

Parole, Re-incarceration, and Desistance: Utah Parolees

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Introduction	1
Background	1
The Promise and Peril of Parole	2
Offenders’ Experience on Parole	6
Desistance	9
Cognitive Transformation	11
The Current Study	9
Parole in Utah	11
Quantitative Methods & Results	11
General Methods	11
Results	12
Parolee Demographics	12
Criminal History	13
Risk Assessments	14
Parole Outcomes	15
Programming	17
Time on Parole	18
Revocation and New Conviction	18
Multinomial Regression Predicting Revocation & New Conviction	18
Demographics	20
Risk	24
Detailed Criminal History	24
Programming	24

Special Conditions	25
Violations	27
Release Planning	31
Time to Revocation & New Conviction	34
Qualitative Methods & Results	33
Data Collection	33
Data Analysis	34
Results	34
Sample Characteristics	34
Impact of Incarceration	37
Social Support	38
Release Experience	40
Characterizing Offenders' Motivation and Process of Desistance	46
Moment of Change	46
Agency	48
Alternative Selves	54
Regret and Stigma	57
Discussion	60
Quantitative Summary	60
Qualitative Summary	64
References	67

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In 2012, more than half a million (581,374) inmates were released from state prisons in the United States (U.S.) (Carson & Golinelli, 2013). Anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of those individuals will be returned to prison within three years of release (Langan & Levin, 2002; The Pew Center for the States (PCS), 2011). Younger individuals, males, persons with more extensive criminal histories, and persons incarcerated for property offenses have comparatively higher recidivism rates (Bell, Bucklen, Nakamura, Tomkiel, Santore, Russell, et al., 2013; Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014; Langan & Levin, 2002). There are a number of explanations for the frequency with which offenders are recommitted to institutions, including the collateral impacts of cycling between prison and the community. The majority of offenders enter prison with significant deficits in terms of social and financial capital (Petersilia, 2004; Raphael, 2011; Seiter & Kadela, 2003) and lengthy or repeated episodes of incarceration further disrupt community ties, social relationships, and employment (Wolff, Schi, & Schumann, 2012). When compared to the general population, inmates have lower levels of education, less stable employment and housing histories, less social support, and higher levels of substance abuse (Lynch & Sabol, 2001; Visher, Yahner, & La Vigne, 2010). While the majority of prisons operate programs to address these deficits, budget constraints have limited inmates' access to services (Crayton & Neustetter, 2008; Mumola & Karberg, 2006; National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (NCASA), 2010; Petersilia, 2003).

The combination of multiple periods of incarceration and relatively limited rehabilitation services means that inmates exit prison with a risk of offending that is similar to, or even higher than, the risk when they were admitted (Petersilia, 2011). Former inmates have difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment and housing; lack positive social support and community ties; and struggle with substance abuse and mental illness (Gaynes, 2005; Visher et al., 2010). Compounding this situation are state and federal policies that restrict ex-offenders from certain types of employment and benefits programs, including public housing and welfare assistance (Visher, Palmer, & Roman, 2007). As a result, many offenders leave prison without the skills to lead a crime-free life and without access to resources and support to develop or maintain those skills.

The promise and peril of parole

In 2012, 70% of inmates exiting state correctional facilities were released with parole supervision (Carson & Golinelli, 2013) and more than 850,000 people were on parole in the United States (Glaze & Herberman, 2013). Research shows that as many as half of paroled inmates will be re-incarcerated within two years of release (Bell et al., 2013; Kohl, Hoover, McDonald, & Solomon, 2008; Ostermann, 2013; Wilson, 2005). In many respects, recidivism among parolees is associated with similar demographic and case characteristics as recidivism among the overall offender population: parolees who are younger, male, have more extensive criminal histories, and were incarcerated for property crimes have the highest recidivism rates (Solomon, Kachnowski, & Bhati, 2005; Steen & Opsal, 2007). Offenders who have been paroled multiple times on the same sentence have higher re-incarceration rates when compared to those paroled for the first time (Bell et al., 2013; Langan & Levin, 2002). Additionally, the longer an offender has been on parole, the more likely they are to discharge successfully rather than return to prison (Steen & Opsal, 2007).

Parole supervision is theorized to reduce recidivism rates through two mechanisms: 1) monitoring offenders' behavior in the community; and 2) providing rehabilitation services to lower the overall risk of recidivism after supervision ends. As such, parolees would be expected to recidivate at lower rates than offenders who serve their entire sentence in prison and are released unconditionally. In fact, research examining the impact of parole on offender outcomes demonstrates mixed results, with some studies showing comparable (Petersilia & Turner, 1993; Solomon, Kachnowski, & Bhati, 2005) and even higher (Gendreau, Goggin, Cullen, & Paparozzi, 2001; Kohl et al., 2008; Tewksbury, Vito, & Higgins, 2012) recidivism rates for parolees when compared to unconditional releases.

In part, supervision drives up recidivism rates because increased surveillance means that parolees are more likely than unconditional releases to be apprehended both for committing new crimes and for violating the conditions of parole. Parole violations accounted for nearly one-third (27%) of all admissions to state prisons in 2012, up from 16% in 1978 (Carson & Golinelli, 2013). Given increases in the prison population during that time, a parolee was 87% more likely to go to prison on a violation in 2012 when compared to 1978¹. When looking at offenders who exited parole in the U.S. in 2012, one-fourth (25%) exited through re-incarceration: eight percent (8%) with a new sentence and 14% for a technical violation (Maruschak & Bonczar, 2013). Steen and Opsal (2007) found that state-level factors—such as policies and decision-making processes—significantly influence technical revocation rates and that states “vary widely in their use of revocation” (p. 358).

In a cohort of offenders released from prison in Kentucky, parolees had a five-year return-to-prison rate of 63% compared to 40% for unsupervised offenders; however, 36% of unsupervised offenders were re-incarcerated for committing a new crime while only 12% of supervised offenders were re-incarcerated for a new offense (Tewksbury, Vito, & Higgins, 2012). When recidivism is operationalized as new crimes, rather than technical violations, multiple studies show lower recidivism for parolees than unconditional releases (Bell et al., 2013; Kohl et al., 2008; PCS, 2013; Schlager & Robbins, 2008). Even studies demonstrating an inverse relationship between parole and recidivism, however, do not necessarily support the impact of parole on long-term behavioral change: in some cases, differential recidivism rates between conditional and unconditional releases disappear once supervision ends (Ostermann, 2013). This latter finding may be a function of dosage: after discharge from supervision, Nebraska parolees had lower re-incarceration rates than unconditional releases, but only if they were supervised for at least six months (Vandenberg, 2013).

The ability of parole to change offender behavior, rather than merely contain it, is related to the goals of supervision. Meta-analyses and reviews consistently demonstrate that control-oriented supervision does not deter criminal behavior (Aos, Phipps, Barnoski, & Lieb, 2001; Aos, Lee, Drake, Pennucci, Klima, Miller et al., 2011; MacKenzie, 2006; Petersilia & Turner, 1993). When contact between parole officers and parolees is driven by

¹ Statistic based on odds ratio, or relative odds of imprisonment (given number of parolees) for the two comparison years.

surveillance-oriented goals, offenders are more likely to return to prison; as noted earlier, this is partially a function of increased detection of technical violations (Gendreau, Goggin, Cullen, & Paparozzi, 2001).). Even well-implemented treatment programs are not associated with significant reductions in recidivism when provided in the context of surveillance-oriented intensive supervision (Lowenkamp, Flores, Holsinger, Makarios, & Latessa, 2010). In contrast, parole strategies that use intensive supervision to facilitate attainment of treatment goals are associated with lower recidivism rates (Aos et al., 2001; Aos et al., 2011; Drake, 2009; Bonta, Wallace-Capretta, & Rooney, 2000; Lowenkamp et al., 2010; Paparozzi & Gendreau, 2005).

Offenders' experience on parole. Offenders' perspectives on the transition from prison to parole—and particularly the processes by which some offenders successfully reintegrate into the community while others are re-incarcerated—are not well understood (Bahr, Harris, Fisher, & Armstrong, 2010; Serin, Lloyd, Helmus, Derkzen, & Luong, 2013). Inmates report being unprepared for release on measures of material, social, and medical needs (La Vigne, Shollenberger, & Debus, 2009; Wolff et al., 2012). Older inmates, and inmates who have spent more time in prison since turning 18, report feeling significantly less ready for release than younger inmates and those who have spent less of their life in prison (Wolff et al., 2012). The days immediately following release are a period when many inmates struggle to find a place to stay, transportation, access to social support, and access to medications and mental health or substance abuse treatment (Gaynes, 2005; Morani, Wikoff, Linhorst, & Bratton, 2011; Rossman & Roman, 2003; Samuels & Mukamal, 2004; Visher et al., 2010). This period poses a threat to public safety, as well, because the weeks after release from prison are the time when offenders are most likely to commit a new crime or violate the conditions of parole (Luallen, Astion, & Flygare, 2013; National Resource Center, 2007). Recidivism rates stabilize during the second year after release, which suggests that helping inmates through the transition may reduce overall re-incarceration rates. Taxman, Young, Byrne, and Holsinger (2003) identified the months that precede and follow release as a “critical juncture” for offenders in terms of supporting change processes that started in prison.

In addition to a lack of material resources, many offenders have unrealistic expectations with respect to strategies for staying out of prison (Hanrahan, Gibbs, & Zimmerman, 2005; Nelson, Dees, & Allen, 1999). The failure of these plans to materialize—and subsequent struggles with housing, employment, resources, and social support—can precipitate a relapse into drug use or other criminal behavior (Harding et al., 2011). As many as three-fourths of parolees commit at least one technical violation within six months of release from prison, most commonly related to drug testing (Luallen, 2013). Many offenders leave prison “half-way” expecting to return (Hanrahan et al., 2005) and these fatalistic expectations are predictive of unsuccessful parole discharge (Bahr et al., 2009). Parolees are more likely to succeed on parole when they have values, beliefs, and problem-solving skills that help them successfully negotiate the various problems they will encounter (Bucklen & Zajac, 2013). Parole officers are well placed to offer support to offenders as they leave prison and studies show they perform a range of functions, including treatment referrals, assistance finding housing or employment, and emotional support (Reichert & Ruzich, 2012). Nonetheless, offenders' experience on parole varies

widely and even parolees who report a positive relationship with their supervising agent express concerns with: lacking trust in their parole officer; being returned to prison for minor offenses; wanting more assistance and support from their parole officer; and not being able to fulfill parole requirements (Davis et al., 2013; Hanrahan et al., 2005).

Desistance

Criminal justice research has focused on identifying those factors that predict criminal behavior, with less attention to the ways that offenders exit criminal trajectories (Lloyd & Serin, 2012; Maruna, 2001). This difference is exemplified in research wherein recidivism is operationalized as a discrete event (most commonly re-arrest, re-conviction, or return to prison); in fact, qualitative interviews with offenders demonstrate variability in the frequency and severity of criminal behavior as offenders age (Maruna, 2001). This gradual reduction in offending is referred to as desistance; from this perspective, change is conceptualized as “an ongoing, developing process, occurring progressively rather than instantaneously” (Lloyd & Serin, 2012, p. 544). Desistance literature offers a wide range of factors that are believed to both precipitate and sustain change toward a non-criminal identity, including life transitions (such as employment, marriage, or parenthood), cognitive transformation (such as changes in attitudes regarding the acceptability of criminal offending), and emotional maturation (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Healy, 2012; Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Weaver (2014) identifies that heterogeneity in the trajectory of criminal behavior is a function of complex and contradictory interactions between individual and social circumstances. For example, extensive research indicates that offenders who are employed have lower recidivism rates when compared to those who are unemployed; as such, programming for inmates and parolees often centers on employment status. Relatively little research, however, explains the mechanisms through which having a job reduces individuals’ participation in criminal activities. Employment has been theorized to reduce recidivism because it functions as a form of informal social control: through work, offenders develop relationships with non-criminal people, which increases their stake in conformity (Sampson & Laub, 1993). From this perspective, having a job precedes and facilitates pro-social change. In a study of Pennsylvania parolees, however, successful and unsuccessful parolees were similar in terms of their ability to get a job after release but successful parolees were differentiated from recidivists by increased job stability and satisfaction (Bucklen & Zajac, 2009). Successful parolees were also more willing to accept a range of employment positions while unsuccessful parolees expressed reluctance to accept certain types of jobs, particularly entry-level or low-paying positions. The authors concluded that parolees’ employment status was partially a reflection of the individual’s cognitive skills and that offenders who got and kept a job saw employment as part of a “larger plan for social integration” (p. 260). From this perspective, the desire to conform is a precursor to—rather than simply a product of—employment. In contrast, employment can also function as a pathway to criminal activity, by facilitating contact with criminal or drug-using persons and increased resources, which can be used to buy drugs (Harding, Wyse, Dobson, & Morenoff, 2011).

Similarly, social support is not monolithic in its relationship to parolee recidivism. Bucklen and Zajac (2013) found that successful parolees were less likely than unsuccessful parolees to associate with individuals with criminal backgrounds, were more likely to be married, and often identified themselves in terms of their role as a family member. Bahr and colleagues (2010) found no relationship between parole failure and parental support, spousal support, or being a parent, but found that individuals did do better on parole if they spent more time in leisure activities with friends. The ability to refrain from substance abuse is also associated with successful completion of parole; however, for many parolees this means avoiding family or friends who are themselves using drugs (Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2013). Avoiding those relationships can also pose a risk because of the difficulty that many parolees identify with respect to establishing new, pro-social friendships and the likelihood that loneliness and isolation will precipitate a relapse to drug-use or criminal offending (Davis et al., 2013; Luther, 2011).

Given complex interactions among a plethora of factors that can push offenders toward criminal or non-criminal behavior, Weaver (2014) argues that effective criminal justice interventions will account for:

“. . . the complex and contingent interaction of various opportunities for change, mediated through the lens of an individual’s personal priorities, values, aspirations and relational concerns that (sometimes) imbue these events or experiences with significance and which directly influence their potential to enable or constrain processes of change, at different stages in a given individual’s life.” (p. 9).

Cognitive transformation. There is substantial disagreement about the relative importance of social bonds—life transitions such as marriage or employment—and subjective factors—individual attitudes and desire to change—to the process of desistance. Sampson and Laub (1993) argued that marriage and employment facilitated desistance through the establishment of new routines, non-criminal social support, and social and financial capital. Within this framework, long-term behavioral change originates from turning points—conceptualized as chance events—that provide both opportunity and support for the adoption of a conventional lifestyle. Among others, Giordano and colleagues (2002) contend that life events are not simply the result of chance but stem from intentional movement on the part of offenders to stop engaging in crime. Within this framework, the adoption of a new or non-criminal identity precedes an individuals’ likelihood or ability to capitalize on turning points. In particular, the primary subjective factors that are hypothesized to foster the adoption of this new identity, which is incompatible with (and therefore protective against) offending, are: agency, or the belief in one’s ability to make decisions that will impact the course of one’s life; alternative identities, or the development of an identity that is incompatible with criminal offending; and stigma, which can serve to encourage or discourage desistance (Le Bel, Burnett, Maruna, & Bushway, 2008; Liem & Richardson, 2014; Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001; Paternoster & Bushway, 2009).

Liem and Richardson’ (2014) study of desistance among released lifers found that desisters were distinguished from recidivists by their sense of personal agency: individuals who did

not return to prison demonstrated a greater sense of being able to make decisions that impacted the course of their life and less frequently attributed life events to chance. Interesting, both recidivists and desisters in this study identified themselves as having a “good core self” and said that their criminal behavior did not represent “who they really were” (p. 699). Le Bel and colleagues (2008) found that having regret or shame for criminal involvement predicted desistance as did assuming a pro-social identity. Having a sense of self-efficacy was indirectly associated with reduced recidivism, through its impact on offenders’ ability to cope with reentry problems. Bucklen and Zajac (2009) also found that subjective factors—such as feeling regret over the harm caused to family or friends and the ability to anticipate and manage negative emotions—was associated with better parole outcomes.

In a study of juvenile offenders, Soyer (2014) found that incarceration itself functions as a catalyst for change. Given the high re-incarceration rates of released prisoners, Soyer argues that prison functions as a “failed” turning point, wherein offenders make initial movement toward identity transformation, but this momentum is not sustained once they are released. This failure to sustain change stems from the inability of incarcerated persons to make meaningful, agentic moves. Because agency within a correctional facility is limited to compliance with institutional rules, offenders’ “cognitive readiness for change is not connected to the experience of agency or the ability to make choices about one’s future” (p. 96).

The Current Study

The current study, which complements an earlier literature review and survey of Utah reentry practices (see Sarver, Hickert, Hall, & Butters, 2013), is comprised of two parts. Part I provides a quantitative description for a cohort of Utah’s parolees, describing their demographic backgrounds as well as the prevalence and severity of criminal activity. Quantitative analyses also examine the demographic, criminal history, and programmatic factors that predict parole violations and new criminal offenses, and their concomitant parole revocations, across the state of Utah in order to address the following research questions:

- 1) What percentage of Utah's parolees return to prison due to parole violations versus new offenses?
- 2) What factors are most strongly related to re-incarceration after release?

Part II is a qualitative analysis of parolees' experience returning to the community after release from prison. In particular, the project was designed to provide insight into parolees' conceptualization of their own pathway to reintegration, and in some cases re-incarceration during the transition from prison to the community. Using data gathered in interviews with a cohort of offenders released from prison in Utah during the years 2012-2013, the study describes offenders’ perception of factors that influenced their desire and ability to desist from criminal activity during incarceration and after release from prison.

Parole in Utah. In 2012, Utah admitted 3,142 prisoners to state correctional facilities; of those, 1,197 (38%) were parolees returning to prison for violating the conditions of supervision (Carson & Golinelli, 2013). During that same year, 3,063 offenders were released from state prison, with more than half (58%) on a conditional release. In 2012, the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) supervised almost 3,000 offenders on parole (Maruschak & Bonczar, 2013). Compared to other states, Utah has relatively high re-commitment rates, although a recent study showed that, over the past decade, the state has had one of the steepest national declines in re-commitment rates (PCS, 2011). Of the 2,563 offenders released from Utah prisons in 1999, 66% had been re-incarcerated by the end of 2002 (PCS, 2011). That number dropped by more than ten percentage points for the cohort released in 2004 (3,056 offenders), of which 54% were re-incarcerated by 2007. Broken down according to year and precipitating event, 15% of the 1999 cohort was returned for a new crime and 51% were returned for a technical violation; for the 2004 cohort, 21% were returned for a new crime and 32% were returned for a technical violation. The Utah Commission on Crime and Juvenile Justice, when looking at a cohort of parolees released in 2005, found that 61% were re-incarcerated over three years: 14% for a new conviction and 47% for a technical violation (Peterson, Hickert, Mitchell, & Dorsey, 2008). Multi-variate analyses identified the following significant predictors of parole violation: being younger, being male, having prior prison commitments or prior misdemeanor convictions, having a high LSI-R score or higher recent prison classification, being a registered sex offender, or having transition services as a special condition.

UDC operates two prisons—one in Gunnison and one in Draper—and contracts with 21 county jails to house inmates. UDC conducts a range of programming to prepare inmates for release, including: assessments, case plans, life skills, literacy, GED, high school, vocational education, correctional industries, substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, anger management, and gender-specific interventions. Adult Probation and Parole, which consists of five regions, is a division of UDC. Utah's parole system is administered by the Board of Pardons and Parole, a five-member board appointed by the Governor. The state Constitution grants the Board authority over release decisions and release conditions. Parole conditions are set at release and comprised of one of several sets of standard conditions, but can include individualized conditions at the Board's discretion. The Board also has the authority to make determinations regarding technical violations and parole revocation. Utah law and UDC policy require that parole agents refer all violations to the Board; agents have discretion to recommend sanctions as part of the referral (Peterson et al., 2008).

Quantitative Methods and Results

General Methods

Data for the project's quantitative analyses were collected from two sources: the Utah Department of Corrections' (UDC) O-Track system and the Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) database. Though the two systems contain similar information, they are not identical even with respect to the criminal histories of a single offender. During the

period when an individual is under the jurisdiction of the state's correctional system, the O-Track system serves as a more complete and detailed source of criminal history information. However, if an offender exits parole, or commits a crime with a severity below a Class B misdemeanor, the UDC system is less complete and may be absent of certain details entirely. BCI data contains less information about specific offenses, often lacks a crime class severity designation (e.g., Class C), and can also equivocate the determination of new charges relative to warrants for prior charges, but the BCI database is also more likely to capture the entire range of an offender's criminal history. Because of the relative strengths and weaknesses of both systems, examination of both data sources provides the most accurate description of an offender's full criminal history.

The target population was identified using O-Track and included all offenders paroled in Utah during 2010 and 2011. Because some offenders were paroled more than once during the time period (for example, due to revocation and reinstatement of parole), the first parole date (whether a new parole or a reinstatement) during the time period was used as a hinge date for recidivism analyses. A total of 3,389 unique offenders were identified for study inclusion. Demographic information, Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R) scores, case action plans, programming, parole agreements, special conditions of parole, and violations of parole agreements and conditions were all obtained from O-Track; criminal histories were obtained from both O-Track and the BCI system.

It is important to note that the methodology for the quantitative section of this report is partially a replication of a previous report studying the 2005 and 2006 population of Utah's paroled offenders (Peterson, Hickert, Mitchell & Dorsey, 2008). Though methodologies are similar across the two studies, because different analysts conducted the analyses and provided the data, and because the full methodological strategy was not available from the previous report, most outcomes are not directly comparable between the two. Even slight methodological differences in coding of, for example, the individual statutes classified as one type of crime class (e.g., person offenses) can make a large difference in the aggregate representation of the data.

Systemic factors have also changed since the last report was written, including changes in data collection within the databases, and changes in the legal system as a whole. These changes are independent of the offenders within the system, and are partially responsible for cohort differences found in these data relative to the previous report. For this multitude of reasons, the reader is encouraged to exercise caution when comparing outcomes from the two reports and the outcomes are sparingly compared within this document. The addition of new analytic strategies (where applicable) are, however, noted in the report that follows.

Results

Parolee Demographics

As seen in Table 1, the vast majority of parolees was male (84.2%). The majority was not currently married at the time of parole (81.1%). Other categories below “not currently

married” in the table compose subsections of that status, and the five-subcategories add to 81.1% (the percentage not currently married). Of those not currently married, 44.1% were never married, and 26.9% were divorced. The average age at parole was 35.7 with a standard deviation of 10.2 (not shown in table).

Table 1 Parolee Demographics

Sex	
Male	84.2%
Female	15.8%
Marital Status	
Currently Married/Common Law	18.9%
Not Currently Married	81.1%
Divorced	26.9%
Never Married	44.1%
Separated	5.7%
Widowed	1.1%
Unknown	3.4%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	65.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.4%
Black	5.0%
Hispanic	21.7%
Native American/Alaskan	4.1%
Unknown	0.9%

Table 1 also presents a blended race/ethnicity variable. On this variable, the majority of offenders (65.9%) was identified as “White,” followed by “Hispanic” (21.7%). Other races/ethnicities represented 5.0% or less of the population.

Criminal Histories

Table 2 shows the categorized number of lifetime prior convictions from O-Track and BCI data. BCI data includes an entire offense history and will, therefore, most often include a higher number of total offenses per person (though neither dataset contains out-of-state charges). In this sense, BCI data can be considered a more accurate source of an offender’s entire criminal history prior to parole, and will include offenses of any severity and offenses that did not lead to incarceration beyond jail². However, BCI data are limited to 3,188 cases for which a matching state identifier (SID) could be located as provided by the UDC for use by BCI analysts matching the data. Accordingly, 201 cases from the parole cohort are not represented in the BCI data because no SID was available for matching. For this reason, criminal history tables in this section also present O-Track data for prior

² O-Track data will, however, be considered in later sections of the report when post-parole (i.e., recidivism) convictions are considered. Post parole, O-Track data will be a more accurate representation of actual recidivism because offenders will have been under UDC jurisdiction, and, hence, their data will be more likely to be recorded in O-Track.

offenses which, though limited to convictions rising to the level of UDC jurisdictional involvement, include records for all 3,389 cases in the parole cohort. The tradeoff between the two data systems is thus: BCI data is more comprehensive in terms of a single individual’s criminal history, but O-Track is more comprehensive across the population of offenders once it has jurisdiction.

Because of the different information contained in the two data sources, aggregation of values presented in the table occurred using slightly different methodologies. BCI criminal histories in the table were aggregated such that the number of prior convictions would represent the sum of unique National Crime Information Center (NCIC) codes (i.e., unique crimes) on unique arrest dates. A crime code was not counted more than once if it occurred on the same day (i.e., there were multiple charges of the same type on the same day). Conviction dates could not be used as the basis for aggregation because they were incomplete the majority of the time in BCI data. O-Track criminal histories were aggregated such that the number of prior convictions would represent the sum of unique statute violation codes (i.e., unique crimes) on unique conviction dates (rather than arrests dates, as used in the BCI data).

Notably, Table 2 presents O-Track data separated by number of prior felonies, misdemeanors, and combined. BCI data is presented only for the combination of misdemeanors and felonies. This presentation occurs because BCI data were commonly missing severity level for offenses, precluding examination by severity type. As seen in the table, a small percentage of offenders had no recorded criminal history despite having been incarcerated. Comparison of O-Track and BCI indicators for these individuals supported the conclusion; neither system had any recorded criminal history prior to parole for these offenders. Though the exact cause of the outcome is unknown, it may be partially attributable to interstate compacts (wherein offenders are released to Utah because of family, but have no criminal history in the state).

Table 2 Number of Prior Convictions by Data Source

Prior Convictions	UDC (O-Track)			BCI Combined
	Misdemeanor	Felony	Combined	
0	38.1%	4.0%	3.5%	0.8%
1	22.2%	30.9%	17.6%	10.4%
2-5	34.3%	58.8%	51.8%	34.6%
6-10	5.0%	6.1%	22.7%	30.7%
11 or more	0.4%	0.2%	4.4%	23.5%

Among valid cases (i.e., those available in the BCI data), the most frequently occurring subcategory for BCI data was “2-5” prior convictions, followed by “6-10,” “11 or more” and one. The average number of prior convictions in the BCI was 7.4 with a standard deviation of 6.2 (not shown in table). While “11 or more” prior convictions occurred in about one-fourth of BCI cases, O-Track data (combined column) showed only 4.4% of cases had “11 or more” prior convictions. Again, this is an artifact of the data collection process; O-Track data only includes criminal histories for convictions that brought the offender into the UDC’s jurisdiction, and is also aggregated by conviction date rather than arrest date.

Table 3 shows the severity of the most serious prior offense for the 3,188 offenders located in the BCI data and the 3,389 cases in O-Track. In some cases, dispositions in both systems lacked a class (within misdemeanors) or a degree (within felonies). When this occurred, the unspecified severities within misdemeanors were treated as class B misdemeanors; unspecified severities within felonies were treated as 2nd degree felonies. To an undeterminable extent (given that, for example, the true degree was likely sometimes a class B misdemeanor when marked only as a misdemeanor, but was also sometimes a misdemeanor of another class), these methodological choices will overestimate the number of true class B misdemeanors and 2nd degree felonies.

Table 3 Severity (Degree) of Most Serious Prior Conviction

Degree	O-Track		BCI	
	n	%	n	%
1 st Degree Felony	368	11.3%	314	9.8%
2 nd Degree Felony	1,228	37.6%	1,065	33.4%
3 rd Degree Felony	1,658	50.7%	1,635	51.3%
Class A Misdemeanor	12	0.4%	81	2.5%
Class B Misdemeanor	1	0.0%	50	1.6%
Class C Misdemeanor	1	0.0%	7	0.2%
Unknown/Other	120	3.5%	36	1.1%

In both systems, third degree felonies (the lowest level among felonies) were the most common disposition severity among parolees, followed by 2nd degree felonies and 1st degree felonies. Misdemeanors as a most severe offense were relatively rare among the parolee population for this study³.

The frequencies of types of crimes resulting in conviction prior to parole (including the offense for which offenders were paroled) are found in Tables 4 (O-Track) and 5 (BCI). The tables provide the number and percentage of cases (N=3,389 O-Track, 3,188 BCI) found in each system that were convicted of each crime category prior to parole. The categorical crimes provided in Table 4 match the categories of NCIC codes as indicated by the NCIC. Categories provided in Table 5 match the standard crime categories utilized by UCJC when examining O-Track data. Categories of the same name are not equivalent across the two systems, as NCIC codes and statutes do not align perfectly with one another, and the NCIC uses more crime categories for offenses. Also, recall that BCI data represent a more comprehensive criminal history and are aggregated on arrest date rather than conviction date; they, therefore, include more offenses per person (and a greater percentage of persons committing an offense within a category)⁴.

³ Enhanced misdemeanors would be classified by conviction degree (i.e., felonies).

⁴ Although the categories are not equivalent, some notable patterns in the data can be observed that highlight the different historical comprehensiveness of the data in each system. In BCI data, obstruction of law enforcement (police) occurs in 30.0% of cases, but it occurs in only 8.0% (all misdemeanors) of cases in O-Track. Because this offense is a relatively low level offense, the discrepancy likely results from the fact that the offenses are not recorded in O-Track until the offender commits a crime of a higher offense severity, bringing them (and future criminal activity) under the jurisdiction of the UDC.

Table 4 divides offense categories for O-Track classifications by lifetime misdemeanor and felony convictions prior to parole. Across both felonies and misdemeanors, property crimes were most common, followed by drug and person offenses. Felonies in all three categories were more common than misdemeanors.

Table XD Convicted Offenses Prior to Parole by O-Track Category

O-Track Category	Misdemeanors		Felonies	
	n	%	n	%
Person	586	17.3%	1,281	37.8%
Property	1,101	32.5%	1,654	48.8%
Drug	782	23.1%	1,430	42.2%
Public Order	139	4.1%	40	1.2%
Sex ⁵	6	0.2%	7	0.2%
Weapons	157	4.6%	234	6.9%
Traffic	476	14.0%	296	8.7%
DUI	405	12.0%	331	9.8%
Obstruction of Justice	51	1.5%	61	1.8%
Obstruction of Law Enforcement	272	8.0%	0	0.0%
Escape	38	1.1%	108	3.2%
Liquor	29	0.9%	0	0.0%
Other	109	3.2%	187	5.5%

Table 5 shows that the most frequent criminal histories of the parolee cohort within BCI data were under the categories of dangerous drugs (59.4% of all parolees), larceny (45.5%), traffic crimes (39.3%), assault (34.1%), obstruction of police (30.0%), fraud (22.5%), and burglary (20.7%).

Table XE Convicted Offenses Prior to Parole by NCIC Category

NCIC Category	n	%
Arson	24	0.8%
Assault	1,087	34.1%
Auto Theft	312	9.8%
Burglary	661	20.7%
Crimes Against Persons	185	5.8%
Damaged Property	282	8.8%
Dangerous Drugs	1,894	59.4%
Family Crimes	228	7.2%
Flight/Escape	194	6.1%
Forgery	597	18.7%
Fraud	716	22.5%

⁵ The number of sex offenders listed here appears disproportionately low because sex offenses involving persons are classified as person offenses. The sex offense category here, in contrast, includes only those sex offenses that are not crimes against persons (e.g., distribution of pornographic material). The best estimate of the number of sex offenders is provided below in the sections either (1) describing the number of parolees with special conditions for sex offenders, or (2) describing the number of parolees who completed sex offender based programming (the two do not match).

Homicide	74	2.3%
Larceny	1,450	45.5%
Liquor	324	10.2%
Obstruction of Justice	340	10.7%
Obstruction of Police	955	30.0%
Property	191	6.0%
Public Order	488	15.3%
Public Peace	492	15.4%
Rape/Sexual Assault	490	15.4%
Robbery	292	9.2%
Sex Offense	57	1.8%
Stolen Property	487	15.3%
Traffic	1,252	39.3%
DUI	467	14.6%
Weapon	432	13.6%
Kidnapping	80	2.5%
Invasion of Privacy	263	8.2%

Risk Assessments

Two types of risk assessments are available for Utah’s prison-based and paroled offenders. For prison-based offenders, Utah’s prison system uses a classification system that categorizes offenders by dangerousness; that classification is used to determine the type of housing unit in which offenders reside during their time in prison.

Table 6 provides the prison-based security risk levels for the population examined in this study. Both the highest risk score received during incarceration and the risk score nearest release are provided. The “release” score is provided with the caveat that it is does not represent the score on the actual date of release, but the score recorded on the closest date to release for which an assessment was available. In some cases, this score represents a date several years from actual release. The average difference between the risk-classification date and actual release was 204 days, with a median of 110 days and a maximum of 7,365 days (not shown in table). Though not statistical outliers, several extreme cases (such as the maximum one) greatly increase the mean number of days between assessment and parole, making the median a more accurate indicator of the typical time between assessment of in-prison risk and parole.

Table 6: Prison-Based Security Risk Levels – Maximum and Nearest Release

Risk-Level	Maximum		Nearest Release	
	n	%	n	%
5 (lowest risk)	0	0.0%	1,025	31.6%
4	0	0.0%	584	18.0%
3	2,562	78.9%	1,413	43.5%
2	660	20.3%	225	6.9%
1 (highest risk)	26	0.8%	1	0.0%

Utah’s classification system is scored such that a “1” indicates the maximum security risk-level and a “5” corresponds to the lowest risk-level. All offenders in this study’s cohort received a maximum security risk level of at least three at some point during their incarceration, but only a small number were ever classified at the absolute maximum security level of one (0.8%). For the risk score closest to release, a score of three was the most common (57.2%), though a large number were also classified as low-risk (31.6%). The single individual classified at the maximum security risk level at “release” was actually last assessed 20-years earlier.

As a measure of general risk to recidivate, Utah uses the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R). The LSI-R yields a score ranging from 0 to 53, and each jurisdiction is encouraged by Multi-Health Systems (owners of the LSI-R) to validate its own cutpoints for creation of risk categories. Utah has adopted a four-tier classification system for the LSI-R: low (0-13), moderate (14-23), high (24-40), and intensive (41-53). For the LSI-R assessment closest to parole date, the majority of offenders were classified as high risk (57.2%), while 33.9% were classified as moderate, 7.4% as low, and 1.5% as intensive. The average score for valid assessments (i.e., when less than 5 items were missing) was 24.4, with a median of 24 and standard deviation of 7.8. Use of the LSI-R as a predictive tool for revocation and new conviction is discussed in greater detail below.

Parole Outcomes: Supervision, Conditions, Violations, and Revocations

Table 7 provides the percentage of offenders paroled to each region. The majority of parolees were under the jurisdiction of the Salt Lake region (63.4%) at release. Northern Utah, which includes Logan and Ogden, was the next largest region at 22.7%.

Table 7: Parolees by Region

Region	n	%
Northern Utah (Regions 1 and 2)	765	22.7%
Salt Lake (Region 3)	2,136	63.4%
Provo (Region 4)	207	6.1%
Saint George (Region 5)	142	4.2%
Price (Region 6)	121	3.6%

Table 8 provides the special conditions as well as the number and percentage of paroled offenders (out of the 3,389 total offenders) with the noted conditions of parole, the number and percentage that violated the parole condition, the number and percentage that violated leading to a revocation, and the number and percentage that violated leading to an alternative event. Alternative events vary greatly, ranging from (as examples) verbal warning, curfew implementation, substance abuse or mental health evaluation, and continued parole on the less restrictive end to increased supervision standards, mandatory community service, electronic monitoring, additional treatment (outpatient and residential), and jail time on the more restrictive end.

While some conditions are standard, depending on the offender’s history, some conditions are unique to an offender type. Special conditions for sex offenders, for example, vary

depending on the age of their victim, but may include electronic monitoring, completion of sex offender specific therapy, regular polygraphs, and limitations on employment or residence⁶.

The most common conditions of parole were special conditions related to drug or alcohol treatment or evaluation (2,597/3,389 or 76.6% of all offenders). Because all parolees agree to chemical analysis as part of the standard agreement, special conditions in the table for drugs or alcohol represent conditions of parole beyond chemical analysis (or other standard conditions). The majority of offenders had special conditions requiring completion of other programming aimed at behavior modification or successful transition (56.5%). Almost 10% of the parolee cohort had special conditions for sex offenders⁷; almost one-third had special conditions for mental health treatment or evaluation, and over one-fifth had special conditions for gangs (limiting associates).

Table 8 also provides columns for the number and percentage of offenders who violated the condition and the outcome of violations (revocation or an alternative response). The denominators for calculation of percentages differ across the columns. For the “committed a violation” column, the denominator for calculation of percentages is the number of individuals that had the special condition (i.e., the number in the “had condition” column). For the columns providing the percentages of revocations and alternative events, the denominator for the calculation is the number in the corresponding row under “committed a violation.” For example, 2,597 offenders had special conditions for alcohol or drugs. The percentage under “committed a violation” is thus 1,655/2,597, where the denominator represents the number of offenders who had the special condition. The percentage under “received revocation” is 1,209/1,655, where the denominator is the number of offenders who violated the special condition. Note that revocations and alternative events are not mutually exclusive; that is, an offender could have received a revocation for a violation at one point in time, but received an alternate response at another point in time.

The most commonly violated conditions were those related to compliance and those related to drugs and alcohol (which was also the most common condition). Of the cases that had a special condition for alcohol or drug treatment/evaluation, 63.7% committed a violation of the condition. Of those, 73.1% received a revocation and 75.0% received an

⁶ Examples of special conditions in each category are: alcohol or drug: substance abuse treatment, interlock devices, abstinence from alcohol, drug testing, and required use of Antabuse; mental health: mental health treatment and mental health court; other programming: Life Skills, transitional services and CBT classes; sex offender: limits on contact with children, required polygraphs, limits on type of employment, therapy and submission of DNA; employment and education: acquiring GED or graduating high school, attending vocational training, and maintaining employment; compliance: not committing criminal acts, paying fees and restitution, submitting financial records, electronic monitoring, regular reporting and paying child support; gangs/associates: no gang signs or gestures, emblems or insignias, and no gang associates; other special conditions: free text and conditions not otherwise listed.

⁷ As noted earlier, the number and percentage of offenders with sex offense special conditions is higher than those classified as having a sex offense conviction because the special conditions category includes those who committed person sex offenses while the crime category presented earlier distinguished between the two (i.e., person and sex offenses).

alternative event. It is interesting that both revocations and alternative events were high and nearly equally likely for drug and alcohol special conditions, suggesting that the condition is violated commonly, and offenders are given opportunities to avoid revocation due to the violation (through alternative events), but still continue to violate the condition, leading to revocation.

Violations of compliance conditions were the violations most likely to lead to revocations; this occurs partly because new criminal acts are also violations of compliance conditions. Revocations were also common for violations of mental health special conditions and violations of other programming conditions (e.g., completing CBT classes or participating in transitional services). Alternative events were most common for drugs and alcohol, sex offender, and gang special conditions.

Though not shown in the table, offenders typically received alternative responses prior to receiving revocations for violations, receiving, on average, 1.2 alternative responses prior to a revocation (SD=1.6); the median number of alternative responses preceding revocation was one. Of the 3,389 offenders in the cohort, 1,348 (39.8%) did not have a post-parole violation recorded; none of the individuals without a violation had parole revoked.

Table 8 Special Conditions of Parole, Violations, and Responses

Condition	Had Condition		Committed a Violation		Received Revocation		Received Alternative	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Alcohol or Drug Treatment/Evaluation	2,597	76.6	1,655	63.7	1,209	73.1	1,242	75.0
Mental Health Treatment/Evaluation	1,038	30.6	270	26.0	218	80.7	73	27.0
Other Programming (such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)	1,916	56.5	562	29.3	453	80.6	207	36.8
Special Sex Offender Conditions	332	9.8	151	45.5	90	59.6	100	66.2
Employment/Education	79	2.3	24	30.4	16	66.7	12	50.0
Compliance	2,286	67.5	1,528	66.8	1,309	85.7	786	51.4
Other Special Conditions (not otherwise listed)	735	21.7	68	9.3	51	75.0	22	32.4
Special Conditions on Gangs/Associates	138	4.1	48	34.8	27	56.3	30	62.5

Programming

Records for programming offenders received either in the two-year period before parole or during their parole were not thoroughly documented, and it was determined that they likely did not accurately reflect all of the services an offender received. However, values in Table 9 provide completion rates for the programming services records that were available. Rather than the percentage of offenders who successfully completed a type of

programming out of all 3,389, values in the table indicate the percentage of offenders that successfully completed programming given that an offender was reported as enrolled in a type of program. This representation likely omits some programming even within a service type, as not all programming was accurately noted, but it does accurately reflect the successful completion of a service that was known to be provided.

Table 9 Percentage of Offenders Successfully Completing a Program/Service Type (When Provided)

Programming/Service Type	n	%
Aftercare	116	57.8%
Substance Abuse	1,277	59.0%
Sex Offender	272	61.8%
Cognitive Skills	617	51.5%
Educational	36	19.4%
Vocational	439	72.0%
Mental Health	162	66.0%
Life Skills	585	39.3%
Transitional	154	57.8%
Any Service	1,627	48.0%

The sample size in the table indicates the number enrolled in the program or service that had either a successful or unsuccessful exit status, while the percentage indicates the percentage successfully completing the service. Other individuals who had the programming or service, but for whom the exit status is either unknown or neutral (neutral exits are not indicative of failure, as offenders can be removed from programming for reasons that are not due to failure [e.g., changed facility]), are not included in the table.

Offenders were most likely to receive substance abuse programming or services, and successfully completed the programming 59.0% of the time. Vocational programming was the service most likely to be completed successfully (72.0%), while educational programming (though rarely documented in the sample) was least likely to be completed successfully (19.4%).

Time on Parole

Total time on parole is influenced by revocations or new convictions; if parole is revoked or a new conviction is received, time on parole will be reduced (time to these events is discussed below). Time on parole, therefore, represents total time combined for those who successfully completed parole and those who did not. The average time on parole for this cohort of offenders was 308 days, with a median of 241 and a standard deviation of 248.4. Time on parole was linearly related to the severity of the most severe offense committed pre-parole. Those whose most severe offense was a class A misdemeanor (the lowest pre-parole crime severity in the cohort) were on parole an average of 227 relative to 294 days for third-degree felonies, 315 days for second degree felonies, and 356 days for first degree felonies.

Revocation and New Conviction

Table 10 shows the frequency and percentage of offenders that had no new convictions and also had no revocations for violations, that had technical violations leading to revocations, and that had both revocations and new convictions. The outcomes are mutually exclusive. Because data reflected cases paroled in the period 2010-2011, all individuals had at least two years in which recidivism could have occurred (the maximum was up to 4-years of tracking post-parole). Of the 3,389 cases, 38.1% had no recorded revocations or convictions during the follow up period, while 31.7% had revocations due to technical violations only (not including compliance violations related to new criminal activity), and 30.2% recidivated (new conviction).

Table 10 Offenders with Revocations and both
Revocations and New Convictions

Outcome	n	%
No new convictions or revocations for violations of conditions	1,291	38.1%
No new conviction but revocation for violations of conditions	1,074	31.7%
New convictions and revocations for violations of conditions	1,024	30.2%

Table 11 shows the severities of the most severe post-parole conviction. In contrast to data presented for pre-parole histories above, which presented data for both O-Track and BCI, only O-Track data is presented here for two reasons: (1) outcomes from O-Track data are the basis for defining whether recidivism occurred (the outcome variable in predictive models discussed below), and (2) O-Track outcomes are a more accurate measure of post-parole recidivism because parole date is derived from the O-Track reported dates. Once offenders are under the jurisdiction of the UDC, O-Track captures all criminal offenses above a class C misdemeanor (prior to incarceration, O-Track might not capture complete offender histories; hence the need for BCI data to supplement O-Track data and provide a more accurate representation of an entire offender history). Also, post-parole recidivism is sensitive to the selected hinge date. Because the hinge date is parole (an O-Track variable), the more conservative approach to post-parole recidivism is to use data from the same source (O-Track), reducing the likelihood that convictions that were entered in the database as post-parole were actually pre-parole.

The most common maximum crime severity among recidivists was a third degree felony (18.9%), followed by class A misdemeanors (8.0%) and second degree felonies (2.8%). The overwhelming majority of individuals did not recidivate during the minimum two-year follow up period (69.8%).

Table 11 Severity (Degree) of Most Serious Post-Parole Conviction

Degree	O-Track	
	n	%
1 st Degree Felony	14	0.4%
2 nd Degree Felony	96	2.8%
3 rd Degree Felony	640	18.9%
Class A Misdemeanor	272	8.0%
Class B Misdemeanor	3	0.1%
Class C Misdemeanor	0	0.0%
No Conviction	2,364	69.8%

Table 12 provides the offense types for post-parole offenses by misdemeanor and felony level severity. For ease of interpretation, number and percentages are based on the number of individuals who recidivated (1,024) rather than the entire cohort (3,389). This method provides the percentage of offenders with a specific post-parole offense type given that they reoffended.

Table 12 Convicted Offenses Post-parole by O-Track Category

O-Track Category	Misdemeanors		Felonies	
	n	%	n	%
Person	88	8.6%	91	8.9%
Property	207	20.2%	304	29.7%
Drug	128	12.5%	316	30.9%
Public Order	13	1.3%	2	0.2%
Sex	2	0.2%	0	0.0%
Weapons	41	4.0%	50	4.9%
Traffic	87	8.5%	49	4.8%
DUI	44	4.3%	60	5.9%
Obstruction of Justice	14	1.4%	13	1.3%
Obstruction of Law Enforcement	58	5.7%	0	0.0%
Escape	1	0.1%	4	0.4%
Liquor	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	30	2.9%	24	2.3%

In contrast to convictions pre-parole, person crimes were relatively less common among post-parole recidivists. Similar to pre-parole convictions, property and drug convictions were the most common post-parole. Post-parole property convictions were slightly more likely to be felony convictions, and post-parole drug convictions were nearly three times more likely to be felony convictions. Other convictions were relatively rare.

Multinomial regression predicting revocation and new conviction. Factors predicting revocations and new convictions were examined first through bivariate analyses; 215 variables were examined for their strength of association with both revocations and new convictions. Because the data were ordinal or dichotomous for most predictors, and dichotomous for the dependent variables revocation and new conviction

(i.e., yes/no), correlations were examined using the SPSS HETCOR plugin for R, which allows examination of Pearson, polyserial and polychoric correlations.

It should be noted that examination of bivariate relationships is not a perfect methodology for identifying important predictors of the outcomes because it can capitalize on chance, and is subject to overfitting to the specific sample. Moreover, it fails to consider interactions between variables, wherein a main effect may not be present, but the influence of the variable is important when considered at the levels of another predictor variable (i.e., an interaction). To partially address this inherent methodological concern, previous models developed with the same population were considered (Peterson, Hickert, Mitchell & Dorsey, 2008), and variables of significance in those models were given consideration irrespective of their bivariate relationships in the current cohort of offenders. Consideration was also given to variables shown to have theoretical importance in other past research (i.e., not Utah specific; discussed below). Considering theoretical variables irrespective of their bivariate significance helps reduce (but does not eliminate) suppression effects⁸.

Using variables showing high bivariate correlations as well as theoretical considerations and past research, factors predicting revocations and new convictions were modeled through multinomial regression⁹. Forty-two variables were identified for consideration in the initial multinomial model. A list of all variables entered into the model, and their thematic category (e.g., Risk), is shown in Table 13.

⁸ A suppressor variable is a variable that can have a relatively weak association with a dependent variable (e.g., recidivism) itself, but can nevertheless be important in the model because it improves the predictive strength of another independent variable or variables that would either be non-significant or only weakly associated with the dependent variable if the suppressor variable were absent. A suppressor variable performs its role by reducing the otherwise larger residuals of another variable. For this reason, the suppressor variable is often left in a model, but it is not interpreted because it is not significant itself.

⁹ It is typical to use time-to-event or survival analyses rather than logistic or multinomial regression in the case of censored data (such as the revocation or new conviction data in this report). Censoring occurs when an event that may occur (such as revocation or new conviction) has not yet occurred for a portion of the population. When this is the case, survival analyses are often used to model the factors predicting time-to-event given the presence of censored cases. One of the assumptions of these tests, however, is that the different levels of the covariates have proportional hazard rates. The explanation of this assumption is beyond the scope of this report, but it should be noted that survival analyses were conducted, and the assumption was violated for multiple predictors, leading to a notable loss in power using survival analyses. Multinomial regression is not an ideal substitute for the survival analyses, but it does provide a snapshot in time of the factors related to revocation and new conviction. Unfortunately, however, it does not relate the predictors to either an increase or decrease in the amount of time to either event; rather, it ignores the issue of time entirely (which is ill defined in this study because follow-up can vary from two to four years depending on when parole occurred).

Table 13 Potential Theoretical and Data Driven Predictors of Revocation and New Conviction

Demographics/Other
Age at Parole
Supervision Region (Salt Lake vs Others)
Days in Prison Prior to Parole
Risk
Highest Prison Security Level Pre-parole
LSI-R Criminal History Domain Score
LSI-R Education and Employment Domain Score
LSI-R Family/Marital Domain Score
LSI-R Leisure and Recreation Domain Score
LSI-R Companions Domain Score
LSI-R Alcohol and Drug Problem Domain Score
LSI-R Emotional/Personal Domain Score
LSI-R Attitudes/Orientations Domain Score
Detailed Criminal History
BCI Number of Violent Offenses Pre-parole
BCI (Yes/No) Rape or Sexual Assault Pre-parole
BCI (Yes/No) Obstruction of Police Pre-parole
BCI (Yes/No) Larceny Pre-parole
O-Track Number of Misdemeanor Property Crimes Pre-parole
O-Track (Yes/No) Felony Property Crime Pre-parole
O-Track (Yes/No) Misdemeanor Sex Crime Pre-parole
O-Track (Yes/No) Felony Sex Crime Pre-parole
O-Track (Yes/No) Misdemeanor Drug Crime Pre-parole
O-Track (Yes/No) Felony Drug Crime Pre-parole
Programming
Substance Abuse Program (Successful)
Substance Abuse Program (Unsuccessful)
Sex Offender Program (Successful)
Sex Offender Program (Unsuccessful)
Vocational Program (Successful)
Vocational Program (Unsuccessful)
Mental Health Program (Successful)
Mental Health Program (Unsuccessful)
Cognitive Skills Program (Successful)
Cognitive Skills Program (Unsuccessful)
Life Skills Program (Successful)
Life Skills Program (Unsuccessful)
Other Program (Successful)
Other Program (Unsuccessful)
Special Conditions
Special Condition for Alcohol or Drugs at Parole
Special Condition for Sex Offenders at Parole
Special Condition for Mental Health at Parole

Violations
Number of Violations of Alcohol or Drug Conditions with Alternative Sanctions
Number of Violations of Required Programming Conditions with Alternative Sanctions
Number of Violations of Compliance Conditions with Alternative Sanctions

LSI-R domain scores were entered in the analysis rather than the total score in order to test theoretical assumptions about risk and recidivism and because the bivariate correlations between the outcomes and certain domain scores were higher than between the outcomes and the total score. With respect to theoretical considerations, using domain scores rather than the total score also allows examination of whether specific predictors related to domains of the LSI-R identified in the literature as predictors of revocation and new conviction (e.g., problems in the family/marital domain; Sampson & Laub, 1993) played a significant role in this cohort¹⁰.

Multinomial regression was selected for the analysis because the outcome of interest has three categorical values (no event, revocation, new conviction). Multinomial regression is an extension of logistic regression for dichotomous outcomes to the instance where the dependent variable has three or more values. Rather than conducting two sets of logistic

¹⁰ The methodology for use of LSI-R domain scores placed three notable restrictions on inclusion of the score for modeling purposes. First, in order for a domain score to be valid, a minimum number of items composing the domain must have a valid response (because the number of items differs by domain, the minimum required number varied by domain). If the criterion was not met, an individual's domain score would be considered missing-invalid. Because regression uses listwise deletion, this restriction also meant that an individual would not be included in the modeling process overall. This restriction was necessary because an offender's risk score is artificially and indeterminably lowered when items are missing.

A second restriction enforced a logical cutoff on the eligibility of an LSI-R assessment to be considered in the predictive models. If an LSI-R assessment was conducted after parole, the assessment had to occur before a revocation or before 180-days after the parole date, whichever was first. This restriction was enforced so that: (1) an LSI-R assessment was not predicting a revocation or new conviction that already occurred, and (2) the assessment reflected risk at approximately the time at which parole was granted.

The third LSI-R based restriction on inclusion of a case for modeling purposes was enforced when it was determined that LSI-R assessments were not given at the regularly expected intervals. In some cases, LSI-R assessments were conducted years in advance of the parole date. A moderation analysis was conducted to determine whether the time between LSI-R assessment and parole moderated the predictiveness of the LSI-R. Regions of significance were established using the Johnson-Neyman method, and indicated that LSI-R scores became non-predictive (in terms of significance) once the assessment was greater than 1,103 days prior to parole. Because assessments outside this region of significance do not accurately reflect the predictive ability of the LSI-R, individuals with assessments occurring more than 1,103 days prior to parole were also excluded from modeling.

Combined, the aforementioned restrictions on the LSI-R resulted in removal of 283 cases from the regression analyses. Of these, 119 were eliminated because they had no valid assessment due to too many missing items, and 164 were eliminated because they had no assessments during the eligibility window (1,103 days pre parole to 180-days post parole or first revocation). The removal of these cases is problematic to the extent that invalid assessments or infrequently conducted assessments are not random. For example, if high risk offenders are more likely to have invalid assessments, predictive models are built in the absence of a subset of offenders who are more likely to reoffend. However, correcting the issues that arise from these invalid assessments is an administrative rather than a statistical issue, requiring both more complete and more frequent assessments.

regressions that would isolate the revocation group/outcome from the new conviction group/outcome for separate comparison to the no events group, multinomial regression produces a model that fits both groups relative to the no events group, thereby also providing an examination of factors that predict one outcome, but not the other, or that predict both outcomes (it does this with greater parsimony and less unexplained error variance than multiple logistic regressions).

The multinomial regression analysis compared the group of individuals who had no revocations or new convictions (labeled as group one in Table 14 on page 30) to the group receiving a revocation but no new convictions (labeled group two) and the group receiving a revocation and a new conviction (labeled group three). Thus, for all of the multinomial regression analyses that follow, no revocations/no convictions is the reference group (the importance of this point will be made clear shortly). For parsimony, these groups/outcomes will be referred to in the remainder of the document as: (1) no events, (2) revocations, and (3) new conviction (all cases in the new conviction also had revocations, but the new conviction supersedes the revocation).

A person was classified by the first post-parole event they encountered (if applicable), whether revocation or new conviction. Thus, if a revocation (without new conviction) occurred, the individual was classified as a revocation case. An offender was not allowed to reenter the data pool at a later point; therefore, an offender who had parole revoked could not be released and then reclassified as a new conviction if one occurred. Likewise, a person receiving a new conviction could not be released and then reclassified as a revocation case if one occurred. Cases were also not counted multiple times toward either revocation or new conviction. The models were only concerned with explaining patterns that predict the first event (if applicable). After restrictions due to invalid LSI assessments and missing data, 3,106 parolees were included in the modeling process.

All continuous variables in the model were either centered or standardized (in the case of days in prison prior to, standardization was necessary because of its large variance). Model trimming (using model fit criteria) reduced the number of predictors from the original 42 to 25 significant predictors of the multinomial outcome. The reduced model explained 36.2% (Nagelkerke R Squared) of the variance in the multinomial outcome.

Table 14 shows the results of the analysis. It is important to note that the variables identified as significant in the model are those that are predictive of the outcomes in this cohort of paroled offenders. Analyses were exploratory, and, as such, no attempt was made to cross validate the model presented in Table 14 as a generalizable model of offender revocation and new conviction. If the model is to be considered for applications including predicting these events for future cohorts, cross-validation should be conducted.

For ease of visual presentation, certain elements of the multinomial output have been suppressed in the table, including unstandardized beta weights, standard errors, and bootstrapped confidence intervals. With multinomial outcomes it is typical to present the comparisons (i.e., the no event group/outcome compared to the revocation group/outcome and the new conviction group/outcome) separately or as stacked tables. This is often done

because of the large amount of information presented in multinomial regression. However, because multinomial regression allows comparison within variable on the levels of the outcomes, the table has been organized by variable so that the relative importance (odds ratios; discussed more below) can be compared on one row. The discussion below, therefore, occurs from the variable perspective rather than the outcome perspective.

The table presents the odds ratios for the variables, and significance is denoted by an asterisk. Odds ratios reflect the change in odds of the outcome resulting from a one-unit change in the predictor; therefore, the interpretation of an odds ratio depends on the scale of the predictor. Interpretation also depends on the category that is the reference category (no events here). In these data, when the predictor is categorical, the odds ratio represents the increase (for odds ratios above one) or decrease (for odds ratios below one) in the likelihood of the offender being in the revocation group (relative to the no event group) or the new conviction group (relative to the no event group) as a person changes from one category of the predictor to another. When a predictor is continuous (such as age) or ordinal, the odds ratio is interpreted as the change in likelihood of the outcome as one changes, for example, by one year in age to the next. For each of the variables in the table, the predictor's scale or metric is discussed so the reader can interpret the meaning of the odds ratio.

Only significant effects are interpreted in the text that follows, and, though 95% confidence intervals are not provided in the table, only effects with bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals indicating significance are presented and noted with an asterisk. It should be noted that, if an odds ratio is not significant, the value of that odds ratio is somewhat spurious. An odds ratio of 1.0 indicates no effect, and when an odds ratio is not significant, the confidence interval surrounding the odds ratio will include 1.0. No matter the size of a non-significant odds ratio, it should not be interpreted as meaningful. For example, an odds ratio of 2.2 that has a corresponding confidence interval that ranges from 0.8 to 3.4 is not significant because the confidence interval includes 1.0. It is also the case that it is not as large an effect as an odds ratio of 1.2 that has confidence intervals from 1.1 to 1.3 because the latter intervals do not include 1.0 while the former do. Essentially, the reader is advised not to interpret an odds ratio not noted as significant, no matter its size.

When odds ratios are below one in the table, the relevant predictor is associated with a reduced likelihood of being in the revocation group (relative to the no event group; see the "1 v 2" column) or the new conviction group (relative to the no event group; see the "1 v 3" column). When the odds ratio is below, one, the decrease can be more easily interpreted as the inverse of the odds ratio (expressed as $1/X$), in which case it is interpreted as an increase in the likelihood of being in the no event group. Though complicated, the effect of each predictor on the outcome is explained in the corresponding text. Finally, it is important to note that each effect in the table is interpreted while controlling for every other variable in the model (i.e., when all other variables are held constant).

Demographics/other. For age at parole, a one year increase in age was associated with a 2% ($1/.98$) greater likelihood of no event relative to a revocation, and a 5% ($1/.95$)

greater likelihood of no event versus a new conviction. The effect (and all effects involving odds ratios) is exponential, not additive; thus, a 10-year increase in age corresponds to a 22.4% lower likelihood of revocation ($1/.98^{10}$), and to a 67.0% lower likelihood of new conviction ($1/.95^{10}$). As noted by its absence in Table 14, supervision region was not a significant predictor of revocation or new conviction relative to no event. This finding contrasts with previous research conducted on a prior cohort of Utah's Parolees (Peterson, Hickert, Mitchell & Dorsey, 2008), and is likely the result of the additional variables modeled in the current research. For example, a greater range of criminal histories were examined for the current project, as were new programming variables. When these variables (and others in model are accounted for) supervision region is not related to the multinomial outcome.

The days in prison prior to parole variable was a significant predictor of revocation but not new conviction. Because of extreme outliers (i.e., individuals with an extremely long number of days in prison prior to parole), this variable was transformed (winsorized; see table footnote) and standardized in order to address a violation of the assumptions of multinomial (or any form of) regression. As such, the odds ratio is not indicative of a one unit (i.e., one day) change in prior incarceration. Instead, a one unit change reflects the impact of a one standard deviation (722 days, after the transformation) change in length of prior incarceration. Each one standard deviation increase in length or prior incarceration resulted in a 15.0% ($1/.87$) lower likelihood of revocation, but was not predictive of a lower likelihood of new conviction.

Risk. Risk was represented in the model as the highest security level to which an offender was classified during incarceration as well as the (10) domain scores from the LSI-R assessed closest to parole. The aforementioned restrictions on the range of days before or after parole were applied to determine the qualifying LSI-R assessment (see footnote four). When LSI-R domains were included in the model, highest security risk while in prison was no longer a significant predictor (hence its absence in Table 14). Only certain domain scores were predictive of the multinomial outcome. The overall LSI-R score was examined, but was not as predictive of the outcomes as the individual domain scores, and was not included because of its redundancy with the domain scores.

Three LSI-R domain scores were predictive of both revocation and new conviction relative to no event. For all domain scores, higher numbers indicate greater risk as measured by the LSI-R. A one point increase on the criminal history domain score (which ranges from zero to 10) was associated with an 18% increased likelihood of revocation, and a 24% increased likelihood of new conviction. A one point increase on the leisure/recreation domain score (which ranges from zero to two) was associated with a 19% increased likelihood of revocation, and a 29% increased likelihood of new conviction. The education/employment domain score outcome (which ranges from zero to 10) indicated that a one point increase in risk predicted an 8% greater likelihood of revocation, but was not associated with a new conviction. A one point increase on the family/marital domain score (which ranges from zero to four) was not associated with a greater likelihood of revocation, but was associated with a 12% greater likelihood of new conviction. Finally, a one point increase on the

attitudes/orientation domain score (which ranges from zero to 4) was associated with an 11% greater likelihood of revocation and a 10% greater likelihood of new conviction.

It is important to consider why a variable might predict one outcome but not the other relative to no event; however, this can only be done speculatively, and in conjunction with findings from the qualitative component of the research (statistical models cannot explain the reason a variable has the effect it does on an outcome). It may be the case that parolees who are higher risk on the education/employment domain also have special conditions related to education and employment, or that their employers are contacted more often regarding behavior. To the extent that parolees violate special conditions or demonstrate poor attitudes at work, they may receive revocations without new criminal activity because they are perceived as being at greater risk of recidivating. Though this is only a speculative hypothesis, it illustrates an important consideration; that is, sometimes revocations occur because behaviors observed by parole officers imply recidivism is likely to occur. Revocation, therefore, may reduce new convictions. The use of the term “reduce” (rather than prevent) is intended to emphasize an important distinction. Individuals who receive a revocation may or may not have recidivated, but they are temporarily precluded from doing so, possibly by closer monitoring as a result of their risk profile.

Detailed criminal history. This section is labeled as Detailed Criminal History in order to differentiate it from the criminal history domain from the LSI-R, which is a more general measure of criminal history, aggregately summarizing, for example, number of prior convictions, age at first arrest, escape history and whether or not a history of violence exists, but which does not assess other specific criminal offense types. Crimes in this section are not aggregated across types, but, instead, reflect whether specific crimes (e.g., property) are part of an offender’s past, or how many (the sum) convictions an offender has for a specific crime. Criminal histories represent convictions rather than charges.

All BCI and O-Track indicators of criminal history were considered for inclusion in the predictive model. BCI and O-Track criminal histories are partly redundant with one another for any specific crime committed pre-parole; hence, only the more predictive variable (in the bivariate relationships) from the two sources was considered in the multinomial model. Also, two versions of each criminal history variable were created/considered for each offense type. For example, for property crimes, a variable was created from each offender’s criminal history that reflected the sum number of property crime convictions in an offender’s criminal history. To qualify, a crime must have a unique conviction date. This methodology precludes multiple convictions for the same offense on the same date from artificially inflating a criminal history, and differentiates between a chronic, persistent offender and an individual who commits one, or a series, of crimes in a short period of time but is not otherwise offending. A second criminal history variable reflected whether or not the specific crime type had occurred (yes or no). Using the example of property crimes, if an offender had any conviction for a property crime at any point in his or her history, the individual would receive a “yes” flag on this variable. The sum (e.g., number of unique convictions) variable and the yes/no variable were both considered as predictors of the multinomial outcome to account for the fact that, for some

crimes, the total number of convictions is more predictive, while, for others, the mere presence of a conviction is more predictive.

Only five criminal history variables are included in the final predictive model, as they were the only variables to significantly predict the outcomes given the presence of other variables in the model that may have accounted for similar variance. The sum number of BCI reported violent offense convictions pre-parole (which ranged from zero to 13 in this cohort) was a significant predictor of revocation (14% greater likelihood of revocation for a one-unit increase in the number of violence convictions), but was not a significant predictor of new conviction. This variable is a general measure of violent crime, and was created by aggregating across the BCI categories of assault, homicide, rape and sexual assault, and robbery. This variable provides another example of a case where increased monitoring (violent offenders are more closely monitored in the community) leads to revocation and may reduce recidivism. Again, the use of the term “reduce” (rather than prevent) is intended to emphasize that a person who receives a revocation may or may not have recidivated, but they are precluded from doing so, possibly because of closer monitoring due to their risk profile.

A corollary of this hypothesis is that we might also expect offense types which are associated with lower supervision to receive revocations at a relatively low rate, but receive new convictions at relatively higher rates. The O-Track reported number of misdemeanor property crimes pre-parole demonstrates such a relationship with the multinomial outcome. Perhaps because of the relatively low-risk associated with property crimes, and a correspondingly lower level of supervision, a higher number of property crimes pre-parole is not predictive of revocation relative to no event, but an increase in the number of property crime convictions is associated with an 18% increased likelihood of new conviction post-parole.

A prior obstruction of police conviction predicted higher likelihood of both revocation (33% higher) and new conviction (69% higher) relative to no event. A prior larceny charge was not predictive of revocation, but predicted a higher likelihood of new conviction (42% higher) relative to no event. Interestingly, controlling for other variables in the model (i.e., when they are at their mean or at zero), a history including a misdemeanor drug crime pre-parole was not predictive of revocation or new conviction (despite a lack of significance, it remained in the model because its absence created suppression effects for other variables). Though this finding may seem counterintuitive at first, it is important to keep in mind that the conviction history of interest in the effect is misdemeanor, not felony drug crimes, and misdemeanor drug crimes are inherently less severe.

Programming. As seen in Table 14, programming/treatment success or failure played a significant role in predicting both revocation and new conviction, but it is important to note the comparison group for this variable is qualitatively different than for other variables. In the table, those who successfully completed a treatment are compared to a more general group composed of those who failed the specific treatment, those who had a neutral exit from the specific treatment, and also of those who did not have or need the specific treatment (and so neither completed successfully or unsuccessfully). Therefore,

the comparison is not a 1:1 comparison of success versus failure, but of the relative effect of success or failure in reducing or increasing the likelihood of revocation and new conviction relative to all other offenders (who may have succeeded or failed in other programs aside from or in addition to the specific program of interest). Programs that are not listed should not be interpreted as being ineffective; rather, a program may not be a significant predictor in the model simply because it included too few individuals to demonstrate a significant effect (an issue of statistical power) when compared to a more global population of offenders. Accordingly, these analyses should not be interpreted as strong evidence for either the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of any one specific program, but, in combination, the outcomes are evidence of an effect for programming in general¹¹.

Success and failure on all outcomes were limited to programming/treatment occurring in the two years prior to parole or programming/treatment occurring during parole. For some types of programming/treatment, successful completion predicted the outcomes; for others, it was not whether the offender had successfully completed the programming/treatment, but whether he or she had failed. For some types of programming/treatment, both success and failure predicted the multinomial outcomes. The distinction between success and failure is important because failure is not the only alternative to success in these data. An offender can have a neutral exit, for example, because he or she was transferred within or between facilities; he or she can also fail a program at one time, but successfully complete a program at another time within the window of two-years prior to or during parole.

All programming/treatment variables in Table 14 predicted new convictions, and all but one also predicted revocations. Only the programming/treatment variables with significant effects are presented. Those who successfully completed a substance abuse program were 2.6 (1/.38) times less likely to receive a revocation and 2.4 (1/.42) times less likely to receive a new conviction; in contrast, those who failed a substance abuse program were 88% more likely to receive a revocation, and 2.2 times more likely to recidivate. For the sex offender population, successful completion of a program was not associated with the multinomial outcome, but failure of a program/treatment was associated with 3.3 times the likelihood of revocation and 3.9 times the likelihood of new conviction.

Successful completion of vocational programming was not associated with revocation relative to no event, but did decrease the likelihood of new conviction by 82% (1/.55). Failing a vocational program was associated with 3.5 times the likelihood of revocation, and 2.6 times the likelihood of new conviction. Successful completion of a mental health program was associated with a reduction in the likelihood of revocation by a factor of 2.4 (1/.41), and of new conviction by a factor of 2.0 (1/.49). Failing a cognitive skills program

¹¹ Because the analyses are not a 1:1 comparison of program success or failure, and because offenders could change status over time (i.e., failing at one time and succeeding at another [and even in multiple programs]), it is most accurate to interpret the effects across programming/treatment rather than as specific to any one treatment. As seen in the table, successful completion of programs was (across programs) related to a reduced likelihood of revocation or new conviction, and unsuccessful completion was (across programs) related to an increased likelihood of revocation or new conviction.

was associated with a 45% increased likelihood of revocation, and a 59% increased likelihood of new conviction. Successful completion of other programming was associated with a reduction in the likelihood of revocation by a factor of 2.1 (1/.47), and of new conviction by a factor of 3.0 (1/.33). Failing other programming was associated with 2.1 times the likelihood of revocation, and 2.8 times the likelihood of new conviction.

Special conditions. Bivariate analyses considered several types of special conditions (e.g., alcohol and drug, gang, mental health, and weapons special conditions) and identified two that were significant predictors of either revocations or new convictions. Most special conditions occurred too infrequently to reveal a significant effect on the outcomes. Individuals were flagged as yes or no regarding whether they had the special condition assigned to them at parole.

Those with special conditions for alcohol or drugs were 1.6 times more likely to receive a revocation, and 1.7 times more likely to receive a new conviction. For those who had special conditions for sex offenders, the likelihood of revocation was no greater than no event, but the conditions were associated with a reduced likelihood of recidivism by a factor of 2.4 (1/.41). The fact that sex offenders are notably less likely to recidivate is likely partly a function of their frequent monitoring and restrictions, but, as was shown above, is also partly a function of not failing sex offender programming/treatment. A general proclivity to not reoffend cannot be ruled out as a factor as well.

Violations. The number and nature of several violations of conditions of parole were considered as predictors of either revocation or new conviction in the bivariate analyses described above. Only violations that did not lead to revocations were considered as predictors, as violations leading to revocations would always perfectly predict revocation. Instead, the variable representing the number of violations of specific conditions leading to alternative events/sanctions (described above) was included in the model as a predictor. Several special condition violations were examined for significance, including: gang-related, work/educational, mental health, sex, and others. Some types of conditions were violated too rarely to have predictive power. Three types of violations resulting in alternative sanctions were found to be significant predictors: alcohol and drug violations (e.g., failure to comply with chemical analysis requirement, failing a drug test or using alcohol), other programming violations (failure to complete requirements of transitional services or other types of programming, such as CBT), or compliance violations (e.g., lying, absconding, failure to report, failure to pay fees or new criminal conduct).

Violations of alcohol or drug conditions resulting in alternative sanctions were associated with a 1.6 times greater likelihood of revocation and a 1.4 times greater likelihood of new conviction per additional violation. Violations of other conditions resulting in alternative sanctions were associated with a 1.8 times greater likelihood of both revocation and new conviction per additional violation. Violations of compliance conditions resulting in alternative sanctions were associated with a 1.3 times greater likelihood of revocation and a 1.2 times greater likelihood of new conviction per additional violation.

Table 14 Multinomial Regression Model Results for the No Event Group (1) Relative to the Revocations Group (2) and the New Convictions Group (3)

Comparison	OR (1 v 2)	OR (1 v 3)
Demographics/Other		
Age at Parole	.98*	0.95*
Days in Prison Prior to Parole [†]	.87*	0.90
Risk		
LSI-R Criminal History Domain Score	1.18*	1.24*
LSI-R Leisure/Recreation Domain Score	1.19*	1.29*
LSI-R Education/Employment Domain Score	1.08*	1.00
LSI-R Family/Marital Domain Score	1.09	1.12*
LSI-R Attitudes/Orientations Domain Score	1.11*	1.10*
Detailed Criminal History		
BCI Number of Violent Offenses Pre-parole	1.14*	1.04
BCI (Yes/No) Obstruction of Police Pre-parole	1.33*	1.69*
BCI (Yes/No) Larceny Pre-parole	1.22	1.42*
O-Track (Yes/No) Misdemeanor Drug Crime Pre-parole	0.82	1.10
O-Track Number of Misdemeanor Property Crimes Pre-parole	1.03	1.18*
Programming		
Substance Abuse Program (Successful)	0.38*	0.42*
Substance Abuse Program (Unsuccessful)	1.88*	2.24*
Sex Offender Program (Unsuccessful)	3.29*	3.89*
Vocational Program (Successful)	1.07	0.55*
Vocational Program (Unsuccessful)	3.46*	2.59*
Mental Health Program (Successful)	0.41*	0.49*
Cognitive Skills Program (Unsuccessful)	1.45*	1.59*
Other Program (Successful)	0.47*	0.33*
Other Program (Unsuccessful)	2.05*	2.75*
Special Conditions		
Special Condition for Alcohol or Drugs at Parole	1.51*	1.65*
Special Condition for Sex Offenders at Parole	1.03	0.41*
Violations		
Number of Violations of Alcohol or Drug Conditions with Alternative Sanctions	1.55*	1.36*
Number of Violations of Required Programming Conditions with Alternative Sanctions	1.84*	1.79*
Number of Violations of Compliance Conditions with Alternative Sanctions	1.34*	1.20*

[†] Variable was winsorized (to 3.29 SD) and standardized to address extreme non-normality.

Time to first event, revocation, and new conviction. Because of violation of the assumptions of survival analyses (described above), time-to-event analyses examining covariates that either increase or decrease the time to revocation or new conviction are not presented. However, Table 15 does provide the survival rates to each event (in weeks) at 10% increments without consideration of any covariates. The column labeled “First Event” shows survival increments to the first event of any kind, and, therefore, is a blend of revocation and new conviction (because a new conviction necessitates a revocation). Time

to first event will always be shorter than time to revocation or new conviction alone because it represents the quickest occurring events from both revocation and new conviction. The “Revocation” and “New Conviction” columns show incremental survival to revocation and new conviction, respectively. Revocations refer to revocations without new convictions.

Ten percent of the population in this cohort had a first event (revocation or new conviction) in 8 weeks, a revocation in 17 weeks, and a new conviction in 56 weeks (or just over one-year). Median survival time (shown at 50%) is the time-point at which half the population experienced the event. Median survival time is undetermined (and thus blank in the table) if half the population has not experienced the event by the end of the time-based observation period. This is the case with both revocations and new convictions because half the population did not receive a revocation (without new conviction) or a new conviction during the follow-up observation period post-parole. The median survival time for first event was 65 weeks; that is, half of the cohort had either a revocation or new conviction within 65 weeks.

Table 15 Incremental Post-Parole Survival Time (in Weeks) for First Event, Revocation, and New Conviction

Incremental Survival (Weeks)	First Event	Revocation	New Conviction
90%	8	17	56
80%	16	38	104
70%	27	69	156
60%	44	139	204
50% (median)	65		
40%	113		

Alternative Events as a Mediator of Risk Predicting Reason for Return to Prison. In the modeling analyses above, both the revocation and new conviction group were compared to the no event group. While valuable for predicting the outcomes associated with return to prison relative to successful re-entry, the modeling process did not allow comparison of the revocation group and the new conviction group for some issues of theoretical and practical importance. One important consideration is whether the individuals who returned to prison for violations of parole conditions were of similar risk to reoffend. If individuals who were of lower risk compared to the new conviction group were having parole revoked, it might be the case that decisions to revoke should be reexamined in order to avoid returning lower risk offenders to prison. However, this was not the case.

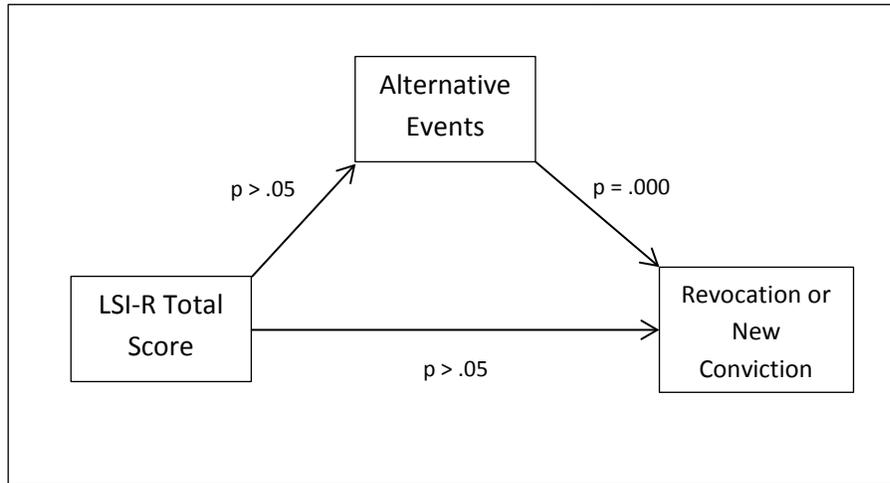
Examination of the LSI-R total scores for the three groups indicated the revocations group ($M=27.2$) and the new convictions group ($M=27.4$) had equally high (i.e., not significantly different) LSI-R total scores. Both groups also had significantly higher LSI-R total scores relative to the no event group ($M=21.8$). This outcome indicates that those who had parole revoked were of similar risk to recidivate relative to those who actually did recidivate, and were at significantly greater risk than the no event group.

One further question of theoretical interest was examined. Given that those with both revocations and new convictions had high LSI-R scores, it may be the case that parole officers are quick to revoke these individuals for violations of parole conditions, and, based on their LSI-R scores alone, are not giving them the same number of alternative responses as lower risk offenders. This hypothesis was examined via a mediation model shown in Figure 1. The model tests a direct effect for LSI-R total score predicting reason for return to prison (revocation or new conviction; this is partially redundant with the test in the preceding paragraph), and an indirect effect in which LSI-R total score predicts reason for return to prison through the number of alternative responses one receives (i.e., indirectly). Note that the no event group is not part of the analysis. For ease of interpretation, p-values are presented in the figure rather than beta weights.

Results of the mediational analysis reveal neither a significant direct effect nor indirect effect for LSI-R as a predictor of reason for return to prison. The lack of effects should not be disconcerting in this context because the outcome variable is the reason for return to prison (i.e., revocation or new conviction) rather than whether or not a person actually returned to prison (i.e., the no event group is not part of this analysis). The lack of a significant direct effect of LSI-R total score as a predictor of reason for return to prison merely restates the aforementioned finding that those who returned to prison for a revocation or for a new conviction did not differ from one another on LSI-R total score. The lack of an indirect effect indicates that the LSI-R score an offender had did not impact the number of alternative events he or she received prior to return to prison; regardless of LSI-R score (i.e., risk), among those who returned to prison, offenders were given a nearly equal number of alternative events.

The only significant effect in the model is for number of alternative events as a predictor of revocation or new conviction. A greater number of alternative events was predictive of greater odds of being in the revocation group relative to the new conviction group. This finding is unsurprising, however, given that, if an individual is returned to prison for a new conviction, he or she can no longer receive alternative events for violations of parole conditions. Overall, despite Utah's high rate for revocation of parole, it appears that individuals who receive a revocation are those who are higher risk to recidivate (note that this is not the same as actual risk, as the LSI-R is a proxy for risk of recidivism), and they are not given fewer opportunities in the form of alternative events prior to revocation.

Figure 1: Mediation Model for Number of Alternative Responses and LSI-R Total Score Predicting Return to Prison



Qualitative Methods and Results

The goals of the qualitative portion of the study were to understand offenders' experience during the transition from prison to parole. Drawing from desistance theories, we were particularly interested in those aspects of the release process that offenders identified as being related to successful reintegration. In addition, we were interested in offenders' articulation of a process of identity change, which accompanied or facilitated desistance. Where the previous section focused on risk factors for recidivism, this section explores individual processes whereby offenders instigate and sustain pro-social change. Lloyd and Serin (2012) argue that the processes for engaging and disengaging in criminal offending are not identical: "desistance is not directly tied to the extinction of risk factors that led to one's initial involvement in crime" (p. 552).

Data Collection

The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) provided the research team with a list of all male inmates released to parole between January, 2012 and August, 2013 who were still under UDC jurisdiction (either on parole or in jail/prison). From that list, the research team pulled a stratified random sample of 130 names. The list was stratified by AP&P region to ensure a representative, statewide sample; smaller regions (Region V and Region VI) were oversampled in order to ensure sufficient participation from those rural areas. The list of potential participants was sent to each Regional Administrator's Office, who worked with supervising agents to alert parolees to the study and ask if they were willing to speak with the research team. Interviews were conducted at AP&P offices, community correction centers, prisons, or jails (depending on where the offender was located). Prior to conducting the interview, the researcher explained the study purpose and procedures and obtained signed consent. Parolees could choose not to participate at any point (parole officers and prison/jail staff were not notified if an offender chose not to participate in the

study). Parolees who were in the community at the time of the interview received a \$20 gift card to a local grocery store as compensation. Individuals who were in prison or jail at the time of the interview were not eligible, by UDC policy, to receive such compensation. Of the 130 offenders recruited, 50 were interviewed.

Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted using a semi-structured guide wherein participants' answers were documented, in writing, during the interview. Because the interviews were not recorded and transcribed, the quotations included in this report are based on notes taken during the interview. As such, they are cleaner, with respect to grammar and sentence structure, than quotations in many qualitative studies. The questions were organized around factors identified by desistance theorists as precursors to, or components of, change: openness to change; opportunities to change; social roles; social attachments; motivation; stigma; and understanding of past actions (King, 2013; Maruna & Roy, 2007; Shapland & Bottoms, 2011).

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti.6.2.28). Analytic methods were based on a template approach (Robson, 2002), wherein theory-driven codes were developed, *a priori*, from previous research. Two members of the research team independently read through the interview guides and compared interviewees' responses to the theoretical codes. As part of this process, and in discussion with each other, the researchers tested and refined the thematic codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as new themes emerged from the data.

Results

Sample Characteristics

In contrast to the quantitative analysis, all of the offenders in the current sample were male. The average age at the time of the interview was 36 years (see Table 16). Compared to the quantitative sample, slightly fewer offenders in this sample were married (15% compared to 20%). While the majority of the sample reported having children (64%, only seven percent (7%) characterized their pre-prison relationship with their child/children as being both strong and positive (not shown in table). The remainder of offenders reported having weak or no ties to their child/children before prison. To some degree, those relationships were strengthened during/after their incarceration, with more than one-third (36%) of offenders reporting strong, positive relationships with their child/children after release.

Table 16 Demographics

<i>Total Sample</i>	50
Age at interview, in years (Mn)	36
Marital Status (n (%))	
Single	30 (61)
Divorced/separated/widowed	12 (24)
Married	7 (15)
Has/had children (n (%))	32 (64)

<i>Total Sample</i>	50
Children live with him	11 (36)

The majority (n=33, 66%) of the sample was on parole at the time of the interview, including interviewees who were residing in community correction centers (n=7, 14%). The remaining offenders (n=17, 34%) were in prison¹² at the time of the interview. In keeping with the stratification process used to select the sample, the majority of offenders interviewed were paroled to Region 3 (36%), followed by Northern Region (22%; see Table 17). Of the offenders who were living in the community at the time of the interview, only four percent (4%) had moved to an AP&P region that was different from the one to which they were originally paroled.

Table 17 Parole Region

	Original	Current
<i>Total Sample</i>	50	33 ¹
Supervised by Region (%):		
Northern	22	18
Three	40	36
Four	20	24
Five	10	12
Six	8	9

¹Only for those on parole at the time of the interview

The majority of interviewees identified themselves as drug offenders, which is similar to the quantitative sample (see Table 1 on page 9). In contrast, the qualitative sample included comparatively more offenders who identified themselves as sex offenders (18% of interviewees, compared to 10% with sex offender special conditions in the full sample; see Table 18). Additionally, property offenders were more common in the quantitative sample than among offenders who participated in interviews; however, these difference may be an artifact of the self-report nature of the current data and that property offenders often identify themselves as drug offenders. When comparing the quantitative and qualitative sample, it is important to keep in mind that they are comprised of offenders from different release cohorts and also that the methods for collecting and analyzing data are different; these factors may fully or partially explain any apparent differences between the two groups.

Table 18 Primary Offense Type¹

<i>Total Sample</i>	50
Offense Type (n (%))	
Drug	19 (38)
DUI	6 (12)
Person - Combined	18 (36)
Sex	9 (18)
Violent	9 (18)

¹² Also include two offenders who were prison inmates but were being housed in a county jail.

<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>50</i>
Property	7 (14)
¹ Self-reported	

Offenders reported an average of two episodes of prison incarceration and six years in prison (see Table 19). When looking at the parole event that got them into the study (referred to as the index parole), offenders were paroled an average of 18 months prior to the interview. When looking at the average months on parole during the most recent parole episode, incarcerated offenders were in the community for an average of 10 months before being re-incarcerated and community-based offenders were in the community for an average of 16 months prior to the interview.

Table 19 Incarceration & Parole History¹

<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>50</i>
Age in years at first incarceration (Mn)	28
Range (Min, Max)	17, 44
Total years incarcerated (Mn)	6
Months since index parole (Mn)	18
Months out on most recent parole (Mn):	
In prison at interview	10
In the community at interview	16
¹ Self-reported history	

In addition to UDC incarcerations, one-fourth of the sample (24%) reported a history of incarceration as a prison/state inmate in a county jail, 16% had been incarcerated in another state's prison, and 16% identified a history of involvement with the juvenile justice system (not shown in table). Of the offenders who were in prison at the time of the interview, two-thirds (n=10, 67%) returned to prison for technical violation(s), and the remainder were returned for new crime(s) (n=2, 13%) or both new crime(s) and technical violation(s) (n=3, 20%). At the time of the interview, offenders in this group had been back in prison for an average of eight months.

Nearly one-quarter (22%) of offenders reported having other family members who were currently, or had previously been, in prison and half of these family members were the offender's parent (see Table 20). Nearly three-quarters (74%) reported having a drug abuse problem (which exceeds the number who identified themselves as being in prison for drugs). One-fourth of interviewees indicated that they had a mental health diagnosis, most commonly for anxiety or depression.

Table 20 Social History¹

<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>50</i>
Offender has:	n (%)
Other family is/has been in prison	11 (22)
Parent is/has been in prison	6 (12)
Substance Abuse	

<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>50</i>
Alcohol	12 (24)
Drug	37 (74)
Mental Health	13 (26)
Anxiety	5 (10)
Depression	7 (14)
Bipolar/Schizophrenia	3 (6)
History of gang involvement	5 (10)
¹ Self-reported	

Impact of incarceration

On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being most impact, offenders gave an average rating of 8 when asked to rate the impact that prison has had on their life. One-fourth (n=12, 24%) of the sample reported participating in educational programming while in prison (not shown in table). The majority of interviewees (n=42, 84%) received some form of treatment services while incarcerated, although a smaller number (n=23, 46%) received individual therapy, most often in one of the UDC therapeutic communities (HOPE or Conquest). Some offenders felt that prison had changed them for the better, in terms of education, treatment services, and incentives to change their lives (see Table 21).

Table 21 Positive Impacts of Prison

<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>50</i>
Percent reporting:	n (%)
Learned skills	22 (44)
Education/technical training	11 (22)
Got sober/clean	10 (20)
Got treatment	27 (54)
Developed positive relationships	18 (36)
Wake-up call	10 (20)
Time to reflect	28 (56)
Improved self-image	10 (20)
Appreciate what have/had	11 (22)

Even those offenders who felt that prison had changed them for the better, also identified negative impacts of prison (see Table 22). As shown in the table, these negative impacts were often due to both the immediate environment and the long-term impact of having a felony record. In particular, offenders whose families lacked resources and/or lived far away found it difficult to maintain relationships due to costs related to phone calls and travel.

Table 22 Negative Impact of Prison

<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>50</i>
Percent reporting:	n (%)
Exposed to criminal activities	15 (30)
Exposed to criminal peers	22 (44)

<i>Total Sample</i>	50
Reinforced criminal identity	14 (28)
Developed trust issues	11 (22)
Increased opposition to authority	10 (20)
Hardened emotionally	10 (20)
Damage to social capital	22 (44)
Having a felony on record	22 (44)

Social support

One-fourth of offenders expressed concern that they would have insufficient support from family once they were released from prison. Many of the offenders in this group attributed this belief to their repeated parole failures and fear that their family was tired of seeing them continue to engage in criminal offending. For other offenders in this group, their families were living far away or in other states and lacked the resources to provide substantial support. When asked to characterize family support after release from prison, the majority of offenders said that they had more positive relationships than they expected in all domains except forming new friendships with non-offending peers (see Table 23). In particular, more than half of offenders had more family support than they expected.

Table 23 Expectations for Support During Reentry

	Better	Worse
<i>Total Sample</i>	50	50
	n (%)	n (%)
Compared to expectations, things went:		
Family support	28 (56)	6 (12)
Peers		
Making or keeping positive peers	6 (12)	6 (12)
Staying away from negative peers	15 (30)	8 (16)
Relationship with kids	10 (20)	6 (12)
Relationship with significant other	13 (26)	8 (16)

Based on the stronger than expected support noted in Table 23, it is not surprising that social supports (i.e., family, significant others, friends) had an average rating of 9, on a scale of 1 to 10, for their impact on an offender's ability to stay out of prison. In general, interviewees reported that their immediate family (primarily parents, but sometimes siblings) was their primary source of social support. In fact, when asked to identify the person who has had the biggest impact on them since their release, over half (n=26, 52%) identified a member of their family (not shown in table; 18 parent, 4 sibling, 2 grandparent, 2 aunt/uncle). When asked about their social relationships prior to prison, very few of the interviewees identified having close, positive relationships with family or friends before they were incarcerated (see Table 24). For the most part, offenders identified that they had

alienated family through repeated incarcerations, ongoing criminal offending, and/or a refusal to participate in family activities. It appears that familial relationships were strengthened, to some degree, during/after incarceration, with nearly two-thirds (60%) of offenders reporting strong positive relationships with their family after release (compared to only 20% prior to prison).

Table 24 Relationships with Parolees Before and After Prison

<i>Total Sample</i>	50	50
n (%)	Before Prison	After Prison
Family		
<i>Positive relationship with Strong ties</i>	10 (20)	30 (60)
<i>Positive relationship but Weak ties</i>	24 (48)	8 (14)
Significant Other		
<i>Positive relationship with Strong ties</i>	2 (4)	8 (16)
<i>Positive relationship but Weak ties</i>	13 (26)	4 (8)
Peers		
<i>Positive relationship with Strong ties</i>	0 (0)	7 (14)
<i>Positive relationship but Weak ties</i>	5 (10)	11 (22)

The same trend was noted with relationships to significant others, however, to a much lesser degree. As noted earlier, relatively few offenders in the current sample (14%) were married at the time of the interview, although an additional 12% identified themselves as single but engaged. In order to examine offenders' relationships with significant others, this category was expanded to include people who filled this role in the offender's life, regardless of legal marital status (e.g., ex-wives, fiancée, girlfriend). With this broader definition, more than two-thirds (n = 34, 68%) of interviewees were identified as having a significant right before going into prison and/or after release.

In general, few interviewees reported close relationships with peers, who appeared to play a minor role in offender's post-release support systems. In fact, while only half of offenders rated peer support on the one to 10 scale, those who did indicated that peer support had very little impact on their ability to stay out of prison (Mn = 2.1, not shown in table). Few offenders interviewed reported that their peers had done anything that had helped (n=16, 32%) or made things harder (n=7, 14%) for them since their release from prison (not shown in table). Most offenders reported avoiding contact with prior friends and associates for fear it would lead them back to criminal offending.

As shown in Table 25, far more offenders reported receiving tangible (e.g., employment, housing, financial, child care assistance) and emotional support from family members than from significant others. One-fifth (20%) of offenders reported that their significant others had made their release harder by exposing them to illegal activities (most commonly drug use). Although, family members were typically described as being supportive, one-fifth (20%) of offenders also indicated that their families were a source of stress for them and one-quarter (26%) indicated that a lack of contact made things harder (see Table 25). These findings further highlight the important role that family members play in offender's post-release support system.

Table 25 Helped since Release

<i>Total sample</i>	50	50
	Family	Significant Other
Percent who have received <i>help</i> in these areas:	n (%)	n (%)
Emotional Support	39 (78)	18 (36)
Tangible Supports	38 (76) ¹	13 (26)
Things supports have done that have made it <i>harder</i> :		
Lack of Contact ²	13 (26)	5 (10)
Lack of Trust	9 (18)	1 (2)
Stressor	10 (20)	9 (18)
Exposure to Illegal Activities	1 (2)	10 (20)

¹Financial (n = 22, 44%), Housing (n = 28, 56%), Child Care (n = 7, 14%), Employment (n = 9, 18%), Transportation (n = 12, 24%)

²Often due to family living in another state

Characterizing offenders' release experience

In national studies, inmates report being unprepared for release on measures of material, social, and medical needs (La Vigne, Shollenberger, & Debus, 2009; Wolff et al., 2012). In particular, previous research has characterized prisoners released in Utah as fragmented with respect to coordination and collaboration between institutional- and parole-based correctional systems (Office of the Legislative Auditor General, State of Utah, 2013; Sarver et al., 2013). Within the current sample, the vast majority of offenders (74%) felt that they had no preparation for release from the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC). For those who did receive transition services, those were most often comprised of: “gate money” (\$100 provided by the prison), a one-day pass to ride public transportation, and a short-term supply of toiletries. Nearly all interviewees (86%) experienced substantial negative emotions in the days and weeks prior to release. One-fourth (23%) of offenders described experiencing both positive and negative emotions and only one-third (37%) described purely positive emotions.

Nearly all of the interviewees (84%) were worried about at least one thing in the weeks before release, with a mean of 2.5 concerns per person. Most frequently, those concerns centered around finding employment, using drugs or alcohol, or adjusting to life in the community after release (see Table 26). Interviewees also expressed concern regarding “the unknown” (n=8, 16%; not shown in table) and starting over with few resources or social connections (n=7, 14%; not shown in table).

Table 26 Concerns Prior to Release

<i>Total sample</i>	50
Before release I worried about ¹ :	n (%)
Adjusting to life on the outside	16 (32)
Employment	15 (30)

<i>Total sample</i>	<i>50</i>
Finding housing	8 (16)
Financial obligations	6 (12)
Living at a halfway house	10 (20)
Parole	9 (18)
Relapsing	12 (24)
Stigma of being a felon	4 (8)

¹Concerns about support from family and friends is reported in the support section of this report (see pg. 38)

All of the interviewees identified at least one aspect of the reentry experience that went worse than they expected, with an average of four issues for which they were unprepared. Despite concerns noted in the previous table, more than one-third (40%) of offenders described that finding a job was harder than they expected and one-third (34%) found adjustment to non-incarcerated living harder than they expected (Table 27). For nearly half of the sample (44%), dealing with general life stressors went worse than they expected (not shown in table).

Table 27 Expectations for Reentry

	Better	Worse
Total sample (n)	50	50
Compared to expectations, things went ¹ (%):		
Adjusting to life on the outside	10	34
Employment	40	40
Finding housing	8	14
Financial obligations	6	36
Living at a halfway house	20	26
Parole		
Conditions	32	18
Officer	34	4
Relapsing	40	10
Stigma of being a felon	3	12

¹Concerns about support from family and friends is reported in the support section of this report (see pg. 38)

In comparison, nearly all offenders (90%) also identified aspects of reentry that went better than expected, with an average of 3 things that went better than anticipated. In comparison to things that went worse than expected, the same number of offenders felt that finding a job was easier than expected. Very few offenders felt that finding housing, meeting financial obligations, or negotiating the stigma of being a felon went better than they expected. Nearly half (40%) of offenders felt that it was easier than anticipated to avoid drugs and alcohol (see Relapsing in Table 27). More than half (54%) of offenders identified at least one type of support that they wish they had during release, most commonly a stronger support system, more money, employment assistance, or reentry planning (not shown in table).

In terms of housing and employment, which were foremost on parolees' list of pre-release anxieties, the majority of offenders were released to their parents' home (37%) or a Community Correction Center (35%; see Table 28). While a small number of interviewees appreciated the structure provided by the Community Correction Centers (CCC), the majority felt that centers' restrictions (such as the prohibited use of cell phones or vehicles) made it difficult for them to accomplish tasks related to reintegration (e.g., employment, contact with family). Additionally, residing in a CCC that was not in the community where the offender expected to live for the long-term increased both anxiety and isolation from their social supports. Offenders expressed ambivalence about obtaining a job that they knew they wanted to leave soon, in order to relocate and live near family. Because all of the UDC CCCs are along the Wasatch Front, this problem was more prevalent among offenders from rural portions of the state.

Table 28 Living Arrangements at Release

<i>Total sample</i>	50
Lived with:	%
Parents	37
Other relatives	8
Significant other	12
Friends	2
Sober living house	4
CCC/halfway house	35
Residential treatment facility	2

While the majority of offenders reported being employed at the time of the interview, only half indicated that they had full-time employment (see Table 29). In many cases, offenders who said that finding a job was not as bad as they expected also identified that they got their current job through personal or professional connections that they had prior to incarceration. As noted earlier, this was not always possible for offenders living in a CCC that was not located in the community they were from. Just over one-third of offenders identified recreational activities that they regularly engaged in with others, most frequently with their parents or their children.

Table 29 How Parolees Spend Their Time

<i>Total sample</i> ¹	50
N (number who report)	
Employed	44
Full-time	26
Part-time/temp	2
Months from release to employment	
Less than 1 month	15
4-6 months	3
More than 6 months	2

<i>Total sample</i> ¹	50
Got job through pre-prison connections	17
Enrolled in school	6
Identified pro-social leisure activities	19
¹ N rather than percent used because data was not available for all interviewees	

Experience on Parole

According to interviewees, parole supervision had a moderate impact on their ability to stay out of prison (Mn = 6, on a scale of 1 to 10). Nevertheless, two-thirds (66%) of interviewees indicated that they had found parole helpful and approximately one-third identified parole as providing support, structure, and/or accountability (see Table 30). Parolees identified a number of challenges they had experienced while on parole including: having contact with family members, traveling out of state, finding suitable housing, finding employers who hire felons, and paying supervision fees (see Table 30). One-fifth (22%) of parolees described parole as an inconvenience with little or no benefit. These individuals typically had strong support systems, jobs, and had never violated their parole. While some of these parolees had always viewed parole this way, others noted the import role that it played during the first few months after their release from prison.

Table 30 Parole Supervision

<i>Total Sample</i>	50
	n (%)
Parole is helpful	33 (66)
Parole Provides:	
Support	18 (36)
Structure	16 (32)
Accountability	16 (32)
Challenges of Parole:	
Family	10 (20)
Travel	10 (20)
Housing	8 (16)
Employment	13 (26)
Fines and Fees	10 (20)
Inconvenience	11 (22)

As shown in Table 31, just over one-third (n=18, 36%) of offenders reported ever being in one of the state’s Community Corrections Centers (CCC) and three (17%) of the offenders who had been in a CCC found it helpful. Similarly, one-fifth (20%) of offenders had been in the Fortitude Treatment Center (FTC), but half of them indicated it was helpful. Although these centers have a number of differences, it is highly likely that at least some of this discrepancy is due to the different point in time at which an offender enters one of these centers. Although both are community corrections centers, offenders are sent to the CCCs as they are transitioning out of prison, while parolees who violate can be sent to FTC as an

alternative to being sent to prison while receiving treatment in a community setting. Over half (58%) of offenders reported ever receiving group treatment in the community, and one-quarter (13%) had received individual treatment/therapy. Although far fewer offenders received individual therapy, those who did reported high levels of satisfaction (85% found it helpful).

Table 31 Community Corrections and Treatment¹

Total Sample	50
	n (%)
Community Corrections:	
Community Corrections Center (CCC)	18 (36)
helpful	3 (17)
Fortitude Treatment Center (FTC)	10 (20)
helpful	5 (50)
Community Treatment:	
Group Treatment	29 (58)
helpful	12 (41)
Individual Treatment/Therapy	13 (26)
helpful	11 (85)

¹Although interviewees were not specifically asked if they had ever participated in these programs/services, a number of parolees did mention them during their interview. As such, these figures are likely an underrepresentation of actual participation rates.

The relationship between offenders and Parole Officers (PO), was also examined. As shown in Table 32, nearly all offenders (n=43, 86%) viewed their relationship with their current or most recent PO as positive. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of offenders indicated they felt like they could be honest with their PO. Although the vast majority of offenders reported feeling positively about their current PO, just over half (52%) reported feeling negatively about a previous PO. While coding these relationships, the researchers decided to make a distinction between relationships that were positive and respectful (but not especially supportive) and those that were both respectful *and* supportive. It should be noted, however, that not all parolees appeared to need additional support from their PO, and these individuals were often those who had strong social supports in place. Interesting, nearly half (48%) of offenders identified their relationship as being both respectful and supportive.

There also appears to be a difference in this relationship depending on the gender of the PO (although sample sizes are small and should be interpreted with caution). As shown in Table 32, more than two-thirds (69%) of offenders with a female PO described their relationship with their PO as both respectful and supportive. This was in contrast to offenders with male POs; just over half (51%) indicated that their relationship was positive but not supportive. It also appears that more of the offenders with female POs cared what their PO thought of them on a personal level, compared to only caring about the PO's opinion because POs determine whether they would succeed or fail on parole. In fact, two offenders identified their PO as the person who has had the biggest impact on them since

their release from prison and six offenders identified their PO as a key member of their support system (not shown in table).

Table 32 Relationship with Parole Officers

	Male PO	Female PO	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
<i>Samples</i>	37 (74)	13 (26)	50 (100)
Relationship with PO¹			
Positive – Respectful, but <i>not</i> supportive	19 (51)	0 (0)	19 (38)
Positive – Respectful <i>and</i> Supportive	15 (41)	9 (69)	24 (48)
Negative	3 (8)	3 (23)	6 (12)
<i>Missing</i>	0 (0)	1 (7)	1 (2)
Ever had a PO who was:			
Positive	--	--	43 (86)
Negative	--	--	26 (52)
Cares what their PO thinks of them:			
Yes, personally	10 (27)	6 (46)	16 (32)
Yes, professionally	8 (22)	1 (8)	9 (18)
No	12 (32)	3 (23)	15 (30)
<i>Missing</i>	7 (19)	3 (23)	10 (20)
Feels can be <i>honest</i> with PO	23 (62)	8 (62)	31 (62)

¹How the parolee viewed their relationship with their PO

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of offenders admitted to having violated their parole and two-thirds (62%) reported ever being “written-up” for violating parole (see Table 33). The most common types of violations included: drug use (34%), running from the CCC/FTC or not checking-in with their PO (22%), and having a new charge (20%). Many of the offenders reported multiple types of violations, but a count of the number of violations was not possible from the data collected in the interviews. Nearly half (46%) of offenders reported that they had been returned to prison at least once for violating parole and one-quarter (26%) had been sent to FTC or another community treatment program.

Table 33 Parole Violations

<i>Total sample</i>	50
	n (%)
Parole Violations	
Ever violated	37 (74)
Ever written-up	31 (62)
Types of Violations	
New Charge	10 (20)
Drug Use	17 (34)
Alcohol Use	7 (14)
CCC Rules Violation	9 (18)
Running/Not Checking-in	11 (22)
Other	11 (22)
Responses to Violations	

<i>Total sample</i>	50
Verbal Reprimand	9 (18)
Treatment/FTC	13 (26)
Short-term Jail Stay	2 (4)
Return to Prison	23 (46)
Other	9 (18)

Characterizing Offenders' Motivation and Efforts to Desist

Moment of Change

According to one strain of desistance theory, long-term, sustained change is preceded by an openness to change: an experience or realization that serves as a catalyst, activating offenders' desire to create a new life that does not include criminal offending (Giordano et al., 2002). Three-fourths (74%) of interviewees identified at least one experience that formed the basis of their current attempts to forge a new identity. These experiences were coded as *moment of change*. This code refers to an offender's perception that he no longer wants to maintain a criminal lifestyle; as such, it is a proxy for intention to change. Offenders who were classified as no change may still have articulated a desire to stay out of prison or have a different life; however, they did not describe an intention to change their identity in order to achieve those goals. Less than one-quarter (18%) of offenders who were in prison during the interview identified themselves as having experienced a moment of change. In contrast, nearly all offenders (78%) in the community at the time of the interview described a moment where they decided to behave differently in order to stay out of prison.

Of those who identified a moment of change, nearly half (48%) attributed that desire to an experience in prison, for reasons that included: regret at missing out on relationships with family, fear of the future, and active participation in prison programs. The following quote exemplifies the role that incarceration can play in terms of creating openness to change:

"I hit rock bottom in my cell in prison when I realized this would be my life; I realized I needed help. I started making little steps in the opposite direction. Going to prison woke me right up and I knew I needed a program. Maybe I could have done it without a program, but I don't think I could have. I deal with things in better ways now."

For offenders such as the one quoted above, prison provided both the incentive to, and the means for, change. For other offenders, being incarcerated was not a direct catalyst for change, though it was still perceived as a means through which change could be achieved:

"It was the week before I went back to prison the last time and I had dope and stolen goods and was driving around being a scary person. I thought 'this sucks' and was thinking 'this is all I got.' I need to find something else when I get back to prison."

While offenders frequently identified incarceration as a place where they could receive support to implement positive change, they also described prison as an environment that provided opportunities for positive and negative change in equal doses:

“Prison is not good for everybody. Prison is a negative environment so when you go it’s all about what you take away from it and how you look at it. . . In prison, you do what you need for yourself or else you come back. Program staff are good, but the environment and things people get involved with are bad.”

For offenders who described a catalyst for change that was not the product of incarceration, those events most commonly involved some change in a familial relationship, including the birth of a child, the loss of a child, or the death of a parent. In some instances, however, offenders’ failure to realize this intention to change served to further distance them from those relationships. In the following passage, an offender articulates his feelings upon returning to prison after the birth of his daughter (which he had previously described as a moment of change):

“I didn’t want my daughter to have that lifestyle. Now [that I am back in prison] I don’t even want to see pictures of her because it is too hard.”

Several offenders described a moment of “discovering” they had changed rather than a moment of deciding they had changed. When describing a third return to prison, one offender articulated the following realization during his most recent arrest:

“I was starting to get my life together. I felt different from the first time I went to prison, when I didn’t care. This time I thought ‘oh wow.’”

Offenders who did not identify having changed were comprised of two groups: 1) those who did not believe that they needed to change, and 2) those who did not believe they were capable of change at the present time. The former group can be characterized, broadly, as offenders who believed their best chance to stay out of prison was to avoid detection (e.g., not get caught rather than not commit crimes). Offenders in the latter group were often struggling with long-term, chronic substance abuse, such that they could not imagine making any intentional move that would positively change the perceived course of their life. This passivity is evident in the following response to the question “Was there a moment where something changed and you knew you wanted to live your life differently?”:

“Every time I came back to prison. Every time I think about life and I think with a clear head. I’m getting too old for this. I’m going to be 35. I need to get on with my life. I’ve been doing this 18 years. One day I’ll wake up and it’ll be in my head. ‘You’re done.’ That day hasn’t happened yet...It is what it is. Someday it will just click. I see people who don’t use drugs. My parents never did. Someday I’ll want to stop. To give it up. This might be the last time I’m in prison. I hope it is.”

Agency

From the perspective of desistance theory, agency is related to intentional change because it both increases the likelihood that offenders will capitalize on transformative opportunities and it increases their motivation and ability to sustain change efforts. The term agency refers to a wide range of beliefs, including hope, motivation, and confidence in one's ability to enact intended change (Healy, 2012; King, 2013). Five codes were developed to assess offenders' sense of self-efficacy, or belief in their ability to make decisions that would keep them out of prison. *Active* refers to statements wherein the interviewee described action he had taken that he believed did or would keep him from failing on parole. *Choice* describes statements wherein offenders expressed the belief that they could keep themselves from returning to prison due to choices they made. Both of these codes were combined, in the following discussion, under the larger code *has agency*.

Chance describes statements wherein offenders identified the belief that their likelihood of re-incarceration was due to random factors outside of their control. In contrast, *lack of control* refers to statements wherein offenders identified that the criminal justice system was rigged and that re-incarceration was both outside of their control and the product of an unfair system. *Passive* refers to statements wherein offenders expressed the belief that they would not be able to stay out of prison in the future, would not be able to do that without the structure of parole, or were not internally motivated to stay out of prison. All three of these codes were combined under the larger code *lacks agency*.

A final code, *ambivalence*, refers to statements wherein an offender expresses the belief that he could take action or make choices to keep himself out of prison and simultaneously expressed doubt or concern about his ability to do this.

In order to analyze offenders' sense of agency, with respect to staying out of prison after release, each respondent was given a rating based on the number of *has agency* statements relative to the number of *lacks agency* statements and the number of *ambivalent* statements. Based on that rating, offenders were coded as having more agency (relative to passivity) or more passivity (relative to agency). Some offenders had no agentic statements (i.e., expressed no belief that they could change the course of their criminal offending through their own choices or actions). While this lack of agency is accounted for in the overall rating, the percent of offenders with no statements of self-efficacy is also reported separately (see Table 34). Similarly, statements of ambivalence are included in the overall rating and also reported separately.

When looking at the entire sample, the majority of offenders (62%) were coded as having more agency. This sense of self-efficacy often took the form of initiating or capitalizing on prison programs. Offenders indicated that, prior to having a desire to change, they had previously been uninterested in programming, but once they wanted to change they were also motivated to participate in programs to facilitate that transformation. For many respondents, having a sense of agency was described in terms of their ability to act and behave differently than they had previously:

“Now I can identify triggers, where before I would just do it. Now I can self-talk and identify what I need to do.”

For some offenders, this sense of agency took the form of self-appraisal and recognition of their ability to choose differently. For example, in the following quote, an offender identified that the same qualities that contributed to his ‘success’ as a criminal could also facilitate success in other arenas:

“Whatever I do I try to see it through. Being committed doesn’t always have to be positive, so if I am going to ruin my life I am really going to f- - it up. If I am going to change my life then I can change it in a big way.”

When looking at offenders by age, younger offenders were more frequently classified as having more agency (see Table 34). In terms of the relationship between agency and desistance, it is somewhat contradictory for younger offenders, who have higher recidivism rates, to also report having more agency. However, younger offenders in this sample also expressed ambivalence about their ability to stay out of prison after release more frequently than older offenders.

Table 34 Agency, by Age

	20-29	30-39	Over 40	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	10	25	15	50
Agency (%)				
More Agency	80	60	53	64
More Passivity	20	40	47	46
<i>No agentic statements</i>	10	12	13	12
<i>Ambivalent statements</i>	60	48	40	48

As exemplified in the following quote, younger offenders’ sense of self-efficacy was often accompanied by youthful optimism or bravado:

“You have to be headstrong and you have to have willpower. You either want to or you don't. I don't worry about doing drugs again; I haven't done them since I went in the last time and if I could go that whole time in prison without using, then I can do it out here. Drugs are all over the place in the prisons.”

The desire to change, as expressed in the preceding statement, is being conflated with the ability to change. As such, the respondent describes relying on force of will to implement change, but otherwise expresses no concrete plan for changing his behavior and assumes his ability to behave one way in the restricted prison environment will translate into success in the face of new circumstances (e.g., parole).

Within the sample, younger offenders also expressed more difficulty with distancing themselves from criminal or drug-using peer influences, as described below:

“Associating with known felons was a major reason I violated my parole. Not everyone who has a felony is a bad person; they're people too. Some of the people that I was hanging out with were into bad activities that I didn't know about at the time. When I leave here I'm going to try to be more careful, aware of what people are doing. Certain friends are still making bad decisions and doing the same things that I used to do.”

In contrast, some of the older offenders were more forceful—if equally regretful—about the losses attendant to their move away from criminal offending:

“You have to cut ties with friends. You have to cut it off like a cancer. They think you're heartless, but it's the only way. A lot of my friends are still heavy into their addiction. Getting rid of friends is hard, but it's even harder for some people than it was for me. I have always been a black and white sort of person, so it was easier for me. I knew I had to do it if I was going to be able to stay away from drugs and start a new life. You have to surround yourself with people who are doing positive things if you want to do positive things.”

When looking at agency by change status, offenders who described themselves as having changed, with respect to their desire or likelihood for criminal offending, were more frequently classified as having more agency (see Table 35). Having agency, in combination with having a desire to change, often precipitated an offender's desire or willingness to capitalize on opportunities for transformation, as described below:

“It was time to die or time to move on. Some people just give up, others change. They should be finding people who are ready and get them into programs like Conquest.”

Table 35 Agency, by Change Status

	No Change	Change	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	13	37	50
Agency (%)			
More Agency	31	76	64
More Passivity	69	24	36
<i>No agentic statements</i>	31	8	12
<i>Ambivalent statements</i>	31	54	48

In contrast to the change group, nearly one-third (31%) of the no change group expressed no agentic statements. Within this sub-group, respondents sometimes expressed ambivalence about their potential for change, but externalized responsibility for the failure of that potential to be actualized:

“He [my parole officer] tried to give me chances, but the way he did it was bad; it was not insightful. He didn't confront me when [he should have known] I was doing bad; he let me hang myself. I feel like, in my case, he set me up to fail.”

Alternatively, other offenders within this sub-group acknowledged that, without an internalized desire to behave differently, no amount of assistance would make them change:

“I’m just grateful for the opportunity to parole and that they give you more chances. They give you second, third chances. It’s cool that there are POs out there that want to help and see you successfully complete parole. If you have a supportive PO, family, friends, the only thing keeping you from succeeding is yourself.”

When looking at agency by return status, offenders with multiple re-incarcerations were more frequently classified as having more passivity (see Table 36) and also more frequently identified as having made no agentic statements. This lack of self-efficacy may precede or stem from multiple incarcerations. As exemplified in the quote below, offenders who did not feel able to impact their parole outcomes sometimes quit trying to comply with parole or avoid future offending:

“I went out and got high because I thought I was going back to prison anyway.”

Table 36 Agency by Return Status

	No Return	One Return	Many Returns	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	17	14	19	50
<i>Agency (%)</i>				
More Agency	88	71	37	64
More Passivity	12	29	31	46
<i>No agentic statements</i>	0	0	31	12
<i>Ambivalent statements</i>	47	57	42	48

Lack of self-efficacy may also be a product of multiple incarcerations. Offenders who had repeatedly failed on parole also expressed fatalism with respect to their long-term ability to sustain change and stay out of prison:

“We become so institutionalized that there’s no way we won’t reoffend. In some aspects, because I was conditioned to believe I was worthless, this is why I reoffended. I was instilled with a lot of fear, doubt, anxiety, depression, with no tools to combat that.”

Overall, even offenders with a strong sense of both desire and ability to remain crime free expressed substantial concern with their ability to sustain change. In many cases, this was characterized as distrust in their own ability to sustain change without the structure provided by UDC:

“My main concern is when I come off parole, I am worried what is going to keep me off now? I can’t touch anything. I want to go to NA, AA. I always to myself thought

‘when I am off parole I can have a couple drinks, smoke some weed.’ Now I am trying to do therapy and progress.”

The preceding quote demonstrates the importance of an experience of ‘supported failure’ in terms of cultivating offenders’ ability to assume ownership for the changes they want to make. Through trying, and failing, in his attempt to continue using substances, the offender strengthened his desire to abstain from substance use; this experience would likely not happen in prison. Simultaneously, however, this offender was required by his parole officer to participate in treatment, which served to increase his belief in his own ability to abstain from substance use.

Ambivalence was often expressed in terms of the fragility of offenders’ newly-emerging identity, particularly in the face of anticipated challenges. When asked to identify those aspects of himself that he wished he could change, one offender responded:

“I wouldn’t be so co-dependent. Captain Save America. Now that I feel that I don’t want to use I worry about my girlfriend. I worry that I could see myself trying to save her and get in trouble again. My dad tells me to break ties with her, that this could be bad for me, but I can’t.”

For many offenders, this sense of vulnerability was heightened during the release process, when both the desire to change and new skills for behaving differently were tested by new circumstances:

“[Being released is like] the world hits you in the face and you are faced with a million more challenges, decisions, and freedoms. Being in here—there are two-sides because both are hard—you are faced with totally different things than you are out there. Liquor stores. You forget what you thought when you were in prison. You throw out the window everything you told yourself you wouldn’t do.”

Finally, multiple offenders were ambivalent about feeling confident that they could remain crime free. When describing attempts to repair his relationship with one of his children, an offender with multiple re-incarcerations stated:

“I want to have confidence with where I am at before pushing harder with that relationship but I also worry about being too confident, which can be a dangerous place for me [with respect to drug use].”

Experience that reinforces positive change. Giordano and colleagues (2002) argued that the desire to change is only fully realized when it is accompanied by opportunities to practice change. Opportunities to positively exercise agency were coded in the data as *experience that reinforces positive change*. This refers to offenders’ identification of an experience that reinforced confidence in their own ability to desist from criminal offending. In keeping with Giordano’s (2002) belief that the desire to change must be accompanied by the opportunity to practice new skills and make agentic moves, statements in this code refer to experiences wherein: 1) offenders identify an experience that

reinforced positive change; or 2) offenders identify an experience wherein their confidence was increased through resisting an opportunity for relapse or criminal offending. Simple opportunities—such as being offered a job—were not included in this code; instead, offenders had to explicitly link the experience to their change process in order to be included within this code.

More than half (58%) of respondents identified at least once experience wherein their desire or ability to change was positively reinforced. In some cases, this experience happened in prison, as the result of programming:

“In the Conquest environment, they hold each other accountable and everyone is doing good behavior. It was still scary, but there was an opportunity for change. You can’t change in general population; it’s too negative there and some people in gen pop who are actually ‘having fun’ while they’re in there.”

Frequently, the release process tested, and sometimes positively reinforced, changes that began in prison. One interviewee described how his relationships with family members improved when they saw him sustain prison-based changes after release:

“Yes, after about a year. After I came down off my pedestal and my communication skills got better. With each visit things were better and better. But being out, and them seeing me do good, that has been the big turn. They know it’s not just me saying I am going to change but then getting out and not changing.”

These opportunities to change often occurred within the context of a job or a relationship; frequently, success in the face of increased responsibility (such as getting married or assuming a supervisory role) was positive reinforcement:

“My boss . . . has given me responsibility, which is important. He has increased that responsibility, let me supervise guys and trust that the job would get done. That’s been a lot.”

Additionally, positive appraisal from others was associated with an increased sense of self-efficacy. For example, one offender described that his parole agent expressed the belief that he would do well on supervision, which increased the offender’s confidence by making him “feel that he was capable of being worked with.” Negative experiences could also have a positive impact on offenders’ belief that change was possible and mistakes were fixable. In the following quote, the interviewee describes the impact of his parole agent’s decision not to revoke his parole, after he had left the state for work without approval:

“I was scared about coming back and ran for 5 days. My girlfriend convinced me to contact the PO (she threatened to leave me) and the PO sent me to [treatment]. I was shocked and expected to go back to prison. I have a therapist . . . and have learned a lot more [than in previous treatment]. I am talking more, opening up more, letting things go. I am listening and understanding.”

This experience also highlights the importance of multiple sources of support—in this case the girlfriend and the parole officer—as a mechanism for incentivizing and reinforcing positive change. Negative experiences and stress also provided an opportunity for individuals to practice, and gain confidence in, new ways of resolving problems:

“My sister died right after I got out of prison. That was hard; it was 3 days before Christmas. . . . But, I didn’t fall back on dope when I lost her. I went to [the place] where I got counseling / aftercare after prison ‘cause you can go for free and I got some support from them. Now when I think of using drugs, I say, ‘I think I’m going to go to [that counseling center]’ because the feeling to use is always there.”

When compared to offenders who did not identify a moment of change, offenders who identified themselves as having a moment of change more frequently (65% compared to 38% for the no change group) reported having experiences that positively reinforced that change. For offenders that did not report a moment of change, experiences that reinforced their sense of self-efficacy also reinforced their sense of being able to stay out of prison, although that did not necessarily include completely abstaining from criminal behavior:

“I know I can control my addiction, if I can use marijuana, like I did when I lived in [a state where marijuana is legal]. I would even take my friend to buy drugs and watch him shoot up and not use myself.”

Despite expressing substantial ambivalence regarding their ability to stay out of prison, half of interviewees rated themselves as a 10 (on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most confident; $Mn=8.7$) with respect to their confidence that they would not return to prison in the future.

Alternative Selves

The desistance process involves the formulation of a new identity, one which is incompatible with reoffending. This non-offending identity emerged out of the current data in two ways: 1) offenders who identified a sense of their “real self,” that was separate from offending behavior; and, 2) offenders who described an identity that they believed they could, or wanted to, become. Three codes were identified to assess the presence of alternative identities, the presence of which might facilitate desistance. *Core self* refers to offenders’ use of statements that distinguish between his criminal offending self and his real self. From Paternoster and Bushway (2009), we also coded for the presence of a possible self, which is a description of “what the person wishes or hopes to become,” (p. 1103) and the *feared self*, which is what the person fears they will become. This latter construct is theorized to increase both desire and motivation for change.

Just over half (58%) of the sample identified themselves as having a core self that was not accurately represented by their criminal behavior. While Giordano (2002) identified this non-offending, real self as a component of desistance, other research showed that, among offenders, desisters and non-desisters identified having a non-offending core self in similar numbers (Liem & Richardson, 2014). In the current sample, the identification of a core self

often emerged in the context of discussions about stigma. When asked how he reacted to the term offender, one respondent said:

“It seems like it’s saying, ‘you’re an offense to society.’ It feels more personal. . . it’s a label that never ends; it seems more permanent. I realize that I offended, but I am not an offender anymore and it is not fair to attach that label to me for the rest of my life. It also has a memory recall of that old life and what I don’t want to be.”

As demonstrated in the previous response, the notion of core self was often closely tied to the notion of a feared self. Within desistance theory, this feared self is theorized to serve as motivation that both inspires and maintains the desire to change. Within the current sample, one-third of respondents identified a feared self. Among offenders who identified a moment of change that occurred in prison, that moment was often the realization or conceptualization of a feared self:

“[The change happened] by looking at other inmates, what went down, things I had to pretend I didn’t see. Being around people who are stuck there their whole lives—I realized I don’t want to live my life like this. I want to be a successful person. I am still fixing mistakes I made when I was 17.”

In identifying his criminal offending as a mistake, the respondent quoted above demonstrates a primary element of the concept of core self, which is to create distance between one’s real identity and one’s anti-social behaviors. This concept of a feared self emerged as both motivation for change and a factor that helped sustain change after release:

“I haven’t had any police contact whatsoever [since getting out]. I’ve complied with all my conditions. With the level of criminal activity and addiction I had I worry that if I started I would start to care less and less what my boss, my family, my PO thinks. I would start trying to hide things from them or get away with things.”

For a small portion of the sample, this feared self was so overwhelming that it served to thwart any movement toward a new, non-offending identity:

“I ask myself ‘why wouldn’t I do that [sell drugs] again? I have done it repeatedly for years.’ The money and the lifestyle is addictive and if I stay here [in Utah] I know I will go back to it.”

Half (50%) of offenders articulated a vision of a non-offending person whom they believed they could become. Offenders described this possible self as a construct that functioned as motivation to both initiate and sustain desistance. This possible self often emerged in the context of new work or romantic relationships, as one respondent described the influence of his girlfriend on his self-conceptualization:

“She sees another side of me that I’m finally starting to see myself and it is changing me.”

In some cases, respondents described this new identity as protective against future offending. For one offender, who identified becoming a husband and a parent as the source of his desire to change, the prospect of losing his marriage did not undermine his sense of himself as a father and, therefore, his intent to avoid a criminal lifestyle:

“I am not worried about using, dealing; [my wife and I] have talked about this. She asked me what would happen if we broke up. But just because she is gone doesn’t negate my responsibilities as a father or man. I have grown up.”

When looking at alternative selves by return status, one of the primary differences between groups appeared with respect to core self, where more offenders who had never returned to prison endorsed the construct (see Table 37). This sense of a true and non-offending identity may be more prevalent in this group because they are able to frame their incarceration as a one-time event, from which they have moved on. The differential role of the core self with respect to parole failures may also be evident in the following quote, wherein an offender with multiple parole failures describes that his core and non-offending self only emerged when he was incarcerated:

“The best version of me is in prison, when I am physically fit and spiritual.”

The groups were also different with respect to the presence of a feared self, with fewer offenders who had multiple parole failures endorsing the construct. If, as Paternoster and Bushway (2009) argued, the feared self functions as motivation for desistance, the relative infrequency of a feared self within this group may be related to their parole failures, in that they are not actively moving away from an offending identity. Some of the offenders in this sub-group described a true, non-offending self that was compatible with anti-social behaviors. This paradox is demonstrated in the following quote, wherein the respondent rationalized his anti-social behaviors because his integrity had been questioned:

“I was so angry at having my honesty questioned that I confronted the facilitator and threatened him saying, ‘I’ll put your teeth down your throat.’ For me, being in prison for being dishonest, when I wasn’t, is the worst thing about this.”

Table 37 Alternative Selves, by Return Status

	No Return	One Return	Many Returns	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	17	14	19	50
<i>Alternative Selves</i>				
Core Self	71	43	58	56
Feared Self	41	36	26	32
Possible Self	47	50	53	54

When looking at alternative selves by change status, the primary differences between groups appear with respect to possible and feared selves, with many more change offenders endorsing both constructs (see Table 38). Many offenders in this sub-group

described themselves as experiencing chronic and persistent struggles with both substance abuse and mental illness, which may partially explain their disinclination to imagine a possible self.

Table 38 Alternative Selves, by Change Status

	No Change	Change	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	13	37	50
Alternative Selves			
Core Self	69	70	56
Feared Self	8	56	32
Possible Self	8	85	54

When looking at alternative selves by age, the primary differences between groups appear with respect to core self, where many fewer offenders who were 20-29 years old endorsed the construct; feared self, where fewer offenders who were older than 40 endorsed the construct; and possible self, where many more offenders who were 20-29 years old endorsed the construct (see Table 39). This increased sense of a possible self among the youngest offenders may stem from youthful optimism about the possibility of change as a result of less lengthy criminal careers and fewer incarceration episodes.

Table 39 Alternative Selves, by Age

	20-29	30-39	Over 40	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	10	25	15	50
Alternative Selves				
Core Self	30	72	47	56
Feared Self	40	36	20	32
Possible Self	80	52	40	54

Regret and Stigma

Le Bel and colleagues (2008) found that offenders who expressed remorse for their criminal behavior were less likely to recidivate. For Giordano, regret is related to desistance because it is part of the process of recognizing, and distancing oneself from, a criminal identity (2002). Within the current sample, statements were coded as regret if the interviewee expressed remorse for the impact of their criminal behavior on others (including crime victims or their own family). To be included in this category, the expression of regret had to explicitly connect the criminal behavior to harm done to others. General expressions of remorse or expressions for remorse for the impact on one's own life were not included in this category.

Stigma is theorized to influence recidivism in both negative and positive ways. When stigma is perceived to be permanently attached to identity, offenders may feel powerless or defiant and thereby not try to quit offending or intentionally keep offending (Le Bel et al., 2008). In contrast, stigma can encourage desistance if offenders feel they are able to express remorse and subsequently be reintegrated into society (Le Bel et al., 2008). Offenders' statements were coded as stigma when interviewees expressed the belief that

they were perceived negatively as the result of being incarcerated. Because the experience of stigma is theorized to facilitate both criminal behavior and desistance, this code was analyzed with respect to offenders' perception that the stigma was durable and persistent or malleable and likely to change (due either to their own efforts or the passage of time).

One-third of interviewees expressed regret for the negative impact they had on others¹³. Most frequently, this regret was described in terms of the impact their crimes had on family members. Given the comparatively low number of offenders who had committed person crimes, it is not surprising that few offenders identified regret specific to persons they had victimized. Regret was often identified as a catalyst for change, as evinced in the quote below:

"I had a bad attitude when I first started parole, but that has changed. After I got out I was still somewhat of a punk. It's too much of a ride, too much of a hassle. I saw the impact I was having on my kids and others."

Regret also served to sustain offenders' motivation for change, as demonstrated in the following statement, wherein an offender identifies strategies he used to avoid relapsing:

"When I think of what I did, when I think I chose drugs over my family, it makes me sick."

Half of interviewees identified feeling stigmatized as an offender and the majority of those felt that the stigma was durable, if not permanent. Frequently, offenders perceived that potential employers and partners, and society as a whole, could not see past the label. Most described the functional impact of stigma in terms of their inability to find housing and employment. For some offenders, the perceived durability of stigma appeared to threaten their efforts to sustain change, such as one interviewee who felt that having a record interfered with his life "despite how much good" he did.

In order to further understand the perceived impact of stigma on offenders' motivation and ability to reintegrate after incarceration, interviewees were asked a series of questions describing their reaction to the term offender¹⁴. Given the specific stigma surrounding sex offenses, results are presented separately for interviewees who self-reported that they had committed a sex crime. The results, presented in Table 40, show that one-fifth of offenders perceived themselves as an offender (this percentage is higher for sex offenders, though there were only 9 sex offenders in the sample), but nearly all perceived that they were labeled as an offender by society (93%).

¹³ Offenders were not specifically asked whether or not they had regret; these were spontaneous statements that emerged in response to other questions. Asking directly about regret may have substantially increased the number of offenders who expressed regret.

¹⁴ And other terms, including convict, inmate, prisoner, and parolee.

Table 40 Reaction to the term Offender

	Sex Offenders		All Other Offenders		Total	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Total Sample</i>	9		37		41	
Do they (%):						
See themselves as offender?	67	33	81	19	78	22
Think society sees them as offender?	0	100	9	91	7	93
Think family sees them as offender?	67	33	76	24	74	26
Care if they are labeled as offender?	67	33	45	55	49	51

Despite the durability of the stigma, described above, the majority of offenders (both sex offenders and non sex-offenders) felt that their families did not view them primarily as a criminal. Positive appraisal from family members was often articulated by interviewees as a mechanism for reinforcing their sense of themselves as having a non-criminal identity:

“I only care what my loved ones think about me now. They know I have a good heart; my head just gets hard sometimes. I’ve done some stupid things and made some stupid decisions. I don’t see myself that way but I know some people do.”

Given the important role that family plays in providing opportunities for enacting a non-criminal identity, these results suggest that one-fourth of the sample perceived limited opportunity to “escape” the label of offender.

When looking at regret by return status, offenders with one parole failure expressed regret more frequently than the other two groups (see Table 41). In all three groups, offenders who experienced stigma most frequently identified that stigma as durable rather than malleable. In particular, all offenders with multiple parole failures who perceived stigma characterized that stigma as durable. This perception was sometimes accompanied by expressions of failure that externalized responsibility for the violation, as demonstrated below:

“I am very confident I won’t reoffend. I realize now the strategies the state has used to keep felons incarcerated. Parole is not designed to help you succeed. The policies are designed to ostracize you in terms of employment, housing, [and] expenses of being on parole.”

Alternatively, the perception of stigma among offenders with multiple parole failures was associated with a feeling of hopelessness that undermined the belief that they could succeed:

“When you get a job you have to explain it all to them. It’s hard to get a job when you have to tell them all your bad things. Anybody would have a hard time getting a job if they had to do that.”

Table 41 Regret and Stigma, by Return Status

	No Return	One Return	Many Returns	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	17	14	19	50
Regret (%)	29	43	26	30
Stigma (%)	53	36	58	50
<i>Durable</i>	56	60	100	76
<i>Malleable</i>	44	40	0	24

When looking at regret by change status, almost half of change offenders expressed regret, while none of the no change offenders expressed regret (Table 42). When looking at stigma by change status, change offenders more frequently identified that they experienced stigma. Of the offenders who had experienced stigma, both change and no change characterized the stigma as malleable with similar (low) frequency.

Table 42 Regret and Stigma, by Change Status

	No Change	Change	Total
<i>Total Sample</i>	13	37	50
Regret (%)	0	43	32
Stigma	38	49	50
<i>Durable</i>	80	72	74
<i>Malleable</i>	20	17	17

Discussion

Quantitative Summary

In order to define the cohort's characteristics, and factors that predicted parole revocation or new conviction (if applicable), the quantitative section of the report examined data from the BCI and O-Track for the cohort of offenders paroled in Utah during 2010 and 2011.

Demographics

The majority of offenders in the cohort were male and White. Most (63.4%) were supervised in region three (Salt Lake) upon release; regions one and two (Northern Utah) supervised the second largest group (22.7%). Region four (Provo) supervised 6.1% of parolees, region five (Saint George) supervised 4.2%, and Region six (Price) supervised 3.6%.

Pre-Parole Criminal History

Because of differences in the coverage of the two databases used in the study, the extent of criminal histories pre-parole varied depending on the database.

BCI data, which provides more comprehensive coverage of crimes pre parole, but which often lacked the associated crime class (severity), indicated the majority of offenders (54.2%) had six or more prior convictions, and almost all were felons (94.5%; where

recorded in the database). The most common categories of offenses were: dangerous drugs (59.4% of all parolees), larceny (45.5%), traffic crimes (39.3%), assault (34.1%), obstruction of police (30.0%), fraud (22.5%), and burglary (20.7%).

O-track data indicated only 6.3% of offenders had six or more prior convictions, but this is likely an artifact of the nature of the database; O-Track data only includes criminal histories for convictions that brought the offender into the UDC's jurisdiction. BCI data, therefore, was suggested as the more accurate source of pre-parole criminal history. O-Track data also indicated the majority of offenders were felons (96.1%). O-Track data typically included the severity of the most serious prior conviction; accordingly, outcomes were examined by crime class. Across both felonies and misdemeanors, property crimes were most common, followed by drug and person offenses. Felonies in all three categories were more common than misdemeanors.

Risk

At the time of release, the majority of offenders was classified as high risk (57.2%) by the LSI-R risk and needs tool, while 33.9% were classified as moderate, 7.4% as low, and 1.5% as intensive. The average score for valid assessments (i.e., when less than five items were missing) was 24.4, with a median of 24.

Special Conditions and Violations

The most common conditions of parole were special conditions related to drug or alcohol treatment or evaluation (2,597/3,389 or 76.6% of all offenders). Because all parolees agree to chemical analysis as part of the standard agreement, special conditions in the table for drugs or alcohol represent conditions of parole beyond chemical analysis (or other standard conditions). The majority of offenders had special conditions requiring completion of other programming aimed at behavior modification or successful transition (56.5%). Almost 10% of the parolee cohort had special conditions for sex offenders; almost one-third had special conditions for mental health treatment or evaluation, and over one-fifth had special conditions for gangs (limiting associates).

The most commonly violated conditions were those related to compliance and those related to drugs and alcohol (which was also the most common condition). Of the cases that had a special condition for alcohol or drug treatment/evaluation, 63.7% committed a violation of the condition. Of those, 73.1% received a revocation and 75.0% received an alternative event. Violations of compliance conditions were the violations most likely to lead to revocations.

Offenders typically received alternative responses prior to receiving revocations for violations, receiving, on average, 1.2 alternative responses prior to a revocation. Of the 3,389 offenders in the cohort, 1,348 (39.8%) did not have a post-parole violation recorded; none of the individuals without a violation had parole revoked.

Programming

Offenders were most likely to receive substance abuse programming or services, and successfully completed the programming 59.0% of the time. Vocational training was the service most likely to be completed successfully (72.0%), while educational programming (though rarely documented in the sample) was least likely to be completed successfully (19.4%). Across all services, outcomes indicated 48.0% of offenders successfully completed a program in the two-year period pre-parole or during parole.

Revocation and New Conviction

Of the 3,389 cases, 38.1% had no recorded revocations or convictions during the follow up period, while 31.7% had revocations due to technical violations only (not including compliance violations related to new criminal activity), and 30.2% recidivated (new conviction). The most common maximum crime severity among recidivists was a third degree felony (18.9%), followed by class A misdemeanors (8.0%) and second degree felonies (2.8%). The overwhelming majority of individuals did not recidivate during the minimum two-year follow up period, and, hence, had no maximum crime severity (69.8%).

In contrast to convictions pre-parole, person crimes were relatively less common among post-parole recidivists. Similar to pre-parole convictions, property and drug convictions were the most common post-parole. Post-parole property convictions were slightly more likely to be felony convictions, and post-parole drug convictions were nearly three times more likely to be felony convictions. Other convictions were relatively rare.

Predictive modeling of revocation and new conviction. In order to explore the factors that predict return to prison, multinomial regression analysis compared the no events group to the revocations group and the new convictions group. The no events group was selected as the reference group because it allowed modeling of the factors that predicted successful re-entry compared to return to prison for either revocation or new conviction.

Being older at parole predicted a decreased likelihood of return to prison for either reason, and a higher number of days in prison prior to parole predicted a decreased likelihood of revocation, but not new conviction. Higher LSI-R domain scores on the criminal history, leisure and recreation, and attitudes/orientations domains predicted increased likelihood of return to prison for either reason, while higher scores on the education/employment domain predicted only an increased likelihood of revocation and higher scores on the family/marital domain predicted only an increased likelihood of new conviction.

Four criminal history variables were significant predictors of at least one of the multinomial outcomes. A prior obstruction of police conviction predicted higher likelihood of both revocation and new conviction. The number of violent offense convictions pre-parole was a significant predictor of revocation, but not new conviction. A higher number of property crimes and a prior larceny charge pre-parole were associated with an increased likelihood of new conviction, but not revocation.

Programming/treatment success or failure played a significant role in predicting both revocation and new conviction. Successful completion of a substance abuse program, a mental health program, or "other" programming were all associated with a reduction in the

likelihood of return to prison for either reason. Successful completion of vocational programming was not associated with revocation, but was associated with a decreased likelihood of new conviction. Failing a vocational program, a cognitive skills program, “other” programming, or a sex offender program were all associated with an increased likelihood of return to prison for either reason.

Individuals who violated special conditions for alcohol or drugs were more likely to return to prison for either reason. For those who had special conditions for sex offenders, the likelihood of revocation was no greater than no event, but the conditions were associated with a reduced likelihood of recidivism. Violations of alcohol or drug conditions, compliance conditions, or “other” conditions that resulted in alternative sanctions were all associated with return to prison for either reason.

Some important differences existed in the factors that predicted revocation or new conviction. It is important to consider that revocations can occur without new criminal activity; revocations can occur because behaviors observed by parole officers imply recidivism is likely to occur. Revocation, therefore, may reduce new convictions for some outcomes. The use of the term “reduce” (rather than prevent) is intended to emphasize an important distinction. Individuals who receive a revocation may or may not have recidivated, but they are temporarily precluded from doing so.

Time to first event, revocation and new conviction. Ten percent of the population in this cohort had a first event (revocation or new conviction) within 8 weeks of release, a revocation within 17 weeks, and a new conviction within 56 weeks (or just over one-year). Median survival time was undetermined for both revocations and new convictions because half the population did not receive a revocation or a new conviction during the follow-up observation period post-parole. The median survival time for first event was 65 weeks; that is, half of the cohort had either a revocation or new conviction within 65 weeks of release from prison.

Validity of revocation decisions. LSI-R total scores indicated the revocations group and the new convictions group had equally high (i.e., not significantly different) LSI-R total scores. Both groups also had significantly higher LSI-R total scores relative to the no event group, indicating that those who had parole revoked were of similar risk to recidivate relative to those who actually did recidivate, and were at significantly greater risk than the no event group.

A mediational model examined whether individuals who had higher LSI-R scores were having parole revoked more quickly (i.e., were given fewer alternative events prior to revocation). Results indicated that, regardless of LSI-R score, among those who returned to prison, offenders were given a nearly equal number of alternative events. Overall, despite Utah’s high rate for revocation of parole, it appears that individuals who receive a revocation are those who are higher risk to recidivate (using the LSI-R as a proxy for risk of recidivism), and they are not given fewer opportunities in the form of alternative events prior to revocation.

Qualitative Summary

The individuals interviewed for the qualitative portion of the study was comprised of a representative sample of prisoners released to all five parole regions in the state. The majority of the sample reported lengthy prior involvement with the criminal justice system, averaging two incarceration episodes and six (6) years incarcerated in state prison. The majority (67%) had experienced at least one parole failure (not necessarily related to the current sentence). Partially as a function of their criminal justice involvement, most interviewees identified significant deficits in terms of human, social, and financial capital.

Characterizing the release experience

One-third of offenders had nowhere to live, upon release, and was released to a halfway house/community correction center (CCC). For many, the location of the halfway house was geographically distant from their family, which made it difficult to access meaningful instrumental and emotional support. This isolation was exacerbated by standard CCC rules, which restrict access to cell phones and automobiles. In terms of employment, parolees felt ambivalent about getting a job in a community in which they did not intend to live for the long term. As noted earlier, many offenders experienced difficulty finding employment while on parole. One means for circumventing this difficulty was through pre-prison relationships with friends or former employers. As such, residing far from family and community would appear to threaten, or at least prolong, offenders' reintegration efforts.

Among offenders who did have somewhere to live at release, they most commonly resided with their parents. Within this sample, immediate families were the primary—and often only—source of support for parolees. Those family relationships, however, were notably strained by repeated episodes of criminal offending and incarceration. Many offenders identified their incarceration as a time when they and their families were open to repairing those relationships; lack of resources, however, makes it difficult for prisoners to have frequent contact with their families through phone or visitation. This may partially explain the anxiety many offenders expressed in the weeks prior to release with respect to expected support from family.

Motivation and efforts to desist

Moment of change. Overwhelmingly, offenders in this sample identified that being incarcerated was a catalyst that made them want to change their lives. Many also felt that prison provided support and opportunities to develop skills that would allow them to make the changes they wanted to make. These results confirm other research suggesting that incarceration is often conceptualized by prisoners as a transformative moment (Soyer, 2014). The high failure rate on parole, however, indicates that the desire to change is not sufficient to create long-term, sustained change. In part, offenders felt that the impact of incarceration served to undermine change efforts as much as it fostered them because they were immersed in a culture that required them to rely on manipulation and aggression to survive. While the majority of younger offenders were confident in their ability to change, only half of older offenders expressed greater belief that they would succeed than that they

would fail. Among all age groups, offenders expressed substantial ambivalence that they would be able to keep themselves from being re-incarcerated. This ambivalence stemmed from a history of relapse, an inability to imagine a crime-free life, and tenuous connections to social support and employment opportunities that supported those changes.

Agency. When looking at parolees who were in the community at the time of the interview (n=33), the average length on parole was 16 months. Given that everyone in the sample was released between January, 2012, and August, 2013, this appears to demonstrate that a substantial portion of the sample had successfully capitalized on the transformation processes that began in prison. For this sub-group, the transition from prison to the community is an important time; interventions targeted to this population could focus, in part, on enhancing motivation for desistance through tangible support, fostering positive relationships, and creating moments that reinforce positive change. The results of the qualitative portion of this study suggest that family and employers are an important source of 'experiences that reinforce positive change.' Placement far from those support systems and lack of opportunities for positive reinforcement may threaten offenders' confidence in their ability to sustain any meaningful change that started in prison. As noted in the previous discussion, parole violations can often serve as a mechanism to increase both motivation and agency, which suggests, for some offenders, that violating incidents can be conceptualized as an opportunity to enhance parolees' ability to succeed in the community.

For another sub-group in the sample, incarceration was less clearly linked to the desire for positive change. While all offenders expressed a strong desire to get out of prison and never return, a minority planned to avoid re-incarceration through evasion (e.g., not get caught rather than not commit crimes). In contrast, a portion of offenders who were ambivalent about change identified themselves as having chronic substance abuse problems. Even the majority of the sample received some sort of treatment in prison, many worried about relapsing prior to release and a portion continued to struggle with substance use in the community. For this group, prison-based interventions may be more successful if targeted toward enhancing offenders' sense of self-efficacy with respect to the possibility of change. In particular, the agency of this sub-group may be enhanced by release to community-based, substance abuse, therapeutic communities that build on the work of prison-based programs. Inciardi, Martin, Butzin, Hooper, and Harrison (1997) found stronger positive results for prison-based therapeutic communities when they included a mandatory aftercare component.

Alternative selves. The majority of interviewees made a distinction between their 'real' identity and their criminal behavior. Offenders who expressed no intention to change, however, were somewhat stagnant with respect to movement away from an offending identity or toward a non-offending identity. Given that the no change group largely consisted of incarcerated offenders, this may reflect the difficulty of imagining a different and non-offending self while in prison. In addition, the feared self may actually be amplified in an institutional setting as a means of survival. Many offenders noted that the coping strategies that helped them survive in prison were the same qualities that would get them returned to prison once they were released.

For the offenders with a strong sense of a possible self, progress toward those goals often increased their confidence in the ability to make meaningful identity change. Particular attention to offenders' goals—in combination with individualized interventions to assist offenders in actualizing those goals—may increase desistance rates for offenders' with a strong sense of a possible, non-offending future.

Regret and stigma. Expressions of regret were only evident among offenders who had identified a moment of change. This may indicate that regret stems from, rather than precedes, the intention to change; once they decided to be different, offenders may have been more open to reviewing and acknowledging the harm they had done to others. Regret was most common among offenders who had returned to prison once since the index parole. This 'first failure' may serve as specific motivation to change for a group who, upon release, expected that they would be more able to reintegrate.

Overwhelmingly, offenders identified experiencing stigma and characterized it as durable. This sense of fatalism seemed to increase with more failure events, as half of offenders with no returns identified stigma as durable while all of the offenders with multiple returns felt that it was permanent. While stigma can function as incentive to adopt a non-criminal identity, research suggests it can also have the opposite effect if it is perceived to be immutable. Many offenders in this sample identified relationships and contexts wherein they did not feel stigmatized; interventions and particularly interactions with parole officers should be structured to enhance parolees' sense that they are accountable for their crimes but not doomed to a life labeled as a criminal.

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