within the constraints and enablements of their conditioning structures. In this vein, reflexivity incorporates notions of transcendence through which we can imagine ourselves and our relations differently from what we/they are and thus capable of actualizing things as yet unrealized (Donati 2011a). The process of reflexivity occurs across three phases of discernment, deliberation and dedication, as individuals engage the temporal concepts of the self in a dialogue (the pre-existing self or 'me'; the present self – one's 'I'; and the 'You' of the future). In this context, this reflexive process can lead to behavioural modifications which may include, for example, relinquishing one crime type or desistance (morphogenesis) or persistence (morphostasis).

However, as elaborated in Chapter 12, social networks can also be a context within which personal reflexivity takes place. Indeed, what emerged from this study was the frequency with which the exercise of reflexivity was triggered by individuals' comparative positioning of themselves against their primary reference groups. Thus as Donati (2011a) recognised, Archer's (2000, 2003, 2007a) formulation of the 'internal conversation' needs to be expanded to connect it to the properties and influences of the social relations and networks of relations in which people participate. The process of reflexivity, through which projects and practices are decided on, realised and sustained is relational in so far as it is shaped by the relational networks in which it emerges. These sets of relations affect what can and does satisfy the individual and what can be sustained, on which the individual brings his/her personal reflexivity to bear with regard to his/her participation in this

relational context (Donati 2011a). This process of personal reflexivity may be triggered through an appraisal of the changing or changed behaviours of others (see Evan and Jay's story for example) or through an individual's comparative positioning of himself against others in his network, through 'the looking glass self' (Cooley 1922) (see Jed and Harry's story for example).

Social relations can thus be conceptualized as a) a context in which personal reflexivity is brought to bear, as discussed above and/or b) the manner in which social relations are configured by those participating in the relation as an outcome of the application of their relational reflexivity (Donati 2011a). This study has illustrated how different social relations operate with their own reflexivity of a different kind, which Donati terms 'relational reflexivity' and which can account for the relational contributions to the desistance process. What this study illustrated was that individual and collective action is guided not only by individual concerns but by the relational goods which matter to them. In this context, compromises are deliberated over and decided upon *between* individuals-in-relation in order to sustain the relation and the co-indivisible emergent relational goods, of trust, loyalty, care and concern for example. This type of reflexivity is thus distinct from reflecting on one's own position in a network or comparing one's self to others within one's primary reference group. The social relation is that which exists *between* people and which ''constitute[s]' their reciprocal orientations and actions as distinct from all that characterizes single actors' (Donati 2011a:60). It is through these means that the social relation has its own powers to influence the subjects participating in it. This was particularly evident in the orientations and practices of 'the revised group' and 'the Christians' as well as within some intimate relations and families of formation (see Harry, Jed and Seth's stories).

It is also worth reiterating that it is through these processes that individuals and individuals-in-relation and/or groups can influence their conditioning structures. The elaborated structure or outcomes are the products of an individual's application of their personal reflexivity (individual contributions) and of the interactive dynamics of their relational networks, which can include the interaction between social relations and the influence of (certain configurations of) social relations, which have their own properties and powers to feedback on, and thus influence, their behaviours of individuals in relation (relational contributions).

Such an analysis thus marks a departure from current explanations for desistance that fail to illuminate *how* social structures shape decisions, ignoring how the individual-in-relation perceives and responds to such influences. But it also extends agentic and cognitive explanations by moving beyond their explanations of the onset of desistance and by offering an elaboration of how social relations sustain or hinder desistance over time. Donati's relational sociology thus provides a new conceptual framework for understanding the desistance process that gives proper recognition to the individual actions, social relations and social systems and the inner characteristics and influences which are peculiar to them.

- What is the role of social relations in accounting for desistance over time?

The role of social relations in accounting for desistance over time is, in part, addressed in response to the preceding questions. What follows builds on the preceding discussion.

Social relations play a constitutive part of one's identity. Employment, for example, represents an important means through which aspects of a given individual's identity might be realised, performed and, in turn, recognized, either by enabling or reinforcing the role of provider, for example, or in enabling the expression of one's masculine or religious identity. The constraints on and of the desistance promotive or reinforcing effects of a given social relation cohere around the degree to which the nature of, or experience of participating in, the social relation creates an environment of and resource for social recognition. How social relations are configured by individuals in relation is influenced by the context and form of the social relation, the normative expectations of the relation, the interactive dynamics between those in relation (themselves informed by internalized cultural, class or religious beliefs and values for example) and the interaction with and influence of other social relations within which the individual participates.

Taking the social relation as a central unit of analysis thus facilitated an exploration of the shifting configurations, meanings and influences of the various social relations, of friendship, intimate relationship, families of formation and employment, over time – and in interaction with each other. The analysis of the individual stories (see Chapters 6-11) illustrated interesting differences as to how, when and why these social relations variously enabled or constrained processes of desistance, which can be attributable to important differences in the nature, form and meaning of these different social relations, and in individuals' responses to them, refracted through the lens of their individual and relational concerns.

As this study has illustrated, the impact of a social relation on individuals is not reducible to the interpersonal effects of one person on another. The configuration of a social relation is necessarily influenced by what Donati (2011a) refers to as the chains of meanings that a given social relation entails for individuals, who bring their

own personal reflexivity to bear in a manner consistent with their ultimate concerns. Moreover, as observed above, the social relation has its own powers to feedback onto those subjects participating in it (Donati 2011a). The impact of a given social relation on individuals' behaviour is, thus attributable to the bonds maintained *between* people that constitute their reciprocal orientations towards each other, the emergent effects of their interactive dynamics, as well as the chains of meanings that a given type of social relation, as opposed to another, entails for individuals, who bring their own personal reflexivity to bear in a manner consistent with their ultimate concerns (Donati 2011a).

It is the relation between people, their reciprocal orientation to the maintenance of that relation that makes them reflexive in a relational, instead of merely in a personal way. To be clear, the emergent relational goods cannot be produced outwith the context of the relation, and it is to the maintenance of these relational goods that individuals-in-relation orient themselves. In order to maintain the relational goods, people make adjustments and compromises in their own behaviours towards each other motivated by a concern to maintain the social relation on which the maintenance of the relational goods depends. It is precisely because of the relation, the bond between them and the emergent relational goods of trust, of care and of concern for example, that such relations have their own powers to feed back on, or influence, the subjects participating in the relation, since it exceeds their individual and combined contribution to it. Relational reflexivity is concerned with elaborating a new awareness of 'we', a new way of being in relation as a relational good for each person participating in the relation. This involves reshaping the relation as a reciprocal good in which each member finds a sufficient measure of trust and collaboration in himself because there is a sufficient measure of trust and

collaboration with others (Donati 2011a). So, it is changes in the social relation and how *it* becomes more reflexive that underpins processes of change over time.

This notion of reciprocity is central to Donati's conceptualisation of social relations. Donati explains that the social relation 'implies an 'exchange of something', a reciprocal action in which something passes from ego to alter and vice versa, which generates a reciprocal link of some kind between them' (Donati: 2011a:73). This reciprocity is what he terms the 'generating mechanism of social relations' (ibid), in that it is the practice of reciprocity itself that generates and re-generates the bond of the relationship; of trust or confidence or caring for example. It is through these reciprocal relations, or relations of reciprocity, which recognise the human dignity of the person, that those participating in them find a shared intrinsic commitment to 'their communal experiential basis as beneficiaries of worth [in reference to the relational goods produced] unobtainable in any other way' (Archer 2000: 10).

In terms of friendships, those which were most causally influential were characterised by fraternity, which denotes a particular type of friendship based on mutuality and reciprocity (Pahl 2000) (elaborated in Chapter 5). Reciprocity can be conceptualised as the expression of fraternity which forms a strong social bond, particularly where the means or manner of relating express solidarity and subsidiarity, however informed. Subsidiarity and solidarity are two ways of relating to others in such a way as to acknowledge the human dignity of the other. Reciprocity can therefore be conceptualised as mutual helping performed in a certain way (Donati 2009), i.e. help given in the context of solidarity and of common responsibility. Subsidiarity is the means or the ways in which this help is offered such that it enables the other to do what must be done to realise his ultimate concerns (this was evident particularly among the 'revised group' and 'the

Christians'). Those intimate relations that exerted the most influence were those in which the relation was characterised by mutuality and affective concern, to which each party oriented themselves to the other in such a way that enabled both parties to realise their individual and relational concerns (see also Jed, Jay and Evan' stories with regard to their later relationships). In this vein, the manner of their relating (subsidiarity) in the context of solidarity is also significant in understanding the relational contributions to the outcomes.

To conclude, this study has revealed the role of friendship groups, intimate relationships and families of formation, faith communities and employment in, differently, triggering individuals' reflexive evaluation of their ultimate concerns – resulting, variously, in a diminution of the desirability of offending, suspension of offending, or in consolidating and sustaining commitments to desist. In particular, both the manner of relating and individuals-in-relation's reciprocal and mutual orientation towards the maintenance of the emergent relational goods emerged as significant in understanding the relational contributions to the change process.

Implications of findings

Ultimately, what the foregoing analysis reveals is that desistance occurs primarily within and through the fourth sector of civil society - the informal sector, where informal exchanges take place between family and friends and the social relations that manifest through work and, for some, faith (Donati 2009). This would suggest that we need to take the role of civil society seriously in considering how the other sectors (the first sector generally refers to the state, the second sector to the market economy, and the third sector to organised groups within civil society including

charities, NGOs, self-help groups, social enterprises and various networks) might support desistance, not least in terms of the manner of relating. Reciprocity is the natural human condition and manifests as mutual helping performed in a certain way. Reciprocity is help concretely given in a context of solidarity – one of common responsibility – and is thus recognized as interdependency. Subsidiarity is a way to supply the means – a way to move resources to support and help the other without making him or her passive or dependent. It allows and assists the other to do what must be done. Subsidiarity cannot work without solidarity (sharing a responsibility through reciprocity which implies interdependence). If desistance is to be enabled and supported by sectors outwith the fourth sector, then it can be inferred from this analysis that focussing on the means and processes that enable the reconnection of the individual to 'circuits of social reciprocity' might be a useful starting point for considering how penal policy and practices within and across the other sectors might work to support desistance (Donati 2009:227).

As previously observed (in Chapter 3), Donati's relational paradigm provides an account of social integration (and therefore of the nature of civil society) based upon people's reciprocal orientation to relational goods (at all levels). Penal policies and practices have become so focused on what Archer (2011b) refers to as market exchange relations and political command relations that the contributions of the kinds of social relations that inhere in civil society have been at best marginalised and at worst ignored. Yet, as Archer (2011b) argues, the former are simply procedural transactions proceeding by instrumental rationality. They do not generate the relational good that is characteristic of a friendship, for example, such as trust. Rather, Archer argues, these rationalities - proceeding by command (in the form of

increasing bureaucratic regulation) and commodification generate relational 'evils' or bads which fragment and disrupt human relations (2011b).

Donati (2009, 2011a) instead advocates 'fraternity' (or reciprocity) which is the defining feature of social life and underpins the common good in society. He suggests that subsidiarity and solidarity are key concepts of the common good. They are, ideally, mutually reinforcing and necessary to realizing the common good. Donati (2009) argues that commitment to the common good and mutual respect for the dignity of each person is what makes for a robust civil society. Reciprocity is the social norm that contains and links together subsidiarity and solidarity. The first common good is that of human dignity which, Donati (2009) argues, is also the basis of any further common good. The human dignity of any given individual cannot be violated without the community suffering because to do so is to fracture the possibility of doing the common good from the start. Donati (2009:220) reasons that:

> 'The task of ensuring participation, social inclusion, security, and justice is certainly what justifies the existence and the action of the state, but the state must accomplish those tasks in a subsidiary way as regarding the civil society.'

Donati (2009) however clarifies that the common good is not synonymous with justice. Rather, he reasons, justice is a means to reach the common good. A person who commits a crime has to be punished because he has violated not only the norms of society (Duff 2001, 2003) but 'the common responsibility (solidarity)' (Donati 2009:227). If, however, punishment has a merely punitive or vengeful aim, or if it is simply incapacitative, it is likely to have the effect of fracturing relations and severing natural norms of reciprocity (on which see Andy's story).

> 'Its objective should be to assist the guilty person to do what he or she has to do, namely to re-establish the circuit of reciprocity. If an act of solidarity toward those who commit a crime is not subsidiary to them (in order to have them reenter the circuits of social reciprocity), it would not be a right action' (Donati 2009:227) (see also Duff 2001, 2003).

This would suggest that to restore or reinforce reciprocities in pursuit of the common good, justice must be realised through means that are restorative and allow people to fulfill their reciprocal obligations. This seems to require some recognition of mutual responsibility in supporting change, consistent with concepts of 'earned redemption' (Bazemore 1998:768). This form of mutual responsibility is forward looking, and asks not ''why did you do it?' but rather 'what is to be done'' (Maruna 2006b).

If, then 'the common good coincides neither with the state, nor with the state market compromise, – but…is the product of a system of social action involving a plurality of subjects orientating themselves on basis of reciprocal solidarity and subsidiarity' (Donati 2009: 228), this in turn then has implications for relations between state and civil society in seeking to support desistance. Doing so requires some reconsideration as to how we might reconfigure relations between the different sectors of society so as to 'support, enhance and work with the organically occurring community processes of reconciliation and earned redemption' (Maruna 2006a: 16)

Policy Implications

As this study has demonstrated, the change process extends beyond the operations and interventions of the penal system to what both the individual and informal support systems and networks contribute. The implication is that both practice and policy might become oriented to promoting supportive, reflexive relational networks premised on reciprocity, or mutual helping and obligations to support each person to realise his ultimate concerns. This would therefore seem to require that both policy and practice become oriented to supporting and generating -

> '[networks of] relationships to produce changes in both context and in behaviour through the modification of existing relations; …[which] activate the natural potential of social networks and make use of innovative forms… of relationality' (Donati 2011a:95).

In this global era of fiscal constraint, related social policies emerging from concepts of personalisation, co-production and *The Big Society* have ostensible potential to support the implementation of relevant initiatives in this regard. Personalisation appears with striking frequency in government publications on public service policy across the UK (Ferguson, 2007; see also Cabinet Office, 2009; Scottish Government, 2008, 2009) although it is generally associated with the *'Third Way'* social policy reform agenda of the New Labour Government. Personalisation is essentially focused on devolving control of service provision to the service user, harnessing their strengths and predilections in the context of their extant networks and capacities to inform the design and delivery of services (Weaver 2011). Personalisation 'enables the individual alone, or in groups, to find the right solutions for them and to participate in the delivery of a service. From being a recipient of

services, citizens can become actively involved in selecting and shaping the services they receive' (Scottish Government, 2009:10). However, in practice, personalisation approaches remain essentially individualistic and, whilst speaking to individual and network strengths, do so within the parameters of statutory constraint and current service provision and resources. If we are our relational concerns, then a truly personalised approach to community supervision requires policy and practice to attend to the relational contexts in which people's ultimate concerns emerge and through which relevant supports can be developed and protected. This requires changes to the organization of current services and the products they produce.

Within and beyond services, policies might become more oriented to supporting community re-integration by generating programmes and initiatives that promote active citizenship (Edgar et al., 2011) and generativity (Maruna 2001). Such an approach could increase user involvement in the design and delivery of interventions, services and policies, which might further enhance their credibility and legitimacy with those they aim to support (see Weaver 2011). The related policy emphasis on how ex/offenders, volunteers families, and community groups might become involved in justice services (Cabinet Office, 2010a; Ministry of Justice, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010) is, at least in principle, consistent with concepts of co-production and civil society.

Bovaird defines user and community co-production as ‘the provision of services through regular, long-term relationships between professionalised service providers (in any sector) and service users or other members of the community, where all parties make substantial resource contributions’ (2007: 849). The essence of co-production is collaboration and the reciprocal contribution of each party’s resources to producing mutually agreed outcomes. Realizing this, however, means not only

relinquishing monopolies of power and professional or service-defined expertise but the generation of reciprocal relationships underpinned by mutual responsibilities. To facilitate participation, co-production requires organizational flexibility and policy support for the regeneration of community development and engagement approaches so that policies and practices are not constrained by the more narrow objectives and capacities of services alone. This is broadly compatible with the emerging Justice Reinvestment model which refers to the redistribution of public money spent on penal measures to 'local community based initiatives designed to tackle the underlying problems which give rise to criminal behaviour' (Allen 2007:5). Justice Reinvestment's emphasis on decentralisation and the devolution of power and decision-making from national to local government bodies further resonates with the rhetoric of the *Big Society* thesis (Cabinet Office 2010b) and the *Rehabilitation Revolution* (MOJ 2010), at least where they share an emphasis on mixed sector service provision premised on models of social enterprise, mutuals and co-operatives.

The increasing policy emphasis in the UK on localized practices, building community assets, capacity, reciprocity and social capital, and on partnerships—between the statutory, private and third sectors, communities, service users and families—and the growing recognition of their mutual roles in supporting change could be construed as an opportunity for the pursuit of a more reciprocal and collaborative approach to justice that statutory services cannot achieve alone. However, underpinning the *Big Society* and the *Rehabilitation Revolution,* and the subsequent *Transforming Rehabilitation* agenda (MOJ 2013) lays an unmistakable economic rationale manifest in the withdrawal of traditional state services, increasing privatisation and market competition. Unlike the Justice Reinvestment model, the *Rehabilitation Revolution* and the *Transforming Rehabilitation* agenda are not

accompanied by a *redistribution* of economic resources from prisons to communities, but by the *withdrawal* of funding across services.

Relatedly, the simultaneous emphasis on 'payment by results' in England presents particular challenges to community and voluntary organisations. Though these organisations are central to Justice Reinvestment, the *Rehabilitation Revolution*, the *Transforming Rehabilitation* agendas and to the realization of coproductive arrangements, they are inadequately resourced and are unlikely to withstand the financial risk of managing a payment-by-results contract. In consequence, this policy turn is more likely to represent the further privatisation and commodification of justice (McCulloch and McNeill 2007). In similar vein, the emphasis on competition risks undermining more cooperative partnerships that already exist between statutory and voluntary sectors and the narrow focus on reducing re-offending in the short term is likely to constrain the development of innovations that might promote the less easily measured objectives of social justice and integration. Not only is recidivism an inaccurate measure of change but if desistance is characterized by lapse and relapse, then the effects of interventions may be longer term and more subtle than immediately discernible. How performance will be measured is one question, but it is one that focuses primarily on the activities and interventions of services, which is only one dynamic in the wider process of change.

Given the centrality of employment to the men's narrative of reforms, progressing beyond an economic definition of work seems apt in an era of increasing unemployment. Indeed, volunteering, 'to the extent that [it] produces a public good... benefits nonparticipants and participants alike' (Uggen and Janikula 1999:356) and has been positively associated with desistance in that it establishes notions of reciprocity and mutuality, promotes generativity and, through social recognition,

acknowledges citizenship. As this study suggests, volunteering and civic engagement may also be a route to accessing new social networks, and generating social capital. As with Justice Reinvestment, however, further consideration needs to be given as to how initiatives promoting active citizenship might be adequately resourced and supported by wider social policies. Currently, participation in voluntary work can impact on benefit entitlement and unemployed people are consistently pressured to relinquish these activities to enter the formal employment market (Seyfang 2006). This seems to conflict with the *Big Society*'s emphasis on relinquishing power and promoting choice and volunteerism within local communities and appears mindless of the realities of increasing cuts and unemployment that exert a disproportionately negative impact on already disadvantaged populations and communities.

Practice Implications

McNeill (2006: 46) proposed that 'offender management services need to think of themselves less as providers of correctional treatment (that belongs to the expert) and more as supporters of desistance processes (that belong to the desister).' As chapter 2 illustrated, while there is some consensus that supporting desistance requires practitioners to attend to individuals' personal concerns and an increased level of involvement in families and communities, there is limited discussion on how these shifts in probation practice might be realised or how justice services, however broadly defined, might reconfigure their relationship to and with individuals, families and communities (although see Maruna and LeBel 2010; Weaver forthcoming). Indeed, chapter 2 illuminated that much of the research on desistance has not been directly concerned with or focussed on the role of criminal justice interventions or practices at all, albeit with notable exceptions. This study does not mark a departure

from the norm in this regard. However, it has been suggested that understanding how and why people desist can inform professional practice (see for example McNeill 2003; 2006; Rex 1999), which, as Porporino (2010) suggests, means listening carefully to the kinds of supports that individuals, and it could be added – families and communities – need in order to relate to each other in a such a way as to enable and support naturally occurring processes of desistance.

If, then, as this study suggests, desistance is about more than simply reducing re-offending, this would suggest that supporting desistance requires going beyond a sole focus on the individual, as if their offending behaviour occurred freely and in isolation, to address the social opportunities and obstacles that either help or hinder desistance (see for example Barry 2006; Farrall 2002). This means recognising the individual in the context of their relationships with families and communities (or lack thereof). In turn, this requires the building both of professional relationships and of social and community networks to enable change. Recognizing individuals and families and other informal networks of support as assets, involved in mutual support and delivery of penal practices, may assist in re-establishing and building 'circuits of social reciprocity' (Donati 2009:227). In this reformulation of relationships between the various sectors of society, the third and fourth sectors have a critical role to play.

> 'They are thus put in a position from which to express their potentialities… precisely because they are not treated as residual subject…. [they] become social actors with their own powers, and recognized contributions, independent from the state or market' Donati 2009:232).

As this study suggests, this means creating the kinds of practices, premised on the principles and practices of subsidiarity and solidarity, that can generate, support and sustain the kinds of relational goods and reflexive relational networks that reside at the heart of the desistance process. This might require promoting under-utilised peer, familial and community support resources in the process of supervision as much as utilising the resources that reside within networks, families and communities beyond supervision, in facilitating social re-integration. However, as this study has demonstrated, being tied into social relations does not in itself produce desistance. Suggestions that social capital might support desistance through increased social mobility through connection to various network structures are not only too limited in their recognition of agency and reflexivity, they also fail to acknowledge why and how being connected into such networks exerts an influence on the individual. If we understand social capital as 'an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between individuals' (Fukuyama 2001: 7) then we need to understand social capital as a property and a quality of social relationships. As a relational good, social capital is neither an asset possessed by the individual, nor a collective property of a social structure, but a configuration of those social networks which are shared by people who will not be able to produce such goods outside their reciprocal relations (Donati 2007). The implication is that policies and practices focus less on the structural outcomes derived from participation in a given network and more on the connections between people and on fostering the reflexivity of the individual who is being connected by the good of the relationship.

Recognizing then that the process of desistance, and the people who support it, extend beyond penal practices and practitioners, the focus here is on *how* practitioners might begin to reconfigure their relationships with and to individuals, families, groups and communities in order to co-produce desistance. This may

include supporting and enabling peer-productive practices (Pestoff 2012) such as peer mentoring, self-help, activism and mutual aid and their vital contribution in collaboratively co-producing desistance promoting community justice services (see for example Maruna and LeBel 2009; Weaver 2011; Weaver and Lightowler 2012; Weaver and McCulloch 2012).

Taking a whole person approach and focusing on people's quality of life, not just their offences, suggests a role for practitioners in advocating on behalf of individuals, and in forging partnerships with people's families, where appropriate, and other organizations such as local authorities, voluntary organisations, user led organisations (Weaver 2011) social enterprises and mutual cooperatives (Weaver and Nicholson 2012) all of whom have a role to play in co-producing desistance[61]. Practice should therefore 'focus on people as interdependent citizens embedded in a wide network of support including formal public services, as well as a host of less formal interactions and relationships' (Needham 2009: 27). This means that practitioners also have a role in supporting the development or maintenance of a person's positive social relationships, with friends and families, as well as engaging them as part of the change process.

Current approaches to group work in probation practice across the UK typically bring a collection of individuals together on the basis of various demographic criteria to participate in correctional programmes underpinned by cognitive behavioural psychology to address 'criminogenic needs'. Building on the dynamics of the change process elaborated in this study, a desistance focussed and co-productive approach to working with groups may have more of an appreciative, rather than correctional, focus and should be strengths-based and collaborative; should create the kinds of

[61] For an elaboration of approaches to working with individuals, families, groups and communities, see Weaver (forthcoming)

environments for and resources of social recognition; should promote and enable the exercise of both personal and relational reflexivity; should be oriented to generating and enhancing social capital, and thereby should support the development of new supportive social networks. Mutual aid has the potential to perform all these functions. While mutual aid manifests in a range of peer-to-peer activity, mutual aid groups can also function collaboratively with practitioners in the public and voluntary sectors to co-produce services (Burns and Taylor 1998). In groups, mutual aid is premised on the reciprocal exchange of help; the group member is both provider and recipient of help for the purpose of co-producing mutual/collective and individual goals. In this sense, mutual aid is both a process and an outcome (Steinberg 2004). Mutual aid groups are widely established in the community – not least in the recovery from addictions movement (for example, Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous) and recovery in a mental health context – but practitioners could also support the co-design and co-implementation of mutual aid based group work practices (Steinberg 2004).

The development of multi-stakeholder social or mutual cooperative structures of employment may represent both a means of building community capacity, and thus co-producing community based desistance-supporting resources, and a means of enabling access to employment. In general terms, co-ownership by practitioners, service users, and, as appropriate, community members or groups is the defining characteristic of social cooperatives and mutual public services (Weaver and Nicholson 2012). They enable members to create their own employment and provide support to each other through their membership of the social co-operative. The role of the professional in these structures is to facilitate the promotion, development, and success of each social co-operative rather than simply providing either expert assistance or rehabilitative services to individual members. Mutual or

social co-operatives can offer vital social supports, contribute to the development of a more pro-social identity, increase levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy and provide a sense of purpose for both individuals and communities. Through the negotiation of mutual rights and responsibilities, mutual and social co-operatives can also promote active citizenship and generate wider and more sustainable social capital (Weaver and Nicholson 2012).

Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

As previously recognised, one of the limitations of this research is the small sample size, comprising six white males, on which this study was based and, in that, the discrete geographical area from which the participants were drawn. This study does not seek generalisability in the statistical sense but may nevertheless be analytically generalisable. Future research could test out the extent to which this research is indeed analytically generalisable though further in-depth research with other groups, or individuals who have limited, or no, social networks, or whose offending occurs in isolation. How different cultural and social environments and gender dynamics might play out requires further investigation. While such studies are not likely to refute the significance of social relations, they could usefully elaborate how they differ for people in different conditioning structures. Future research, then, could usefully focus on studying a number of naturally forming groups from within the same or across different geographical locations. This would enable an investigation as to whether the findings of this research can be identified within and across populations of people who once co-offended and have since desisted across a range of cultural contexts. This could be progressed by either a retrospective qualitative research design or by a prospective longitudinal research design. In so doing, this would

enable a broader analysis of the dynamics of offending and desistance within and across naturally forming groups.

As suggested earlier, a limitation of this study was that it focussed solely on analysing the life-stories of a naturally forming group. A more thorough analysis of the role of social relations in the change process would suggest the inclusion of a broader base of participants, including, for example, parents, partners and new social network members, to understand their experiences of desistance processes and how to support them. In so doing, it would further understandings of the relational contributions to the change process. This could be progressed through either a qualitative or a mixed method study, which may be either retrospective or prospective in focus.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the relationships between structure, agency, reflexivity, identity and the desistance process to inform how a paradigm shift in penal practice, based on the implications of understandings of the desistance process, might be realised. Following a review of the literature it was identified that while there was some consensus that social relations were a central element of the change process, no desistance studies had adequately analysed how dynamics within a naturally forming group might constrain or enable desistance or, in that, the impact that a naturally forming group can exert on criminal careers – both empirically and theoretically. The analysis of the life stories of the men who formed part of 'The Del' makes something of an original methodological contribution to the literature both in studying a naturally forming group and in, albeit retrospectively, capturing the processes of involvement in the group, onset and maintenance of offending,

extrication from the group and desistance. In turn this has generated new empirical and theoretical conceptualizations of the role of peers in onset, persistence and desistance; of the role of social relations in the process of change; and of the dynamics of the desistance process. Moreover this study has reconceptualised the relationships between structure, agency, reflexivity and identity and the desistance process by revealing what reflexivity entails, elaborating different forms of reflexivity and by reconceptualising the role of individuals, social relations and structures in the desistance process. In so doing, the findings and implications of this study have generated new insights as to how a paradigm shift in penal polices and practice might be realised.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Pre Interview: engagement phase: is it easy or hard to look back on things you have not thought of for a long time?

The purpose of the first part of this interview [62] is to for me to learn as much as I can about you and your life as you understand it.

The second part of this interview will focus on your offending behaviour and whether and how you gave up crime. While this may feature in the first interview in, the second interview, you will be asked about this in more detail.

In the third part of the interview, you will be asked about your ideologies and any faith you might hold but you will also be asked about your hopes and aspirations for the future.

Part One: Context of life:

Family:

Tell me about the family you were born into and / or brought up with.

Prompts: *family composition; experience of the family; who and what was the main source of income in your family i.e did parents work? In comparison to neighbours or people at your school do you think you were poor, well off or the same as others? How did your mum and dad get on? How did you get on with them and with your*

[62] This is adapted from Faith Politics and the Life Story; Interview Protocol; The Foley Center for the Study of Lives; Fourth Revision: March 2005: Introductory Comments and the Guided Autobiography and the Life Story Interview: Dan P McAdams, Northwestern University revised 1995).

Siblings? Relationships now – have they changed? Family values – did/do you have sense of shared values with your family? What are they? Where do you think these values came from? How were you influenced by your family or upbringing?

Environment / Place

Tell me about or describe the neighbourhood you grew up in.

Prompts: *What was it like there then? How did you feel about the neighbourhood and coming from there and living there? What was the best part about it? What was the worst part about it? How would you feel about your children (if you have / had them) growing up there? Do you still live there? If yes, how does it compare – now and then? If no – when did you move? Why? Tell me about all the places you have lived in. Tell me about where you live now. Why do you no longer live there?*

Friends / Social Network

Tell me about the people you hung out with when you were young or who were the significant people in your life when you were younger.

Prompts: *When you were young did you have a wide circle of friends? Why were these people important to you? How did you know them? Was there a particular place you hung out together – tell me about that? Shared activities, experiences, values i.e why were you friends. What influence do you think your friends had on you or you on them? What are they doing now? Are you still in touch with the same people? – If no Why? Tell me about your new friends*

Experience of Education

Tell me what school was like for you.

Prompts: *Where did you go to school? What was your relationship like with your teachers? Peers? How did you find class and homework? What was your parents attitude towards education? Did you think education / school was important? Positives? Negatives? What impact has your experience of schooling had on you today? To what extent was your experience of education within your control?*

Pre Amble: I am going to ask you now to think about your life as if it could be divided up into separate stages with main characters, and so on. I am asking you to tell me all about your life… your past, present, and what you see as your own future. People's lives vary enormously and people make sense of their own lives in a huge variety of ways. In telling me about your life, you do not need to tell me everything that has ever happened to you. Focus on a few key events, a few relationships, a few key themes which recur in the narrative. In telling about your life, you should concentrate the areas in your own life that you believe to be important in some fundamental way …information about yourself and your life which says something significant about you and how you have come to be who you are. What you say should tell how you are similar to other people as well as how you are unique. I will ask you some questions to help you fill in some of the details; some may be harder to answer than others. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to although for those that you do answer, I would ask you to be as honest as you possibly can be.

The Life Story[63]:

[63] Adapted from Life Story Interview: Dan P McAdams, Northwestern University revised 1995.

- **Life Stages**

I would like you to begin by thinking about your life with characters, places etc. There are high points and there are low points in your life, good times and bad times, good guys and bad guys and so forth. You might even be able to think of it as having stages to it. What might those stages be? I would like you to describe for me each of the main stages in your life. You can have as many or as few as you like If you can, give each stage a name and describe the overall contents in each stage. Thus we are outlining the major stages in your life**.**

- **Significant Events:**

Now that you have given me an outline of the stages of your life, I would like you to concentrate on a few significant events or situations that may stand out for you. This could be a specific happening, an incident that sticks out in your mind, a significant period in your past, situated in a particular time and place, with particular people involved, actions, thoughts and feelings. It is helpful to think of such an event as constituting a specific moment in your life which stands out for some reason.

> **For each event:** Describe it for me in detail. Make sure you tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context. What happened? What did you do/ who else was involved? Where and when did it happen? What were you thinking and feeling in the event? Why is this an important event? What impact has this event had on who you are today? What does this event say about who you are or were as a person? Why does this moment stand out for you?

Event 1: High point:

Can you recall a particular high point in your life …perhaps the high point. It would be a moment or episode in your life in which you experienced extremely positive emotions like happiness, excitement, uplifting or deep inner peace or hope. Today, the episode would stand out as one of the best, highest, most positive scenes or moments in your life story. Please pick and describe in some detail a high point in your life – [Beth ask for extra detail if required only after narrative has concluded]

> Describe it for me in detail. Make sure you tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context. What happened? What did you do/ who else was involved? Where and when did it happen? What were you thinking and feeling in the event? Why is this an important event? What impact has this event had on who you are today? What does this event say about who you are or were as a person? Why does this moment stand out for you?

Event 2: Low Point

This low point is obviously the opposite of a high point. It is a low point in your life. Thinking back over your life, try to remember a specific experience in which you felt extremely negative emotions, such as despair, disillusionment, terror, guilt or shame etc. Even though this memory is unpleasant, I would still appreciate an attempt on your part to be as honest and specific and detailed as you can be.

> Describe it for me in detail. Make sure you tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context. What happened? What did you do/ who else was involved? Where and when did it happen? What were you thinking and feeling in the event? Why is this an important event? What

impact has this event had on who you are today? What does this event say about who you are or were as a person? Why does this moment stand out for you?

Event 3: Turning Point

In looking back on one's life, it is often possible to identify key 'turning points' or times or episodes through which a person undergoes substantial change. Turning points can occur in many different spheres of a persons life, in relationships with other people, in work, in school, in hospitals, in prisons, in outside interests – this can be a postivie or negative experience etc I am especially interested in turning points in your understanding of yourself, Please identify a particular episode in your life that you now see as a turning point. If you don't feel as though you have one, then pick one you think comes close. {Beth: do not allow respondent to repeat one that has gone before}

Life Challenge

Looking back over the various stages in your life, please describe the single greatest challenge that you have faced in your life up to now. How you faced, handled, or dealt with this challenge? Have other people assisted you in dealing with this challenge? How has this challenge had an impact on your life? How easy was it for you to face / resolve/ tackle this challenge? Did you feel you had control over the situation when it was happening?

Influences on the Life Story: Positive and Negative:

Positive:

Looking back over your life, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organisation or institution that has or has had the greatest positive influence on your life to date. Please describe this person, group or organisation and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a positive impact on your life.

Negative:

Looking back over your life story, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organisation or institution that has or have had the greatest negative influence on your life. Please describe this person, group or organisation and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a negative impact on your life.

Images of the self

Tell me how you see yourself.

Prompts: *Who are you/ What words or images would you use to describe yourself? What do you like about yourself or dislike? What different thoughts or beliefs do you think contribute to how you see yourself, how you live your life? How do you think other people see you? Masculinities – how do you feel about being a man? What does it mean to you to be a man? Do you feel pressure to act in a certain way? What way? Where does this come from? Class? Culture? Generational? Peers? Media? Have you always felt this way? Which people do you admire most and why? What parts of these people or this person do you relate to?*

Current life

Tell me about your more recent life.

Prompts: *Where do you live? Partner – relationship ? Drugs? Alcohol? current employment? Wider Family? Friends? Finances? Emotional wellbeing? Health?*

Significance of these factors to individual. How much of where you are today has to do with fate or luck or did you make this happen? What is good about your life now? What worries or problems do you have?

Part Two: Story of Criminal Career

Onset of offending

Tell me the story of how you first became involved in offending.

Prompts: *How old were you? Was there anything significant happening in your life at that time that may have made a difference to you offending or not? Describe it for me in detail the earliest offence that you can recall. Make sure you tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context. What happened? What did you do/ who else was involved? Where and when did it happen? Did you feel that you had a choice about what was happening? Is this something that happened to you or did you feel in control? What else were you thinking and feeling in the event.*

Were you caught?

If **yes** – see below.

If **no –** tell me now about your first charged and processed.

Make sure you tell me what led up to the scene, so that I can understand it in context. What happened? What did you do/ who else was involved? Where and when did it happen? Did you feel that you had a choice about what was happening? Is this something that happened to you or did you feel in control? What else were you thinking and feeling in the event.

Both - What happened?

Prompts: *i.e panel / court/ what happened i.e caution etc (BW ask questions as before) Then: How did you feel after you were caught? Were friends caught too and how did they feel? Did they experience the same outcome? Do you recall this having any impact on your parents or your family? Did this have any immediate effect on your life i.e your general day to day life or school? How did you see yourself after this, at the time? Do you recall noticing whether you were treated differently by anyone else?*

Is there anything else significant about this that stands out in your mind?

How long was it if at all before you committed your next offence? Was it with the same people?

Continuation of Offending

Tell me about the your offending career

Prompts: *types, dates, frequency, sentences. In general was there any pattern to your offending when you look back ie in relation type, associates, places, were you always drunk? Was alcohol or drug use relevant to your offending? At the time -did you ever think about whether what you were doing was right or wrong or whether you were happy with doing or not ? How did you see or understand yourself in relation to other people that were not doing these things? What impact do you think this has had on you or your life? When offending, what did you fear most? When offending, what did you get out of it? What did you like most about offending?*

Desistance

How would you define offending behaviour?

Would you ever describe yourself as having stopped offending?

Has there been a period in which you offended less?

In terms of where you are now, would you say you had stopped offending?

When was your last offence / When was your last conviction?

At what point would you say that you had moved away from offending behaviour?

If not – What do you think are the reasons you continue to engage in offending behaviour?

Prompts: *Would you like to stop offending? What if anything makes it difficult to stop offending / why not? What would need to be different for you to lead an offence free lifestyle? What are the costs and benefits of this? How optimistic are you that you could stop? What do the people you hang about with feel about offending or not offending and do they offend? Do you feel as though you have a choice in this or how much control do you feel you have over this?*

If so

Can you identify any particular point or stage(s) which you could pinpoint as the start of you stopping offending?

Prompts: - Explore process: How easy was it to stop? What led up to this point? Was it an abrupt or gradual process? What started this process off? What things did you differently when you were trying to stop offending? What made it easy to stop offending? What made it hard to stop offending? What were the people you were hanging about with doing at this period? Why did you want to stop offending? What were the costs and benefits of stopping offending? How optimistic are you that you

will not offend again? What has changed in you or your life since you stopped offending? Whats stayed the same? Was this something that happened to you or did you make it happen? How long has it been seen you since you last offended? What stops you from offending now? Is there anything in your life right now that if it changed could result in you offending? How would you feel? Was it your choice to stop offending or did things just work out that way? Is it easy to continue to not offend – i.e how hard is it to sustain desistance

Both

Tell me what your experiences have been, successful or otherwise of trying to go straight?

Prompts: Explore process - What helped / hindered this process? What did or could have made a significant difference? What was the role of imprisonment or the community based penalties in helping or hindering your efforts to go straight? Do you think there has been anyone of significance or a particular event that has helped or did help you or tried to help you to go straight? Did your friendships / relationships and / or family have a role to play in you either continuing or stopping offending? What effect has continuing or stopping offending had on your friendships and / or relationships / and or family relationships

Criminal Self:

Does your criminal past matter to you? What impact, if any, does it continue to have on you? What impact does it have on how you see yourself today? Do you think other people see you in this way? Do you have any control over how people see you? How do you feel about your offending now – looking back?

For those who have desisted – now that you're not offending, do you think about your past offending differently than you did at the time? Do you see yourself differently now?

For those continuing – how do you see yourself? How much does your offending feature in the way you see yourself? How do you feel about yourself?

Part Three: Ideologies and Futures

Personal Ideology

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your fundamental beliefs and values and about questions of meaning and spirituality in your life. Please give some thought to each question:

Please describe in a nutshell your religious beliefs, if you have any, or the way you approach life in a spiritual sense.

Prompts: *How if at all have these changed over time? How important are these beliefs to you, to how you see yourself and to how you conduct your life? Who shares these views with you?*

What interest do you have in political and social issues?

Prompts: *Do you have a particular political point of view? Are there particular issues or causes about which you feel strongly? Describe them. How if at all have these changed over time? How important are these views to you, to how you see yourself and to how you conduct your life? Where did these views come from? Who shares these views with you?*

Do you think there is a purpose to your life?

Prompts: *What are the rules or set of standards you live by? What would you do and not do; what do you expect of other people? Where do you think these rules come from? How important are they to you and to how you see yourself and to how you conduct your life? Who shares these rules with you?*

Futures

Now that your have told me a little bit about your past, I would like you to consider the future.

First, tell me what you imagine you future will be like. Whilst keeping it realistic: What are your goals and dreams? Who will be in your life? What do you hope to accomplish in the future? What fears for the future do you have? How do you see your future self? Where do you get these feelings from? What is the likelihood of this happening for you? What needs to happen for this future to occur [can divide into positive or negative but elicit as much concrete detail as possible] How much control do you feel you have over the future?

End – describe contours of narrative to participants – check understandings.

Other

What else should I know to understand you and your life story?

APPENDIX 2: TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE AND SUB-THEMES: ORGANISED BY SUPERORDINATE THEME

Superordinate Theme:	Subordinate Themes
The Relational Context of Offending (All participants)	On Becoming and Belonging
	The Nature and Dynamics of the Group, Lifestyle and Behaviour
	Identity and Identification to and with the group. The Fragmentation of the Del
Experience of Punishment (Andy's Story)	Experience of Prisoner Community
	Effects of Prison
	Anticipating and Experiencing Release
Experience of Punishment (Seth's Story)	Making Positive Change in Prison
Roles, Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance (Harry, Seth, Jed's Stories)	Role of Extant (Familial) and (New[64]) Social Networks in Supporting Desistance
	Role of Intimate Relationships and Families of Formation in Supporting Desistance
Religiosity[65], Reflexivity, Relationality and Desistance (Jay and Evan's stories)	Role of Extant (and New) Social Networks in Supporting Desistance
	Role of Intimate Relationships and Families of Formation in Supporting Desistance
The Meanings and Outcomes of Work (all participants)	The Desistance Promotive Meanings and Outcomes of Work
	Constraints and Limitations

[64] The phraseology of this sub-theme changes across Chapters 6-9 as applicable to the individuals' stories

[65] The phraseology of this superordinate theme differs for Jay and Evan due to the emphasis placed on religiosity in their narratives of desistance, rather than social roles.

APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Narratives of the Criminal Self: Shared Beginnings, Divergent Outcomes[66]

To whom it may concern,

I am a PhD student at the Glasgow School of Social Work, University of Strathclyde. My PhD research is about listening to people's life stories who may have, at some stage, been involved in offending behaviour. The aim of this research is to understand the process that led to participant's involvement in offending and perhaps led to participants stopping offending and to hear their stories about this and other aspects of their life. It is hoped that, by listening to people's stories, we can learn more about the experiences of people who have been or who are involved in offending. Further information relating to this study can be found on the Information Sheet, accompanying this letter.

I am writing to you because I would be interested in listening to your story. You do not have to commit to taking part in the project now. However, once you have read the information sheet accompanying this letter, and if you would be comfortable with the idea, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and talk further.

[66] This was the original title of the study

I would like to emphasise that by meeting with me, you will not be obliged to participate in this project in any way. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at ANY stage. I have taken this opportunity to give you my contact details (below), should you wish to meet with me, or even if you have any questions you would like me to answer at this juncture.

Thank you for your time.

Yours truly,

Beth Weaver

Glasgow School of Social Work

University of Strathclyde

Jordanhill Campus

Sir Henry Wood Building

76 Southbrae Drive,

Glasgow,

G13 1PP,

Email: efawcett06@aol.com

Tel: 07865 046 912

APPENDIX 4: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

<u>**Narratives of the Criminal Self: Shared Beginnings, Divergent Outcomes.**</u>

Information Sheet for Participants

What is this research about?

This research is about listening to people's life stories who may have, at some stage, been involved in offending behaviour. The aim of this research is to understand the process that led to your involvement in offending and perhaps led to you stopping offending and to hear your stories about this and other aspects of your life. It is hoped that by listening to your story, the researcher, Beth Weaver, can learn more about the experiences of people who have been or who are involved in offending.

Who is doing this research?

This study is not funded. It will be submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Beth Weaver who is the sole researcher. Beth Weaver will be the sole interviewer, transcriber, interpreter and presenter of findings.

Beth Weaver is a post graduate Doctoral student at the Glasgow School of Social Work, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Contact details are supplied at the bottom of this information sheet.

What will happen if I agree to participate?

If you agree to participate, Beth Weaver will make arrangements to arrange a suitable time and place to meet. At this first meeting, Beth Weaver will explain the type of questions you might be asked, the purpose of asking these questions, and what will happen to the information you provide. This will also give you an opportunity to ask any more questions you may have and give you further time to think about whether or not you would like to participate in this project. If you continue to be happy to participate, Beth Weaver will arrange to meet with you again to interview you. You will then be asked some questions designed to help you tell the story of your life in your own words.

Basically, the aim is to capture your account of your life, how you became involved in offending, how you think your life has turned out, how you see yourself and other people and systems, and what your hopes and plans for the future might be. You will not be pressurised into answering any questions that you do not feel comfortable with and you have the right to decline to answer anything you do not wish to.

Beth Weaver intends to record the interviews to make sure that an accurate record of what you said is obtained, although if you do not give your permission for the interviews to be recorded, then this will be respected. It is expected that interviews may last up to two hours each, undertaking two to three interviews in total over the course of two to three weeks, as an approximate guide. You can discuss with Beth Weaver where you would feel most comfortable undertaking the interviews, although it should be somewhere where your privacy is assured, and you can discuss which dates and times would be most convenient for you.

What will happen to the information I provide?

At the end of the final interview, Beth Weaver will give you feedback on the information you have provided, so that both you and Beth Weaver can be assured that the information you have provided has been correctly understood. The digital audio recording of the interview will be transcribed and fully anonymised. A copy of the transcript will be made available to you following the interviews. The recordings and transcripts will be kept in a secure place and no-one will have access to the recording or the transcript except Beth Weaver.

Your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected as will that of any persons mentioned during the course of interviews. If however, you tell Beth Weaver something that indicates that there is a significant risk that you or someone else is at risk of serious harm, she will be obliged to report this. This will not be done without a full discussion with you first and you will be consulted about how best to pass this information on.

The end product of this research will be submitted to an academic panel in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and if successful the final report will be held in the university library. It may be that Beth Weaver proceeds to publish reports and academic papers from the study. Beth Weaver will not refer to any one by name in these reports and papers. If, and only if you agree to it, Beth Weaver might also use the anonymised information you provide for future research.

What if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind about participating in this research at *any* time during the process and unless you would like to, you do not

have to explain your reasons for this. If you do wish to explain your reasons, arrangements will be made for you to do so in private. If you decide to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be destroyed unless you are happy for Beth Weaver to retain it.

Is there anyone I can talk to if any of the discussion points upset me?

Yes. Should you experience any distress or feel that you need any further support in relation to any of the issues that participating in this research has raised for you, Beth Weaver will provide the name and contact details of a named individual or relevant support service.

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any concerns or complaints about the study, before, during or after your participation in the study, you should contact:

Professor Mike Nellis: **Telephone: 0141 950 3227**
E-mail: Mike.Nellis@strath.ac.uk

OR

Professor Fergus McNeill: **Telephone: 0141 950 3098 / 0141 330 2000**
E-mail: Fergus.McNeill@strath.ac.uk

OR

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee: Dr Jo Edwards **0141 548 5909**.

<u>For more general questions, you might wish to contact Beth Weaver:</u>

Contact Details for Beth Weaver:

Glasgow School of Social Work
University of Strathclyde
Jordanhill Campus
Sir Henry Wood Building
76 Southbrae Drive,
Glasgow,
G13 1PP,

OR:

Tel: **07865 046 912**
Email: elizabethfawcett@strath.ac.uk

Glasgow School of Social Work

University of Strathclyde

Narratives of the Criminal Self: Shared Beginnings, Divergent Outcomes.

Participant Consent Form

If you agree with the statements below, please sign and date the form at the bottom:

I have read and understood the information sheet about this project and I am aware of what my participation in this project involves.

All the questions I have concerning my participation in this project have been satisfactorily answered.

I freely agree to take part in this study and understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I do not wish to.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons, at which time any information that I have already given will be destroyed unless I agree otherwise

I agree to the interview being audio recorded

I would like to receive a written record of the interview

I understand that all the information I give will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and my anonymity upheld at all times. I understand that where I disclose something that indicates that there is a significant risk that I or someone else is at risk of serious harm that that Beth Weaver will be obliged to report this.

I consent to Beth Weaver using the anonymised information I provide for a future research, if desired.

Name (Participant)…………………………………………Date ………………………….

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