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Becoming ‘unemployed’: Mapping and (re)constituting subjectivity within *jobactive.*

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Abstract

This project utilised a Foucauldian-inspired critical psychology perspective to rethink how it is possible to study unemployment. The study drew on critical psychology, governmentality studies and critical methodology to reconsider how research can reconnect the economic, political, institutional, material and affective factors that coordinate to produce a particular form of unemployment. This PhD examined the problem of research methods in psychology and governmentality studies, particularly in relation to how to research unemployment. By drawing on key insights of this literature, and returning to first principles of a Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralist study, this research utilised a quasi-ethnographic design to trace how elements are held together in policy and everyday practices in an employment service provider in South East Queensland.

The study was motivated to examine the conditions of possibility for unemployed subjectivities outside of the dominant psychological and policy explanations. Here, the research attended to the broader processes, materialities, and the daily social practices that (re)produce unemployment as a certain type of problem, and in doing so, also (re)produce unemployment as a certain object. In an attempt to maintain (meta)theoretical coherence, this study also attended to the way unemployment was produced as a certain type of problem through the enactment of research methods. The objective was to research unemployment and unemployed subjectivity in ways that do not (re)produce 'psy-complexified' understandings of unemployment which are often taken as 'self-evident' in employment services as well as research. In short, this PhD explored how it is possible to *not* think about unemployment as we have so far (Fryer, 2019).

This study extended on the latest methodological debates in governmentality studies by attuning research focus to the how methods, especially the interview, are implicated in the power-knowledge nexus. In governmentality studies, quasi-ethnographic methods are presented as innovative ways to hold together macro and micro governing practices. This study used a critical reading of policy, interviews and observations in one Employment Services provider in South East Queensland to highlight how the unemployed are produced as such through the practices used to govern them. Namely, I discuss how unemployment is produced as a problem of the unemployed who require reformation into an affective subject ready to withstand the ebbs and flows of the market.

The findings presented in this thesis contribute to the literature in two ways. Firstly, the findings highlight the important of attending to and critiquing research practices about unemployment in terms of the objects and subjects produced. Secondly, the findings highlight the governing practices of *jobactive* and how punitive activation strategies, organisational priorities, material circumstances and psy-infused 'heart technologies' impact how affective governing is enacted.

The thesis shows, firstly, that the latest iteration of employment continues to prioritise economic participation of citizens, equating welfare with work. *Jobactive,* however, is a key moment in how punitive activation is coupled with changes in policy practices to increase the scope to penalise job seekers. Secondly, the thesis follows critical psychologists by recognising that researching unemployment is not simply a matter of studying something 'out there' but how research is enacted is integral to how unemployment is objectified and known. In this way, the psychological literature on unemployment produced unemployment as a problem of causality and 'subjective wellbeing' operationalised as psy-infused 'affects/emotions/feelings'. Reflexively, I demonstrate that my research had epistemic, ethical and political implications, that includes (re)psychologising unemployment. Fourthly, my research shows that the attempt to realise policy on the ground in one employment service provider shows how organisational priorities (reducing costs and achieving short-term outcomes), policy (framework for service delivery), office spaces, and affective governing constitute and (de)constitute the emotional unemployed subject. Fifthly, my thesis shows that this affective governing is nuanced by following psy-infused emotions that inform, activate and sustain dominant problematisations about unemployment, the unemployed and the role of ES.

The significance of these findings is that they reveal how researching the governing of the unemployed also requires researchers to attend to the implications of our practices. My research contributes another element of complexity to how governing takes place in the contested spaces of Employment Services but it also demonstrates how our research practices can (re)produce discourses/practices/subjects we set out to critique and rethink.

Declaration by author

This thesis *is composed of my original work, and contains* no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

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2 List of Abbreviations

DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DHS	Department of Human Services
ESA	Employment Services Area
ES	Employment Services
EC	Employment consultant
ES1	East site 1
GROUP	Group case management
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JSA	Job Services Australia
JN	Job Network
LEC	Lead employment consultant
NAR	Non-attendance report
NS1	North site 1
NS2	North site 2
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIA	Poststructural interview analysis
RESP	Research Employment Services Provider
SDP	Service delivery plan
SS1	South site 1
WfD	Work for the Dole
WPR	What's the problem (represented to be)?
WS1	West site 1

1 Chapter One: Becoming 'unemployed': Mapping and (re)constituting subjectivity within *jobactive*

In the opening pages on his work on unemployment, Walters (2000) informs the reader that in the past, it was not uncommon to write the word *unemployment* within quotation marks: 'unemployment'. Walters tells us the term was treated with scepticism for its ambiguity. However, somewhere along the way 'unemployment' became 'normal' and taken-for-granted, and so the inverted commas disappeared. The practice of placing terms[1] within inverted commas is also useful to trouble an over-easy reading and subsequently, processes of normalisation (Butler & Scott, 1992). Essentially, this thesis is like the inverted commas because the overall objective is to (de)normalise 'unemployment' and unpack how it is normalised through state policies, Australian Employment Services (ES) and research practices.

My research started with the aim to rethink 'unemployment', especially the relationship between psychology and how the experience of unemployment is rendered intelligible. The research is based in South East Queensland in a sprawling urban city. The study used ethnographic-inspired practices to map the coordination of various elements that strategically produce the 'unemployed' as a problem that needs solving. The context of the research was the latest iteration of ES in Australia, known since July 2015 as *jobactive,* specifically within one Employment Services Provider[2] ('RESP'). My research contributes to the discussion about the potential for critical methodology and the importance of thinking through method, in terms of the 'objects'/'subjects' that are constituted through the truthing process. In this chapter, I will lay the foundations for my thesis. I will position my research as 'critical' before presenting the main problems this thesis will tackle and the thesis aims. I then present a possible way forward via governmentality and the apparatus. In the last section of this chapter I provide the thesis outline. Below I will discuss what I mean by 'critical'.

[1] I will not continue to place 'unemployment' in inverted commas throughout this document as it does become rather unwieldy for the reader. However, I will place other taken for granted terms (that are not used so much in the document) in inverted commas to challenge their normal status. This includes terms like 'depression' or 'mental illness'.

[2] Employment service providers are organisations, both for profit and not-for-profit that are contracted by the Australian Government to deliver services and monitor compliance of people receiving social security payments, like the unemployed.

In discussions on the ‘psychology of unemployment’ I usually position myself as engaging with *critical psychology*. This, however, is not qualifying much except distinguishing ‘critical’ psychology from ‘mainstream’ psychology. Critical psychology itself is an umbrella term that incorporates many standpoints, all of which, in one way or another, critique mainstream psychology (Parker, 2007) and how it maintains an “unacceptable status quo” (Fox, Prilleltensky & Austin, 2009, p4). ‘Critical psychologists’ draw on a range of theoretical traditions[3] such as: Marxism (e.g. Kagan, et al, 2011); the work of Martin-Baro (e.g. Lykes, Blanche, & Hamber, 2003); psychoanalysis (mostly Lacan) (e.g. Parker, 2005a); Feminism(s) (e.g. Burman, 2012); Butler (e.g. Martens, 2008); Fanon (e.g. Hook, 2005) among others (for review of theoretical approaches to critical psychologies see Teo, 2014).

The work of Foucault is also very influential in critical psychology (see, for example, Hook, 2010). For my version of critical psychology, Foucault's tool of ‘critique’ is paramount. Foucault (2003a) defined critique as “…the movement by which the subject gives himself [sic] the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth” (p. 266). To put it another way; critique involves interrogating the relations of power and truth regarding ‘unemployment’ and the unemployed subject. By engaging in critique, we can destabilise how we think about ‘unemployment’, its ‘impact’, and the effects of these, including how we pose any ‘solutions’.

There is another element to Foucault’s tool of critique that is relevant to *doing* research. Foucault (2003a) also said that critique is related to governmentality, or the ‘conduct of conduct’. He stated that critique is “the art of not being governed quite so much” (p.265). In a separate context, Foucault further clarified his overall objective in relation to this refusal to be governed in pre-established ways,

> My role - and that is too emphatic a word - is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticised and destroyed (Foucault, 1998, p. 10).

[3] The examples provided are works that draw heavily on one tradition than another but, of course, the approaches taken by these authors are more complex than exhibiting a purist approach to any one standpoint. For example, Lykes’ (1997) research is influenced by Martin-Baro (1996) but she uses the Photovoice method (Wang, 1999) that is both informed by Freire (2006) ‘critical consciousness’ and is explicitly feminist.

As an ‘attitude’ critique has the potential to transform our social world (Foucault, 2003b) and ourselves. Indeed, in a modern society obsessed with knowledge, the knowledge that is constituted and legitimated through research practices bears a considerable amount of authority. The research itself needs to be ‘critical’. For my critical psychological research thesis, the problem of method and methodology is interlinked with tackling the problem of the ‘psy-complex’ and ‘unemployment’.

1.1 The psy-complex and the problem of method

The ‘psy-complex’ refers to the network of relations that constitute ‘psy’ or “the heterogeneous knowledges, forms of authority and practical techniques that constitute psychological expertise” (Rose, 1999a, p. i). Rose (1996, 1999a) considers ‘psy’ (incorporating disciplines such as psychiatry, psychology, social work) as an integral technology, or tool of power relations, for governmentality. The ‘psy-complex’ (Rose, 1985) provides authority of expertise that is taken up in other disciplines (such as education, law, ES).

The psy-complex, as a network of relations, is also about how these ways of thinking are made into ‘common sense’ which end up in the public domain (Parker, 1997) and regular ways of talking about oneself and others (Rose, 1996). Psychology provides ourselves and our social institutions with a set of knowledges about who ‘we are’ and how ‘we should act’ on ourselves and others (Rose, 1996; Hook, 2010). Another useful term for thinking about the influence of psychological knowledges is the term ‘psychologisation’ or how the psychological gaze has infiltrated cultural life with depoliticising effects (Gordo & De Vos, 2010).

In extending the focus of critique to method and the psy-complex, I am in agreement with Parker (2005b) that “the most important battleground now is methodology…what has held psychology together and defined it as a distinct discipline is its method, the way it goes about knowing those that it observes and regulates” (p. 1). As Parker suggested, how psy-complexifiers claim to know things is so important that critique should “emphasise the activity or process of research rather than the objects” which are allegedly known in dominant psy-complex discourse (p. 3). Parker elaborated this assertion within a Foucauldian frame-of-reference, which he positions as having “profound implications for methodology” (p. 3). He asserted that “the way I produce knowledge is important, if not more so, than the actual things I think I have discovered” because “different disciplines

(such as psychology) operate as 'regimes of truth' in which there is a circulation of knowledge about objects that are *formed by the very practices through which they are known*[4]" (p.3, my emphasis).

A 'critical' psychological approach to researching unemployment is a small area with few researchers explicitly taking such a perspective (see Bluestein, Medvide, & Wan, 2012; Fryer & Stambe, 2014a; 2014b; for a *community* critical perspective see Fryer, 2012; Fryer & Fagan, 2003). This body of work mostly covers theoretical components using Foucault to describe psychological notions of unemployment within neoliberalism (Fryer & Stambe, 2014a, 2014b). Other researchers have engaged in Foucauldian-inspired fieldwork to critique psychologised knowledges about unemployment or ES (Cromby & Willis, 2014; Drewery, 1998; Friedli & Stern, 2015; Pultz, 2018; Walkerdine & Bansel, 2010). Empirical applications of a governmentality approach look at how the unemployed in UK welfare regimes are encouraged to think of themselves through the knowledges of positive psychology (Cromby & Willis, 2014) or how positive psychology shuts down resistance in these same spaces (Friedli & Stern, 2015). 'Neoliberalism' is often considered central in analyses about the types of subjects (motivated, ethical, 'entrepreneur of the self') idealised in these psychologised spaces of ES. However, governmentality researchers have also warned against the tendency to produce 'grand narratives' with neoliberalism as a universal explanatory device (Brady, 2014; Walkerdine & Bansel, 2010). The difficulty for these researchers is that various practices, like those that produce and maintain ES, are presented as cohering with neoliberal objectives (as articulated in policy). In contrast, some governmentality researchers maintain that attention to enacted practices may uncover how these practices are produced through different (and competing) discourses (Marston, Lansen & McDonald, 2005).

Researchers have studied unemployment while aiming to avoid over-generalisation. For example, Walkerdine & Bansel (2010) focued on local situations and specificities to understand unemployment and neoliberal discourses as enacted in situ. However, governmentality researchers do not always apply a critical lens to research practices that

[4] By engaging in such critique, I am not suggesting a pre-psychological subject can be reached by troubling these research practices. I am not suggesting that it is possible to return to a 'better' understanding of unemployment unshackled from psy-complexified notions. Such a claim reinserts a notion of 'normal', presenting psychology as inherently 'bad'. Rather I accept that "what we take for reality is already always psychological" (De Vos, 2012, p. 10) and the point of critique is to suspend any normative standards to explore the possibility for being otherwise (Hansen, 2016).

potentially reinscribe the humanist subject. For example, Walkerdine and Bansel's study cited above presumes a humanist pre-discursive subject in their interviewing by separating the 'I' from the 'deed' or missing how interviewing itself is a subjectification practice (Fadyl & Nicholls, 2013). Additionally, not all of these researchers maintain critique beyond the employment relation, for example, Blustein, Medvide and Wan (2012) reproduce 'mental health' as self-evident and support psychological interventions for the unemployed without interrogating how these knowledges function. None of these critical psychology studies have empirically researched ES in Australia.

The task for this PhD was thus to take a critical psychology perspective to research unemployed subjectivity that does not reproduce unemployment and the unemployed subject in psychologised ways that are often taken as self-evident (in ES as well as research practices). Focusing on how unemployment is produced in ES in Australia, I drew on the latest debates in governmentality research and extend these discussions through both a critical psychological perspective to thinking about 'mental health' but also in rethinking research practices through a critical lens. In short, this PhD combined aspects from critical psychology, governmentality and critical methodology to explore how it is possible to *not* think about 'unemployment' as we have so far (Fryer, 2019).

1.1.1 Thesis aims

My PhD research aims are as follows:

- To explore how a critical psychological approach to unemployment can draw from recent debates in governmentality studies to rethink unemployed subjectivity.
- To explore how the unemployed subject is understood and 'governed' (or encouraged to change into a desired subject) in the current *jobactive* model
- To explore the epistemic, ethical and political implications of doing a PhD thesis (on unemployment).

To achieve these thesis aims, I below elaborate the fundamental starting points that which form the basis for the 'frame-of-reference' of the research.

1.2 A critical frame-of-reference: critique, ‘truth’, methods

Social science research is situated within a frame-of-reference (Babbie, 2013). These ‘frames of reference’ refer to an interrelated set of philosophical assumptions about epistemology; ontology; how knowledge claims are constructed and legitimised; how knowledge functions societally and how we position the ‘subject’ (Stambe & Fryer, 2014). Although I concede that dividing research into different categories depending on a 'frame-of-reference' is itself a modernist practice (Brinkmann, 2014), it is nevertheless useful to think through some of the difficulties of doing poststructural research with traditional qualitative research methods since the frame-of-reference of the research and methodology will each have implications for the other. Although ‘methodology’ and ‘method’ are sometimes used interchangeably, they can be defined differently. I follow Harding (1987) by defining ‘methodology’ as the theory of method (method + logos) while ‘method’ refers to the techniques used to generate ‘data’. I do not, however, imply that method (action) is distinct from methodology (theory). To clarify, what I will be attempting in the paragraphs below (and later chapters) is to make explicit the machinations and veridiction of method (that includes methodology and ethics), which is always present but not necessarily discussed. I will outline the frame-of-reference in the following paragraphs before explicating in more detail the usefulness of Foucault’s work. In the last section of this chapter, I will return to the frame-of-reference to discuss the implications for critical methodology.

The ‘critical frame-of reference’ for my research consists of four interrelated axes. These axes form the parameters of my research design and, as a result, constitute the (meta)theoretical position of the research. Firstly, the research is a means of critique in a Foucauldian sense - refusing to be governed in certain ways. Secondly, the research aims to challenge psychological knowledges and practices insofar as they reproduce a certain ‘unemployed subject’. A part of analysing the psy-complex also implies positioning the ontological and epistemological foundations of psychological knowledges and practices (Teo, 2009) as a discipline to be critiqued. Rimke (2016, p. 7) summarises these foundations into ten characteristics. The characteristics which are relevant to this discussion include suspending: the tendency to reduce the complexity of the social world to causal explanations, particularly about the individual; essentialising and naturalising human beings as stable, unitary, rational entities (which St Pierre, 2011b refers to as the ‘liberal humanist subject’; see also Henriques et. al, 1984); and positivism. The third axis

rejects modernist principles of truth-work including making predictions, providing solutions, gathering ‘evidence’ for social ordering and to contributing to a broader sense of societal ‘progress’ (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

The last element of the frame-of-reference refers to a different way of approaching ‘truth’ and this concern, along with the practice of ‘critique’, is crucial to the aims of this thesis. Following Foucault (2002), I see ‘truth’ as a verb rather than a noun (hence I use terms like ‘truthing’). The ontological and epistemological foundations of disciplinary knowledges and practices are positioned as 'regimes of truth' to be critiqued. These ‘regimes of truth’ relate to discourse or the “body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of the operation of the enunciative function” (Foucault, p. 131). These historical rules are not rules in the strictest sense (Cousins & Hussain, 1984) but rather form a “complex group of relations that function as a rule” (Foucault, p. 74). Discourse surpasses the symbolic-material boundary since, “in a discourse, words, materialities and practices hang together in a specific, historically and culturally situated way” (Mol, 2008, p. 8). Discourse sets the boundaries around its domain, and with visibility and authority, certain things are possible to say, and alternative possibilities are closed down. In this way, discourse establishes what it is “possible to say within the true” (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014, p. 179) or that which enables “speakers to be taken seriously” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 48). Discourses are multiple, multi-level and sometimes contradictory (Bacchi, 2009). Research is one way of manufacturing ‘truth’ and is a complex set of discursive practices within a regime of truth. In sum, this critical frame-of-reference is heavily influenced by a Foucauldian-inspired poststructural perspective. In the following section, I will elaborate more on such a perspective justifying why it is advantageous to rethink unemployment and the unemployed.

1.3 The usefulness of Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralism

A difficulty with individualising ‘unemployment’ is that it fails to acknowledge ‘external’ factors of ‘unemployment’ such as policy, economic, political or social factors (see, for example, Baxandell, 2002; Howe, 2012). Accordingly, some researchers claim that any attempt to make sense of ‘unemployment’ that in effect separates the social and the individual will be “inadequate for encapsulating the complexities surrounding its meaning and impact” (Cullen & Hodgetts, 2001, p. 34).

While I do want to have a conversation about 'unemployment' that re-joins the social and the subject, I am also aware that just attempting to reinsert the subject back into the social can ascribe to the 'person-in-context' position (Nic Giolla Easpaig, Fryer, Linn, & Humphrey, 2014). As Nic Giolla Easpaig et al. point out, theorising subjectivity through the 'person-in-context' framework reiterates the agency/structure binary by positioning the individual as an agent who interacts and negotiates through different levels of their social environment and can imply a one-way interaction. For this reason, I am interested in exploring the complexity of what it is to be unemployed in Australia. Specifically, this exploration enables me to: reject the modernist individual (Henriques et al., 1984); explore the selves we can/not be through specific apparatuses of subjectification; take seriously the distress of 'unemployment'; as well as examine and contest the (re)production of oppressive discourses, that is "... the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer... because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned society" (Young, 1988, p. 272). Consequently, I have taken a Foucauldian-inspired post-structuralist perspective that focuses on the (re)constitution of subjectivity.

Subjectification is taken here to mean "how inner processes are reshaped amid economic and political reforms, violence and social suffering" (Biehl, Good, & Kleinman, 2007, p.1). Subjectification is thus both being a subject and the constitution of the subject through power relations (Butler, 1997). That is, there is a double meaning in the use of 'subject' we are simultaneously subject/ed *to* and the subject *of* action (Jones, 1997, p. 263.) Here subjectivity moves us past the agency/structure dichotomy where discussions are caught between a subject who is socialised through different ideologies and social structures and the voluntarist subject who is able to make choices from their free will, thus separating the subject from their social world.

Such conceptualisations of the subject enable us to distance our work from the 'liberal humanist subject', which assumes that while the subject is influenced by the social structures around us, there is still a person that comes before (the 'pre-discursive subject') who is able to make meaning about the experiences that they have. A Foucauldian-inspired position on subjectivity is one that is *post*structuralist, still draws on the importance of the person-in-the-world but instead of the person existing *prior to* an act (the 'I' that does things) a person is constituted as a subject through the act (Butler, 1990). Terms like 'constitution' or 'produced' are important here since both imply that something is made or brought into existence rather than something being recrafted. I favour the term

‘constitution’, following Jones (1997) and Butler (1990), since it captures the idea of the subjected being ‘brought into existence’ but also of ‘taking up’ where the “taker and the ‘taken are, in a sense, ‘the same’ mutually determining” (p. 267). Here, Jones draws on Butler’s (1990) explanation that subjection occurs in the discursive possibilities for being and that at the “convergence of such discursive injunctions” there is a potential for a “complex reconfiguration” (p. 145). In other words, the agentic potential for the subject is possible through the discourses available thus “there is only the taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very ‘taking up’ is enabled by the tool lying there” (p. 145).

Foucault’s work on subjectivity is useful in my research that is interested in critiquing (rather than reproducing) the psy-complex since Foucault took an explicit anti-psychological stance on subjectivity (Valverde, 2004). Instead of mapping a static self according to generalisations about normal human characteristics and capabilities (which can then be accurately measured with a personality test and so forth), the focus is on the ongoing constitution of a person. By ‘ongoing’ I am referring to how a “human being is in flux, in process at every moment being disciplined, regulated, normalised, produced, and at the same time, resisting, shifting, changing, producing” (St Pierre, 2011a, p. 46). That is, our subjectivity is precarious, “constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak” (Weedon, p. 32, as cited in Jones, 1997).

Importantly, what it is to be ‘human’ from a Foucauldian-inspired perspective is intimately entangled in the social world. We cannot merely talk about what is inside the heads of people without joining ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ politics together in the conversation. Understanding the subject in such a way helps to resist reducing the complexity of the social world, including ourselves, into individual-society dualism (Henriques et al., 1984). It also helps to circumvent the priority of the cognitive ‘I’ constituted through the psy-complex (Rose, 1985) and potential for rethinking psy-complexified practices and the individualist-therapeutic state (McNamee, 2015). Unemployment within this frame-of-reference must be something ‘more than’ the attitudes, faulty cognitions, and negative affects of the (‘individual’) unemployed. The point of inquiry therefore shifts to understanding the socio-historical, material, affective context for the constitution of subjectivities.

1.3.1 Subjectivity and unemployment.

To understand how ‘unemployment’ and subjectivity are intertwined, I find a useful starting point to return to Foucault’s (2008a) first lecture from *The Birth of Biopolitics*. Foucault is

not interested in how an object was discovered or conversely how it is proven not to exist. Rather he was interested in "…by what conjunctions a whole set of practices - from the moment they become coordinated with a regime of truth - was able to make what does not exist nonetheless become something, something however that continues not to exist" which however *does* exist in so far as "it is precisely a set of practices, real practices, which established it and thus imperiously marks it out in reality" (p. 19). A task of my research is, therefore, to begin to unpack the interconnections between a whole set of practices that adhere to truth, which turn 'unemployment' into an object.

By 'practices' Foucault was referring to the "places" where what can be said and done, discourses, and strategies "meet and interconnect" (Foucault, 1991a, p. 75). There is a judicial component (the rules given) and a veridicition component (the reasons given according to discourses of true/false) (Flynn, 2005). Kendall (2011) describes how Foucault's work on the self was more concerned with how institutions and systems have been invented to problematise the self. Consequently, I propose that a focus on how the unemployed self is problematised within ESand psychological literature will allow a means for locating this 'marking out' in part through the practices of the (re)subjectification of the unemployed subject.

My research studied the practices of the (re)subjectification within the domain of ESin Australia. This institution, funded by the taxpayer, continues the logic of problematising 'unemployment' at the level of the individual (Dean, 1995). This is consistent with the political rationality of 'neoliberalism' as defined by Foucault (2008a). Political rationalities are "a way of doing things that was oriented to specific objectives and that reflected on itself in characteristic ways" (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006, p. 84). Here, State intervention is not directed towards regulation of the labour market but rather thorough intervention through society "in its fabric and depth" (p. 145).Within welfare policy in Australia, this neoliberal intervention includes the responsibilisation of the individual to (re)gain employment; an idea entrenched within the notion of the 'active society' (Dean, 1995; see also Triantafillou, 2011).

1.3.2 Governing the unemployed

Some researchers have drawn on Foucault's understanding of 'governmentality' to analyse the logic and practices of ES and subjectification. Government, for Foucault, was not just the state or political structures but also the way of regulating behaviour towards

certain ends (Dean, 2010). Governmentality refers to the rationality and practices, drawing upon expertise, which aims to improve a population (Foucault, 2003a). Dean (1995) clarifies that this central problem of governing, the “conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 2003c**,** p. 138), suggests two forms of the constitution of the self. In the first instance, the 'conduct of conduct' refers to how authorities seek to shape people’s behaviours, thoughts, aspirations, and capacities through various strategies driven towards satisfaction of certain goals. In Australia the governing of the unemployed is through processes of activation to produce the ideal unemployed subject, the 'job seeker'[5].

Dean also refers to the 'conduct of conduct' where people will self-problematise and self-regulate through technologies of the self (Foucault, 2003c) to change themselves into the desired subjects. In ES, this self-governmentality would manifest through wanting to work upon oneself and actively engage in programs of reformation to improve job-readiness. The governmentality framework enables can analysis of multiple strategies by different authorities to govern (Rose, 1996), establishing the conditions so that people are inclined to “behave as they ought” (Li, 2003, p. 5121). Therefore, governmentality can be understood as the “movement through which individuals are subjugated in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 266).

Governmentality can help to analyse how new markets and expertise are enabled within a governing complex. In Australia, there is both the ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ psychologisation of unemployment. Some provider organisations develop ‘activation’ training programs in-house while others purchase programs from third parties. For example, psychologists will act as contractors to provide psychologised services to individual job seekers, to assist the employment consultants to develop ’skills’ relating to motivating the unemployed and/or improve job seekers’ ‘attitudes’.[6] Another philanthropist third-party program is the Welfare Applied Positive Psychology (WAPP) program that was developed by Esher House and sold to ES in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Esher House (n.d) is an organisation that incorporates behavioural strategies informed by Positive Psychology and ‘nudging’ to develop assessment and training programs to

[5] Dean (1995) also points out the significance of the discursive strategy of changing the term for a person receiving social security for unemployment from ‘unemployed’ to ‘job seeker’ in that the subject is presumed to already be active. Therefore, when the term ‘job seeker’ is used through this document, it refers to a person who is receiving the unemployment social security payment known as the Newstart Allowance.
[6] See for example http://back2work.com.au/services.html

improve outcomes for Government policy objectives; especially “maximis[ing] outcomes amongst sometimes apathetic, suspicious and resistant groups” (Esher House, n.d., para., 5). While there is some research that suggest programs based in positive psychology improve subjective well-being (Dambrun & Dubuy, 2014), there is conflicting evidence about whether psychological interventions improve job outcomes (Adhore, 2011; Liu, Hang & Wang, 2014; Wanberg, 2012). However, the interest for my thesis is not whether these ‘solutions’ work but the implications for how unemployment is understood and how this marks out the unemployed as a certain type of subject.

Specifically, these knowledges inform, sustain, complicate, activate or may even disrupt the power-knowledge in ES in Australia. There has been extensive work on the governing of the unemployed in an Australian context (see Dean, 1995, 1998; Henman, 2004; Marston, 2005; Marston & McDonald, 2008; McDonald & Marston, 2005; McDonald, Marston, & Buckley, 2003) including focusing attention on how neoliberal political rationalities materialise in the constitution of neoliberal unemployed subjectivities (McDonald & Marston, 2005). The consequence of such governing within ESis that there are fewer possibilities for alternative subjectivities for job seekers (Brady, 2011). Investigating the governing practices of the unemployed also involves examining how these practices are knowledgemented. Further, when it comes to how we can understand the meaning of what it is to be unemployed I consider ‘psy’ discourses to be crucial in this endeavour.

1.3.3 The role of the psy-complex and ‘affect/emotions’ to govern the unemployed

Practices of governing others and self-governing rely on psy-complexified discourses and power-knowledges within welfare organisations in Australia. Although governmentality research in Australia does not discuss the psy-complex directly, this body of literature has captured how job seekers are required to undergo counselling, self-examination, engage in training for the improvement of job-readiness, motivation, self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, civil society actors are conscripted to govern by enabling them to embrace psy-complexified notions of the self (Dean, 1995). Hook (2010) argued that governmentality extends to how psychological technologies of affect are involved in the (re)subjectification process. As Bjerg and Staunæs (2011) state, “affects and affectivity are not simply by-products or something to be overcome, but the core matter to be managed by and through” (p. 138). I view affects as relational, an affective circulation that is embedded in situated practices and connected to subjects’ embodied capacity to affect

and be affected (Wetherell, 2012). How discourses of affect are involved with resubjectification corresponds with the Foucauldian notion of power-knowledge and psychologised knowledges/practices of the self, the potential self, and the way we can talk about and experience emotions (McAvoy, 2015).

Affect, as an intensity, is distinguishable from 'emotions' but not mutually exclusive. I see emotions as the cultural and historical component of 'affect', that come to the fore we try to understand and discuss 'affect' (see Reddy, 2001). Hence 'emotions' are discursive practices, or an 'emotional regime'. By this I mean the normative style of emotional management, part of 'common sense', that is situated, historical and political (Reddy, 2001). While 'affect' might be an excess, our attempts to understand 'affect' also brings us back to discourse, and so we should take seriously discursive practices and power - knowledge relations such that we attend to what 'emotions' *do* (Cromby, 2015; D'Aoust, 2013; McAvoy, 2015; Wetherell, 2012). In this way the focus should be on how practices are "clumped, who gets to do what, when and what relations do an affective practice make, enact, disrupt, and reinforce" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 17).

I agree with Walker et al (2014) that studying 'affect/emotions/feelings' is a way to take seriously peoples' distress without having to (re)inscribe psychologised notions of 'heath' or 'disorder'. Instead, research can focus on how 'emotions' or affect are used to management the unemployed in order to ensure people conduct their behaviour in prescribed ways. By focusing on the use of emotions and what these discursive practices do, I can attend to how governing is legitimated and deployed via certain technologies, strategies and authorities and how psychology is part of this assemblage. Indeed, the psychologised notions of 'emotions' with the associated technologies, assessments, and practices of reformation are connected to the 'regime of truth' about emotions. Psy knowledges are part of the 'emotional regime'. As argued by Rose (1996) the psychological sciences, its history and current use, presents such a normative management style of emotions. This 'expertise' merges a technical rationality with the 'truth' about individuals that are problematised psychologically.

According to McDonald and Marston (2005) case managers in previous iterations of ES relied on psychologised knowledge claims to diffuse anger and manage job seekers. Furthermore, Dassinger (2013) describes forms of governing used to reform the subjectivities of the unemployed through training and counselling where affects/emotions

such as 'shame' are utilised in processes of (re)subjectification to induce self-responsibility. Employment consultants are likely to take up these knowledges to manage communicative processes and relations with job seekers. This includes the practices of knowing, problematising, and working on the self so workers manage their emotions. The object of this affective self-governing is to regulate the affective dimension of ES (manage job seeker anger for example) or to use emotion (empathy, enthusiasm, threats) to encourage job seekers to keep looking for work (Penz et al., 2017).

I agree with other critical psychologists who note that some of the sociology of emotion literature is limited by uncritical endorsement of psychological understanding of the self and emotion (for review see Cromby, 2015; Wetherell, 2012). For example, the growing literature on the affective governing of job seekers in ES focus on the productivity of 'affect' via 'affective labour' (Hardt, 1999). I have found this body of research useful to examining the micropolitics and self-governing of workers in ES and how this is related to labour politics (particularly the feminisation of work, see Glinser, 2018). However, as mentioned, focus on 'affect' over 'emotions' can sideline the social, cultural and historical constitution of these experiential elements. Importantly, the affective governing literature does not examine the psy-complexified elements of 'affect' or 'emotions', leaving these 'self-evident'. In contrast, I am interested in researching how affective governmentality and psy-complexified practices function in ES.

The strategies deployed by employment consultants to govern the unemployed, and how these are (re)shaped by contractual obligations, organisational procedures and priorities, and material circumstances provides a rich landscape for researching the psychologisation of unemployment. Researchers have looked at how the materials used by employment consultants shape how the unemployed are encouraged to take up certain understandings of the self. Cromby and Willis (2014) unpack the VIA (values in action) questionnaire developed within a positive psychology discourse that encourages job seekers to understand themselves through a 'positive characteristics' and 'strengths' lens. The researchers argue that not only does this 'psychometric' have questionable theoretical and methodological status but because the use of the device is dovetailed into the welfare assemblage psychologised knowledges are a part of the 'nudging' work encouraging the 'neoliberal' subject. Additionally, psychological intervention to improve 'positive affect' while also implicated in punitive and coercive practices of 'workfare' (UK context) can also silence voices of critique within ES (Friedli & Stern, 2015). Indeed, these authors note

psychological knowledges within welfare which are involved in the "monitoring, modifying and punishing" (p.42) of job seekers are seldom criticised.

Bringing a critical psychological approach to the Australian welfare context blends a governmentality approach with a critical lens to also examine the psy-complex and methodology. To research unemployment from a critical psychological perspective, I posit that focus should be on how various elements, that are historical and culturally contingent, are coordinated and (re)assembled to strategically solve 'problems'. Research methods are not separate from these 'apparatuses' and so are not 'describing' subjectivity but are part of the system of discursive and governing practices that contribute to the conditions of possibilities for how unemployment is experienced. While, governmentality is not a novel approach to thinking about unemployment in Australia, my thesis presents a novel way to (re)approach subjectification practices in front-line organisations and potentially go beyond governmentality by using 'emotions' (D'Aoust, 2013) to challenge psy-complexified understandings of governing practices. In this way, I focus on the practices that make and remake the unemployed and workers in ambiguous, political, contested and affective spaces while keeping research methods within the critical lens.

1.4 *Jobactive* as apparatus

While acknowledging the importance of using the governmentality framework for understanding how subjectivities are constituted, Binkley (2011) recognised that the focus on governmentality tends to slip into discussions of causation and determinism. That is, Binkley argued that a "governmentality prose" (p. 84) results in a smoothing over of the connection between macro and micro processes of governing that loses the ambiguity of subjectification. Binkley (2011), drawing on Deleuze's (1992) reading of the apparatus (or in French, 'dispositif[7]'), argued for a closer examination of the apparatus to study the processes of disposing of free subjects[8] to move from a self that is problematised to an

[7] "Apparatus is the commonly used translation in English for 'dispositif' but not without contention (Bussolini, 2010). Other translations include 'deployment' or ''dispositive'. The work 'apparatus' implies a machine-like device that produces something, bringing various elements together (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). However, Agamben (2009) suggests 'apparatus' is not a sufficient translation, pointing out that in legal terms 'dispositive' is that part of the Judge's statement which enacts a clause of the law. He also notes that in a military context a 'dispositif' involves elements that are arranged to carry out a plan. In everyday French, 'dispositif' refers to a system that is setup for a certain purpose, like an alarm system (Carbon, 2007). Despite the shortcomings of the English translation, I will shift between 'dispositif' and 'apparatus' since these are the two terms that are used most in the literature and are therefore more familiar.

[8] Importantly, the exercise of power relations implied a 'free subject' for as Foucault (2003a) power can only be exercised on 'free subjects'. Additionally, Rose (1999a) explicated that governing practices function by governing *through* freedom in that we are 'obliged to be free'.

ideal self. Indeed, he argued that it is in the (de)subjectification - (re)subjectification process that the apparatus can be located. As Deleuze (1986) describes it in his essay on the apparatus, “a line of subjectification is a process, a production of subjectivity in a social apparatus (dispositif): it has to be made inasmuch as the apparatus allows it to come into being or makes it possible. It is a line of escape. It escapes preceding lines and escapes from itself” (p. 161). Thus, I will draw on one of Foucault’s ‘tools’, the apparatus, to theorise an ontological understanding of ‘*jobactive.*’

The apparatus is useful for thinking about subjectification as it enables a researcher to ‘cut across’ various heterogeneous elements, “…the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 194) The apparatus itself is the relations between these elements. The apparatus has a strategic function that is assembled to solve an “urgent need” (p.194), and it is through the apparatus, power-knowledge, principles and agendas of governing are applied (Hook, 2004a). It should be noted moreover that by ‘strategy’ Foucault is not implying there is a person wielding power in the background. He insisted on the contrary that we should direct our attention to power *relations* and “strategies without strategists” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 109).

To explore the apparatus and how ‘unemployment’ is marked out in reality through the (re)subjectification of the unemployed via the *jobactive* apparatus I consider how the *jobactive* employment model is constructed. Firstly, ‘unemployment’ is constructed through various regimes of truth and power relations (Walters, 2000). For Foucault, knowledge and power relations are inextricably linked, hence the term ‘power-knowledge’. Considered in such a way, power-knowledge brings into examination not so much whether or not something is ‘true’ but rather how it has been truthed, how that knowledge has been warranted or accorded the status of and then how this particular knowledge functions ideologically, that is how different knowledges serve the interests of different groups in different ways (Stainton Rogers, 2002). In relation to ‘unemployment’, analysis should involve the interrogation of statements, power-knowledges and regimes of truth of unemployment researchers, psychologists, policy, politicians, employment consultants and organisations which deliver programs of reformation and governmental compliance.

1.5 Implications for critical methodology

The critical frame-of-reference explicated above has implications for methodology and method. In sum, any methodology and method chosen need to accomplish the following:

challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about ‘unemployment and the ‘unemployed’ (critique); resist (and not reproduce) the psy-complex and the associated epistemological and ontological assumptions, and finally; take an anti-modernist stance on the ‘subject’, knowledge generation, and the function of knowledge.

In Foucauldian-like inquiries, the researcher’s role is to untangle ‘lines of force’ (power) and ‘lines of enunciation’ (knowledge) (Deleuze, 1992) to map the “dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques and functionings” (Foucault, 1991b, p. 26). The point, in short, is to demonstrate the materiality of knowledge and its effects on the constitution of objects and subjects. By showing the contingency of knowledge (historical and social), research can point to how certain regimes of ‘knowledge’ come to dominate and other ways of ‘knowing’ are dismissed or disappeared (Britzman, 2000). Research, as a practice of ‘critique’, should open up the spaces to challenge dominant knowledges and practices so that repeating or reproducing these discourses/practices becomes a hard thing to do (Foucault, 2003b).

Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralist research understood within a critical frame-of-reference is inherently political. Here ‘political’ refers to the strategic relations which act upon lives (Bacchi, 2012). For example, researchers completing Foucauldian-like research engage with a multitude of methodologies and associated methods for political ends. Some use more recognisably ‘Foucauldian’ methods by engaging in genealogies or ‘histories of the present’ to unravel the historical specificity of different concepts, like ‘welfare dependence’ in the United States of America (Fraser & Gordon, 1994). Alternatively, some researchers will interrogate 'psychometric assessments' using scientific principles (like 'validity' and 'reliability') and /or governmentality (Cromby & Willis, 2014; Marston, McDonald & Buckley, 2003).

Research is also political even if it does not have explicit political intentions. Returning to the idea of power-knowledge, the production of knowledge is political insofar as research not only influences other practices (other research, theory building, policy draft and so on) but it is interventionist. To explain this point further I find it useful to draw on Mol’s (1999, pp. 74-75) ‘ontological politics’ (especially Bacchi’s, 2012, use of the concept). Mol defines ontology as the ‘real’ or the “conditions of possibility we live with”. Because “reality does not precede the mundane practices in which we interact…but is rather shaped within these practices” then reality is political since it is crafted, open and contest(ed)able. Research

methods can be seen as *intervening* in the world because “methods, their rules, and even more method’s practices, not only describe but also help to produce our world” (Law, 2004, p. 5).

Repositioning research practices as an intervention into the world highlights an ‘action’ element of all research and raises important questions when using as a Foucauldian-inspired critical frame-of-reference. Not only does the research challenge self-evident renditions of ‘unemployment’ and the ‘psychologisation of the unemployed’ but research methods are also under question. Methods, as epistemically informed practices, also have taken for granted assumptions which may be contradictory to the broader frame-of-reference. Research methods and the disciplines within which the research is situated operate through the ‘regimes of truth’ that continue circulations of truths about objects.

Such ‘regimes’ are present in every society and discipline that set the criteria for what is to be considered ‘knowledge’. Additionally, these regimes of truth are driven by a ‘will’ or pursuit of knowledge, and these discourses are deeply contentious and contested. The focus should thus be on the rules, how the ‘truth’ and the ‘false’ are separated, how such separation is controversial and alternatives are presented, and the implicated power relations, attached to the true, that produce certain subjects and spaces (Foucault, 1980a, p. 131).

These regimes involve ‘games’ of truth where the emphasis is on the rules which produce ‘truth’, what can be considered valid, or what is sidelined as ‘false’ (Foucault, 2003d, p. 38). These games of truth are connected to the self, since “the games of truth and error through which being [is] historically constituted as experience” (Foucault, 1985, pp. 6-7) or how experience can be thought and discussed as such. Rabinow and Rose (2003) suggested that the best way to analyse these games is through technologies or “the intellectual and practical instruments and devices enjoined upon human being to shape and guide their ways of ‘being human’” (p.xxi). Interviews or observations in a research setting can also be understood as technologies.

Research methods and the disciplines within which the research is situated operate through the ‘regimes of truth’ that continue circulations of truths about objects (which are then constituted by the practices that allow these objects to be known). In other words, it is the knowledge-making practices embedded in research methods that critical research is

trying to untangle. The way that we do our research needs to be attended to when we discuss our research. As already stated, how we produce knowledge, rhetorically or otherwise, is just as important as the objects constituted in our research (Newman & Holzman, 1997; Parker, 2005). The knowledge produced through research understood within the power-knowledge nexus renders method and research practices in need of critique.

1.6 Thesis outline

My thesis contributes to understanding how psy knowledges are deployed to govern the unemployed in contemporary Australia. In contrast to similar research on the governing of unemployed in an Australian context, my research focuses on the strategic manner in which method is deployed within the research/policy/practice apparatus. The thesis will proceed with the second chapter that outlines the context for the research. The governing practices of ES under *jobactive* are read through a problematisation lens. Chapter Two uses Carol Bacchi's *What's the problem represented to be* (WPR) approach to contextualise how unemployment is made a project, and therefore an object for governing. Assumptions of the active society and activation are discussed in relation to the individualising, psychologising and emotionalising of unemployment.

Chapter Three explores the knowledge that both allows and requires unemployment to be thought of in certain ways. Governing practices require the authority of 'expertise' and Rose (1996) suggested that problems are constituted within various institutions "in a way amenable to 'subjectification' so that psychology and psychologists would be able to provide solutions" (p. 84). The way that the experience of 'unemployment' has been made meaningful through psychologised discourses (Miller, 1986; Walters, 2000) here provides a way for analysing the psychologised knowledges and practices that occur on the ground. This chapter examines the knowledges (and ways of constituting/legitimating that knowledge) that underpin how the experience of unemployment is articulated. Firstly, the problem of method in the psychological literature is explored by considering how the research constitutes 'unemployment' as a problem and what issues are left problematised. Governmentality research is presented as an alternative to using the mainstream method of psychological research. However, this body of research has other concerns about method. The second chapter therefore not only looks at issues of method in psychological literature but also in governmentality studies. The arguments in governmentality studies

for ethnography that focus on examining ‘actual practices’ that occur ‘on the ground’ (Brady, 2014) are critically examined.

The fourth chapter describes a methodology for the thesis. The methodology uses the ‘apparatus’ to methodologically supplement the use of an ‘ethnographic imagination’. Additionally, the chapter explores issues of doing interviews in poststructural research as well as the problems of using traditional method (with modernist underpinnings) in a Foucauldian-inspired critical frame-of-reference I have analysed the interviews using Poststructural Interview Analysis (PIA) (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017). PIA is located within Foucauldian scholarship and provides several processes to analyse the way in which interviews are ‘sites’ within discursive practices. These knowledge formations allow the interview/er to make claims in the interview. With this Foucauldian understanding of discourse and how research intervenes, their method also helps reconsider how research interviews constitute subjects, objects, and spaces. Chapter Five follows on from the methodology by detailing the research practices, interviewing, observations and a critical reading of policy documents.

Chapter Six discusses some of the findings from interviews and observations regarding ‘activation’ in the spaces of one ES provider in South East Queensland. ‘Activation’ is positioned here as a discursive practice that underpins the logic, policies, and daily activities of ES. Indeed, the idea of the ‘active society’ and the need to produce an ‘active’ subject has dominated policy discussions and is now a taken-for-granted approach to governing the unemployed (Murphy et al., 2011). Despite the dominance of the activation rationality workers still need to find a way to ‘do’ this work of activating. Subsequently, the question of how to govern incorporates discussions about the role of employment consultants or activation workers as agents/subjects of governing. Through their interviews the workers’ talk is saturated with and reproduces discourses about activation that (de)constitute an emotional subject. Furthermore, through the interviews activation is intertwined with psychologisation, which reinserts the emotional unemployed subject back into these spaces via ‘heart technologies’. That is, ‘emotion’ is more that an aspect of subjectivity that needs to be controlled and manipulated for the objectives of governing, but also provides the rationale for and influences governing practices. The unemployed subject in these work practices and interviews is constituted as ‘sad’, ‘bad’, and, ‘mad’. The potential for psy to disrupt activation practices is found wanting.

Chapter Seven pulls together some notes that were made about the practice of my research to think reflexively about the production of knowledge, objects, subjects and spaces. I explore the implications of a PhD thesis that are epistemic, ethical and political. I conclude the thesis in the eighth chapter where I provide a thesis summary, drawing together the main claims of the thesis. I highlight the importance of doing critical methodological research for researching the subjectification of the unemployed and how such research is important to imagine a different kind of politics. That is, unemployment is 'known' as a certain type of experience through the psy-complex, and research (psychological, sociological, economic and from governmentality studies). To think of unemployment differently requires unpicking assumptions about unemployment *and* research. I keep the politics, contradictions and challenges of doing research in mind as I close the thesis and look forward to future research possibilities.

2 Chapter Two: Participation, activation and compliance: A brief problematisation of *jobactive* policy.

One of the aims of this thesis was to study the governing of the unemployed in Australia under *jobactive. jobactive* began in July 2015 and is the latest iteration of Employment Services (ES) in Australia. Employment Services is an arm of welfare provision that consists of a conglomerate of for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. These organisations, known as 'Providers', are contracted by the Australian Government to administer services to 'job seekers' or people receiving unemployment payments. Such services are embedded within discourses of 'activation' or ensuring that the unemployed are motivated to continually look for work and ensure they remain 'job ready'.

This chapter reports on the current state of play of ES via *jobactive*. The latest model was important to examine since *jobactive* has been increasing the punitive components of welfare provision as well as incorporating more automated processes. I discuss how the ongoing problematisation of unemployment as an issue of 'participation' replaces concerns about demand management. In light of the increased penalties for non-compliance, these problematisations make it even riskier for job seekers to refuse to 'participate' in the prescribed ways. It is dangerous for unemployed subjects to refuse the affective (re)subjectification demanded by policy objectives.

From a critical perspective, I take *jobactive* to be an 'apparatus', or a system of relations that pulls together various heterogeneous elements for an "urgent need" (Foucault, 1980, p. 194). I position policy on unemployment as one 'node' of the jobactive apparatus. In this chapter I will use the *What's the problem (represented to be)* (WPR) approach (Bacchi 1999; 2012; Bacchi & Goodman, 2016) to examine how policy produces unemployment as a certain type of problem.

Positioning policy as productive (instead of responsive) was deployed as part of the thesis work of critique (as detailed in Chapter One). Unpicking how it is possible to experience unemployment 'this way' as opposed to 'that way' is partly tied to how unemployment is 'knowledged'. By this, I mean how 'unemployment' is socially constituted through psychological, sociological, economic and political discursive practices. Indeed, this is a question of governmentality since governing involves subjection "in the reality of a social practice" via technologies that "adhere to a truth" (Foucault, 2003a, p. 266). ES in Australia is a key space for researching the truthing of unemployment and the subjectification of the

unemployed since it is in these spaces that 'being unemployed' is the main concern for governing.

I deployed Bacchi's questions (see Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 20) to probe into the subjectification effects of *jobactive* policy. I utilised Bacchi's questions because they provide a useful framework for interrogating the taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie *jobactive* policy and how unemployment is produced as a problem of the unemployed. As I show later in this chapter, *jobactive* problematises unemployment via 'participation' thus making 'participation' governmental through 'strengthening' mutual obligations and ensuring the unemployed comply in line with moral citizenship. Within policy-related documents, I traced the 'making' and 'unmaking' (p.69) the unemployed subject (and I pick up similar threads in Chapter Six that focuses the analysis on fieldwork methods). I followed Bacchi by asking questions about how subject positions are implicated in representations of the 'problem' of unemployment, what assumptions underpin these representations, and the lived effects and silences that are then made possible. The WPR approach thus helped to understand how specific versions of unemployment and the unemployed are made intelligible, with corresponding strategies of reformation, and simultaneously make alternatives impossible, or at least, make improbable or suspect. From this critique, I hope to reignite critical discussions about governing in Australian ES, making it less easy for the 'activation' of job seekers to go unchecked.

2.1 Locating the problem of unemployment: notes on method

2.1.1 Why focus on 'problems'?

Unemployment is 'truthed' in many spaces: such as statistical computations, media constructions of the 'dole bludger', and in the psychological literature as 'cause' or 'effect' of poor 'subjective well-being'. ES in Australia, currently called is a key 'site' where unemployment is 'truthed'. While our subjectivities are fluid and situation-dependent, a person 'serviced' within an ES provider ('provider') is first and foremost 'unemployed'. To be marked out as 'experiencing unemployment' requires a network of relations between "fields of knowledges" that are both drawn upon and created; "types of normativity" to be compared against, and technologies developed and deployed to invoke certain "forms of subjectivity" (Foucault, 1985, p. 6). In this way, ES is a 'site' where a person *becomes* unemployed in attempting to make, discipline and re-make ontological identities.

As discussed in Chapter One (and will elaborate further in Chapter Four), I positioned *jobactive* as an 'apparatus'. By this, I mean it is the "strategic relations" between various heterogeneous elements that are laid out to solve a 'problem' (Foucault, 1980, p. 194). I turned my attention to policy documents (the Deed and its guidelines, the latest welfare review, and media release of jobactive) as a way of researching the 'problem' *jobactive* was assembled to 'solve'. Part of the objective, then, was to contextualise *jobactive* and its strategies and technologies of intervention through administrative procedures and frameworks that establish the 'rules of the game' for providers' governing practices.

Governing practices are "modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, that [are] destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people" (Foucault, 1994, p. 341). In the spaces of ES, governing involves governing others (the work of employment consultants) and governing oneself (the work of the job seeker). Here the governing practices of policy are part of establishing a 'mode of existence' that inscribed techniques of self-problematisation and self-regulation. These technologies of the self are part of the apparatus which 'allows' subjects "to come into being or makes it possible" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 161) through processes of "becoming-other" (Deleuze, p. 164).

Policy is often presented as a rational set of undertakings to solve a problem efficiently. These 'problems' are positioned as exogenous to policy. For example, commenting on earlier iterations of ES Ganley (2002) stated psychological understanding of the "*consequences* of joblessness" is integral to "mobilise societal commitment to *tackle* the problem" and to inform "policy *responses*" (p.179, my emphasis). From a critical psychological perspective, studying policy as a 'response' leaves 'unemployment' and its 'effects' as self-evident and unproblematic (namely, psychologised notions of the 'self' and affect, see Chapter One). Indeed, to say the unemployed are being governed is to point to how the unemployed are shaped as a solution to a problem and how policy intends to, and can, shape the lives of the unemployed. The benefit of using tools like critique, problematisation and a governmentality approach is it allows researchers to examine practices by suspending them, potentially avoiding (re)producing those very categories and practices that (re)shape unemployed subjectivities and lives.

I used Bacchi's (1999; 2012; Bacchi & Goodman, 2016). *What is the problem (represented to be)?* (WPR) approach to read through policy documents to contextualise *jobactive* and

make visible the pluralities of policy (problems, solutions, subject positions, political rationalities). Indeed, WPR highlights how policy constitutes the 'solution' as both 'logical' and 'necessary' and presents this 'necessity' to critique (see also Chapter One where I discuss 'critique' and the possibility of otherness). WPR is connected to governmentality since instituting liberal rationalities relies on certain problematisations Bacchi, 1999; Teghstoonian, 2015). But unlike other researchers in this space who use governmentality analysis (for the Job Network model, see McDonald & Marston 2005) or genealogy (for JSA model, see Brady, 2011), I focused on problematisations to consider how *jobactive policy* problematises more than the (assumed lack) of self-regulation of the unemployed. Here, a WPR encourages researchers to reflect on what has been obscured, ignored, marginalised or disappeared through the problematising process. Utilising a WPR approach, therefore, can disrupt the hegemonic status of dominant and prevailing problematising (Clarke, 2018). In this chapter, a WPR approach is utilised to unpack the 'common sense' 'need' to 'activate' the unemployed as it manifests through *jobactive*. Thus, connecting this chapter to the overarching objectives of the thesis; to untangle and disrupt the taken-for-granted assumptions about unemployment in Australia.

The WPR approach presents the following questions to guide the critical reading:

1. What's the ''problem' of unemploy(ed)ment represented to be in *jobactive* policy?
2. What presumptions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem' of unemploy(ed)ment?
3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' of unemploy(ed)ment be thought of differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?
6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' of unemploy(ed)ment been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced? (see Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 20)

2.1.2 Corpus of texts

When studying problematisations, the focus should be on practical texts that outline the rules and provide advice on how to regulate behaviour or how one should act (Foucault, 1985). Bacchi (1999) argued that policy is one of these practical texts. However, Bacchi's

approach requires the researcher to go beyond policy documents. The goal of the WPR approach is to reflect on the complex and multifarious 'strategic relations' that shape lives (Bacchi, 2012). This approach thus implies a broader than usual understanding of governing and politics. It includes the state as one player (or influence) alongside others (professionals, experts, and researchers) and looking at specific policy interventions (Bacchi, 2015). I begin with jobactive as a key corpus of texts to explore the subjects produced through the jobactive apparatus. I consider the *jobactive* Deed ('the Deed') (the contract between the Australian Government and Employment Service Providers) to be a practical text since it is a contract that outlines the framework within which Providers can operate. However, as a contract, the Deed does not include explanations for its existence. To fill this gap, I drew on service guarantees, media releases, reviews and reports that surround the development of, and initial review of, jobactive. These documents include the following:

- Firstly, I used the media release announcing the *jobactive* deed (Abbott, 2015) as a key orientating document because it outlines the reasons for the change to 'jobactive'.
- The welfare review *A new system for better employment and social outcomes* ('*welfare review'*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2015a) that was released around the same time as *jobactive*.
- I looked at the Deed (Department of Employment, 2015a) as the main text since this document outlined what 'should' and 'must' be done. As mentioned, the Deed is written in 'legalese', and so I also looked at the documents that 'translate' the Deed into 'laypeople terms' and which are relied upon by workers to interpret the Deed (ANAO, 2017). Since the 'objectives' of jobactive include 'finding a job, reducing welfare dependency, and strengthening mutual obligations, and includes the intervention strategy of WfD I looked at the following: the *Employment Services Guarantee; jobactive factsheet; WfD factsheets.* These documents are available to the public and are routinely given to job seekers by providers and other government bodies to explain the *jobactive* model. The *Guarantee* also has to be displayed at every provider office so job seekers can (potentially) read the document whenever they are attending an appointment. In this way, these documents are important for disseminating policy information to welfare recipients and providers.

2.2 The problematisation of employment services: 'helping' job seekers 'participate' in the workforce.

Although Bacchi (2012) does not suggest her questions need to be completed in a specific order, she does suggest that researchers begin with the first question. From there, researchers can decide which questions will dig 'deeper' into the problematisation of policy or proposal. I have also started with Bacchi's first question, what the 'problem' presented to be in *jobactive* policy? I have already mentioned that the main text, the Deed, provides the framework for the enactment of policy but, as a legal document, does not establish a rationale for its existence. Therefore, I will start with the media release announcing the new iteration of ES, *jobactive.*

In March 2015 the then Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced that, from July, *jobactive* would replace Job Services Australia (JSA, 2009-2015). The announcement of the *jobactive* model situated the problem, and hence the justification for the move to *jobactive*, to be in the inherently flawed Job Services Australia (JSA) model. The main concern was providers had been unable to help job seekers gain and retain employment; they were "letting job seekers down" hence the need to improve the "quality" of services by "investing $5 billion" (Abbott, 2015). *Jobactive* would make "clearer incentives" and "reward performance not process" to ensure Providers "better prepar[e] job seekers to meet the needs of local employers" (Abbott). The two problem categories, "red tape" and "training for training's sake" supposedly prohibit providers and their workers from "doing what they do best", that is, helping job seekers to "find and keep a job" (Abbott). The assumption here is that ES when functioning appropriately (i.e. as enabled through policy), *can* 'help' job seekers "find and keep a job".

The problems of excess process and ill-derived incentives are examples of the constant 'tweaking' of ES (Fowkes, 2011). Further excavation is required to study the subject positions produced through policy and policy interventions. Bacchi (2012) suggests that problem representations can be embedded within other problem representations. So, the problems of 'red tape' and 'training' are problems of how to activate the employment service providers to ensure they engage in 'best practice' when governing the unemployed. The problem of how best to govern is embedded within another problematisation, that is, why govern the unemployed in the first place? I used the WPR approach to dig deeper to locate the problem that ES generally, and *jobactive* specifically, are assembled to 'resolve'.

As stated previously, the Deed is a contract and so does not outline a rationale for its existence. However, such explanations are provided in documents discussing 'jobactive', like the Deed appendix, *Employment Services Guarantee*. I also drew on the *welfare review* to find the problematisation of ES via the assumptions that underpin the design of Australian welfare services.

The *Employment Services Guarantee*, which is a part of the *jobactive* Deed produced by the Department of Employment, states that a "range of services" are provided by the Australian Government to "help people looking for work". The *Annual Report 15-16* also provides the following rationale for *jobactive*,

> Through jobactive, the Government aims to improve sustainable employment outcomes with services to job seekers and incentives that better meet the needs of employers. Combined with clear expectations of active participation by job seekers, jobactive promotes stronger workforce participation and helps unemployed Australians to reduce their reliance on income support (Department of Employment, 2016, p. 10).

To identify the 'problem' that policy is here assembled to 'resolve' entails clarifying what is 'meant' by 'helping', and why this 'help' is constructed as being required in the first place. Following the statement above, 'helping' is based on "improv[ing]", "incentiv[ising]", making "clear expectations", "promot[ing]" and "help[ing]" job seekers to "better meet needs of employers (leading to) "sustainable employment outcomes", actively participate; participate in the workforce, and not be reliant on income support. Starting from the assumption that *jobactive* is a 'solution' to a 'problem' highlights how the unemployed subject (rather than unemployment) is considered a certain type of problem(s): unemployable (not fulfilling the 'needs' of employers), not participating 'actively', and too reliant on welfare. All three of these issues come back to assumptions about 'participation' *in the workforce*.

This 'problem' of non-participation is also locatable in the problematisation of ES (rather than just *jobactive* specifically). The review into the welfare system, *A new system for better employment and social outcomes* ('welfare review') (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b), states its "purpose [was] to identify improvements to ensure the system is sustainable, effective and coherent, and encourages people to work" (p. 5). A policy cannot be generalised to 'all' people; therefore, I searched the *welfare review* for 'who'

needs encouraging. I found a ‘problematic’ subject in the government directives for the *Review’s* independent panel*.* The panel was instructed to suggest strategies to improve the affordability, accessibility and efficiency of welfare policy as well as:

- provide incentives to work for those who can work
- adequately support those who are genuinely not able to work
- support social and economic participation through measures that build individual and family capability (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p. 6).

The criteria for the *welfare review* divides welfare recipients into those who “can work” and those who “genuinely” cannot. To expand on the contents of these categories, I searched further into the *welfare review*. The *welfare review* later specifies that those who meet a criterion of ‘genuineness’ include people with “severe disability” who are consequently, “not *expected* to work”. However, for everyone else, “there is an *expectation*” that “now or in the future” recipients “will be capable of some level of workforce participation” (Commonwealth of Australia, p. 84, my emphasis).

Participation is a fundamental component of the reviews’ conception of the purpose of policy because it is ‘expected’ by ‘society’. The *welfare review* claims that there is a “broad community acceptance” and expectation that “people who have the capacity to work should work where possible” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p. 62). ‘Participation’ in the workforce is, therefore, not just an ‘outcome’ of policy but a social norm. The need to ensure that people are ‘participating’ in the workforce is connected to the Review's position that the ‘current’ welfare system is “failing to identify groups at risk of long-term income support dependence” (p. 9) and so needs to “invest” in evidence-based ‘early-intervention’ strategies that will boost ‘employability’ to improve ‘participation’.

A running objective that links each document discussed above is the need to ensure welfare recipients are ‘participating’ in some way. Therefore, *not* participating is one main problematisation of *jobactive* and employment policy. The main task of a WPR approach is to unpack how processes produce ‘participation’ and the non/participating subject as problems. Here, the task is to examine the ‘things’ that make up this category (Bacchi, 2015). In the next section, I take up this task and look at the problem category of ‘participation’ in more detail by focusing on one of the main policy interventions, ‘mutual obligations’, to ensure job seeker do participate.

2.3 Activating the unemployed through 'mutual obligations'

In this section, I will follow Bacchi (2015) by focusing on a specific policy practice, 'mutual obligations', to excavate the 'problem' of 'participation'. I start with the premise that what we decide to do about a 'problem' is indicative of what we think needs to change. This segment draws upon understanding the problem being represented (question 1), its ontological and epistemological assumptions (question 2), how it is historically and socially contingent (question 3) and how it limits other problematisations (part of question 6). I will discuss how 'participation' is underpinned by 'activation' discourses. I discuss the continuities and discontinuities of the logics of activation. I trace how the processes of activation and compliance that render participation a concern of social, economic, law and morals, are 'strengthening' over time. That is, I discuss how job seekers are being punished for failure to participate *appropriately*. It is the nature of 'punishment' rather than the 'need' to 'activate' that is rendered questionable in the broader public debate about the 'purpose' of *jobactive*. Effectively, the 'problem' of participation is now so entrenched as 'common sense' that 'activation' and 'mutual obligations' are rarely questioned. Unsettling *how* participation comes to be a problem, therefore, is part of the critical work of this thesis to think differently about unemployment.

To begin to unpack 'participation', I use Bacchi's second question, "what deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem"? (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 20). Here I position 'activation' as a discursive practice or the "set of rules which at a given period...and society" define "what is sayable" in terms of the distinction between 'true' and 'false' (Foucault, 1991c, p. 59). In order to explicate these discursive practices of 'activation', I will also briefly address the third question of the WPR regarding the emergence of this problem presentation.

The importance of the 'need' to activate' is integral to how 'participation' is conceptualised in *jobactive* and ES. Looking horizontally across the *announcement, Employment Services Guarantee* and the *2015 welfare review* there is little suggestion that Government or Providers should find job seekers work (as would be expected in a recruitment agency or through labour-hire). Instead, the role of the State is to create a space ('improve', 'promote', 'help', 'encourage', 'incentivise') where providers can 'activate' job seekers. 'Activation' is a key epistemological assumption about why focus on getting the unemployed to 'participate' as well as 'how' to ensure they 'participate' in a pre-established 'right' way.

‘Activation’ is fundamental to welfare policy so much so that it is ‘common sense’ (Morris & Wilson, 2014). The point of activation practices is to motivate the unemployed to ‘actively’ find work (Department of Employment, 2015a; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2012; Sage, 2013). Indeed, in Australian welfare practices the idea that the unemployed ‘need’ to be ‘activated’ is indisputable since, as the *welfare review* points out, “activation works” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p.6). Although some researchers have suggested caution when interpreting claims regarding the effectiveness of ‘activation’ interventions (Frings-sen, Hoving, Audhoe, & Sluiter, 2010); others have argued that not only do these interventions speed the re-employment process but also may help to mitigate the detrimental ‘psychological consequences’ of being unemployed (Sage, 2013; Creed, Machin & Hicks, 1999). ‘Activating’ to increase re-employment ignores the fact that there are not enough jobs for all the unemployed, and that unemployment, in macro-economic terms, is needed to keep inflation in check, or so the theory goes (Stambe & Fryer, 2015).

Nevertheless, I do not want to discuss whether ‘activation works’ or not but how ‘activation’ renders unemployment and the unemployed subject a certain kind of problem. Indeed, ‘activation’ is integral to unpacking the ‘contents’ and take for granted assumptions of the problematisation of participation. The following section looks at the emergence of activation practices through a brief historical problematisation. I look at how the relationship between the emergence of activation-informed welfare practices occurred alongside the increasing influence of neoliberal political rationality and a changing Australian market.

2.3.1 Activation as a remedy: making ‘supply’ the ‘problem’ of unemployment

Although there has been some unemployment benefit in Australia since 1945, we can identify continuities and discontinuities between the original scheme to the current model *jobactive*. These changes follow shifting ideas and assumptions about ES, the role of the market, and State intervention into society**.** Namely, the main change from the original unemployment benefits scheme (from the *Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act 1945*, [Cwlth]) is the relocation of the ‘problem’ of unemployment from ‘unemployment’ as an economic concern to the ‘unemployed’ as ‘passive’ and lacking ‘job readiness’.

Originally, unemployment benefits were designed on the assumption that ‘unemployment’ was a problem of macroeconomics. At the time, there was an assumption that the market

would maintain job demand. For example, such assumptions were made explicit in the Harvester Judgement that established a living-wage and as such prioritised not only a (white) male's wages as a breadwinner but also assumed job demand would be assured by the market (Donnell, 2015). However, it was also assumed that the Government could and should intervene in the market to stimulate demand. So much so pursuing full employment was Government policy (Commonwealth of Australia white papers, 1945 as cited in Coombs, 1994). These core assumptions remained for the next few decades, and it was not until the 1980's that substantial changes to unemployment benefits coincided with a major shift in the underlying assumptions.

The unemployment benefit scheme was mostly unaltered from 1945 until the mid-1970s, but the significant change to the underpinning assumptions about how best to 'deal' with this 'problem' occurred in the 1980s with the 'active employment strategy' (Ey, 2012). A major shift in the assumptions that underpin the rationale for, design, and allocation of unemployment benefits is connected to the issue of 'conditionality'. Unemployment benefits have always been conditional in Australia. However, with the 'active employment strategy' (Ey, 2012), the unemployed had to satisfy the 'activity test' instead of the 'work test'. The 'work test' allowed the Director-General to cancel the payment of an unemployment benefit if the recipient was voluntarily unemployed "without good and sufficient reason", was unemployed due to misconduct or had "refused or failed, without good and sufficient reason, to accept an office of employment which the Director-General considers to be suitable" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1945, Section 28). As Donnell (2015), pointed outthat the 1945 legislation breaks with trade union pre-war out-of-work schemes that would provide support for members to delay employment until they found work that suited their current occupation or trade. The 'work test' prioritised getting any reasonable job over getting a specific trade-appropriate job. The 'work test' demonstrates how unemployment was constituted as *involuntary* lack of work as before yet provided a shift in discourse by emphasising 'any reasonable job'.

By the 1980s 'unemployment' came to regarded as a problem of the individual than lack of demand. In the late 1980s, unemployment was high after three decades of trending at 2% (it was not until the 1970s that unemployment started heading towards 6%) (Marston et al., 2014). Factors that are often put forward to explain the increase in unemployment include: changes in the structure of the Australian economy, such as the decline of manufacturing, offshoring of production, the increased presence of women in the labour

market, the higher part-time/ casual work/hire labour, and the removal of achieving full employment as a policy aim (Coombs, 1994). According to the *Social Security Review* (referred to as the *Cass Review*, after the lead author, Cass, Gibson & Tito, 1988), this economic backdrop meant the 'work test' "becomes a meaningless activity". It was meaningless because "the likelihood of a positive outcome is low" and does nothing to fix the supposed incongruence between the skills of labour and the skills required by the market (structural unemployment).

In addition to these concerns about the fruitlessness of the work test and lack of a skilled surplus labour force is the problem of the 'discouraged'. That is, Cass, Gibson and Tito argued that the "effects of unemployment on behaviour and motivation" such as demoralisation, low self-esteem, poor motivation and so forth, meant that the 'work test' was not sufficient and did not produce a ready and able surplus labour pool. The solution, according to *Cass Review* (Cass, Gibson & Tito, 1988, p. 146) was to make the unemployment social security a "job search program" whereby unemployed should be taught the skills and attributes required for successful and sustained job search activities. They argued more "positive intervention" (p. 133) such as frequent appointments with ES or 'job clubs' would keep the job seeker 'on track' to find employment and could counter the 'effects' of being unemployed.

The *Cass Review* was influential on welfare policy and ensuring job seekers' take 'active steps' became central to welfare 'service' provision (Watts, 2016). This shift in Australian welfare policy was contingent on other trends in political and economic thought that were (and still are) occupying policy discussions both in Australia and in other Global North countries. The OECD encouraged member states to implement an 'active society' framework (Watts, 1989). Indeed, the Cass review mirrors the OECD (1990) concern that the 'passive welfare state' renders people 'demoralised', 'dependant' and accordingly increases social exclusion (O'Conner, 2001). The solution was this 'active society' and 'activation' which was premised on leaving the market to its own devices (and not pursuing full employment) (Dean, 2006). Even though there was still evidence that demand was at least part of the problem (Cook**,** 2005), individual explanations for unemployment were deemed to be the most satisfactory.

In this way, the main problematisation hides some of the other issues with finding a job. For example, ageism (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015), and racism (Booth,

Lee & Varganova, 2012) are problems with hiring practices in Australia. Still, the assumptions of policy maintain that if you are *actively* looking for a job, any job, then you should find one. As a consequence, the unemployed are not just 'passive' but 'deficit'. The unemployed are assumed to be lacking the vital characteristics that are otherwise present in the working population (Marston & McDonald, 2008). The purpose of employment service provision in Australia changed from assuming involuntary unemployment and intervention to help people into jobs to an assumption that unemployment is voluntary and service provision should be aimed at improving 'job readiness' and motivation. Discourses of activation *produce* the passive, demoralised and unconfident subject as the problem. As I will discuss in a later section of this chapter, failure to find or accept a job will result in increased financial penalties. The move to authoritarian governmentality relies on the assumptions that people who do not have a job choose to do so, and therefore, it is 'reasonable' for the State to punish them.

The problematisation of the passive subject can be located in the Deed insofar as the contract outlines a framework for what is allowed to be 'done' to, with, and for, job seekers. The Deed outlines the 'practicalities' of activating, although the Deed does not use the term 'active*' very often, and it does not mention 'activation' explicitly. However, tracing the uses of the term 'active' in the Deed can highlight how the problematising of the unemployed subject is 'sayable' through 'activation' and manifests at the crossroads of discourse, practice, legislation, intervention, social norms and technology via 'mutual obligations'.

When searching through the Deed, there are 27 uses of the term 'active*' 20 of which are references to 'jobactive''. The other seven are used about jobseekers and providers. In these instances, 'active' is an operative word. Firstly, 'self-service' job seekers (considered to be 'job ready' in the initial six months of the program) should "undertake active and ongoing job searching" (Department of Employment, 2015a, p. 85). In line with the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) definition of 'unemployment', job search is only counted as such if it involved, "active contact with a potential employer to apply for a job, and includes a contact by phone or in person, by submitting a written application, or by attending a job interview" (p. 61).

'Mutual obligations' enforce these expectations. Mutual obligations are requirements job seekers must meet in order to keep receiving their income support. In the Deed, there are

two more references to ‘active’; these relate to the responsibility of the Providers to “actively monitor” job seekers’ mutual obligations. Mutual obligations here include job seekers:

- Attendance at appointments,
- enter into a current Job Plan,
- undertaking job searches,
- fulfilling of their Annual Activity Requirement and
- any other compulsory activity included in their Job Plan and as notified to them (p. 113)

In the *jobactive Factsheet,* it states these ‘mutual obligations’ are designed to “ensure job seekers remain active and engaged *while* looking for work” (Department of Employment, 2015b, my emphasis). In this way, enforcing ‘participation’ is more than ensuring job seekers seek jobs but also *attend* appointments, *enter* into a Job Plan, *fulfil* their annual activity requirement (like work for the dole, WfD) or other compulsory activity (as specified in the Job Plan). Here, being ‘active’ is operationalised into behaviours that can be observed, monitored and enforced. As I will go onto discuss, breaking participation and activation into these governable micro practices is legitimised through the *Social Security Act*, but also through ‘regimes of truth’. The unemployed *should* attend appointments with their provider because it is assumed they ‘need’ to be ‘activated’, they ‘should’ be activated, the provider has the skill set to activate, and non-compliance is a direct violation of responsible citizenship. These assumptions legitimate increasing punitive activation strategies.

In the section below, I bring together question two (looking at assumptions) with the first part of question six, “how and where has this representation of the ‘problem been produced, disseminated and defended?”. I look at the practice of ‘mutual obligations’ and how it connects ‘activation’ with ‘citizenship’.

2.3.2 Merging discourses of ‘activation’ with moral citizenship.

The concept of ‘mutual obligations’ was introduced in the late 1990s. The introduction of ‘mutual obligations’ relates to the privatisation and quasi-marketisation of ES. In 1998 the private ‘Job Network’ replaced the public Commonwealth ES (CES, Senate, 2009). Job network was initiated on the premise that exposing ES to a competitive market space would improve the quality of services and outcomes reached as well as increase choice for job seekers (Keating, 1994; Productivity Commission, 2002). The changes to ES, therefore, is in line with international changes referred to as ‘new public management’ that

introduces ideas from the private sector to reduce costs and improve efficiency (Considine, O'Sullivan & Nguyen, 2014). 'Mutual obligations' was based on the idea that the unemployed have responsibilities to fulfil in return for the receipt of social security. This included actively looking for work, and improving their job competitiveness as well as "give[ing] something back to the community that supports them" (Yeend, 2004, para. 3). In effect, providers are also contracted to enforce compliance and ensure that the unemployed are 'participating' as 'good citizens'.

In addition to 'fairness', the idea of mutual obligation is presented as the unemployed 'giving back' to society. The implicit idea here is that citizens enter into a 'social contract' that stipulates as a reciprocal relationship between the citizen and the state. To be considered a 'good' citizen, the subject must embody the principles of activeness, responsibility and individual autonomy. Moreover, neoliberalism is based on the assumption that "those who refuse to become responsible and govern themselves ethically have also refused the offer to become members of our moral community" (Rose, 2000, p. 1407). Here job seekers are divided from 'taxpayers'. As will be discussed in more detail below, failure to comply with the worker-citizen discourse is punishable by a measure which may have a substantial impact on the subject and the lives they can live.

Part of the objectives of jobactive was to "[i]ncrease jobseeker engagement by introducing stronger mutual obligation requirements" (Department of Employment 2015c, p. 11). These 'mutual obligations' tie 'activation' to citizenship by making the receipt of unemployment benefits conditional on demonstration of becoming the ideal unemployed subject. While connected to the idea of 'activating' to avoid a 'risky' subject, the surveillance, enforcement of, and endeavour to 'strengthen' mutual obligations presents job seekers as a problem

'Mutual obligation' as a term was introduced into the policy sphere via the *Participation Support for a more equitable Australia: Final Report* (McClure, 2000) and was materialised under Job Network. However, the idea that welfare recipients have 'obligations' in order to receive income support was not novel. Both the *Cass Review* (Cass, Gibson & Tito, 1988) and the 1994 *Working Nation* white paper on unemployment discussed a similar concept, 'reciprocal obligations'. Harris (2001) maintained that there are similarities and differences between the 'mutual' and 'reciprocal' obligations. He suggested that *Working Nation* and the *Cass Review* did not challenge the view that, as citizens, the unemployed were 'entitled' to

support from the State. Harris suggests that with the privatisation of ES in 1998, the assumption that the State has a responsibility to the support the unemployed started to diminish. Indeed, critics of the privatisation of ES have noted that the structure of contractual arrangements lacks transparency with clauses such as 'commercial-in-confidence[9]', undermining the possibility to hold the State and provider organisations accountable (see Farrow, Hurley, & Sturrock, 2015).

Mutual obligations tied conditionality to accepting 'suitable' job offers that has always been a part of a commonwealth unemployment benefit scheme (as I mentioned above). However, with the changing assumptions about the role of the State and the individual, accepting a job offer placed a moral burden on the unemployed. Moreover, the introduction of mutual obligations assumed that it was only "fair that clients take up reasonable offers of employment" (DEET, 1992, p. 21, as cited in Harris, 2001). Mutual obligations seems to only apply to job seekers, and not to the State to improve demand or to employers.

The same principle, 'fairness', is discernible in the *welfare review* that states "participation expectations" of job seekers' mutual obligations need to be "clear and fair" that "people with the capacity to work seek to become more self-reliant" (p.133). The welfare review makes clear that these 'expectations' of developing 'self-reliance' are connected to our "responsibility to work" (p. 33). 'Participation' is, therefore, more than 'motivating' a person to find a job and to 'participate' in the services provided by *jobactive* provider organisations but also about fulfilling one's role according to a 'social contract' and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Failure to comply with these "participation expectations" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p. 133) can result in a financial penalty for job seekers.

2.3.3 'Strengthening' mutual obligation by punishing non-participation

The introduction of *jobactive* is a key moment to locate how the logics of activation intercept with moral discourses and technologies to legitimate punishing job seekers for not participating in the market. Indeed, the changes to the ES model via the introduction of *jobactive* occurred alongside automated processes to penalise job seekers for not attending appointments and political promises to change legislation to continue to 'strengthen' mutual obligations and punish those who do not comply.

[9] The 'commercial-in-confidence' clause also reduced my access during fieldwork, for discussion see Chapter Five.

Several changes were suggested, and others were successfully introduced in order to 'strengthen' mutual obligations under *jobactive.* The main element used to 'strengthen' obligations was increasing the opportunity to implement financial penalties. I focus on the two compliance activities that received the most attention. Firstly, I discuss the changes there were successfully made to ensure job seekers attended and 'participated' at appointments with providers. Secondly, I discuss how the conditions for authoritarian governmentality of the unemployed is taking place via attempts to 'strengthen' job seeker compliance. 'Strengthening' mutual obligations equates to increasing the punitive aspects of service provision, punishing the unemployed for not meeting the moral obligations to 'participate' economically and socially in contemporary Australia.

There were three changes made with *jobactive* to ensure job seekers complied with their mutual obligation to attend and participate. This three-step process included the Non-Attendance Report (NAR) (which was introduced in the later part of 2014), 'suspend til attend' policy (which was introduced in early 2015) and the alterations to the participation report (that became active in July 2015 with the start of *jobactive*). The NAR was an automatic suspension of a payment initiated when providers reported a job seeker to the State (via Centrelink) for not attending an appointment. The 'suspend until attend' policy meant job seekers' income would be suspended until they attended a 'reengagement' appointment. Finally, the 'provider appointment report' (part of the participation report) allowed providers to recommend job seekers incur a financial penalty for non-attendance or "inappropriate" behaviour at appointment or another mutual obligation activity (like WfD) (Department of Employment, n.d.). "Strengthening' mutual obligations was operationalised by increasing the potential to penalise job seekers. This included trying to remove 'waivers' for these penalties like with the 'serious failures' charge.

Removing the waiver for a serious penalty was a failed attempt to widen the scope to penalise job seekers. 'Serious failures' include persistent non-compliance with participation obligations or not accepting an offer of suitable employment, and not coming to appointments or completing adequate job search. The penalty for 'serious failures' was a loss of eight-weeks income. However, this penalty could be waived if it was deemed that the job seeker was experiencing financial hardship or if the job seeker selected to complete an alternative activity (such as work experience or WfD, approved training or intensive job search) (Commonwealth of Australia, 1991, section 42). This waiver was implemented under Job Services Australia to reduce the severity of financial penalties for

vulnerable job seekers (Thomas, 2014). Such concerns included the risk that already disadvantaged job seekers would disengage from the labour market, as well as the possible additional demands placed on community services, health, housing and justice sectors (DEEWR, 2010). I have included a brief discussion of this failed attempt because it is a telling example of the assumptions that underpin mutual obligations (question two) and the rationale for 'strengthening' them.

The *Social Security Amendment (Stronger Penalties for Serious Failures) Bill* ('Stronger Penalties') (Parliament of Australia, 2014 p. 11) proposed to remove the waiver for job seekers who refuse work and only allow persistent non-compliant job seeker one opportunity to waive the 8-week penalty. 'Stronger Penalties' was justified on the ground that it is a 'human right to work' and that the Bill "encourages" job seekers to "engage with their right to work by providing a stronger incentive to accept an offer of suitable work". In doing so "more job seekers experience the benefits of employment" such as "social and economic inclusions". Moreover, the Bill was presented as complying with the 'right to work' in terms of the right to choose what sort of work, since incurring serious penalty suggests "the person is employable, and they are likely to have other choices as to what work they do" (Parliament of Australia, 2014 p. 11). These changes were presented as 'needed' because the procedure at the time (opportunity to waive penalties and reinstate payments at reconnecting appointments) failed to incentivise job seekers to comply with their mutual obligations (Thomas, 2018).

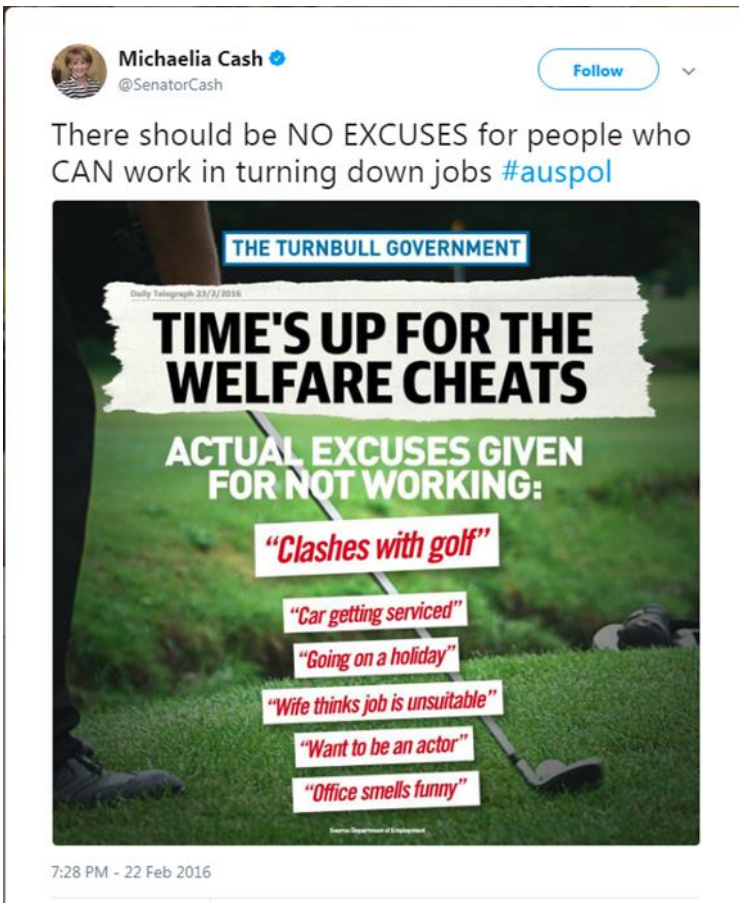

Figure 2.1 Former Minister for Employment M. Cash expressing her concern about job seekers not taking up 'suitable employment.'

At a discursive level, the proposed removal of the waiver, would “uphold the fundamental principle that taxpayer-funded income support payments are provided as a safety net” for people who are “genuine”, and they are not “an option for people who have been offered a job but simply refuse to work” (Department of Employment, 2015d, p.9). Indeed, the option of a waiver is presented as an “insufficient deterrent to refusing work” (Thomas, 2018, para. 4). The distinction made between ‘genuine’ job seekers and those who are choosing not to work is reinforced through the Government using social media to advocate for removing the waiver (see Figure one. Here, those job seekers who ‘simply refuse’ to work are regarded as ‘welfare cheats’. When positioning the unemployed, or a segment of unemployed, as deliberately defying the rules of mutual obligations, there is also the suggestion ‘welfare cheats’ are rejecting their implicit social contract agreements. The implication that people are choosing not to work justifies increasing punitive measures of activation. However, it is also an example of the ‘emotional’ component of policy where the subjects of policy are supposed to ‘feel’ a certain way (Southgate & Bennett, 2014). In the spaces of ES, *jobactive* policy involves governing the unemployed to ensure they ‘feel’ motivated to constitute job searching as I discuss later in this chapter (and in Chapter Six).

Here, however, social media campaigns show how ‘emotions’ are part of the arsenal to mark out and publicly shame job seekers who refuse to participate as moral members of society.

The ‘strengthening’ of mutual obligations suggest that these requirements were not strong enough. The role of the State here is to intervene, via legislation, to ensure job seekers are compliant active citizens, punishing those who are not. This ‘stronger’ approach to disciplining the unemployed is in stark contrast to the recommendations from the *welfare review*. The *review* presented mutual obligations as “one of a range of tools” that should be wielded by service providers (although it is the Department of Human Services, via Centrelink, that actually enforces mutual obligations through sanctions) to “tailor an individual’s support package” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p. 132).

Critiques of ES repeatedly raise concerns about the contradiction between providing ‘support’ and ‘punishing’ job seekers. As guided by Bacchi’s question, the dissemination of the ‘problem’ of ‘participation’ is represented through the ‘node’ of legislation, providing authority and justification for sanction practices. The measures suggested by the Government are problematised for their ‘harshness’ since removal would lead to financial hardship (ACOSS, 2015). Other critics point out such measure assumes a level playing field and thereby ignore social disadvantage and barriers (Goodwin-Smith & Hutchinson, 2015). Similarly, critics point out that the Government’s focus on supply, without sufficient focus on demand, penalise job seekers for the failure of the market (Australian Workers’ Union, AUWU, 2015).

There are further suggestions that the requirement for employment consultants to monitor compliance undermines the role of employment consultants to develop ‘self-efficacy’ within job seekers (Marston & McDonald, 2008). Indeed, some advocates of a Universal Basic Income argue for a complete overhaul (even eradication) of ES and the aspects of conditionality. They argue that the current punitive practices are potentially harmful (increasing financial hardship) and irrelevant in a labour market that is increasing precarious (with more people working part-time, high underemployment levels and the changing landscape of potential jobs with increasing technologisation of work) (see Watts, 2016).

To summarise this section, *jobactive* is a key moment to examine how activation, work first, and conditionality (mutual obligations) produce unemployment as the fault of the individual via 'participation'. The shift to the 'activity' test moved the gaze from macroeconomics to the unemployed individual. Alongside the objectives of an 'active society', the onus to induce behavioural changes in the unemployed was intended to keep the unemployed attached to the labour market and avoid demoralisation. With the introduction of mutual obligations, 'activation', while always tied to conditionality, became a routinised and monitorable practice. Additionally, the privatisation of ES in Australia meant the enforcement of mutual obligations was contracted to organisations that are incentivised to meet key performance indicators to increase funding received. As argued by (Bredgaard & Larsen, 2007) incentivising private organisations to find "the quickest route possible" (p. 294) to (re)employ job seekers makes it easier to implement welfare conditionality than is possible in the public sector.

Jobactive is also a key moment for the 'strengthening' of mutual obligations via increasing financial penalties. Making these penalties effective "immediately" from automated processes or removing the opportunity to apply a waiver reduces discretion and human intervention (McGann, Nguyen, & Considine, 2019). Mutual obligations are being discursively reframed via technologies of legislation, automation, and affect. In effect, reframing mutual obligations this way reshapes the 'condition of possibilities' making it harder to think of unemployment as anything but failure to 'participate' 'economically' or 'socially'. In the section below, I will elaborate on this point by discussing the fourth part of the *WPR* approach, "What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this [participation] representation of the 'problem'?" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). I will discuss two subject positions that are produced through *jobactive* and the *welfare review*: the keen job seeker who 'desires' work and the disadvantaged and despairing subject.

2.4 Making and unmaking affective subjects for the market

While the announcement of *jobactive* situated the previous iterations of ES as problematic and ineffective, the objectives of *jobactive* represented non-participation as the problem to be solved by policy intervention. Of course, a 'problem' of 'participation' begs the question of 'who' is/is not 'participating' in the 'right' ways? Moreover, how is this person defined, made visible, assessed and reformed? The practices of policy produce a certain subject, and in *jobactive* policy, the 'unemployed' is produced as a 'problem. Hence, a 'solution' to the 'problem' of the 'unemployed' is made both 'simple' and 'necessary'. In this way,

jobactive policy both 'makes' and 'unmakes' the unemployed subject (Bacchi & Goodman, 2016). In other words, starting with the 'problem' of the non/participating subject, we can trace the 'becoming-other' via the 'lines of subjectification' (Deleuze, 1992). These processes are an assumed subjectivity (Clarke, 2007) and not a 'guarantee' of individual self-governing practices. Yet, they are still important to study since *jobactive* governing practices shape the 'modes of existence' and set the 'rules of the game' for intervention practices. These practices therefore not only allow for certain subject positions to be 'taken up' but they also have lived consequences for those being 'activated' (especially if the subject does not self-govern in prescribed ways).

The WPR approach provides a heuristic device to interrogate how particular problem representations shape subjects and their lives. The three interconnected 'effects' of policy are discursive effects which limit what can be said and done; subjectification effects or how subjectivities are constituted in discourse and; lived effects are the material results from policy implementation. I drew on the changes to the format of service delivery under *jobactive* to study subjectification via policy interventions (Bacchi, 2015). Under *jobactive* job seekers were to be 'serviced' or 'helped' through providers service delivery plans that were to be organised as 6-monthly alternating phases of case management and work for the dole (WfD). Through these policy interventions, I discuss below two central subject positions: the 'keen subject' and the 'disadvantaged (and despairing) subject'.

2.4.1 Subject position 1: Keen as mustard: cultivating the 'desire' for work

In the above section, I have discussed 'participation' as the main problematisation of both the *jobactive* Deed but for the *welfare review.* As well as being a policy outcome, in participation is a "core value" of welfare policy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, p.6). Specifically, the value of 'participation' is about "supporting people to participate both economically and socially and to engage with employers, and the wider community (p. 6).

The problem representation of 'participation' is divided into two problem categories: economic and social participation. On the one hand, this sounds like the policy is expanding on the 'types' of participation. However, as I go on to illuminate, the problem of social participation is intertwined with economic priorities that frame citizens as 'worker-citizens.' As has been noted in previous discussions about ES since the 'activation' took hold as 'common sense', 'being a 'worker-citizen' means the unemployed must work on themselves to 'become-other'. It is the increased requirement for work for the dole (WfD)

and the emphasis for job seekers to ‘become’ ‘keen’. Here I will discuss a change made with *jobactive* that has discursive, subjectification and lived effects for job seekers.

Most job seekers would have mutual obligations, and for many, their annual activity requirement would consist of completing WfD. WfD was initially introduced in 1998 unemployed aged between 18 and 24. It was expanded to the unemployed under 49 by 2000. Under *jobactive,* the WfD requirements were increased to every six months, for six months, for most job seekers. Previously, under JSA, WfD (which was called ‘work experience’) was only for the long term unemployed (people who had received welfare payments for at least 12 months). WfD sees job seekers engaging in 6 months of volunteer-work, usually in charity organisations, for a certain number of hours (up to 25 hours a week).

The purpose of WfD was expressed as,

> Work for the Dole will be rolled out nationally to help job seekers to learn new skills and remain socially active and engaged while looking for work. Work for the Dole allows job seekers to show that they are keen and willing to work while also giving something back to the community that is supporting them (Abbott, 2015).

Following the above rationale for increasing WfD, the policy intervention situates ‘participation as a problem that WfD supposedly solves. However, here ‘participation’ is more than ‘looking for work’. Indeed, WfD sees ‘participation’ as job seekers being “socially active and engaged’ *while* they look for work. Social participation is constituted of two things: the imperative to ‘give back’ to the community that is ‘supporting them’ (read: taxpayers) and to demonstrate that they are “willing” and “*keen*” to work.

Dean (1995) researched the early changes to ES and he argued that the unemployed subject was discursively transformed into a ‘job seeker’ through practices of activation. Foucault (1991c) once described discourse is the “law of...difference” (p.63) that separates what it is possible to say correctly and what is said. It is ‘possible’ to say many things about the unemployed (as a problem or not). In reference to WfD, what is ‘actually said’ constitutes the unemployed as on the fringes of citizenship, lacking skills and appropriate affectivity.

The unemployed are assumed to be in ‘debt’ to the income-tax paying community which presupposes paying income tax accords ‘citizens’ rights that are not accorded to the ‘unemployed’. Further, the unemployed need to be encouraged to ‘participate’ in a prescribed ‘social’ way that is intimately tied to the economy since WfD placements are supposed to be a “work experience” program (Department of Employment, 2015e, p. 1). The unemployed are supposed to perform a particular type of affective subject: to be ‘active’ is to be emotionally attached to the labour market. j*obactive* is about reconstituting ‘job seekers’ to be certain types of emotional subjects, by encouraging people to *feel* a certain way about themselves, the labour market, and the duties of citizenship.

To be ‘keen’ to work is more than looking for and being willing to work. *Keenness* invokes an eager and enthusiastic subject. The discursive practices of WfD assume that the unemployed need to ‘become’ active, enthusiastic job seekers who, sitting precariously on the fringes of the labour market and citizenship, ‘give something back’ to the ‘community’. Subjectively, the unemployed should embody this engaged, eager, earnest subject position lest they demonstrate a ‘selfishness’ or ‘sense of entitlement, which society supposedly no longer tolerates (Hockey, 2012). Indeed, to survive in an increasingly volatile, precarious labour market (Standing, 2014) job seekers need to develop themselves as entrepreneurs of the self who have the ‘resilience’ and ‘right’ ‘attitude’ to cycle through periods of employment and unemployment (Boland & Griffin, 2015). By not taking up this ideal subject position, the unemployed mark themselves out as poor non-citizens who do not deserve State (and taxpayer) support.

In the second part of her sixth ‘question’ Bacchi encourages researchers to attend to dissenting voices to explore how problematisations have been (or could be) disrupted (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 20). I merge this question with the question of the ‘lived effects’ of the WfD policy intervention. One main critique of the WfD program is that it is pitched as equipping job seekers for ‘work’ via ‘work-like experiences’ but does not provide job seekers with any transferable skills (Brennan, 2000). Moreover, the WfD requirements did not lead to a substantial increase in job seekers gaining employment. According to government-funded research (Kellard et al., 2015), there was a 7% increase rate of casual/part-time employment (baseline of 13%). This last increase was partly attributed to job seekers realising that reporting their casual/part-time income reduced their activity requirements (and thus WfD requirements). Although this does not explain the entire increase in this type of work reported, WfD providing an incentive to job seekers to report

their previously unreported income is considered by the Department to be a positive outcome (p. 89). However, there was a 2% increase in the probability that job seekers would find a job placement (controlling for other factors, baseline 14%) and another 2% increase in people coming off social security payments compared to what would occur without WfD (from a baseline of 13%).

When asked during a Senate committee (Senate, 2016) if WfD should be removed because it did not produce ideal outcomes, a Government representative clarified what an ideal outcome was. Positive outcomes related to personal development as measured via a survey with respondents stating they had an increased self-confidence and "desire" for work (p.73) along with other 'soft skills' such as learning to work in a team and skills of reliability (p.60). The success of the WfD evaluation, although restricted because the evaluation was of short duration, centred on the subjectification of the participants into a desiring subject who wants to work. Although the research did not assess whether these same participants did not 'desire' to work previously to going on the program, the conclusion nevertheless assumes that the passive subject has been changed.

The passive subject is also reproduced in the evaluation of WfD, which spends time examining a portion of WfD participants who failed to comply (not turning up to WfD activities or not participating on-site). Non-compliance was partly attributed to poor attitudes, having to 'work for the dole' rather than appreciating the "benefits" of the program (p. 90). The changes to an 'activation' discourse whereby the focus is on ensuring job seekers are actively looking for work and working upon themselves (including improving their 'desire' through programs like WfD) coincide with an increasing conditionality of social security payment (Marston, 2014). That is, "If you are required to complete Work for the Dole or another approved activity and don't participate, your income support may be reduced or stopped." (Department of Employment, 2015e, p. 2).

WfD requires the co-ordination of several elements to function. There is, firstly, a 'need' to 'activate' the subject and ensure they are seen to be participating socially ("giving back"). In programs like WfD we can trace the ideas about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and those of the State (as it does in 'case management', I discuss this below, and in Chapter Seven but see also McDonald & Marston, 2005). Policy produces the problem that these 'needs' can be 'solved' and establishes a framework for the 'solution'. The policy authorises individual providers to administer WfD via legal contracts and holds

them accountable via the same. Job seekers are beholden to their 'mutual obligations' by a legal contact, the 'Job Plan'. Indeed, the law works in tandem with policy to put in place procedures and punishments (via the *Social Security Act, 1992*).

These punishments are activated by governing agents monitoring and documenting punishable behaviours. Technologies provide the means to see, assess, and document these behaviours, and provide the means to communicate across the workplace and government departments. Some technologies are general to *jobactive*, like the Job Seeker Classification Instrument. Other forms, criteria, and risk management devices are created 'fit'-for-purpose. Complex procedures and practices are put in place by governmental agencies which need to be enacted by workers (for example of how ridiculously complicated WfD gets, see Figure - invoicing system). Workers must also monitor job seeker placements to ensure that job seekers are completing tasks that align with the objectives of the program (Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2018c). Organisational policies and procedures, therefore, are also part of the WfD arm of the *jobactive* 'technical machine'. This arm hooks into other apparatuses. Workers need to ensure that WfD placements comply with employment law (for example, job seekers cannot be asked to do something outside of their qualifications) or workplace health and safety. As demonstrated with the ruling against NEATO (a *jobactive* provider who placed a job seeker, Josh Park-Fing in a WfD placement, where he suffered a fatal accident), WfD placements are governed by a workplace safety apparatus so ES providers and host organisations have a legal responsibility to ensure WfD placements are safe work environments (Workcover, 2018). Additionally, WfD provides scope for philanthropy, where non-for-profit companies or government agencies can present themselves as 'host organisations' as long as the 'work' does not replace paid workers (Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2018d). WfD has a role in helping productivity by allowing "organisations to undertake projects or activities which they might otherwise not have the capacity to do" (Department of Employment, 2015f, p. 2).

The responsibilisation of the individual is a fundamental component of neoliberal political rationality. The policy intervention of WfD problematises job seekers as inactivated but also as needing to take responsibility and 'participate' economically and socially in prescribed ways in order to receive their social security payments. Various components of *jobactive* hang together and work in a machine-like way to 'make up' job seekers in this vision of a responsible 'denizen'. WfD is illustrative of how the unemployed subject is

made both *psychologically* and *emotionally* comprehensive and governable. However, it is possible to dig deeper to read how the unemployed subject is assumed to be psychologically and emotionally deficit. I turn to this issue of the 'despairing' unemployed in the next section.

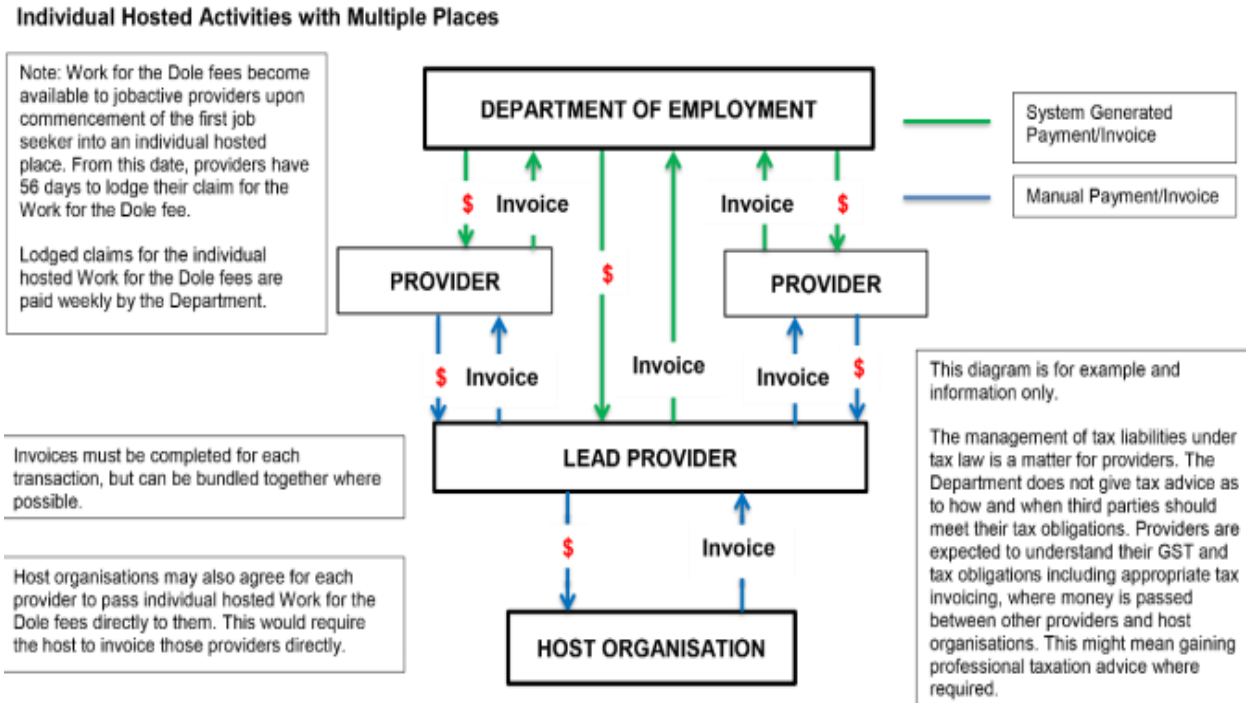

Figure 2.2 Invoicing diagram from the Department of Employment as reproduced by Jobs Australia (2016, p. 2)

2.4.2 Subject position 2: (Let) down and (missing) out: the despairing and disadvantaged job seeker

As discussed previously, *jobactive* policy organised service provision with two alternating 6-monthly phases of case management and WfD (Department of Employment, 2015a). I elaborated on the subject position made available by WfD in the previous section. In this section, I will use Bacchi's problematisation and the fifth question of policy 'effects' to discuss the "current" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 164) part of the lines of subjectification that the *jobactive* apparatus is assembled to resolve. Discourses of activation and 'work first' manifest to constitute and enable 'case management' to produce the 'despairing' unemployed subject. In this section, I also highlight how the psy-complex forms part of the "system of relations" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 194) that produce the unemployed as a problem.

Case management and the role of employment consultants is a key to understanding the changes made to ES and the now 'common sense' approach of 'activation' (Van Berkel & Van der Aa, 2012). Case management is constituted of personal interactions that assume workers can motivate the unemployed to look for work and self-govern to improve employability. Indeed, the problem of the unemployed as a dangerously discouraged job seeker is placed at the centre of case management practices, rendering the unemployed 'deficit' and in 'need' of 'psy-informed' 'help'. Such practices rely on the Jahoda (1971) legacy in the psychology of unemployment literature that unemployment deprives people of the benefits of employment (see also Chapter Three).

The *jobactive* deed provides the 'rules of the game' for providers to organise their spaces, develop 'innovative' service delivery programs, and use discretion to attune these practices to individual 'needs'. The quasi-marketisation of ES was initiated on the premise that exposing ES to a competitive market would improve the quality of services and outcomes reached as well as increase choice for jobseekers (Keating, 1994; Productivity Commission, 2002). The outsourcing of ES was envisioned to allow providers the flexibility and discretion to "pursue more innovative problems faced by job seekers in securing employment" (Department for Employment, Education & Welfare Relations, DEEWR, sub 43, p. 18, as cited in Productivity Commission, 2002, p. 3.8). Employment Consultants can use 'discretion' to take into consideration the mitigating circumstances of the jobseeker and the realities of the local labour market (Department of Employment, 2015a). *Jobactive,* as spelt out in the *Employment Service Guarantee,* should provide job seekers with individualised servicing and, in terms of subjectification, individualise job seekers since the focus is on identifying personalised 'needs' and 'wants'.

Who defines these 'needs' is clear in Table 1, highlighting the 'verbs' used in the *Employment Services Guarantee* attached to *jobactive*. The decisions are made by the consultants, about 'needs', 'strengths', 'matching' and 'referring'. Workers here are produced as certain types of experts in being able to do such 'defining'. Job seekers, on the other hand, have to do 'everything [they] have agreed to do' - complete activities and so forth. They have to 'make every effort' (activity test) and 'accept any (suitable) job offer' (work test). Discursively, job seekers here are only allowed 'agency' if the object of that agency is finding a 'job'.

The imperative for job seekers' 'needs' and 'goals' to be incorporated into service delivery is not novel to *jobactive* and indeed was a component in previous policy including working nation, Job Network and Job Services Australia (Considine, 1999; Fowkes, 2011). Across time, evaluations of ES have lamented the lack of individually tailored practices and the recommended increased focus on improving the individualised aspect of case management (APESAA, 2012; Cass, 1988; DEEWR, 2008). A recent example, is research argued that ES runs a "two-speed nature of outcomes": one that provides "adequate results" for frictionally unemployed "at a low cost" but has "major shortcomings" by "chronically underperforming" when it comes to working with the "complex critical cases of disadvantage". Indeed this "failure" to 'help' the disadvantaged "appears entrenched" (Farrow, Hurley, & Sturrock, 2015, p. 25).

'Helping' the unemployed in this context relies on the assumptions that the 'unemployed' as 'individual 'people' should have their 'needs' 'listened to' and 'addressed' leaving them feeling 'empowered' (Neville, 2013). The telos of 'empowerment', improved 'self-efficacy' (Marston, & McDonald, 2008), or 'resilience' (Paul & Moser, 2009) are often put forward as ideal unemployed subject positions. There is an implicit assumption, especially with 'resilience', that the ideal unemployed subject can become psychologically equipped to withstand the dangers of the market.

To ensure jobseekers embody these psychological and emotional qualities, case management requires employment consultants to be suitably qualified. Here an embedded problematisation (Bacchi, 2012) of employment consultants as authorities highlights how the unemployed are problematised as *psychological* and *emotional* subjects. Research has noted that workers rely on personal experience and other areas of informal expertise to perform case management since workers in ES do not tend to come from social work or other professional backgrounds (McDonald & Marston, 2005). Research suggests qualifications among consultants is not only "disturbingly low" but the few who have tertiary qualifications (20%) are in field "unrelated to ES, social work or psychology" suggesting workers will not have the appropriate theoretical tools to do their job appropriately (Jobs Australia, 2012, p. 8). The latest *welfare review* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b) has advocated for an 'investment approach' which would centre around individualised capacity building over the long term through "more focused case management" (p. 130) even suggesting a 'wrap-around approach'. Such an approach is based on the presumption that the unemployed, or at least a proportion, experience disadvantaged in both non-vocational

and vocational areas, and therefore require integration of services for a holistic approach (ACOSS, 2012; Department of Employment, 2013). Case management is assumed to be able to address disadvantage and work with job seekers as 'individuals' and so also produces unemployment as a problem of the individual as disadvantaged and in 'need'.

As a practice case management is constituted by and pulls together different elements of the *jobactive* apparatus. Case management can be seen as a 'solution' to a 'problem' of unemployment that assumes a subject that needs changing and the 'means' to producing the 'becoming-other' (Deleuze, 1992). As noted above, case management produces jobseekers as a deficit but using the apparatus as an organising principle, and problematisations as a specific reading lens, we can situate the problem solved by case management also to be connected to broader assumptions about activating the unemployed. That is, activation (through governing practices, but primarily through the 'personable' 'individualised' case management' remedies the 'effects' of unemployment (despair) and the associated risk of welfare dependence.

Bacchi's (2012; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) *WPR* approach encourages researchers to consider the underlying assumptions of problematisations. *Jobactive* is steeped in discourses of 'activation' and 'work-first' and continues the incremental 'strengthening' of conditionality (via mutual obligations). In reviewing the welfare system, the *A new System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes* endorsed the view that "activation works" stating "[j]ob brokers, mutual obligation and a market-based ES system contributed to low levels of unemployment" (p. 62) during the Great Financial Crisis. The main critiques of *jobactive* also did not fundamentally challenge the principles of 'activation' and conditionality of ES. Reviewers have called for more "effective activation" (Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2018a, p. 62) and a more flexible approach to mutual obligations (Senate, 2019). Just like the announcement for *jobactive*, the idea that ES are 'letting job seekers down" (Abbott, 2015) or "failing those it is supposed to serve" (Senate, p. i) is an ongoing 'problem'. Exploring this problematisation in more detail draws on Bacchi's questions about problem representation (question 1), historical emergence (questions 3) and the 'effects' for subjects of policy (questions 5).

In Chapter Three I discuss how psychological research on unemployment gave it a 'human face' (Walters, 2000). This began with research pre-World War II, but there was a resurgence in this field of research in the 1980s (see Fryer 2019, for discussion).

Proponents of activation and psychological theorists may not directly reference one another in these periods but these two fields can be seen to 'hang together' by the time of the 2015 *Welfare Review* and the installation of *jobactive.* In other words, the *jobactive* apparatus intersects with the 'psy-complex' in contemporary problematisations about unemployment and ES, via activation, since to deny, or at least not to 'help' people 'participate' in the marketplace, leaves them disadvantaged and 'missing out' on the taken-for-granted benefits of work.

We can see the beginnings of the aligning of said apparatuses with the shift to the activity test (which I discussed previously). In suggesting an 'activity test,' Cass, Gibson and Tito (1988) acknowledged issues of demand but still shifted the problem to the individual attributes (and personal affects) of the unemployed. As I have already noted, part of the contents of this problematisation was the 'economic' issue that the unemployed can become 'discouraged' and 'detached' from the labour market. Being 'discouraged' however, assumes that the subject has suffered the effects' of being unemployed and from this despair has stopped actively looking for work. Dean (1995) notes that this problem of the 'discouraged' individual was sorted into lack of 'job readiness' and the 'risk of welfare dependency'. The first issue relates to the failure to re-enter the labour market because a person lacks the skills, attitudes, and motivation to do so and the second refers to the risk of becoming solely dependent on social security for extended periods. The danger about the discouraged subject is they risk becoming the welfare-dependent subject. The very opposite of the "self-reliant" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015c, p. 9) (neoliberal) subject that welfare policy should 'support'.

As mentioned, the remedy to the passive 'discouraged' subject is activation. The move from 'work test' to the 'activity test' signals a psychologisation of unemployment in the spaces of employment service. The issues outlined by the *Cass Review* highlight how 'affect', 'attitude' and 'motivation' start to become priorities in governing the unemployed. Psychological intervention has become increasingly called upon to 'change' job seeker 'attributes' through Active Labour Market Programs (Sage, 2013). However, more fundamentally, the discursive practices of psy render unemployment governable at an individual level. A part of legitimating these practices connects to moralising ES and the marketplace, and just like WfD, relates to assumptions about citizenship.

In the *announcement of jobactive* 'work-first' discourses hold together assumptions about individuals, citizenship, work, and 'wellbeing'. The *announcement* suggested JSA was "letting jobseekers down" and that this 'problem' was being 'solved' by *jobactive* through prioritising 'work-first'. This is possible to 'say', 'within the 'true' because "the best form of welfare is a job" (Abbott, 2015, para. 7). 'Welfare' here is a pun: it refers to the 'welfare state' and the 'wellbeing' of a group. ES in Australia were reshaped in the 1990s along neoliberal political objectives to minimise the 'welfare state'. Part of this reasoning included the 'problem'' of the welfare state encouraging 'welfare dependence' (Dean, 1995). Reducing the State means responsibilising citizens to maintain their own 'welfare', primarily through paid employment. This 'end of entitlement' (Hockey, 2012) is part of the 'recommodifying' of the liberal welfare state, whereby State support for the unemployed is conditional on the individual demonstrating they are 'actively' participating in the labour market, thereby still fulfilling their part of the 'social contract' as 'worker-citizens' (Brodkin, 2015; Espig-Anderson, 1990).

The work-first discourse extends beyond citizenship by also merging 'welfare', as in "well-being", with 'work'. As it is framed, (re)employment should be prioritised by policy because it would be immoral to deny citizens these benefits. Governing, especially in the neoliberal frame, is about ensuring the wellbeing and optimisation for a population (Foucault, 2008). Quick re-employment (avoiding long term unemployment) is a priority for governing the unemployed to avoid the issues with 'depending' on welfare. Indeed, other problems are deprioritised since 'work' should come 'first' (Farrow et al., 2015).

In the case of 'mental illness', for example, the welfare review (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015b, pp.60) specifically outlines how (re)employment can be part of the "recovery plan" for people with "lived experience of mental health conditions" because "being able to secure a job and contribute in a workplace are important normalising milestones'. Discursively, the dividing practice of 'normal/ abnormal' segregates 'employed/unemployed/ and /mental health/conditions' along similar lines. That is, 'normality' as produced through work, helps to alleviate 'mental health conditions'. The review does acknowledge that such 'normalising' needs a "healthy work environment" to provide 'optimal' 'health benefits" (p. 61) although work-first discourses prioritise 'any job', over a 'good job' (Marston et al., 2019). Work is ideal 'welfare' because within this discourse, work has a therapeutic function.

Problematising unemployment as ‘missing out’ on the benefits of work makes the activating work of ES a moral duty. Activating job seekers from the assumed passive, potentially discouraged and despairing subject into the ‘active’, motivated, and ‘keen’ job seeker is more than pursing economic objectives. With the intersection of psy and the *jobactive* apparatuses, activation also becomes about ensuring the ‘well-being’ of the population through economic and social participation.

Discursively, it becomes dangerous for unemployed subjects to resist subjectification and ‘desire’ to become something other than a worker-citizen. For example, in the latest *welfare review* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015) suggested mutual obligations need to be tailored to ensure that job seekers who “may not be fit for full-time work but may still have some capacity to prepare for work” (p. 133) are not exempt from activation tasks. Denying a job seeker, the opportunity to be employed is also denying them the benefits of work, “letting them down” and so providers need to ensure they screen people for their ‘capacity to work’, lest people fall through the cracks and ‘miss out’. The focus of jobactive and at a micro level, of employment consultants utilising governing practices like case management, must be directed towards activating job seekers to participate ‘economically’ and ‘socially in the narrow sense constituted through the jobactive apparatus. I suggest it becomes almost impossible *not* to want to ‘participate’ in society through work because to do so is potentially putting one’s own ‘wellbeing’ at risk.

2.5 Concluding comments

My objective with this chapter was to present a different way of reading through policy that is coherent with the overarching objectives of the thesis; to untangle and disrupt the taken-for-granted assumptions about unemployment in Australia. Following Bacchi, (2012, Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) policy produces unemployment and the unemployed subject as certain problems. The problem of unemployment, as produced through the welfare assemblage and the *jobactive* apparatus, is the unemployed. Concerns about macroeconomics and the related demand-based strategies are left by the wayside and, instead, policy focuses on intervening into the market by ensuring there is an able and at-the-ready surplus labour force. Instead, dominant discourses about ‘active society’, citizenship and ‘work-first’ make ‘sayable’ and ‘doable’ an ensemble of practices that are coordinated through different sites (legal, administrative, computer database program, provider offices, governmental agencies, WfD host organisations) the unemployed subject,

who, ‘needs’ to be ‘helped’ (and also ‘hassled’) to ‘participate’ in the workplace for the good of themselves, their community, and the market.

Governmentality researchers in Australia have researched previous iterations of the quasi-marketised and privatised ES (see Brady, 2011, 2018; Dean, 1995, 1998; Henman, 2004; Howard et al., 2016; Marston, 2005; Marston & McDonald, 2008; McDonald & Marston, 2005; McDonald, Marston, & Buckley, 2003). This research has noted how governing practices induce self-regulating subjects via activation strategies and also simultaneously limit unemployed subjectivities. As McDonald and Marston (2005) describe, the unemployed are tasked with always becoming motivated and ethical unemployed subjects. ‘Activation’ is thus the core discursive practice of ES. Activation implies a move away from a what has been positioned as ‘passive’ forms of welfare to one that attempts to reconstruct the unemployed person through ‘activities’ such as: job search, vocational training, positive psychology programs, non-vocational skills (effective communication, presentations), job interview skills, motivation training among others. These assumptions about the labour market and the role of ES in getting individuals to ‘participate’ are continued into the *jobactive* model.

In contrast to earlier analyses of ES, I have utilised a problematisation and critical psychology to emphasise how psy-complexified knowledges are part of the underlying assumptions behind dominant problematisation of job seekers in contemporary Australian welfare policy. Other researchers have noted how pseudo-counselling strategies are part of the governing practices used by works to ‘activate’ job seekers (Dean, 1995). And that these counselling practices are part of the confessional aspects of individualised case management where workers use emotions like empathy to govern (McDonald & Marston, 2005). Furthermore, technologies like the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) are used to segment and classify job seekers into ‘streams’ based on their ‘disadvantage’ and ‘distance’ from the labour market. The JSCI is legitimated as a ‘psychometric’ device, despite little transparency that would allow research to examine the ‘psychometric’ components (McDonald, Marston & Buckley, 2003). Regardless of its acceptability in a psychological frame as a ‘real’ ‘psychometric’, the JSCI is used to categorise and job seekers and funding/ provider income is distributed accordingly. Research has noted how employment consultants will try and re-evaluate job seekers to get a different ‘stream’ (O’Sullivan, McGann & Considine, in press). In this way, psy-complexified knowledges are

linked with job seeker ‘outcomes’, how employment consultants do their governing work, contractual obligations are resourced, impacting on lives of job seekers.

By using a problematisation-inspired approach to produce a critical reading of policy, I have highlighted how the very notion of individualised services or activation relied on psy-complexified notions of an individual who, in not being ‘active’, is assumed to be ‘passive’. This passive subject was described in the *Cass Review* as ‘demoralised’ or assumed to be ‘unmotivated’ and needs to be kept busy to avoid ‘welfare dependence’. In this way I agree with Dean, (1997) that with the shift in policy that assumes unemployment is voluntary, the internal processes of the unemployed individual – their thoughts, affects/feelings/emotions, and attitudes, become the site of reformation over and above and demand-focused solutions to unemployment. Such psy-complexification is made most notable in the problematisation of the work of employment consultants. This is notable in two ways. Firstly, workers are deemed to be ‘problematic’ insofar as they are lacking the ‘right’ qualifications (i.e. psychology or social work). Secondly, the assumption that ‘individualised case managements’ is ‘good practice’ positions the work of employment consultants as pseudo-counsellors but it also moralises their work by interlinking ‘welfare’ with ‘work’. Such assumptions about the benefits of work are psy-complexified understandings of the role of employments in our lives, There is a huge body of research on the effects of unemployment (like the work of Fryer & Payne, 1986) which crosses over with research on the meaning of and benefits of work (most notably the work of Jahoda, 1972, see the next chapter for more detail).

However, *jobactive* signals a rapid continuation of increasing (or ‘strengthening’) conditionality in welfare policy. Alongside this increase in the potential for incurring financial penalties in the development of more sophisticated processes to automate these sanctions, such as the non-attendance report. *jobactive* provides the framework for the delivery of policy objectives, changing the structure to 6-monthly alternations between ‘case management’ and WfD. The increasing scope for penalties (for non-attendance or not participating appropriately, i.e. embodying the ideal affective unemployed subject) and the increased emphasis on ‘activation’ through ‘giving back’ via WfD makes the problem of *compliance* with *participation* in the pre-established ways is the key defining aspect of *jobactive* apparatus. The *jobactive* apparatus solves this ‘urgent need’ of maintain a ready labour force by holding together (the system of relations) various elements. Elements include, activation discourses, work first discourses, social norms about participation and

good citizenship, discourses about responsibilities and the role of the state (particularly under a neoliberal political rationality), social security legislation, and policy objectives. contractual arrangements, psy-infused notions about 'affect/emotions/feelings', , case management practices, social media platforms and technologies (like computer programs, database systems or quasi-psychometric instruments) are all, one way or another, a part of how the unemployed are (de)subjectified and (re)subjectified in ES.

To comply with the 'mutual obligations' of citizenship' job seekers need to be participating in prescribed ways, or else they are reprimanded for not embodying the neoliberal subject. The increased scope for financial penalties and activation programs like WfD (which make the job seeker easier to monitor since they have to be at their host organisation for x hours a week as well as attend their monthly appointment with their provider) make it risky (even dangerous) to fail to fully embody the 'keen' and motivated unemployed subject. These dominant discourses champion work-as-welfare and overlook the problems of work. Including, but not limited to, detrimental effects of insecure work (Benach et al., 2014), underemployment (Friedland, & Price, 2003), over employment (Dollard & Winefield, 2002), or workplace bullying (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

Van Berkel (2013) suggests we can see ES as looping processes of 'activation', whereby the State activates providers (through policy and legislation), providers then activate their workers (through workplace policies and procedures), and then the workers 'activate' job seekers through their daily 'activation strategies'. But as we can note from the various elements of the apparatus (those that have been noted, there would be others), these elements 'hang together' by series of relations to 'ensure' the job seekers 'becomes-other (Deleuze, 1992). However, as I noted in Chapter One the apparatus is not fixed or static and there are unintended effects. Van Berkel's point is useful to consider how different elements 'activate' other processes and how elements that might get missed in policy analysis, like how organisational priorities and procedures influence how the unemployed are governed. It also helps to consider how political these spaces are, and that the 'success' of delivering punitive policies to 'strengthen' mutual obligations fit comfortably within a contractual framework where providers need to comply with policy/legislation, and achieve objectives with as little expense or time as possible, in order to achieve their objective: profit. The apparatus is also useful for considering how 'messy' subjectification can be, and how a focus on policy (and the archive) overestimates the programmatic success of governing practices (Walter, 2012).

There are some researchers within governmentality studies who have been advocating for more traditional fieldwork to research this ‘messiness’ to capture the contradictions, contestations, ambiguity, and problematisations as they occur ‘on the ground’ (Brady, 2011, 2014, 2018; Brady & Lippert, 2016; Collier, 2011; Jordan, 2018; Li, 2011; McDonald & Marston, 2005). In light of the context provided in this chapter, it is interesting and important to research how governing under *jobactive* occurs in the actual spaces of an employment service provider. Not as a realisation of policy, at least not in causal terms, but instead to map a topographical account of governing (Collier, 2009). Indeed, following the governmentality researchers mentioned above, the proceeding chapters outline a quasi-ethnographic account of governing practices within one employment service provider in South East Queensland. However, as a point of difference from this body of literature, I take a critical psychological perspective that not only challenge the psy-complexified notions of ‘unemployment’ (which can be reproduced in such research, see Chapter One) but also to think critically about research practices and the objects/subjects produced therein. Consequently, the next chapter will examine the problem of researching unemployment as an ‘experience’ in both psychological literature and governmentality studies.

3 Chapter Three: How to research ‘unemployment’: A critique of methods

3.1 The problem of (researching) unemployment

It is customary at this early point in a PhD thesis to present a literature review. This chapter, however, does not describe gaps in the literature which in turn are used to justify my research aim. Arguably, there is always an element of analysis in producing a literature review that implies the reproduction of certain assumptions about the status and production of ‘knowledge’. In this chapter, I use ‘problematisation’ as I did in the previous chapter, but this time, I use it to look critically at relevant literature about ‘how’ to research unemployment. ‘Problematisation’ was for Foucault both a method and a way of thinking (Bacchi, 2012).

Regarding ‘thinking', problematisation refers to how an object comes to be thought of as a problem and hence becomes an object of thought. For example, Foucault would have considered unemployment to be an object of thought insofar as unemployment is deemed to be a problem. He would not imply that unemployment exists before thought nor would he insist that unemployment is merely something that only exists due to discursive practices. ‘Unemployment’ is not imaginary; it is very ‘real’ particularly regarding the ‘effects’ it has on people. ‘Unemployment’ is nevertheless only understood through discursive practices that enter it into regimes of truth (distinguished from the false) and thus mark it out in reality (Foucault, 2008a, p. 19).

The task for the researcher then is to find how unemployment is constituted as a problem. Studies exploring such problematisations focus on the “games of truth” (Foucault 1985, p. 6) that through historical processes constitute our experiences. The analytical focus is on how it is possible to think about and manage people. This includes the technologies invented to identify and solve these problems, the expert professional subjects created and endorsed to enforce and legitimise particular truths, and the ideal subjectivities that all of these strategies are aiming for (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Foucault, 2003d). Using this framework will prevent endorsing any of literature as ‘truth’; ensuring the focus is on the production of truth.

This chapter starts to provide some answers for the research aim, ‘h*ow can a critical psychological approach to unemployment draw from recent debates in governmentality studies to rethink unemployed* subjectivity. I provide ‘answers’ for this aim by discussing

literature on ‘how to research’ unemployment from two standpoints: psychology and governmentality research. I begin with psychological research on unemployment and discuss the concern with causality. I explain why the methodological concern with causal relationships was raising critical issues and position my research as deliberately moving away from such fixations. I positioned governmentality as an alternative. However, this corpus has also been debating issues of method that have reinserted concerns about realism and relativism into the conversation. In the end, I proposed a way forward with governmentality research that potentially avoided this cul-de-sac but also presented different questions that needed serious consideration during the research process.

3.2 How it ‘feels’ to be unemployed

The concern about ‘unemployment’ goes beyond economic considerations, as Dooley (2003) opined, the economy is “... one of the most important social environments that affect[s] well-being” (p. 9). Indeed, for decades psychological research has investigated the negative ‘consequences’ of ‘unemployment’ for ‘psychological health’ (for example see Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; Fryer, 1986a; McKee-Ryan & Kinicki, 2002; Milner, Page, & Lamontagne, 2014; Murphy & Athanasiou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). ‘Psychological health’ is generally understood by these researchers as “an individual’s emotional and mental well-being, ability to function in society, and capacity to meet the demands of the day-to-day life” (Wanberg, p. 371). This body of literature also contends that the impact of ‘unemployment’ includes poor physical well-being (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005); experiences of stigma (Karren & Sherman, 2012), which are exacerbated when receiving an unemployment allowance (Keily & Butterworth, 2013); and increased suicidality (Classen & Dunn, 2012).

Whilst researchers have noted that some employment arrangements such as underemployment, or not receiving enough work hours (Friedland & Price, 2003), and insecure work (Benach et al., 2014) have equal, if not worse, negative consequences for people (Butterworth et al., 2011; Fryer & Winefield, 1998); Paul and Moser (2009) claim the solution to the harmful impact of ‘unemployment’ should involve intervention to hasten re-employment. Paul and Moser state the way to do this is through isolating the characteristics of the ‘resilient’ and motivated unemployed in order to provide training of such ‘characteristics’ or ‘skills’ for the unemployed who are deemed to be not ‘coping’ as effectively, in terms of both managing the experiences of ‘unemployment’ and engaging in job seeking behaviours.

Examining psychological literature on ‘unemployment ’and the discourses used is important here since it provides an avenue for unpacking how ‘unemployment’ has come to have meaning (Walters, 2000) and additionally can illuminate how these discourses function. For example, in the ‘solution’ posited by Paul and Moser (2009) the focus on activating the individual and their ‘ability to cope’ or ‘bounce back’ places all responsibility on the individual (Aranda, Zeeman, Scholes, & Morales, 2012) and obscures other important factors related to the constitution of ‘unemployment’ and how ‘unemployment’ can be experienced. These psychologised discourses that blame the individual (Swan, 2008) rely on the idea of the ‘modernist individual’ or that a person is a stable, consistent, rational, separate entity.

Unemployment has not always been within the scope of psychologists. Walters (2000) argued that unemployment was an issue of economics and policy in the United Kingdom until the 1903’s. At this time, the experiences of unemployment became visible because researchers started looking at lived experiences rather than rely purely on statistical explorations. Walters claims the unemployed in these studies were used to explain unemployment over other structural explanations. One of the fundamental studies in this period was the Marienthal study (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, & Zeisel, 1972). Indeed, Fleck (2002) argued that the Marienthal study spearheaded the way for subsequent research that examined and demonstrated the effects of unemployment on individuals and communities. It has been widely acknowledged how influential the Marienthal study has been in the psychology of unemployment (Fryer, 1992) particularly the subsequent Deprivation theory[10] that developed (partly) from this study (Jahoda, 1982).

The Marienthal study was situated in the Austrian village of ‘Marienthal’ during the Great Depression in 1930 (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, & Zeisel, 1972). The village’s main employer, a local factory, closed down and subsequently, 70% of the village (bar some, for example, the local butcher) were unemployed. I will discuss the study’s research design in the next section, but it is important to note here the researchers positioned their work as being about the unemployed community and not the unemployed individual. The key insight of the study was that “unemployment leads to a state of apathy” (Lazarsfeld, vii) whereby the unemployed did not participate in the limited amount of opportunities available to them.

[10] Deprivation theory is one of several theories put forward to explain the impact of unemployment. There is also stage theory (Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938), Fryer’s (1986b) agency restriction theory, Warr’s (1987) vitamin model and Paul and Moser’s (2006) use of incongruence as an explanatory framework.

Other terms used by the authors (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld & Zeisel) to describe the unemployed include “under the dole system he [sic] is destitute and idle” (p. x, emphasis in original), “feeling of irrevocability and hopelessness” (p. 79) or “misery” (p. 46) and they discussed ‘motivation’ and ‘attitudes’. They did not, however, use words we would expect in today’s psychological research on unemployment like ‘depressed’, ‘anxious’ and ‘stressed’.

In contrast, in the 1980s the development of the deprivation theory looked at unemployment in an explicit psychological (and psychoanalytical) frame. Jahoda’s (1982) deprivation theory posits there are functions of employment both manifest and latent. The manifest is financial remuneration. The latent is psychological: purpose beyond oneself, organised time, relationships outside of the family, identity, working towards a shared goal. The deprivation theory thus establishes the problems of unemployment to be integral to the inner workings of the unemployed while simultaneously downplaying the external factors, like poverty (Fryer, 1992).

Research on unemployment because psychological became increasingly psychological from the 1980s with a resurgence in this research area. Psychological research on unemployment now relies on psychometrics to ‘measure’ the ‘feelings’ and ‘experiences’ of the unemployed. Unemployment is turned into scores about ‘wellbeing’ from the General Health Questionnaire (which was a favourite in this field of research, see Fryer, 1992), and other scales like the Beck Depression Inventory (Feather & Barber, 1983) or the State Anxiety Questionnaire (Lev-Wiesel & Kaufman, 2004).

Although scholars have noted the literature mostly studies symptoms rather than clinical diagnosis (Catalano et al., 2011), the problem of the ‘effects’ of unemployment is rendered psychological through the knowledges and devices used to study these effects. As Rose (1996) points out, assessments render individual differences visible and technical. By presenting the human experience as calculable and objective, these assessments are positioned as close to the ‘truth’ of the experience and thus are formed in and reinforce the authority of psychological knowledge. Some scholars go as for to argue that “psychiatric diagnosis is a professional reification about human misery, not a fact” (Pilgrim & Bentall, 1999, p. 271). Importantly, what these assessments operationalise (and go on the ‘measure’) can be understood as certain ‘truths’ that are social, culturally, and historically contingent and material. These assessments form part of a broader apparatus so that

what can be articulated as ‘experience’ is constructed by and through discourse, institutions, and practices, of which experience is the effect.

As well as producing a particular kind of experience by situating unemployment within a ‘regime of truth’ (psychology), there are other assumptions about the organisation of the social world that underpin this body of research which needs to be unpacked. Jahoda (1982) (whose work was influenced by Austro-marxism and psychoanalysis) admitted that employment is the only institution able to provide all of the functions required for subjective well-being in this current labour market. She did envision a time where employment could be replaced by something else, but that would not be for “about 500 years” (Jahoda & Ernst as cited in Wacker, 2012, p. 129). Her work and the Marienthal study still emphasise the productive self (Miller, 1986). Indeed, Cole (2007) argued that the Marienthal study and deprivation theory reproduce a moral discourse by valorising the importance of work in a person’s life. Here work is assumed to be ‘normal’ thus diminishing any non-work experiences. There is research to suggest that non job-related activities have beneficial effects, like ‘anti-depressive’ effects (Haworth, 1997), for example, the role of parenthood (Nordenmark & Strandh, 1999).

A part of Cole’s argument focuses on the Marienthal depicting the unemployed as ‘doing nothing’ (as opposed to doing work or even engaging in political activity) which he argued misreads people's attempts to survive unemployment. He also critiques Jahoda’s emphasis on the psychological aspects of unemployment. Fryer (1986b) counteracted the over-reliance on latent functions in Jahoda's work by shifting focus back onto financial and material deprivation and the implications for agency. However, both Fryer and Jahoda still place more focus on the importance of work in a person’s life and place little emphasis on individual differences (Ezzy, 1993). So too do other theories on the effects of unemployment, for example, Paul and Moser’s (2006) incongruence theory relies on the assumption that people are committed to and want to work. This assumption is required for them to claim that it is the incongruence between work commitment and actual reality that impacts the person in such psychologised ways. While they take into account the influence of the Protestant work ethic, these authors do not critically evaluate the assumptions underpinning the meaning of work and what this means for how it is possible to think about working relations.

Indeed, a similar question could be asked the psychological research that characteristics distress of unemployment as psychologised notions of ‘depression’ and such forth. The solutions to unemployment rectify the inner mind of the unemployed, (through psychological interventions like cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), Henderson & Muller, 2013, or programs that supposedly improve ‘positive affect’ and thus job seeking behaviours, Turban et al., 2013). Additionally, the solutions presented emphasise re-employment and the ‘naturalness’ of employment by encouraging people to cope with unemployment (Schuring, Robroek & Burdorf, 2017). Placing the focus on ‘coping’ never challenges the institution of employment and leaves untroubled some of the problems of being employed, simplistically labelling any work ‘good’ (Ezzy, 1993; Karlberg, 2011). Reproducing a strict dichotomy between having and not having a job is out of place in today’s flexible economy with all the various positions (in some instances increasing precarious jobs) possible in today’s labour market (Burchell, 1994; Standing, 2014). Unemployment becomes a (psychological) problem of the individual while employment is left unproblematised.

In this way, psychologised and individualised knowledges about unemployment, how it ‘feels’, and how it can be remedied (through employment) is part of the knowledge base that is part of the *jobactive* apparatus. These psy knowledges ‘about’ unemployment assists with, the dominant discourses of ‘activation’ and ‘work first’ (or welfare-through-work). For a critical psychological perspective on researching unemployment, these psychologised knowledges and/or research practices to understand the ‘experience’ of unemployment needs closer examination in terms of how it problematises ‘unemployment’, rendering it an object of thought.

3.3 Causation v. Individual Drift: The problem of method

What it is possible to ‘know’ about unemployment is intertwined with how it is possible to ‘know’. The Marienthal study stands out amongst psychological research since it employed a sociological method. The study is often considered to be methodologically impressive (Cooke et al., 2015) and with good reason. One of the principal investigators of the Marienthal study, Lazarsfeld (1972, p. xi), stated that the research was partly inspired by his dissatisfaction with the unemployment figures at the time and the way that unemployed life was being described, in causal terms, in popular media. The study dused a mixed-methods type design, which they call ‘immersion’.

Immersion refers to an in-depth and highly detailed collection of information regarding various aspects of the Marienthal community. He argued this was achieved through case studies, times sheets, meal records, questionnaires, “solicited reports” of the lived experience of the unemployed and “unobtrusive measures” of observation (Lazarsfeld, 1972, p. xiv). The researchers wanted an eclectic approach since “[m]ore description was not enough. To ‘get behind’ it, a variety of data had to be collected on any issue under investigation, just as the true position of a distant object can be found only through triangulation, by looking at it from different sides and direction” (p. xiv). Despite the ‘objective’ approach to the study, they nevertheless highlight the specificity of the research and do not make broad generalisations. The study also engaged in ‘action’ elements such as running activities for the townspeople.

Fryer and Payne (1986) identified three other significant studies in the 1930s occupied with the subject of ‘unemployment’; those of Bakke, Subsistence Production Society (as described in Jahoda, 1982) and the Pilgrim Trust. Each, though varying in method, described the negative consequences of ‘unemployment’ sullenness, despondency, demoralisation (Bakke, 1933, as cited in Fryer & Payne, pp. 242-243); loss of identity; anxiety, depression, apathy, isolation and loneliness. Fryer and Payne stated that both the Bakke and the Subsistence Production Society studies emphasised the pre-unemployment conditions. For Bakke, this was the “qualities of the working man…as a result of the social heritage of the individual” and for Jahoda it was the thought habits that were “steeped in the traditions of capitalism” (as cited in Fryer & Payne, p. 244).These approaches contrast starkly with the approach favoured by psychologists today.

In these three studies, we may argue that there is a sense of connection between the broader societal and ideological processes and their impact on the formation of the individual and the possibilities which are then available to them in respect to how one could react to unemployment. However, according to Walters (2000), the Pilgrim Trust study was interested in the personal aspects which could explain long-term unemployment, “long unemployment is one of those problems where cause and effect are inextricably mixed… for instance, long unemployment may itself make a man unemployable” (Pilgrim Trust, 27, as cited in Walters, 2000, p. 86). Walters argued that the Pilgrim Trust are therefore suggesting that a potential cause of unemployment, the ‘problem’, was the effect of unemployment: demoralisation.

Psychological research has been concerned with similar issues. The 'gold standard' research method for unemployment is the prospective longitudinal study (Dooley & Prause, 2004). This particular research method is presented as the gold standard because of a nagging issue within the literature as illustrated in the research from the 1930s. It is known as the 'social causation v. individual drift' problem (Jefferies et al., 2011). The problem is thus the concern with casuality, framing the issue in methodological terms. Wanberg (2011) noted that "a great focus of recent on unemployment and well-being has been on issues of causality" (p.371) and indeed studies tend to seem preoccupied with the need to separate the 'egg from the chicken'. Is unemployment caused by poor subjective well-being (depressed affect, stress, anxiety, low self-esteem) or is poor subjective well-being caused by unemployment (again: depressed affect, stress, low self-esteem).

Connected to this problematisation of cause is the problem of moderating factors. Unemployment, as the argument goes, though detrimental to people in a general sense, it is still experienced differently by people (Leana & Feldman, 1995). And so the problem of 'what caused what' is further complicated by age, welfare state, gender[11]; marital status, duration of unemployment and so on[12] (for meta-analysis see Paul & Moser, 2009).

Though, as Fryer (1997) points out, the issue of causality is a very complicated issue for research design. For example, he argued cross-sectional studies (which dominate the literature) tend to assume, by comparison of means, a point of 'normality' (i.e. a healthy employed sample) and this in itself is a point of contention. Furthermore, being unemployed can lead to poor mental health (social causation), but the 'scarring' effects mean a person may struggle to find or keep employment (individual drift) (Fryer, 2000). There is also the possibility of some other event led to decreased emotional wellbeing prior to unemployment (Diette et al., 2012). Teasing out the nuance to make way for a reductionist casual explanation provides for plenty of debate in the literature.

Of course, any questions that we ask about a topic in the form of a research question come with embedded "conceptual baggage" (Allen, 2003, p. 24) including what questions it is possible to ask. The problem of causality is only conceivable as a problem within a

[11] Or sex, sometimes both, the literature gets a bit confused on this point. For discussion about the influence of the 'gender regime' and researching unemployment see Standh et al. (2013).
[12] McKee et al (2005) note in their analysis of the literature there are around 100 different variables correlating with different indicators of psychological and physical well-being during unemployment.

framework that considers ‘unemployment’ and ‘psychological well-being’ as objects accessible and quantifiable through certain systematic methods. Traditional psychological research is “committed to natural-scientific, experimental-statistical or empirical-statistical methodology” (Teo, 2009). The argument goes that these methods when administered adequately through deductive reasoning (hypothetical deductive model), and controlling for mediating variables, there is a potential for causal claims to be made. These methods are constructed within modernist, scientific discourses which assume that via careful analysis, observation and measurement the human condition and experience can be reduced to fundamental principles which can universally explain phenomena. Therefore, the focus is on ensuring the method is ‘right’ for the ‘truth’ or ‘facts’ to be uncovered.

The point here is not to make the mistake of oversimplifying very sophisticated statistical and design methods. My primary interest is not whether these approaches are ‘wrong’ (for they are another way of producing ‘truth’) but how they are accorded the status of truth and how these truths function (Stainton Rogers, 2009). Questions often excluded from the research design include who benefits from this knowledge? How is this knowledge dovetailed into specific economic, political, social, and historical matrixes? What kinds of assumptions constitute the possibility of doing this type of research, and that is also reproduced by the research?

For example, the assumption that certain scientific methods can access the inner workings of the mind since the mind is amenable to scientific explanation[13] (Venn, 1984). Such methods further assume that the subject is a humanist subject, as previously noted, one that is rational, static and unitary. Potentially reducing the complexity which we ‘are’ or the fluidity of our selves/worlds and potential for being otherwise. The unemployed could be ‘acknowledged’ as expressing certain kinds of distress, and their subjectivity becomes ‘stuck’ as the distressed unemployed.

This is so even if we ignore some of the problematic assumptions of psychological research and agree that, with some caveats, the bulk of research has since the 1930s

[13] Although this is not a universal assumption in psychology. Psychology is divided into sub disciplines that can be very different from one another for example, Skinner’s operant conditioning ignored the ‘black box’ of the mind and focused instead on observable behaviours (Parker,2007). Nevertheless, for unemployment research to use psychological assessments, many which require self-reporting, there is an assumption that an individual can access their own thoughts and accurately transpose these into the pre given template of questions and Likert scales.

suggested that unemployment ‘causes’ mental distress (Fryer, 2013). Nevertheless, the theories of explanation and the solutions presented enforce an individualistic understanding. McKee and Bell (1986) make the argument that sociological research on unemployment that is focused on telling the stories of the unemployed through qualitative type research forms part of the increasing individualisation of unemployment. Psychology here is implicated in producing social relationships, and institutional issues are reduced to the properties of individuals, potentially blaming the victim (Burman, 1996). The unemployed are divided from the employed and through positioning employment as the best solution to unemployment employment relations removes needed conversations about the labour market and the problems of work (Burchell, 1992). Not least how useful it is for the labour market to have surplus labour that is continually working upon itself to ‘cope’ and prepare to (re)enter the workforce (Fryer & Stambe, 2014a).

In rethinking the problem of unemployment, I want to move past positioning unemployment as a lack of employment and instead study how the experience of unemployment is possible or how it is “an actively produced category” (Boland & Griffin, 2015, p.2). As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, the welfare state and ES in Australia is integral to this production of unemployment. It is in this way that I position the spaces of ES to be a crucible where various heterogeneous elements, like administrative practices, policy, questionnaires, and training programs are laid out together to change the way the unemployed act. ES also open up spaces for different/ new professionals to establish their expertise (for example 'welfare applied for positive psychology programs' see esherhouse.org) or to provide new opportunities for the market (the commodification of unemployed subjectivities, see Brodkin, 2013).

In other words, my research started in ES to study how the problem of unemployment constitutes the possibility for ‘being unemployed’ and will draw upon a theoretical perspective (Foucauldian inspired-poststructuralism) to sidestep the psychologising, individualising, and interest with causality noted in the psychology literature. Governmentality is useful in avoiding dichotomies like society/individual or reliance on causal claims (Jessop, 2010). A governmentality approach is, therefore, a useful approach to avoid reproducing the problems already listed. Governmentality, the ‘conduct of conduct’ provides an analytical framework that comes from the work of Foucault and provides a way to examine both the practices within an employment service provider and the psychologised knowledges that authorise the work done in these spaces. I will quickly

re-outline the usefulness of governmentality and how it relates to researching subjectivity before turning to some of the issues related to ‘research method’ and governmentality analysis. I will also situate my justification for designing the research as ‘ethnographic-inspired’ within these debates.

3.4 Using governmentality as a means of critique

The central nub of this thesis is subjectivity. I follow many researchers in critical psychology, medical anthropology, and other critical disciplines by moving away from psychologised notions of the self towards a more complex, fluid, and contingent understanding of ‘who we are’ and ‘whom we are becoming’. As explained in the previous chapter, coming to subjectivity through poststructuralism assisted my research by moving away from individual-society dualism (Henriques et al., 1984). Additionally, such an approach creates a critical distance from psy knowledges and practices so they can be analysed as part of the project of governing (rather than being an objective science that describes ‘individual differences’). As Rose (1999) argued, psychology and related disciplines have “a very important role in the ways we are governed today” (p. xxii) insofar as these knowledges are implicated in both the production of governable spaces (like population, factory, ES) and the constitution of subjects who are amenable to governing, like ‘the unemployed’.

For Foucault (2003b, p. 265), governmentality is related to critique. He stated that if governmentality is the “movement through which individuals are subjugated in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth”, then critique is “the art of not being governed quite so much”. He further elaborated that being governed less implies a person “not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and using such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them”. Orientating my research towards critique, therefore, involves interrogating the relations of power and truth regarding ‘unemployment’ and the unemployed subject. Critique can provide ways through which we can destabilise how we think about ‘unemployment’, its ‘impact’, and the effects of these, including how we pose any ‘solutions’. Detaching psychologised knowledges and practices from processes and rituals within ES is also part of this work of critique. Since psychologised knowledges are fundamental to how workers in ES distinguish between normal and pathological, passive and active, employed and unemployed, moreover, psychologised knowledges inform who needs ‘help’, if they can be ‘helped’, and how to do the ‘helping’.

Governmentality is thus used to study how different knowledges, attached to various authorities, inform practices and technologies that are developed to guide people's voluntary behaviour. It is particularly useful for examining neoliberal political rationalities that utilise 'freedom' and 'free choice' to produce subjectivities that are self-optimising and entrepreneurial (Foucault, 2008a). At the same time, these taken-for-granted practices, knowledges, and assumptions are interrogated and dismantled. As Dean (1999) argued, governmentality and critique make it possible for us to take on an "experimental attitude where we can test the limits of our governmental rationalities [and] the forms of power and domination they involve" (p.35). The practices can no longer be presented as self-evident or inevitable, and we can thus "think in different ways about the action on the actions of the self and others" (p. 36). By eschewing the idea that power is traceable back to a single source and instead focusing on politics as 'governing at a distance', a governmentality approach enables critique to go beyond structure/agency, public/private, and other limiting dichotomies (Valverde, 2004).

My research also aims to engage reflexively with method/ology. I not only approach ES and psy as 'dangerous' but also the methods I use to research these spaces. There is no formal way to research governing practices. Indeed, most governmentality researchers would be reluctant to prescribe a method (Rose, 1999, p. xi). There are nevertheless patterns discernible in the methods used. The focus of this section the sustained criticism of archival-only governmentality research and the suggested alternatives. The arguments against using secondary sources as the sole source of data will also be outlined as a way that researchers have justified using traditional social science methods. I will outline this literature and explain how I moved from this literature to the original justification for designing an ethnographic study.

3.5 Researching governing practices

In this section, I will explore some of the commentators who have highlighted the shortcomings of governmentality research. I will pay particular attention to the suggestion that governmentality research is dominated by archival research, the related downfalls from relying on secondary data and assumptions about 'realism'. Poststructuralist research rejects the realist imaginary that there is an ontological reality independent of the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This is connected to the foundationalist line of thought that maintaineds there is a 'real' that can be known either in an unmediated sense (empiricism) or in a partial way (post-positivism). First, however, I will quickly outline the

dominant understandings of ‘governmentality’ before I turn to issues relating to the status of the text and issues of epistemology.

Rose (1999b. 20) argued that an “analytics of governmentality” begins in a different space to more traditional forms of sociological/historical inquiries. Governmentality does not start by asking, ‘what is happening in this situation?’ and, most importantly, does not then follow with, ’why?’. Instead, researching governmentality involves, “...asking what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what objectives, through what strategies and techniques”. According to Rose, starting with authorities, technologies, problems and strategies “do[es] not single out a sector of the real for investigation...but…[involves] adopt[ing] a particular point of view which brings certain questions into focus”. Using governmentality as an analytic approach is, according to Rose, more of a way of seeing than a theory. Specifically, analytics of governmentality focuses on the problematisations that ‘objects’ and ‘beings’ are rendered ‘thinkable’ and manageable, the authorities/expertise referenced, and the devices invented and techniques deployed. It also requires thinking about the ‘assembled locales’ (Rose, 1999a), and the ideal ‘conduct’ that is the telos of this “more or less calculated and rational activity” (Dean, 2010, p. 18)

Central to any Foucauldian-like approach is the focus on questions starting with ‘how’ since these questions attend to power relations (Foucault, 2003a). As Dean (2010) explained, from this standpoint power is not a “...zero-sum game within an a priori structural distribution” (p. 29) but fluid and open-ended. Additionally, to research power relations and its effects researchers turn to focus on the practices of government. Dean (1999) provided an example in relation to the governing of unemployed welfare recipients. He suggests researchers pay attention to some of the following: “ the administration structure, integration and coordination of various departments of State and other agencies, organisations and businesses, the forms of training of public servants and other professionals (counsellors, case managers) and the expertise expected of them; the means for the collection, collation, storage, and retrieval of information about specific population of clients, the design, layout and location of various offices, the procedures of reception of clients, and methods of questioning interviewing and assessing them, the design and use of assets tests, eligibility criteria, waiting periods, forms of certification, the use of forms, publicity, advertisements etc” (p. 28).

Dean (1999) goes on to say that “to list such conditions of governing...is not to say that analysis is merely the description of the empirical routines of government” but that analysis is to understand “how all of the above have been thought” (p. 29 emphases in the original). The key point here is that a governmentality approach prioritises the study of political rationalities, connected to materials and practices, which underpin technologies of power. Government thus “defines a discursive field in which existing power is rationalised” (Lemke, 2001, p. 191) and this produces a series of strategies for the ‘conduct of conduct’ to address whatever is deemed to be a problem (Teghstoonian, 2015). These strategies are types of intervention since political rationalities do not represent the world as it is but “itself constitutes the intellectual processes of the reality which political technologies can then tackle” (Lemke, p. 191). Governing the self is just as important in these discussions and the government of others (see Dean, 1995).

3.5.1 Empirical work: archives and materiality

The list of possible elements or ‘texts’ analysable as practices of governing provided by Dean (1999) is extensive. Dean recognised that the list is quite heterogeneous and could be made up of some different elements. Importantly, the list contains materials and practices that can be analysed along the various dimensions that are drawn out of Foucault's work on governmentality. These dimensions have been collated by different authorities on ‘governmentality’, most prominently, Rose (1999a; 1999b), Miller and Rose (1990) and Dean (2010). According to Brady (2014, p.32), Rose and Dean emphasised different elements in their analytic guidelines. Rose (1999) focused on “the ways that political rationalities set boundaries for the kinds of problems that rulers can tackle and render some technologies for governing as sensible, and others as not” whereas Dean (2010) focuses on “how we are governed, rather than distinct rationalities”. These approaches concentrate on the archival and documentary evidence to meticulously map the various materials, rationalities problematisations, and so on that governmentality-driven questions would explore. Whether that be issues of psychological life (Rose, 1996) or changes to unemployment benefits (Dean, 1995).

Again, focusing on materials does not mean that drawing on Foucault’s work is realist; however, is it also not engaging in absolute relativism. As O’Farrell (2005) argued, Foucault was interested in the historical and culturally specific rules (and thus power relations) that enable something to be considered ‘true’, and this is different to the absolute relativist refusal of the possibility of verifiable truth. In other words, Foucault was starting

from a different place and asking different questions to modernist social science (indeed, social science is the object of some of Foucault's inquiry). Regarding the methods Foucault used, O'Farrell stated that Foucault's methods are distinguished by "the use of positivist, critical and scholarly tools of archival research, meticulous documentation and historical methods of comparison, verification and citation" (p. 84).

However, O'Farrell (2005) also stated that Foucault challenged the status of the 'fact', particularly in the westernised fixation on obtaining 'truth'. As a point of difference, Foucault positioned 'facts' as an interpretation, and thus his work was an interpretation of an interpretation (O'Farrell; Veyne, 2010). To state that Foucault's works are 'fictions' however, misses the point. Foucault's work incites reading as an experience that can alter the reader's way of seeing, but it can only do so because his work is "attach[ed] to history, to the practicalities of concrete existence and the material existence of things" (O'Farrell, p. 86). The historical and cultural contingency of Foucault's work and his rejection of universals makes his work closer to nominalism. Although it would be inaccurate to describe Foucault as a philosopher since he was not interested in entertaining epistemological inquiries (Cousins & Hussain, 1986). The point is that using Foucault's tools provides recourse to explore the power-knowledge nexus without having to re-inscribe dominant and universal concepts.

Furthermore, Foucault, was very clear that his work was not about how an object was discovered or conversely how it is proven not to exist but rather "…by what conjunctions a whole set of practices - from the moment they become coordinated with a regime of truth - was able to make what does not exist nonetheless become something, something however that continues not to exist" which however does exist in so far as "it is precisely a set of practices, real practices, which established it and thus imperiously marks it out in reality" (p. 19). Foucault was referring to the "places" where what can be said and done, discourses, and strategies "meet and interconnect" (Foucault, 1991a, p. 75). Even though Foucault's work is sometimes aligned with linguistic approaches, as Bacchi & Bonham (2012) argued, his work was materialist insofar as he focuses on discursive practice (that which can be said within the true or the constitution of knowledge). Thus, distinguishing between an architectural plan and the actual building as the former being discourse and the latter being material is a linguistic concern and outside of Foucault's interest (Foucault, 1991a). What was of concern to Foucault was "the practices through which knowledge is produced and operates within each and across the two 'domains" (Bacchi & Bonham,

p.189) thus manages to combine “material and language in a single configuration” (Mol, 2002, p.8). Translating this focus into a research practice Veyne (2010) recommended that “heuristically, it is better to start off with detailed practices, details of what was done and what was said, and then make the intellectual effort to explicate the ‘discourse’ surrounding them” (p.10).

Indeed, Rose (1999b, p.19) argued that there should be a distinction between governmentality studies and sociologies of governance. To summarise, Rose argued that governmentality studies are not interested in the “actual organisation and operation of systems of rule” since they are not realist. He goes on to argue that the governmentality is more “diagnostic rather than descriptive” since it is interested in the “emergence of regimes of truth” and the “invention and assemblage of particular apparatuses and devices for exercising power an intervening upon particular problems”. Rose argued that studies of governmentality are distinct from sociologies of rule since they require the researcher to attend to critique. As a separate group of inquiry, governmentality has been found wanting in several areas. I will turn to these issues in the next section.

3.5.2 Limitations of governmentality studies

Governmentality studies bring together a multiplicity of different scholars, attached to different disciplines, yet who are utilising Foucault's work on ‘governmentality’. Since the 1980s these studies have accumulated and together now constitute a large body of literature. As with all scholarly pursuits, criticisms have targeted this literature, and some researchers have presented alterations to address these limitations. I will discuss two broad limitations of governmentality studies as they are relevant to my research design; these are problems of determinism and grand narratives. I will also discuss how these issues are connected to problems of method.

Binkley (2011) argued that the language of governmentality studies slips into determinism and causality, losing the ambiguity of subjectification. He suggests an assumption is made that the processes in/of policy are causally inserted into the minds of the subject, and hence he also argued that a subject's agency is written out. Clarke (2007) stated this is the same problem of ‘reading off’ discourse, where subjectification is assumed to be a straightforward effect of discourse (say in policy). Similar arguments are made regarding the use of Foucault's later work on technologies of the self. The argument here is that researchers have interpreted this part of Foucault’s work as an extension of disciplinary

practices. Hence technologies of the self-are another form of discipline, and this misses Foucault's later focus on 'refusing oneself' and experimenting with possible 'selves' (Valverde, 2004) or how people reinvent these 'disciplinary' or 'governing' practices to achieve self-care[14] (Heyes, 2006).

There are other problems located in the governmentality literature related to researching subjectivity. Similar to Clarke (2007), Walkerdine and Bansel (2010) noted there is a proclivity in this literature to 'read off' discourse. These authors suggest this 'reading' creates difficulties because our subjectivity is constituted as one aspect of, following Massey (2005), a web or matrix of relations, continually shifting, that is developed in historically and temporally located spaces. Hence, they argued researchers need to keep the location and temporality of practices in consideration when discussing discursive effects. As they did in this paper when they compare neoliberal subjectivities (and "self-fashionings") through interviews with redundant/unemployed persons in South Wales, UK and Sydney, Australia.

A part of Walkerdine and Bansel's (2010) argument also ties into a larger, and more referenced, problem in governmentality literature about treating neoliberalism as a hegemonic discourse or grand narrative. They argued that there are other discourses, and positions within them, that "exceed, defy, resist and intersect with dominant neoliberal discourses in ways that can be reduced to a deterministic hegemonic rationality" (p. 493). They located this problem in governmentality literature which they claim relies too heavily on secondary texts.

The complaint that governmentality literature mostly engages in an analysis of secondary texts reoccurs as the source of the problems in governmentality literature. Following this, researchers argue for moving away from relying on just secondary data as a solution or, more tentatively, as an alternative. Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde (2006, p. 97) stated that while governmentality helps to identify rationalities, problematisations and technologies, it also lends itself to a 'cookie-cutter' explanation style. This is where explanatory devices subsume entire programs without clarifying between elements which may conflict. Li (2007a; 2011) posited that governmentality literature misses the misadventures, conflicts

[14] It should be pointed out that critical psychologists have been wary of the later Foucault, including the way technologies of the self emphasises 'knowing thyself' since it is "vulnerable to critiques on the grounds of voluntarism and psychologisation" (Burman, 2015, p. 19).

and tensions that occur in policy implementation. Particularly about the work done to smooth over this tension and in this way, Li argued while “governmentality rationality is apolitical...in practice governmental interventions politicises” (2007, p. 5120). Subsequently, researchers need to pay attention to the politics, practices, attempts to resolve conflict, the contradictions and also how governmentality rationalities co-exist with the logic of sovereignty.

Other researchers have discussed similar concerns like difficulties in the assumption that one type of power is clearly displaced by another (e.g. from sovereign to disciplinary) power configurations that are shifting and messy (Collier, 2009). Brady (2014) argued this tendency is noted in governmentality literature, particularly about treating neoliberalism as a grand narrative. As consequence of this is that “when rationalities and technologies are characterised as singular, clear and settled in ways they are not” (p.24) then power relations appear to be exhaustive and complete. This is obviously counter to the project of governmentality which itself is tied to processes of critique (Foucault, 2003a). Furthermore, Walters (2012) warns that the over-reliance on rationalism in governmentality studies simplify and order through the use of metaphors like ‘mapping’. Instead, he argued researchers should loosen their reliance on steadfast replication of Foucault concepts and focus on the “disordered orderliness” of practices. To do this Walter encourages researchers to merge governmentality with methods like ethnography to attune to the “unwritten and unsaid ways in which things work by not working” (p. 146). There is a growing group of governmentality researchers who agree with this general position, that governmentality studies require greater interaction with more traditional research methods (especially ethnography) to either solve or get past some of the limitations listed above. Such positions are outlined in the following section.

3.5.3 Researching ‘ethnographically’.

Since my research originally set out to use ethnography, I will focus on discussions that champion this approach as methodology. To rectify, or at least not repeat, some of the problems with governmentality research that relies on secondary sources researchers have employed more traditionally recognised ‘fieldwork’ methods. For example, ethnographies have been used to locate situated actors and practices create situated fields of action (Campbell & Tetghoosian, 2010), problematisations that are not discernible in policy (Brady, 2011),the “intended and unintended effects” of policy (McDonald & Marston, 2005, p. 380), or constructing history-specific and detailed governmentality in

non-western contexts (Biehl & McKay, 2012) . Here ‘top-down’ approaches merge with ‘bottom-up’ approaches to attempt to preclude coherences in political rationalities, power relations, or apparatuses. Bringing these together means governmentality research is no longer “abstracted from subjects and spaces” since the bottom-up elements provide opportunity to study,

> the processes and forms of subjectivity formation to new technologies and rationalities of state institutions and actors, the evasions, resistances, enablements, exclusions, and/or motivations or individual behaviour which occur alongside and about new forms of contemporary ‘government’ (Mitchell, 2006, p. 390).

Not all researchers who acknowledge some or all of the problems described above have gravitated towards fieldwork, preferring instead to do more detailed work on the archive while attending to issues of complexity and so forth. Walters (2012) has suggested researchers should return to genealogy to help with some of the problems of governmentality (a large problem for him is the lack of historical analysis in governmentality studies). Moreover, some researchers are more tentative about endorsing ethnography as a solution (or alternative). Brady’s (2014) paper asserted that by ethnographies “beginning with the everyday” they been able to avoid the “deterministic, homogenous, and static accounts of social transformation” (p, 11).

Dean counters Brady’s argument by refuting her on several points. Of interest here are those that relate to method/ology. Firstly, Dean stated that he has no objections to scholars diverging from Foucault's work or using ethnography to study ‘practice’, but he does have difficulty with Brady’s fundamental argument for ethnography. He objects to Brady’s claim that ethnography as a method is justified with Foucault’s work and the related second claim that Brady makes about ethnography having exclusive access to the ‘actual practices’ of governing. By maintaining an ‘epistemological imperialism’ for ethnography to address the ‘Achilles heel’ of governmentality studies, Dean suggested Brady returns to something of ‘the real’. Here Dean argued Brady’s argument for using ethnography to research the actual practices of governing is decidedly removed from Foucault's work since “Foucault is not seeking to access the complexity of everyday life but the conditions under which we form a knowledge of and seek to govern such domains as everyday life” (p. 359).

There are explicit calls for drawing on realism in governmentality (Stenson, 2008). These call for closer attention to the everyday and the complexity of policy implementation and invite researchers to employ fieldwork-based methods, including mixed-methods (see McKee, 2009). The return to using a mixture of methodologies and methods, including mainstream social science methods, is required to obtain more 'contextual accounts' of research situations. Such contextualisation avoids the supposed overgeneralisations of governmentality studies, including assuming language has a constitutive effect (Lippert & Stenson, 2010). Moreover, advocates for taking an explicit realist approach also highlight how realism allows for studying implications for program implementation may reveal effects that are different from those anticipated (Garland, 1997). However, engaging in with realism has potential methodological traps. Stenson maintained his realist governmentality frame provided him with the opportunity to explore how safety initiatives in the UK were mediated through the problems linked to cultural diversity and how the police service negotiated these difficulties. Larner (2008) pointed out that Stenson, by embracing realist methods, reproduced naturalised notions of the phenomena he was investigating. The challenge is balancing realist social science methods which rely on self-evident descriptions with a governmentality approach that would render the same concepts "denaturalised, made specific and their governmental implications revealed" (Larner, p. 23).

Not all researchers agree that fieldwork methods are necessarily realist. Lippert (2005) argued that interviewing does not immediately render the object of inquiry as 'real' and as Fischer (2003) pointed out, the focus in 'post empiricism' is on accounts of reality rather than trying to access reality. Collier (2013) argued that while in his discipline of anthropology there are ethnographers who do research the details of daily practices, he uses ethnography as part of wider "arc of inquiry" that serves to focus on problems about or to problematise concepts and to guide further inquiry. Here he suggests that doing this sort of fieldwork can assist with the "grouping of sites and a set of problems that I simply could not have stumbled upon otherwise" (Collier, 2001, p. 29).Brady (2016) drew from this literature that distances itself from realist assumptions by employing an 'ethnographic imagination' that is not a method or a methodology but a 'sensitivity'.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Taking a critical psychological approach to researching unemployment involves distancing the research from traditional psychological methods and measures. Within a Foucauldian

understanding of 'critique' psychological knowledges are not only 'about' unemployment' but also render 'unemployment' as understandable in certain ways. The beginning of this chapter briefly explored how unemployment is individualised and psychologised through research practices that untangle the economic and political aspects of unemployment, leaving the individual as the focus of inquiry. Admittedly, this concentration on *individual differences* is hardly surprising considering that psychology 'is' the scientific study of individual differences in thought and behaviour. Reductionism is necessary and ideal in scientific psychological methods, so requests to understand the unemployed as a heterogeneous group through studying individual differences[15] abides by the rules of a modernist post/positivist regime. The interesting element here is how unemployment becomes both a problem of individual pathologies of feeling (in a certain way) (for example depressed affect) and a problem of method.

These concerns about how it feels to be unemployed and how to research these feelings are interlaced. By abiding by the truth-rules of the hypothetical deductive model psychologists need to find a way to establish causality, and so temporality becomes key. Does the feeling come first or is it job loss? The fixation on the relationships between these 'variables' constitutes unemployment as a problem that can be resolved *once we get the method 'right'.* To join this conversation my research would need to discuss unemployment drawing on certain psychological assumptions about human beings and how we can know these things about ourselves. Instead, I prefer to hold these 'truths' at arms' length, suspending them, holding them to critique. I'm also aiming to research 'the experience of unemployment', of how it 'feels' but I'm starting at a different point. Rather than beginning with psychological assumptions about human beings, and how we can know things about ourselves (known through the psy-complex), I concentrate my efforts to understand how these truths are given the status of knowledge and with particular effects (the power-knowledge nexus).

As discussed in Chapter One, governmentality research recognises the subject-in-process, as constantly being reconstituted through power relations and the interrelated process of the self-formed through discourse and in social institutions. Governmentality is

[15] I am not stating that the unemployed are indeed a homogenous mass. The location of individual differences in unemployment research could be further developed by moving past ideas of 'moderation' (which assumes that unemployed is a static thing) by looking at how various historical and socially contingent constitutive components ('age', 'gender', 'race', 'nationality', 'locality', 'mental health', 'socio-economic status', and so forth) intersect to produce unemployed differently with certain effects.

thus used to study how different knowledges, attached to various authorities, inform practices and technologies that are developed to guide people's voluntary behaviour. It is possible to draw on this framework to rethink the 'unemployed subject' that is constituted as 'depressed', 'anxious' and so forth through psychological research. This does not suggest we dismiss the distress of being unemployed, but we can move past the concerns with causality to how psy-complexified knowledges are implicated in both the production of governable spaces (like ES) and the production of governable subjects. To be 'unemployed' then is not a self-evident experience but an actively produced category that makes possible 'experience' possible.

Joining a governmentality approach to researching unemployment with a critical psychological approach draws attention to the debates in governmentality studies about method. Several issues for my research are raised as a consequence of trying to bridge two separate approaches. I do not want to use the methods of psychological research because I do not want to endorse psy-complexified ways of constituting the problem of unemployment. Instead, I want to suspend any 'truth' about 'unemployment' and examine how it is a socially produced category. I also want to be able to discuss the implications of governing practices. Hence the idea of the 'real' is necessary to think through how practices have effects (Papadopoulos, Schraube & Parker, 2004) particularly in how practices will service the interests of some groups rather than others (that is, 'oppress', see Stainton-Rodgers, 2002). However, repeating Larner (2008), I do not want to accidentally endorse or naturalise 'mental distress' or 'unemployment' through traditional research methods. Somehow, I need to find an approach that could consider the 'real' to be necessary but problematic and so the focus on is the processes and functions of its construction (Peterson, 2013, p. 150). The 'ethnographic imagination' suggested by Brady (2016) appears to be a way to achieve this aim without having to subscribe to anthropological research design.

In sum, critical psychological research can draw on the debates in governmentality research on method to rethink the governing of the unemployment in contemporary Australia. The links between 'what is' unemployment and 'how do we research' unemployment are questions that run through both psychological research but also governmentality studies (although governmentality questions about method are not directly related to ('unemployment'). As I noted in Chapter Two, *jobactive* is a continuation of activation discourses and the valorisation of economic and social 'participation'. However,

it also signals an increasing role of monitoring and executing compliance via ‘strengthening’ mutual obligations. In the next chapter, I will outline how I utilised an ‘ethnographic imagination’ to research how governing practices were (re)problematised in one employment service provider and the role of psy knowledges. However, the ‘ethnographic imagination’ comes with its own problems that need to be worked through. I address these issues in the following chapter where I outline a methodology for the research.

4 Chapter Four: Methodology

In this chapter, I explicate a theory of method (methodology) to justify methods used and claims made about the constitution of the 'experience' of 'unemployment' under *jobactive.* In this chapter then, I lay out how specific methods (interview, observation) and critical reading of policy documents are used to trace the (re)subjectification of the unemployed in an employment service provider's ('provider') offices in South East Queensland. As discussed in the previous chapter, my research drew on Brady's (2014; 2016) 'ethnographic imaginary' as a way to hold together my research practices. However, there are shortcomings to this approach. My main concern is how an 'ethnographic imagination' sidesteps critical conversations about methods, interviewing in particular. Accordingly, I filled the 'gap' methodologically by 'thinking with theory' (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to work through some of the more challenging aspects of using traditional qualitative methods in critical research. Specifically, I used Foucault's 'apparatus' as an organising concept to cohere the completed interviews, observations and critical reading of documents (from Chapter Two).

Below I outline the methodology by firstly discussing the uses and limitations of the 'ethnographic imagination'. Then I proceed to discuss the 'apparatus' as a concept and a methodology. From there, I attend to the problem of 'interviews' and outline a way forward using Poststructural Interview Analysis (PIA, Bonham & Bacchi 2017) that I then dovetail back into the 'apparatus' via discursive practices.

4.1 *jobactive* apparatus: tracing the lines produced through the 'ethnographic imaginary'.

4.1.1 Ethnographic imaginary: uses and departures

There is plenty of contention over what constitutes 'ethnography' (as either a method, methodology, or a way of writing). Nevertheless, the general consensus is that ethnography is characterised by the researchers' extended stay in the field (Markula & Silk, 2011)**.** Typically, it is expected that extensive fieldwork will produce a large corpus of data. Ethnographic data generally consists of the interactions, speech, actions, routine, practices of a group within a certain context (Hammersley, 2005). I agree with the argument that extensive and rigorous analysis of data is more important than the size or the contents of the corpus (Alvesson & Deertz, 2001). However, I also think that how this data is justified *as* data for analysis through methodology and method is important. It is this

very issue that I suggest is lacking in research guided by the ‘ethnographic imaginary’ and requires theoretical work to remedy in order to deploy the ‘perspective’ usefully.

4.1.1.1 Linking ‘ethnographic imagination’ to thinking ‘ethnographically.’

In terms of bridging social research methods with a critical perspective, the ‘ethnographic imaginary’ does provide a way forward. I discussed in the previous chapter how governmentality researchers wanted to research governing practices ethnographically with the resulting debates around ‘realism’. Brady (2016; Brady & Lippert, 2016) appears to have moved past these problems by detaching ‘ethnography’ from anthropological prescriptions about ‘participant observation’ and method. Brady (2016) borrows Forsey’s (2010) term, ‘ethnographic imagination’ to refashion ethnography as a ‘perspective’ or ‘sensitivity’.

Forsey (2010) used the term ‘ethnographic imagination’ to justify his interview-led ethnographies *as* ethnographies. Forsey admited that interview-led ethnographies cannot be called ‘ethnographic’ in a strictly anthropological sense. Nevertheless, interviews are useful to research “beliefs, the values, the material conditions and structural forces that underwrite the socially patterned behaviours” (p. 567). Here, research interviews survey the milieu by talking through a wide range of topics and life histories. In other words, for Forsey, ethnographies do not have to follow the classic format (participant observation) to employ an ethnographic sensibility. It is in this ‘thinking ethnographically’ without prescription to ethnography as an established method or methodology that is being reused by Brady.

According to Brady, (2016), an ‘ethnographic imagination’ is the sensitisation to the “concrete practices within a milieu” (p.4). As Brady and Lippert (2016) explained, this sensitivity focuses on the situated context wherein problematisation, subjectivity or governance strategies are assembled through the accounts provided by “situated actors” (p. 271). This literature follows a reading of Foucault’s later work that posits Foucault moved away from exploring the power/knowledge nexus (and discourse as a self-referencing system) to focusing on ‘thought’ and individual ‘thinkers’ as they problematise rationalities of a particular time and place (Collier, 2009). They claim interviewing provides an ethnographic account of the governing strategies and ‘problems’ that may not have been uncovered by focusing just on the archive (Brady 2014).

However, the ethnographic imaginary has shortcomings *because* it is neither a methodology nor method. Within a PhD thesis, there are expectations of transparency and rigour of research practices which demonstrate 'good' quality research (Honan & Bright, 2016). Atkinson (2015) contended that 'ethnography' is best understood as a method since it can be reworked in different ways depending on the methodological justification. In this way, there are various 'types' of ethnography. For example, in the literature, there are references to performative ethnography (Denzin, 2003) contemporary ethnography (Kincheloe et al., 2011), participatory ethnography (Eisenhauer et al., 2016) or critical (Madison, 2005; Thomas, 1993) among others.

At the very least, researchers would still engage with method and methodological warranting *even while* stating they use an 'ethnographic imagination'. By doing the work to demonstrate 'good quality research', we must make transparent our research practices and draw on language (and thereby regimes of truth) that make methods intelligible (making our claims justifiable). So, researchers who use an 'ethnographic imagination' still use the traditional social research method of interviewing and justify this method according to mainstream (and not necessarily critical) methodological criteria (for example see Brady, 2014; Clarke, 2018). From a critical psychological perspective, a lack of examination of the practice of research, especially interviewing 'individual thinkers', could (re)produce the psy-complex.

How knowledge claims are made and legitimated is key because research and methods (as epistemic-informed practices) are formed via 'regimes of truth' that provide knowledge of objects while simultaneously constituting those objects (Parker, 2005b). Thus, we need to be clear about the assumptions and philosophical underpinnings of our research for critical objectives. Without methodological exposition an ethnographic imaginary risks (re)producing contradictory and inconsistent interpretative frames and truth-seeking practices. 'Ethnographic imagination' still requires methodological warranting (I explore this issue more in Chapter Seven).

4.1.1.2 Using the 'ethnographic imagination' to locate problematisations

While the 'ethnographic imagination' has limitations, I utilise it to trace 'problems' in my research practices and 'sensitise' or sharpen my focus during fieldwork and in the analysis. I made some major departures, however, which I will discuss in the subsequent section. Here, I outline why it is useful to focus on 'problematisations'. Firstly, following the

‘problems’ that are present in the research field (at the research service provider or RESP) and the discussions with workers provide a way to examine ‘thought’ (knowledge) as it manifests in the research situation. Here “ thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it meaning; rather, it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or to react, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and to question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals” (Foucault, 2003e, p. 23). Indeed, to problematise is to establish something *as* a problem and thus render it amenable to thought (Foucault, 1985). Focusing on problems also encourages researchers to attend to the mundane, the struggles, tensions and negotiations that may slightly change thinking or illuminate the unexpected (Rose, 1999b). Problems are identifiable through policy, legislation, research (Bacchi, 2016). To this I add problems are identifiable through the design of an office space, the forms used to classify unemployed into different groups, the overall strategy of activation (known as the ‘service delivery plan, SDP), the problems of daily work enunciated by workers (and the techniques invented to ‘solve’ these problems), the authorities called upon to justify measures, the subjects produced, and the overall objective of strategies employed.

In other words, examining the governing practices of the unemployed in ES is focused on the strategies, technologies, problematisation, authorities, expertise, and the effects of these rather than the accounts of job seekers themselves. Although this does not mean there is no scope for doing interviews with job seekers, my research is focusing instead of how government is done in terms of mapping out the *jobactive* apparatus as it manifests in the research situation. In contrast to psychological renditions of researching unemployment, the apparatus here is used to avoid universal concepts (Foucault, 2008b; see also Agamben, 2009, p. 11; Deleuze, p. 166). Instead of seeing objects as a priori Foucault argued they are “born precisely from the interplay of relations of power and everything that constantly eludes them, at the interface … of the governors and the governed” (p. 297). The analytical task will adjust accordingly, shifting from “the study of objects to the practices that produce them” (Walters, 2012, p.18).

Placing the nub of research engagement with the practices that form unemployment and the unemployed in the spaces of RESP also addresses concerns in the literature on ES and the role of the employment consultant. Case management is a central component of governing since the ‘mutual obligations’, and ‘rights’ between unemployed people, the provider organisation and the State are articulated in this relationship (McDonald &

Marston, 2005). The complexity of these spaces can be researched with the apparatus device as a set of relations between different sites of discursive practices. In this way, the apparatus helps to rethink the workers not just as agents of governing in a certain space but helps to interlink the various components (organisational practices, KPIs, legislation requirements; expertise or lack thereof, affective dimensions) interconnect to form these spaces.

Indeed, 'space' itself is "fundamental in any exercise of power" (Foucault, 1982, p. 361) demonstrable through practices that establish, maintain, or transgress boundaries. Researching the practices of workers in ES is connected to how spaces are constituted and constituting, (re)shaping how practices are able to be enacted. Including, how daily activities of ES workers condition, limit, and enforce certain subject positions on jobseekers. However, power relations, in a Foucauldian sense, are capillary and multifaceted; the governing of the governor should also be considered for analysis.

The workers' ability to enact policy, or use discretion to resist or rework these practices, is governed by organisational procedures and priorities (Van Berkel, 2013). The potential for doing their daily work, including the possibility for using discretionary practice (as described in the deed) is contingent on the governing of the Employment Consultants as workers. Nevertheless, the practices of 'governing at a distance' and 'at close range' overlap (Carter, 2016) in these 'activating' spaces where institutional, policy, legislative, and vocational concerns converge. The office floors of *jobactive* can be seen as "a thickly layered texture of political struggles concerning power and authority, cultural negotiations over identity and social constructions of the problem at hand" (Forrester 1992, p. 47).

4.1.1.3 Departures: interviewing 'situated actors'

Exploring the reflections and accounts of workers as 'situated actors' could miss this vital component of subjectification - the double meaning of being subjected through power relations but also understanding/ working on oneself as a subject. As I will explain in more detail in the later section on 'interviews, the practice of interviewing is fraught with assumptions that contradict a critical research study. Notably, interviewing assumes and can also constitute subjects, researchers as well as research participants, as 'fixed' 'humanist' subjects. A poststructuralist study should emphasise how objects are continually being (re)formed, and subjects are 'becoming' (Bletsas, 2012).

Additionally, I considered how the interview is positioned as constituted through and discursive practices such that it requires the same level of analytical interrogation. The interview is part of the research process, along with the establishment of behavioural norms, and the availability of subject positions. This includes highlighting the contradictory or conflicting discourses that are evident in workers' discussions (from contradictions in policy discourse or indeed the conflict arises from other subject positions intersecting with the worker subject position) or through the disagreements/negotiation of meaning between the interviewer and interviewee (Tanggaard, 2007). In order to retain this focus on subjectivity, I prefer to maintain the power-knowledge nexus in my research on governing practices. Consequently, I use the apparatus to justify methods. I explain this below.

4.1.2 'Plugging in' to the Foucault-machine and the 'apparatus.'

One main difficulty for a critical psychological perspective on unemployment is cohering a acritical methodology within a critical PhD thesis. As mentioned, attempts by other researchers to refuse to discuss their research in methodological terms (while still using method and warranting claims through typical social science mechanisms, see above) raise more problems than they solve. This is the situation with an 'ethnographic imagination'. While I find it useful to pull together interviews, observations and critical reading of policy through an 'ethnographic lens' there is still the problem of how interviews and observations are done, and what uncritical assumptions creep back into my study. I discuss this problem of method in more detail in the bottom sections of this chapter. For now, I will use the 'apparatus' to methodologically justify thinking ethnographically with research practices.

I use an 'ethnographic imagination' as a way of 'thinking ethnographically' to link together the routines, practices, governing strategies, problems, the constitution of spaces and subjects, technologies, authorities and discursive practices of the research situation. To link methods, I will 'plug' into the apparatus. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) discuss the practice of 'plugging in' as a way of "thinking methodologically" (p. 261) by 'thinking with theory' instead of using analysis as a way to 'code'' and 'reduce' data to 'themes'. They explain,

> We first encountered "plugging in" while reading Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) A Thousand Plateaus: "… When one writes, the only question is which another

> machine the literary machine can be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work" (p. 4). In our thinking with theory, we were confronted with multiple texts—or literary machines: interview data, tomes of theory, conventional qualitative research methods books that we were working against, things we had previously written, traces of data, reviewer comments, and so on ad infinitum. That is, we had a sense of the ceaseless variations possible in having coauthored texts that relied on a plugging in of ideas, fragments, theory, selves, sensations. And so we moved to engage "plugging in" as a process rather than a concept, something we could put to work (p.262).

By putting theory to work Jackson and Mazzei (2012) claim they produce knowledge as an ongoing-assemblage that establishes connections between "a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)" (p. 263). The assemblage also destabilises knowledge as a 'final arrival' and instead something moving and unfinished we as subjects, objects, and the apparatuses that produce these, are unfixed and changing. 'Thinking methodologically' in this way involves acknowledging how methods, as epistemically informed practices, may not automatically cohere methodologically with our broader project. According to Jackson and Mazzei, their interviews (and qualitative research methods) were "failed from the start" (p. 264), so they worked to 'plug into' machines "your theories, data, methods, becomings, and so on" (p. 263) to do 'something else'. For Jackson and Mazzeri (2013), this 'something else' was the refusal to "create thematic patterns to represent the essence of the participants" (p. 262). For me, 'something else' is the refusal to produce 'evidence' about the 'psychological consequences' of 'unemployment'.

I 'plug into' the Foucault-machine and 'put to work' several 'tools' of Foucault. I use 'problematisations' to critically read through policy documents (see Chapter Five); I use problematisations and discursive practices to critically analyse interviews and observations (see the end of this chapter but also Chapter Six), and I bring all of these together through the 'apparatus'. 'Thinking with' these tool from Foucault-machine help to rework some of the methodology concerns with using an 'ethnographic imagination' and social-science-research-methods-as-usual. By doing this 'work', I hope to outline a theoretically-informed research strategy for 'critique'.

In the opening chapter, I used 'apparatus' to theorise an ontological understanding of '*jobactive.*' To define the apparatus, I will quote Foucault in full,

> What I am trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions - in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements (Foucault, 1980a, pp. 194-5).

The apparatus is a system of relations that brings together practically anything but notably, lines of 'enunciation' (knowledge), 'force' (power relations) and 'subjectification (Deleuze, 1992). It emerges from a specific historical problem. The apparatus targets a section of society to define, constitute and regulate through power/knowledge. It is assembled to resolve an "urgent need" and "thus has a dominant strategic function" (Foucault, 1980, p. 195).

The apparatus can be usefully deployed to study the complexity of subjectification for both workers and the job seekers they govern. Binkley (2011) argued for a closer examination of the apparatus in order to study the processes of 'disposing of' free subjects to move from a self that is problematised to an ideal self. Indeed, he argued that it is in the (de)subjectification - subjectification process that the apparatus can be located.

For example, in Foucault's (2008b) work, *The History of Sexuality Vol 1: The Will to Knowledge,* he demonstrated how the apparatus of 'sexuality' was deployed to constitute sexual subjects. Foucault was interested in how 'sexuality' was first constituted as an object of thought that was then deployed as an apparatus combining four strategies that "formed knowledge and power centring on sex" (p. 103). The four strategies were a "technical machinery" (Foucault, 2008b, p. 114) that stretched across various elements: discourses, techniques, administration, laws, knowledges, practices, institutions in order to construct and maintain the notion of 'sexuality' that became "multiplied" rather than "rarefied" (p. 53).

The 'technical machinery' produced subjectivity via the technology of 'confession'. Here Foucault traces the changing practices of confession from the admittance of a deed through to the requirement to confess and "transform your desire, your every desire, into discourse" (p. 21). In other words, Foucault describes the processes of confession, not as a repressive form of power but as productive. Through drawing on discourses of sex, self-

knowledge and self-examination; and confession to an authority, one becomes a subject. Thus, Foucault elaborated how the apparatus of sexuality produces 'sexual person'. In the same way, I see the *jobactive* apparatus as formed through a multiplicity of instruments, means, discourses that shape a field of possibilities wherein unemployed subjectivity is performed.

4.1.3 Putting the 'apparatus' to work to research jobactive

I propose that the *jobactive* apparatus makes visible the 'unemployed' by marking out the population through an assemblage of practices and knowledge claims about what 'unemployment' is and how 'unemployment' is a problem that needs to be resolved by the *jobactive* apparatus. The *jobactive* apparatus draws together specific strategies and technologies of intervention through administrative procedures and frameworks for providers to operate and form service delivery models and incorporate a variety of institutions for this implementation while also creating scope for philanthropy. The *jobactive* apparatus is co-coordinating certain discourses about 'unemployment' and similarly silences subjugated discourses.

However, it should also be noted that the notion of 'apparatus' is more complex than simply performing an uncontested and uniform machine-like function. Firstly, despite the strategic function of the apparatus, there are unplanned effects (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). For example, in ES, case managers can use 'discretion' to accommodate the circumstances of the job seeker and the realities of the local labour market (Department of Employment, 2015). That is, programs of conduct are altered at the level of actual practices or micro-practices. Moreover, the apparatus, although stable, is not static (Rabinow, 2003) and will refashion over time. Thus, *jobactive* is the latest iteration of ES and represents the current formation of the apparatus that governs the unemployed.

The apparatus can be useful to connect the micro and macro practices of governing (Hook, 2004b) regarding the overall strategy without ever directly implying lines of causation but rather "double conditioning" (Foucault, 2008a, p. 99). Here Foucault holds that there is continuity between the macro and the micro but also reject the idea of homogeneity where the micro is a smaller version of the macro and vice versa. Instead, of looking for clear causal lines, the focus is on "the specificity of possible tactics, and of tactics by the strategic envelope that makes them work" concurrently. In his later work, according to Collier (2009), Foucault avoids claims of causality by engaging in a

topographical type analysis. Here he focuses on correlations of heterogeneous elements that can be deployed transforming original patterns. As Foucault (1991c) pointed out, one can "... [suspend] the indefinitely renewed privileges of cause, to render apparent the polymorphous interweaving of correlations" (p. 58). Focusing on the apparatus and engaging in a more topographical account can potentially avoid reinscribing the issues of causality that has occupied psychological research on unemployment (see Chapter Two).

As developed above, the apparatus is one of Foucault's most useful tools, mostly because it allows the researcher to 'cut across' disciplines, devices, spaces, practices, technologies, to see how these elements 'hang together' by a strategic system of relations. The next step is explicating how to use the apparatus methodologically. I put the apparatus to work by using methods as a way to trace and make an account of how the unemployed are made, unmade, and made again through processes of 'becoming-other' (Deleuze, 1992). From here, I lay out cartographically elements of the *jobactive* apparatus (although my list is non-exhaustive).

The apparatus can help to merge doing observation, interviews and document analysis in terms of merging the symbolic and the material. Foucault's apparatus is often used to explore materiality as well as language. As argued at length by Bacchi and Bonham (2014), Foucault's work on 'discursive practices' does not refer to just language but knowledge formations. Here the focus is on the set of rules or relations that establish what can be said and done. To put it another way, what is of interest is the practices that install regimes of truth. This is markedly different from claiming 'truth'. They go on to argue that contrary to many recent criticisms (see for example Barad, 2007), Foucault's work is not missing a material element. Instead, they maintain that Foucault's work is inherently material because discursive practices are inherently material. Bacchi and Bonham (2014) returned to Foucault's (2002) work *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault's discusses the 'statement' as part of the discursive practice, which bridges the symbolic-material divide. They note that Foucault used the 'statement' to refer to an 'event' or 'monument'. So, statements are more than words spoken and could also be artefacts since they have inherent repeatable materiality.

Importantly, statements function to activate an entire area and the relations involved. Foucault called this the 'enunciative function' and it is the 'doing' of the statement or how they make things happen. This activation allows certain things to be said, the authority on

what is said to be “within the true” and they prescribe subject positions with constitutive effects for the subjects involved. Additionally, Foucault (1980a) argued power is “everywhere because it comes from everywhere; it is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of ‘non egalitarian and mobile relations’” (pp.92– 94). Here power relations (i.e., power-knowledge) connect discursive and the non-discursive, constituting objects and subjects. In this way, the distinction between ‘discourse’ and ‘material’ is not an issue since “power is always already material” (Hekman, 2010, p. 57).

The apparatus for Bacchi and Bonham (2014) reaffirms the materiality inherent in Foucault's understanding of discursive practices. Even though in his often-cited definition Foucault talks about the discursive and the non-discursive as constituting the heterogeneous elements these non-discursive are not the non-language elements but those “sites that are not explicitly named as knowledge formation” (p. 188), such as “institutions, political events, economic practices and process” (Foucault, 2002, p. 162). Moreover, in other discussions Foucault (1980a) defended his characteristic of the apparatus against the charge that discussing a non-discursive element, ‘an institution’ is also discursive (insofar as it is signifying) but stating that such a distinction is not necessary to him,

> If you take Gabriel’s architectural plan for the Military School together with the actual construction of the School, how is one to say what is discourse and what institutional? That would only interest me if the building didn’t conform with the plan. But I don’t think that it’s very important to be able to make that distinction given that my problem isn’t a linguistic one (p. 198).

Foucault distinguished his work from the linguistic field by pointing out that what happens in a plan and the material realisation of that plan is not interesting in itself. Instead, for Foucault, the intriguing element is how knowledges, through different practices, form, and operate in either site (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014). The point here Foucault doesn’t distinguish between ‘material’ and ‘symbolic’, but how the “strategies of relations of forces supporting and supported by, types of knowledge” is able to achieve a goal through “manipulation of forces, either developing them in a particular direction, blocking the, stabilising them, utilising them etc” (p. 196). The apparatus thus has a productive quality. The apparatus can be used to connect various elements discursive and non-discursive, material/symbolic, across macro and micro spaces and brings together knowledge, power, and thinking through the subject (Deleuze, 1992). Indeed, Bacchi and Bonham go so far

as to use ‘discursive practices’ and ‘dispositif’ interchangeably. I agree that the apparatus produces objects/subjects and is underpinned by a regime of truth. However, I think using ‘apparatus’ and ‘discursive practices’ interchangeably downplays the strategic component of the apparatus to solve an “urgent need” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 1695). Therefore, I depart from Bacchi and Bonham on this point and I will continue to use ‘discursive practices’ and ‘apparatus’ separately.

While using discursive practices as a way to approach analysing the apparatus, or taking a close reading of Foucault’s work or various other explorations of how to analyse with an apparatus, these approaches still deal with text that has already been constructed. The apparatus can help analyse data generated through traditional qualitative methods. For example, Jäger (2001) posited that that we can watch someone buy a loaf of bread (conduct an observation) in order to do a dispositif analysis. Jäger, who also draws on semiotics and activity theory, argued that there is knowledge which informs these observable social actions and thus is amenable to analysis. That is, we can break down the actions and research the assumptions, social institutions, rules given and reasons provided to understand how these actions are possible. About buying a loaf of bread, we can discuss food requirements, what food is deemed edible, the arrangements of the market space, and so on. In terms of observing the spaces of ES, observing the daily routines of workers can be broken down and analysed similarly. Indeed, such observations provide scope for bringing into analysis those elements recommended by Dean (2010, p. 28) such as waiting times, the design, layout and location employment offices, the procedures of reception of clients and so on that complement document type analysis (on forms, policy, checklists, agreements). These elements help to research the ‘non-discursive’ elements of the apparatus, those that are not directly named as knowledge practices but which nevertheless are made possible through the power-knowledge nexus.

Interviews are another method to be used for researching discursive practices, particularly when the apparatus can be understood as a set of discursive practices or set of routines that are historically contingent through which social knowledges are dispersed and reformed (Bonham & Bacchi, 2014). Interviews in qualitative psychology research (as well as across the social sciences and humanities) may be utilised to understand people's lived experience. Interviews were selected as text because they provide data for how lay people

take up[16] discourses and knowledge of expertise (Willig, 2013). Additionally, interviews provide a way to research systems of knowledge that make certain 'selves' knowledgable, including the array of social and discursive practices that surround and guide conduct. This includes conducting others and how they conduct themselves and the problems attached to these practices or indeed, the problems that these practices solved (Yates & Hiles, 2010).

Interviewing can help locate how employment consultants draw on activation discourses to mark the unemployed out as a 'problem' that needs resolving. Interviews are used to research subjectification (insofar as participants take up certain subject positions and talk about others being as certain types of subjects) and so are useful for tracing the apparatus. However, just as interviews help research subjectification, they are also subjectifying (Fadyl & Nicholls, 2013). In the following section, I turn my attention to this issue of the subjectifying impact of interviewing.

4.2 Analysing interviews differently

The subjectifying element of the interview requires careful critique and is missing from some researchers who employ an 'ethnographic imagination' as well as other governmentality researchers (see Chapter One for discussion). The assumptions of the interview here are: the subject as understood in poststructuralism is "constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, p. 32, as cited in Jones, 1997). Discursive practices are the practices that instil meaning within the true, they are what makes 'what' is said in the interview possible and sensible. Discursive practices are further part of the dispositive according to these authors since discursive practices are also a set of routines that have relations with other routines in different sites (jobactive provider, Centrelink, government policy, legislation, RTO's, counselling services etc.). Finally, they maintain that because interviews produce certain subjects and objects (which are in constant process) they are political, so the analysis produced is not neutral or objective (Bacchi & Bonham, 2017).

[16] As I noted in Chapter One, referring to a subject that 'takes up' discourses is not reinserting a modernist subject. Rather the subject and the action are here the same in a mutually constituting process, in the same way that subjection means to be a subject *and* to be subjected as a subject. We can only take up the discourses that are available to us but we were already being subjected prior to the action and will be resubjected by the taking. This position is important for as Burman (2017) notes a discursive approach helps to study the enactment of policy over assuming people are passive recipients and/or agents of policy.

According to Bonham and Bacchi (2017), interviews are unable to access or even represent the lived experiences of interviewees. Instead, they maintain that interviews are involved in intervening in the world by constituting objects, subjects and spaces. Drawing on Mol's (1999) 'ontological politics' Bonham and Bacchi argued that interviews are involved in creating reality(is). Mol explains her concept of 'ontological politics' that by demonstrating different practices of detecting anaemia as a way to illustrate this production of realities. She posited that, "reality does not precede the mundane practices in which we interact with but is rather shaped within these practices". Moreover, the possibilities that we live with are not given. Instead, the political nature of these practices means there is a "process of shaping, and the fact that its character is both open and contested" (p. 75).

PIA was developed in response to the concern about using interviews in a Foucauldian-inspired poststructural analysis (Bacchi & Bonham 2016; Bonham & Bacchi, 2017; Bonham, Bacchi & Wanner, 2015). Bacchi and Bonham recognise the 'major theoretical challenge' (p. 2) of using interviews to access the experiences, thoughts and feelings of interviewees when doing poststructural research that is influenced by Foucault. They note two main issues; firstly, using interviews to identify resistance by subjects locates these subjects outside of discourse and power relations. Secondly, the interviews must accept some foundational assumptions about human beings (pre-discursive subject). The authors argue these practices, through the research interview, produce normalising effects. Consequently, the interview is political by potentially reproducing dominant (and potentially problematic) norms.

Bacchi and Bonham (2016, p. 115) developed a way of analysing interviews, which they claim can circumvent the issues that come with assuming a pre-discursive subject. Following Foucault, they emphasise that they are not interested in looking at the 'essence' of any "founding subject" but the practices that produced subjects. Thus, they are looking at the 'ongoing-formation' of subjects since people are "always in process - fluid and relational". There are three extra points to consider about subjectivity. Firstly, our subjectivity is produced through power relations which according to Foucault (2003a) implies not only a 'free' subject but also the potential for "means of escape or possible flight" (p. 142). A power relation is thus differentiated from domination. Secondly, since subjectivity implies fluidity where we are always in the process of becoming something

else (Deleuze, 1992), there is also the possibility for otherness inherent in the production of the 'subject' through power relations.

Contrary to some research which posit subjects can stand outside of discourse and resist, the implications of 'possible flight' does not imply that "[d]iscourse is not a place into which the subjectivity irrupts" (Foucault 1991c, p. 58). Instead, it is a space of potential "differentiated subject-positions and subject-functions" (p. 58). Research is an opportunity to explore these ongoing-formations of subject positions that are available within the discursive practices (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017). A part of this movement towards analysing a provisional subject is focusing on mapping what the subject in the interview could become rather than what they have become or interpreting the meaning-making that occurs in the interview event.

PIA is a guide to interrogate and critique research practices. Importantly, research is involved in producing 'categories' for understanding the social world, and this is a crucial characteristic of psychological research (Rose, 1996). As I noted in the first chapter, I agree with Parker (2005b) that methodology is an "important battleground" because research forms objects via research practices. Research that aims to research the psychological self, the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals, through interviews or other practices, produces certain subjects (hailing people as participants and so forth, see chapter seven) but also produces people as objects. People become recognisable as a certain type of subject through a psy-complexified prism that 'enables' the researcher to 'access' participants thoughts, feelings, dispositions, behaviours, attitudes and so forth, and also produces these aspects as being 'real' – actual 'things' that can be segmented, defined, recognised and assessed (See Rose, 1996).

However, it also assumes certain types of people, the rational, individual, unitary subject that comes before the 'I', as Butler (1997) puts it; the 'pre-discursive' subject. In this chapter, I will follow Parker's lead by examining the interviews as technologies/sites, within the research ensemble, to critique the knowledgementing process. Engaging in critique draws attention to the "unexamined ways of thinking" (Foucault, 1994, p. 456), and the associated knowledge that is required to think about 'unemployment'; 'the unemployed' and ES in particular ways. PIA will concentrate attention on the practices that install these very meanings (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014).

When examining the daily tasks of the employment consultants the same discourses that underpin the changes to Australian employment service, such as the need for activation and ‘welfare dependency’ are traceable in workers’ description of their work with job seekers (Howard et al., 2016). This has also been noted internationally (Seale et al., 2010). Although stating discourses are traceable through workers’ talk does not imply that governmental ideologies have been inserted into the minds of workers as has been suggested (Jordan, 2018). Rather, the way these spaces are being governed by policy (organisational compliance and funding), in which workers are trained and activated/constrained in their work tasks, and the broader discourses about unemployment and welfare that extend beyond the boundaries of these employment spaces (issues relating to citizenship, entitlement, the ‘dole bludger’ and so on), form part of the conditions of possibilities for what is intelligible to say and do.

That is, workers in these industries are being governed as well as governing, and so discussions of policy implementation are not straightforward enactments of dominant discourses. Workers use a range of categories for the unemployed. Some that fit neatly with dominant discourses and others that do not. For example, workers have reported endorsing gendered understandings of parental payment schemes even when the Governmental office position is gender-neutral (Brady, 2011). Organisational priorities remake what type of ‘serving’ or ‘governing’ the workers can do in their daily work. For example, worker discretion is not only defined by policy but also by the ‘culture of discretion’ in the organisation (Kelly, 1994). In discussing the unemployed and governing work of unemployment, we need to include an analysis of the complicated ways workers are governed through organisational practices (Marston, 2013).

4.3 Chapter summary

In my research, I use an ‘ethnographic imagination’, a perspective, to examine the practices that constitute worker and unemployed subjectivities within ES in Australia. Conventional ethnographic tools, like observation, interviews and critical reading of policy document are brought together via the ‘apparatus’. The task is to ‘plug into’ the Foucault-machine, to trace the lines of power-knowledge and subjectification, to see the system of relations that constitute unemployment as a certain kind of problem, and the practices and technologies that constitute and reform the unemployed. By positioning *jobactive* as an apparatus, interviews, observations and critical readings of policy are used to locate conjunctions, problem, discursive practices, that when laid out together form this ‘technical

machinery'. In other words, I use traditional qualitative fieldwork to research how governing practices are produced through workers stories. Here, I create a topographical account (Collier, 2013) using the apparatus and focus on discursive practices "to render apparent the polymorphous interweaving of correlations" (Foucault, 1991c, p. 58), alongside policy (as discussed in Chapter Two), and psychological research (briefly discussed in the first part of Chapter Three), to produce the 'experience' of unemployment.

The ultimate task of the research is to make strange and problematise that which is mundane and all too familiar. Indeed, the practices of activating the unemployed and the conditions that attached, within the spaces of ES has been a feature since the late 1980s (Marston, 2014). In the broadest sense critique is the possibility of otherness (Hansen, 2016), hence using research to explicate how certain unemployed/worker subjectivities are achieved and how these achievements are undermined and reworked opens new spaces for rethinking unemployment and ES. In this way, ethnographic tools are used to "investigate" the power-knowledge of ES by "suspending as far as possible the normative system which one refers to test and evaluate it" (Foucault, 1984, p. 68 cited in Lemke, 2011, p. 29). In the next chapter, I outline a 'research strategy' that provides the details of the research practices.

5 Chapter Five: Research strategy

This chapter outlines the research strategy of my thesis. I will begin with the corpus of text before discussing data collection and modes of analysis. I have used 'research strategy' in place of 'method' because it reflects the critical project of disruption while also incorporating a sense of the political nature of knowledge production (Gannon & Davis, 2009). The research practices I utilised included observations of the offices of one Employment Services provider ('RESP') in South East Queensland. I also did interviews with employment consultants at RESP. The research took place between 2015 and 2016. I outline the research straight in the following sequence: firstly, I list the corpus of text, then I detail data collection techniques for observations and interviews, in the final section I discuss some of the ethical practices of the research.

5.1 Overview of the corpus of text

I used a variety of data collection strategies to accumulate a corpus of text for analysis. Texts include:

- Documents that were used by RESP workers in their daily tasks were also collected from the research situation. These documents include a 'job plan', the tasks lists for the GROUPS; and worker training material.
- 25 recorded interviews with 13 workers within RESP
- There are also field notes taken from time spent in the five RESP offices. Fieldwork went over seven months and lasted from two hours to a full working day of observation. I was allowed access five times in West Site 1[17] (WS1); twice in South Site (SS1); once at East Site (ES1); twice at North Site 1 (NS1); and five times at North Site 2 (NS2) (14 times in total).

5.2 Generation of text for analysis

5.2.1 Negotiating gatekeeper access.

I had initially received tentative gatekeeper access to do in research within an employment service provider in early 2015, in South East Queensland. At the time, this provider was working under the Job Services Australia model, and I was employed by this organisation as a casual employment consultant to facilitate a positive psychology program among

[17] Office sites are identified by their actual location as part of the de-identifying process, I have renamed the office sites.

other ‘usual’ activation duties. The Job Services Australia (JSA) model was due to expire June 2015 with the *jobactive* contract beginning in July 2015.

In March 2015 the results of the *jobactive* tender were announced, and the JSA Provider I worked for was unsuccessful in their tender for *jobactive*. Indeed, many organisations contracted under Job Services Australia did not continue into the *jobactive* contract. In Job Services Australia, there were 79 provider organisations, and under *jobactive*, there are 44 (Jobs Australia, n.d). Since my former employer was unsuccessful in their *jobactive* bid, I started contacting other providers to discuss potential access. I was repeatedly told that these organisations would not be interested in having a researcher inside their organisation at the beginning of a new contract. With the reduction of Providers contracted by the Government, many successful organisations had to establish sites in new areas, employ new staff, and retrain all employees in the new *jobactive* contract (Jobs Australia, 2016). As such, even when I did receive tentative approval from one Employment Services provider (‘RESP’) they did not want me to enter the sites until they had time to ‘settle in’ to the new contract.

In September 2015, I had a meeting with the Business Manager of RESP and negotiated gatekeeper access. The approved research practices included: overt observation of in-house vocational and non-vocational training; interviews with workers to discuss their experiences while facilitating these training programs; engage in interviews with Employment Consultants/ Reverse Marketers about their day to day activities as employees in these spaces; overt observations of the everyday activities within the offices (sites). The fieldwork was estimated to last eight months, and I agreed to write a summary of the research and the findings for RESP.

5.2.2 Observations

Observation in research involves “watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions” (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007, p. 2). The degree to which a researcher ‘participates’ in the situation may vary depending on situational opportunities. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) placed ‘participation’ on a continuum where roles can range from ‘active participant’ to ‘passive observer’. However, even if a researcher is just a ‘passive observer’ they are still part of the research situation and are therefore participating in a sense. Gobo (2008) preferred an expansive definition of ‘participant observation’ to include engaging in conversations, socialising, watching and conducting ethnographic interviews. In this way,

the type of observations I did in my research could be described as ‘overt participant observation’. The observations were initially planned to record the training conducted within the research Employment Services provider (RESP). I was expecting training to be similar to the type of training I facilitated when I was an employment consultant. In this type of scenario, the training would be conducted in a separate room where the job seekers would sit at desks and face the facilitator who stood at the front of the room. Just the same as a classroom, training facilitated in this way would enable me to sit in the back of the room to observe the training and interaction as it unfolded.

However, the RESP changed the service delivery plan (SDP) so that there was no training being carried out in the way I anticipated. Instead, the SDP involved group case management where the job seekers would be required to job search or watch videos while they waited for an employment consultant to complete the administrative side of the appointment. These self-lead training practices occurred in a planned open office. I refer to this service delivery model as GROUP. Observations of these GROUP sessions was restricted to listening in to the introduction given by one of the workers to the jobseekers at the beginning of each session and describing/analysing the overarching practices/purposes of the training.

Since there was no separate training program, I could only observe the general interaction in the RESP office space, and consequently, I focused my attention on the workers and their daily tasks. This entailed several different strategies. At times, I would sit in an unused ‘hot desk’ and watch the ‘action’ of the floor. I would watch job seekers coming into the office, being greeted by a worker at the ‘concierge desk’, and then watch as the job seeker would either do what they were supposed to (go to a computer and job search) or sit/stand and wait for their appointment. I would ‘sit in’ on the daily ‘heads up’ meetings as workers started their day. At other times, workers would allow me to ‘sit in’ with job seekers during the group case management. I always introduced myself honestly, explaining that I was a researcher and quickly describing my study (I had extra information sheets for anybody interested to know more - nobody was). When I ‘sat in’ on the GROUPs; however, I introduced myself to the group and usually so would the staff at the beginning of the session. In these GROUP sessions, I would usually strike up a conversation with job seekers, occasionally helping with their job search or providing advice about different issues (dealing with Centrelink, writing a cover letter). Every so often, workers would let me ‘shadow’ them while they did the administrative side of their

work. They would talk me through their training and show me how they filled out internal forms, showed me the changes made to the government database or other tasks that they had to complete.

Overall, I moved between taking a broad focus while observing, and then at other times narrowing my observation to particular actions (Silk, 2005). These observations focused on watching the rhythms of the workplace and attending to specific details of activities or disruptions. Indeed, focusing on the disruptions can help to illuminate the function of power-knowledge. As Foucault (2003a) pointed out, we can study power relations by searching for the points where there is resistance or conflict. A 'failure' provides the opportunity to research the normative role of the tool, ritual, procedure, technology, in everyday practice (Roehl, 2012). So, for example, during fieldwork at NS2, I was observing the GROUP session by being a part of the group talking to a job seeker as they did their job search, waiting for their turn to be seen by the employment consultant. This GROUP session was taking longer than it was supposed to and a job seeker expressed their anger and frustration to the employment consultant. I would observe the altercation, trying to listen in to how the employment consultant resolved the situation while not interrupting the scene.

I was guided by several questions to help discriminate between activities during fieldwork. The questions are directed towards how discursive practices and problematisations constitute specific unemployed subjectivities. As Alvesson and Deetz (2000) described, the interpretative task of observation involves studying 'how particular realities are socially produced and maintained through norms, rites, rituals and daily activities' (p. 34). The questions that guided observation included:

- What are the main 'problems' identified by workers, the organisation, or assumed in daily practices within the research situation?
- How are disputes settled?
- What are the artefacts that are important in these workspaces, and how do they function?
- What are the sequences and rituals of the workers, and what does this work mean for how job seekers are positioned in these spaces? Who gets to stand where?
- What is the role of policy?

- What are the normal organisational procedures?
- What are the intended and unintended effects?

In qualitative research, observation is considered the data collection procedure and the field notes are positioned as ‘data’ (Merriam, 2009). The field notes were mostly ‘descriptive’ trying to capture the details of the situation (Willig, 2008) and were mostly written by hand in an abbreviated form. However, these ‘descriptions’ are not as accurate representations of what occurred but rather situated interpretations of what I saw and heard (Mol, 2002). The Institute for Social Science Research Ethical Review Panel approved observation procedures (see Appendix A for approval letters).

5.2.3 Interviews

Interviews were done with employment consultants (general workers who ran the group case management and did most of the administrative work), lead employment consultants (who ran the individual offices but were governed by regional managers) and the reverse marketers (whose primary role was to ‘sell’ job seekers to employers). None of the upper management agreed to an interview. The interviews ranged from ten minutes to one hour and were audio-recorded on my smartphone (that is password protected). After the interviews were recorded, I uploaded the recordings onto my work computer (password protected) and deleted the recordings on my phone.

Interviews should be conducted in a place and at a time that is convenient to the interviewee (Creswell, 2013). Doing interviews within an organisational setting presents several obstacles to creating the ‘ideal’ interview environment. When I first entered a site or office as part of my introductory discussions, I would ask workers if they would be interested in being interviewed at some point during the interview. I would then re-ask when I had noticed the worker was alone doing administrative tasks. Sometimes workers would advise they were busy and they would approach me when they had time for an interview. At other times workers would state they could spare some time to do the interview then. The locations for interviews was decided in situ. Mostly; interviews occurred at the ‘hot desks’ at each of the work sites. Most of the interviews took place in the open spaces of the offices except for the interviews at SS1. At SS1, the interviews were completed within a private room.

Since most of the interviews were done in an open plan office, I would advise workers that others could hear our conversation in the office space. On one occasion, when reminded about the possibility of being overheard, a worker decided that we move to the opposite corner of the office away from her colleagues. Only three interviews were done in separate offices, and two of these interviewees were lead employment consultants. In these instances, the lead employment consultants had a separate office to work in or suggested we use that space. The one occasion that an employment consultant was interested in a private room was when the lead employment consultant approved the use of the room. In other offices, the separate offices were not available for interview purposes. There was also the problem of workers not being able to leave the main floor for the interview even though they had permission to take some time to complete the interviews. This occurred on one occasion, for example, because the worker being interviewed was the only employee not on a lunch break (and hence had to watch for incoming job seekers while we did the interview). With the interviews conducted with workers in the main office area, there was always a sense that the workers were still working; several interviews were interrupted and cut short because the workers needed to return to their duties.

In the same way, the workers could not give multiple interviews (for the most part). Even though I only approached workers when they seemed to be in 'downtime' doing administrative work (and not with jobseekers) I had plenty of workers decline interviews (most citing they were too busy with work). I always respected these boundaries put in place by workers. All interviewees were provided information sheets, and informed consent was obtained. Not all the interviews were recorded. At times it was inconvenient for the respondent or unpractical, and in these instances, I wrote notes in my journal as per usual practice in these situations (Fetterman, 2009). The Institute for Social Science Research Ethical Review Panel approved interview procedures (see Appendix A for approval letters).

Interview questions were developed from ethnographic engagement after spending some time in the field (Madison, 2005). Generally speaking, interview questions were around:

- The changes (or lack of) in the delivery of services under *jobactive*
- Experiences in activating the unemployed

In addition to the conversations, workers provided examples of materials that were handed to jobseekers. They showed me: the spreadsheets they were using to do different tasks;

forms to re-categorise jobseekers developed in-house; graphs recording their Key Performance Indicators. They explained new elements of the Government database they have to use (ESS web) as well as the in-house database system and showed me examples of videos they showed to job seekers (on topics like writing resumes or cold canvassing) and a video developed to train the workers in the new service delivery plan. Upon completing the interview, interviews were transcribed verbatim and conversations were summarised in handwritten notes in the research journal. All participants' identities were protected with pseudonyms.

5.2.4 Documents

For collecting documents in the research situation, I always asked permission if I could have a copy of any document, repeating that the document was being used for analytical purposes, but any identifying information would be redacted. Although I had access to read organisational documents, most were deemed 'commercial-in-confidence' and so were excluded from the analysis. Organisational documents used for analysis included:

- task list for 'GROUPs';
- internal 'assessment' device (created by workers) for determining 'eligible candidates' ("seeking real solutions");
- 'career quiz' worksheet; observational notes on a training video for the GROUPs;
- Job Plan template;

5.3 Participants

I interviewed 13 workers for a total of 25 recorded interviews. Four participants were Lead Employment Consultants (LEC) (three cis-men, one cis-woman); two participants were employment consultants whose positions focused on reverse marketing (or 'selling' job seekers to prospective employers) (both cis-women), and seven participants were employment consultants who did more general work (administrative duties and running a group case management sessions) (six cis-women, one cis-male). I did not ask interviewees their ages, but I estimate the age range is from in their 20s (the youngest interview was still studying her undergraduate degree) to mid-60s (one participant discussed nearing retirement). The youngest participant had only worked in ES under *jobactive*, and another participant had worked in Disability Employment Services (DES)

before moving to *jobactive*. Every other participant had worked under Job Services Australia and then transitioned to *jobactive*.

Workers of RESP were chosen as participants because they do the governing work of 'activation'. Participants were recruited via convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling, or recruiting participants because of their availability and willingness to participate, is commonly used in ethnographic research because this research is often emergent and exploratory (Duneier, 2011). My sampling technique is classifiable as 'convenient' because I approached workers in sites that I was provided access to without targeting potential participants on any other criteria (age, gender, level in the organisation and so forth).

5.4 The strategy: problematisation, governmentality, discourse and PIA

The purpose of the analysis was to interrogate governing practices within RESP to map this apparatus. As I elaborated in the previous chapter (Chapter Three: Methodology), I use Foucault's work on problematisations to attend to practices (in policy, in interviews, in the spaces of ES) that render the unemployed subject visible, thinkable, and governable. I brought together elements of Poststructural Interview Analysis (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017) and governmentality (Rose, 1999). In this section, I will go through the analytical procedure, outlining the steps taken. I will provide an example of how I analysed the interview transcripts. I present this demonstration as representative of all analysis done on transcripts and so will not repeat these explanations in the findings chapter.

5.4.1 Transcription

Transcripts were transcribed verbatim. As with any other practices in research, producing transcripts is not a neutral or straight forward process. These transcripts prioritise the sounds of voices on a tape recording and disembody the speakers from the research interview situation. The way the transcription has been done has deliberately tried to avoid interpreting sound by editing words into sentences, statements, including commas or the like which adds an extra interpretive element, turning the transcript into an artefact (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). I summarise the transcription codes in the table below:

(.)	Signals a pause
(2)	signals a pause of 2 seconds
=	signals a run-on sentence where one speaker interrupts the other
**	the description between ** signals a non-verbal sound or extra context
(ok)	Parentheses also signal minimal responses from the other person

Table 5.1 Transcription codes

Still, the artefact is the result of some translation and interpretation with some form of punctuation creeping in which can be automatic (Allred & Gillies, 2002) (for example, what constitutes a pause that is long enough to be represented as (.)?). Producing transcripts in this way helps to limit interpretation of words spoken and thus bringing extra meaning into the produced text. Additionally, it also provides extra-material elements into the transcript (interruption to the interview, laughter) that may be interesting during analysis.

5.5 Analysing interviews and fieldwork

5.5.1 Locating problematisations

The first step in the analysis was to read and reread all transcripts and notes to ensure I had immersed myself in the data and was familiar with the contents. Then the focus was on locating ‘problems’ articulated in the research situation. As described in the methodology, focusing on ‘problems’ in the first instance draws the researcher’s attention to how a specific ‘thought’ is made possible. Researchers will use problems to sensitise their work in the field and the analysis (Brady, 20017; Clarke, 2018). Foucauldian discourse analysis can begin with locating problems in the text as a way of concentrating on how a discursive object is constructed (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017).

I used this process of locating ‘problems’ as a way to engage in the field as well as how to read through interviews, looking for areas of interest. In the field, the main problematisation I encountered was the concern with individualising case management;

hence, RESP had made changes to their service delivery plan. The service delivery plan is a general strategy for governing the unemployed. Focusing my attention to changes made (and arguments for) was a way to examine governing practices and subjectification of employment consultants and job seekers. In this way, I narrowed in on how the new service delivery plan made the job seekers a subject of thought, according to certain criteria, and embedded within certain discursive practices. This was observed and discussed with managers and workers both before entering the field and in the first few days of fieldwork. This 'problem' of governing the unemployed was something I would then discuss with workers. Additionally, in the workers' accounts during interviews I also first read the interviews looking for the 'problems' discussed whether about the service delivery plan, about job seekers, or their role as an employment consultant. I also looked for how I, as the interviewer and former employment consultant, problematised the practices of the new service delivery plan.

I focused on three main problems (and two embedded problems)

- The problem of individual case management that justifies the move to group case management. I.e. Activate the subject.
    - Embedded in this problem are two other problems
        - The individual case management creates the space for the heart to heart' conversations, which are deemed to be irrelevant to the space of employment services
        - Conversely, workers problematise this move to group case management because it limits their ability to have these very conversions.
- The unemployed need to be activated (because they are able but not willing to work)
- Unemployed are emotional subjects, and this impacts how they are to be activated.

These problems came from observing and talking with workers during fieldwork, looking at official RESP documents and training materials, assumptions underpinning policy, and they were problems that were constructed through the research interview. The following text was selected because Ray and I are discussing a problem of the GROUP SDP. What caught my attention is here Ray states that GROUP does not activate the job seeker but renders them passive; which I interpreted as an unintended effect of the GROUP

technology. The text below is part of this conversation where Ray explicates his concerns about GROUP.

> RAY same sort of reaction to the group activities (.) I think (1) the first session we did was like a video session so we got them down to watch a video for 20 minutes and that did not work because there was no participation really um and
> ROSE = is that the video where there are a set of slides and someone talking over the top of it?
> RAY yep, and you can barely hear the talking? Yep that one *laughs* Yep so um that was basically my first three weeks here and I was looking at it going "that video just does not work" and you could see people going (1) you would see (1) that the red flags were popping up in the room and you could see people becoming very (.) resistant the body language the crossed arms and stuff they were not engaging (hmm) (.) so what I found was that doing something that involved them actually hands on doing something has actually eliminated some of that (ok) because they are actually seeing that they're doing something they are not just here to get their names marked off and then to go away for three weeks (.) (Ray, LEC, NS2).

I will now discuss the analytical processes (Bacchi, 2015, pp. 115-120) for interviews by using the above excerpt as a brief example,

PIA: Process1. 'what' is actually said

Having located the main 'problems' identified throughout the interviews, I focused my attention on the first of PIA's processes, that is, paying attention to 'what' is said. Instead of looking for the hidden meaning behind these problems articulated, I looked at what was being said, including noting moments of differentiation, self-formation, or types of measurements that were included in discussions of these 'problems'.

In the extract, 'what is said' is that the SDP, in particular using a video to 'activate', was not working because there was "no participation really" form the job seekers. The job seekers were also showing "red flags," i.e. showing "resistant body language". The activities are a problem because they are not engaging the job seekers to participate (job seekers 'just' show up to "get names marked off"). This was noted as a moment of differentiation because it flags the GROUP SDP as producing the same problem noted with individual case management, namely that job seekers are not activated. Ray further differentiates his version of the GROUP by "doing something that involved them [job seekers] hands on". According to Ray, this has removed the "red flags" because job seekers are "actually seeing that they're doing something".

. *Process 2: producing genealogies of "what is said."*

After exploring what has actually been 'said' in the interview, my attention turned to how such articulations could be said and positioned as acceptable or 'truthful'. Bacchi (2015) suggests exploring brief genealogies, or looking to the past to see how multiple practices are "involved in the production of "*what* is said" as "sayable" as "within the true" p. 116). Questions suggested guiding analysis include, "What meanings need to be in place for particular, "things said," to be intelligible?" Moreover, "where and how has a specific "thing said" come to be accepted as "truth"? (p 117)

For this process, I draw connections between the *WPR* analysis on policy and the fieldwork work and interviews. I do not draw causal; relations here but instead outline how elements of the apparatus hang together. Analysing the interview transcripts can be a point of departure for identifying traces of the apparatus, such as problematisations of policy, dominant discourses, technologies, the assertion of authority and expertise, rules and routines, subjects and so forth.

For example, Ray says lack of participation is the fault of the format of GROUP (the video) and the related issue of "red flags". How is participation "sayable" as an issue requiring intervention on Ray's behalf (as it is described in the interview)? In the analysis of policy, the problem of the unemployed in Australia since the 1980s is an issue of 'activity'. The assumptions of an 'active society' and the problems of the discouraged unemployed (and long term unemployed) meant job seekers needed to be 'activated' to ensure they were actively looking for work and working on improving their job readiness. Discussing how job seekers just "getting their names marked off" and not "doing something" while at appointments is "sayable" because in these spaces of ES the job seeker is 'supposed' to be 'doing something' towards finding a job, and the ES provider is supposed to be ensuring this activation takes place (as regulated through 'mutual obligations').

Process 3 and 4: Highlighting key discursive practices and analysing "what is said."

The next two processes, I took from Bacchi and Bonham focus on highlighting key discursive practices and looking at the 'statement' and the enunciative function. Here interviews are assumed here to be a part of a network of discursive practices and analysis of interviews requires examining the relevant discursive practice/s which provides certain things to be said 'within the true'. Questions to guide the analyst include: "Which discursive practices are relevant to the "things said" that is the focus of the analysis?", "Which subject

position is made available within these discursive practices?", " What norms do the things said evoke?" and which 'subjects' are produced, 'objects' created, and 'spaces' legitimated? (p. 118).

There are two interrelated issues in the transcript excerpt. There is a concern about the 'quality' of service delivery in terms of the poorly designed video and ensuring that job seekers participate. 'Participation' is privileged in activation discursive practices because the focus on ensuring job seekers are "doing something" while they are at their appointments. The problem of the video is that it did not engage the job seekers in that they were not "doing something" towards either getting a job or improving their job readiness (the purpose of activation practices). Activation practices are nevertheless still about providing 'quality' activation whereby workers themselves are 'activated' to ensure job seekers are serviced 'appropriately'. Here 'Ray' is produced as an 'perceptive' worker within the 'ideal activation worker' subject position who notices the 'red flags' and notices ""that video just does not work" and uses initiative to create a GROUP that ensures job seekers "are not just here to get their names marked off and then to go away for three weeks".

The 'norm' of providing activation services in ES is maintained in this extract and both interviewer and interviewee hook into discursive practices of ES and 'best practice' by challenging the quality of the video rather than the content or purpose of the video. The spaces of ES remain a legitimate place for the activation of jobseekers in the text.

Process 5 and 6: Interrogating the production of 'subjects' and exploring transformative potential

These processes explore how subjects are produced in certain subject positions during an interview (as interviewee/er, as employment consultants) but how subject is "in process". This part of the analysis looks for the fluidity of subjectivity, in how it is possible to change through the gaps created when discourses collide or contradict. I also looked at the transformative potential in the interviews or how interviewer/ee problematise their conduct from established norms and thus the subject positions they can occupy. Here I was looking for workers problematising their role and the role of ES in changing the conduct of the unemployed or potentially thinking differently (i.e. moments of potential disruption) about the problem of unemployment (or ES). Questions to consider include: "What individual relates to the self?, What ways of moving, thinking, characterising, and feeling has the

interviewee exercised and related to the self? In which discursive practices have these attributes been and continue to be formed? “Does a particular interview comment appear unusual, inappropriate or out of context? Does a particular comment offer an alternative to a taken for granted ‘reality’?

The excerpt from Ray’s interview was selected as a text for analysis because it discusses the problem of GROUP. Namely, that GROUP creates the same problem it was supposedly developed to solve. GROUP renders job seekers ‘passive’ by not engaging their active participation. The activation discourses that legitimate these governing practices means job seekers ‘participation’ by “doing something” towards getting a job (job searching or improving job readiness). Within an interview situation, Ray is called upon to perform the subject position of an ‘ideal’ ‘employment consultant’, in that questions asked, do not suggest Ray is ‘bad’ at his job or could be. Ray relates to himself as a ‘perceptive’ worker who, drawing on the psy-complexified notions of the self (common sense understandings about motivations, body language, desire to be engaged, think and feelings of progress and so forth). Other research in this area highlights how employment consultants depict their work as a form of counselling, where their expertise lies in ‘knowing people’, how to ‘motivate’ people, and helping people build self-esteem and confidence to keep looking for work and to sell their ‘human capital’ to potential employers. Similarly, Ray’s relation to himself in this ideal employment consultant subject position draws upon this expertise by ‘knowing’ that the GROUP was not working and ‘knowing’ how to fix this with “hands on” activities.

In terms of potential transformation, this section of the interview could provide moments of contradiction, ambiguity, or contestation of dominant discourses. Such moments could create space for thinking differently about ES or the problem of the unemployed. The purpose of the GROUP SDP was to keep job seekers engaged through self-led activities while workers did the administrative side of appointments. The ‘video’ can be positioned as a technology - instructing job seekers on ‘how to write a cover letter’ and other ‘skills’ that entice job seekers to reflect, self-problematise, and draw out ‘truths’ about themselves to put on paper, or to see ‘gaps’, in ‘knowledge and skills’ and from this plot paths of self-reformation. Work-first discourses (that underpin GROUP) are challenged by the positioning of employment consultants as experts who ‘need’ to themselves be more ‘hands-on’ to engage ‘participation’ from the job seekers. However, in Ray’s interview, the ‘hand on’ activities include tasks like a ‘career quiz’, where job seekers are enticed to

reflect, self-problematise, and draw out ‘truths’ about themselves to put on paper, or to see gaps in ‘knowledge and skills’.

Process 7: Questioning the politics of distribution

The last processes used from Bacchi and Bonham is around questioning the politics of distribution, and this process is drawn upon to develop the challenges and contradictions of doing critical qualitative research on unemployment (see thesis summary). The process itself involves reviewing the role of the interviewer regarding how the analysis and ‘findings’ will be reported and dispersed. The main focus here is to look at how the researcher challenged or reproducing pervasive ways of thinking (about unemployment and/or psychologised understandings of mental distress). Guiding questions include: Do interviewer comments challenge or reinforce pervasive ways of thinking? Do the questions asked function to reinforce or challenge pervasive ways of thinking? Are the sites for distributing research results constrained in ways that reinforce pervasive ways of thinking? This process is utilised for the reflexivity and summary chapters.

Analytics of Governmentality

As a way to orient the analysis to concerns around governing practices that spread across both interviews, observations and documents collected, I incorporated some of Rose (1999) ‘dimensions’ of doing a governmentality analysis: Under each ‘dimension’ (Rose, 1999, pp. xi-xii) there is a set of questions that the researcher may consider while exploring the texts. I used these questions to sharpen my analysis in terms of thinking about the governing practices discussed in interviews, the governing strategy of the service delivery plan, and the other elements of governing that come from informal forms or elements discussed in the broader literature. The ‘dimensions’ were worked through from Problematisations, Explanations, Technologies, Authorities, Strategies and Subjectivities.

- Problematisations involve considering how ‘problems’ are constructed in the text, who authorises them and what ‘criteria’ allow for such problems to be made (this ‘criteria’ allows for some examination of discourses).
- Explanations focus on how language (metaphor, logic and so forth) are used and dovetailed into specific types of problems and authorities.
- Technologies pose questions about dissecting the practical means of control in the implementation of judgment, reformation and cure and will also require the researcher considers the influence of the apparatus.

- Authorities involve the researcher considering how the authorities are produced, constituted and maintained, related to expertise (power/knowledge), the specific locale of authority and the authority's relations with their subjects. Strategies focus on the overall objective of governing strategies and how the psy-complex is involved in achieving these outcomes.
- Finally, Subjectivity poses questions about what subjectivity is (ontology), how it is known (epistemology), what subjectivity should be (ethical) and how this ideal is achieved (technical).

5.6 Ethical considerations

My research was approved by the Institute for Social Science Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). There were an original application and two amendments. The original application was for participant observation of group training programs within the RESP. The second amendment was to include the recording of conversation during fieldwork in point form, and the third amendment was for more formal interviews to be audio recorded. This last amendment included the dimension of 'problematisation' element of the interviews (as discussed in Chapter Six). There is more to ethical engagement in a research field that completing and receiving, ethical approval through formal channels. I will discuss the extra elements of ethical considerations in the field below concerning informed consent and confidentiality. An additional element, albeit an essential element, to consider ethical research, is the interests that are served by the research. I will touch on specific instances relating to engagement with research participants and 'reciprocation' here, which implicate the issue of 'insider/outsider' status as previously discussed. However, since the issue of pervasive thinking and interests served is such a fundamental aspect to critical research, and indeed the overall argument of this thesis, I have reserved discussing these issues in greater detail until the thesis summary.

I openly discussed the research aims and intentions with all participants, including the RESP management. These discussions included clarifying the purpose of the research: following the day to day activates of workers and processes of activation to think about how policy is enacted in frontline organisations and how this is connected to broader issues, institutions and ideas about unemployment in Australia. I was upfront with the participants and RESP management that the research was not evaluative and would not be as an assessment of worker's performance or the success/failure of activation processes. I was also upfront with the participants about the impact of their participation

and that their decision to be involved (or not to be involved) in the research would have no impact on their employment relationship. These discussions occurred upon the first contact, but I also found occasion to remind participants that I was not working on behalf of the RESP organisation and therefore, their participation in the research is not obligatory.

There was also an occasion during fieldwork in WS1 where it became apparent that I needed to reiterate to participants and workers that I was not in their office to evaluate their behaviour and report back to their senior managers. During fieldwork, an incident occurred between an employment consultant and a job seeker. The interaction became heated, and the argument was heard across the entire office, ending with the job seeker storming out. The worker immediately debriefed with the lead employment consultant (who runs the particular site but is not a manager per se) and then came to me to explain 'her side' of the story. I needed to explain to the worker that she did not have to justify her actions to me since I was not in the office space in a paid capacity by RESP to monitor the worker's performance. After this incident, I repeated my position to the other workers in WS1 site and the other sites that I was visiting to remind the staff that I was not evaluating their performances per se. This highlights the importance of thinking through power relations between not only myself and the participants but also the dynamics between participants and the organisation's hierarchy and myself within this nexus. Research in an organisation is thus not a straightforward process of obtaining informed consent in a single transaction but an ongoing process involving many actors with various degree of power and influence (Ryen, 2007).

Informed consent was obtained orally from the first contact, and informed consent was revisited and obtained either orally or in the written form before recording. All participants were provided with the participant information sheet (see Appendix B). Further consent was re-sought during the research process, after official consent has been gained, in instances when the researcher had not seen the participants for some time or when multiple recorded interviews took place. Continually revisiting consent allowed participants to re-evaluate the research, how it is unfolding, and the implications of the project. For example, at WS1, the interviews happen in short segments rather than one long narrative due to the nature of this particular worksite. Here I would ask the worker if they were free for a quick chat in between seeing their clients. I would emphasise that this was purely voluntary and that if they were busy, then I would wait for another time. In plenty of instances, the workers would decline the opportunity for a conversation. By ensuring that I

revisited the purpose of the research and the participant's rights, the participants were being reminded that they were under no obligation to be involved in the research at all times (or indeed at all). When revisiting consent, all participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the research, at any time, without prejudice.

As the ethnographic approach is emergent, adaptive, and less predictable than more structured research studies (Flick, 2009), gaining written consent from all participants before engagement can sometimes be problematic. For example, engaging in 'participant observations' entails socialising and having casual conversations with workers in RESP (Gobo, 2008) and at times, these conversations presented information that was relevant to the research. In these instances, I obtained verbal consent from the workers to summarise such conversations in my field notes and these procedures were approved by the Institute for Social Science Research Ethics Committee.

Confidentiality is another main ethical consideration that required reflexive engagement during fieldwork. Firstly, participants have a right to have their personal information de-identified in the reproduction of interview transcripts, field notes, and the dispersion of research knowledge through reporting and publication channels. All de-identifying information, including participants names, names of the organisation and location of offices were replaced with pseudonyms. This included the name of RESP's service delivery plan and group case management as another attempt to keep the organisation de-identified. In documents attached in the appendix (D and E), the name of these programs/organisation were redacted.

Removing identifying information so to protect individual information from external sources is only one aspect of confidentiality. In an organisational setting, there is also the issue of internal confidentiality, ensuring that participants are not recognisable to other members within the same institution (Tolich, 2004). This is more difficult to achieve since the business manager and other senior staff were aware of my location during research visits and therefore will know where observations were conducted and which staff *may* have consented to provide interviews. So, while I told workers that I was not evaluating their performance, I did inform them that I would be providing a summary of my research to the organisation upon completion. Some workers took this as an opportunity to voice their concerns about the work practices that they had already raised with senior staff (in particular the physical toll of doing the GROUP sessions and the lack of a personal work

desk). In other instances, staff would tell me things explicitly ‘off the record’ in relation to their everyday work life, and none of this information has been included in the research.

5.7 Chapter summary

The requirement to ‘activate’ job seekers has now been part of the discourse on the unemployment in social security roughly since the late 1980s. While the activation and mutual obligations of employers have all but vanished, activating job seekers is now so well established that it falls into the realm of ‘common sense’ (Murphy et al., 2011). From the position of employment service providers, the challenging questions are not whether there is a need to activate (after all, it is common sense) but ‘how’ to activate job seekers. Although many strategies are presented to achieve this ‘activation’ such as job search, goal setting and so forth (Liu, Wang & Huang, 2014), there is some debate how what strategies work best for whom, under which circumstances (Bredgaard, 2015).In the discourses of activation, case management is a core practice of governing since the role is directed towards encouraging individuals to meet their mutual obligations (looking for work, coming to appointments and so on). Case management is considered a central component of governing since it is in these spaces that the practical elements of policy and the responsibilities of both the state, provider organisations and job seekers are articulated (McDonald & Marston, 2005).

Methodologically, research with employment consultants has been an important component of researching ES both in street-level organisational research and governmentality research. However, some of this research engages in positivist frames that conclude that the unemployed have certain characteristics (welfare dependent, work-shy) *because* the workers said so in their interviews (see Dunn, 2013). Other researchers have called more complex understandings of the context and conditions within which workers can enact policy (Van Berkel, 2013; Wright, 2013; Marston, 2013). Introducing more ‘context’ into the research frame could entail focusing on the ‘materiality’ of the research situation (Jordan, 2018) or the ‘situated practices’ of welfare and the types of problematisations involved by employment consultants ‘on the ground’ (Brady, 2011).

My research is interested in the employment consultants as they discuss their daily work ‘activating’ the unemployed, but I am interested in these workers as being governed (as well as doing the governing). To achieve this, I draw on the recommendations from previous governmentality literature by using problematisations to sensitise research

practices to contested practices in RESP. However, in order to research subjectivity, I deviated from this research by reclaiming a focus on power-knowledge and using a discursive frame to analyse worker's accounts. Discursive practices here help to think with the 'apparatus' (a system of relations) and therefore examine the relations that dis/connect the macro and micro of policy (part of the strategy) and policy implementation (tactics/technologies) without assuming that these 'sites' are homogenous (Foucault, 2008b). The focus is on how objects and subjects produced through the changes to the service delivery model (micro-management of conduct through governing practices) and the interview event (as a discursive practice that produces what is sayable 'within the true'). The next two chapters will seek to answer the research questions: how is the unemployed subject understood and 'governed' (or encouraged to change into the desired subject) in the current *jobactive* model?

6 Chapter Six: Becoming unemployed in activating spaces: De-constituting the emotional subject.

In the second chapter I contextualised my research by outlining how *jobactive* policy is one of many 'nodes' assembled to 'resolve' the problem of unemployment. *Jobactive* continues activation practices and the focus on ensuring that job seekers 'participate' in the labour market by *actively* looking for work and improving their 'job readiness'. The latest iteration of ES, however, represents an increased focus on penalising the unemployed and incentivising providers to focus on job placements over training or other activation strategies. In Chapter Three, I outlined the problems of method for governmentality researchers and potential of using an 'ethnographic imagination' to avoid programmatic renditions of policy implementation. I departed from this literature by using the 'apparatus' to bring together traditional qualitative research practices to research governing practices within an employment service provider.

Here, I discuss another 'node', case management. Case management, within my frame-of-reference, is a crucial element of governing. It brings together organisational priorities, workers' daily practices and aims of the State. The practices that constitute case management are contingent on individual providers' service delivery plans (SDPs). In turn, these SDPs are formed to demonstrate how providers will 'activate' job seekers per *jobactive* contractual obligations. As I discussed in the previous chapter, I propose the purpose of *jobactive* is to ensure the job seeker is part of an able and ready surplus labour force. Case management is, therefore, political since it is part of the strategic relations that shape how people can act (see Bacchi, 2014).

Employment consultants or jobactive workers ('workers') are infused with various types of authority to enact policy and encourage changes in job seekers' behaviour (McDonad & Marston, 2005). Workers are called upon to employ affective governing strategies to activate (through motivation, empathy, enthusiasm) or to 'undo affect' (through diffusion of anger, management of conflict etc.) (Penz et al., 2017). In other words, workers engage in self-governing practices and 'soft power' (building rapport, maintaining eye-contact and other embodied strategies) to ensure their interactions with job seekers produce 'soft skills' (motivation, dispositions, attitudes). These affective practices are institutional insofar as the SDP dis/allows workers' daily tasks, and they assumed a specific service user. I used an ethnographic imagination to attend to the daily activation practices in ES, including the governing of the governors, via interviews and observations.

In this chapter, I discuss findings from quasi-ethnographic fieldwork in research employment service provider (RESP). I analysed the 26 interview transcripts, fieldnotes from 14 observations, and three documents from the research situation. I utilised a poststructural interview approach (PIA, Bonham & Bacchi, 2017), along with insights from governmentality, to analysis the texts (see Chapter Five for more detail about method and analysis process). I use 'problematisations' to navigate my way through the texts and highlight areas for deeper analysis. I use these problematisations to organise this chapter.

Firstly, I outline the 'new' SDP ('GROUP') in RESP and explore taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning these practices. The SDP aimed to limit 'heart' conversations through group case management. Unemployment is rendered 'technical' through an authoritarian governmentality, (de)constituting the 'emotional' unemployed, and instead placing Employment Services (ES) as a place of transition, for job seekers to move through quickly on their way to employment. I then discuss how workers problematise GROUP by 'emotionalising' the spaces of ES, about both themselves as workers and about job seekers with whom they interact. Here, at the conjunctions of 'work-first', 'activation', and psychologised discourses, the unemployed subject becomes (re)psychologised through 'emotion'. The unemployed subjects are discursively positioned as 'sad' ('despairing'), 'bad' ('non-compliant'), or 'mad' ('angry' and/or 'irrational'). This analysis also considers the potential for transformation (in the same or different ways) from the multifarious and diffuse discourses and power relations that overlap or collide in these spaces. In concluding, I discuss how psy-infused 'emotions' become 'heart technologies' that inform, activate, and sustain the problem of the unemployed.

6.1 Activating spaces: the problem of passive service delivery

The purpose of activation is to ensure job seekers swiftly move into employment by encouraging job seekers to look for work and improve their job readiness. AS discussed in chapter two, these processes of activation are entangled with welfare conditionality, such that failure to comply can lead to financial penalties. Researching activation requires considering how policy activates organisations, and then how organisational policies, priorities and material circumstances shape how workers govern. New contractual arrangements that emphasise managerialism, short-term outcomes, and reducing overheads impacts what 'practices' constitute the 'best way to govern'. Considering that the ideal unemployed subject is supposed to remain enthusiastic despite continual setback ES is a space where the 'experience' of unemployment, and the telos of governing, focus

on affective subjectification (Fortier, 2011). Organisational practices govern the workers to ensure they embody and enact affective governing strategies to 'activate' the unemployed (Penz et al., 2017). As I will discuss, these practices rely on psy-infused notion abut empathy, counselling, and therapeutic encounters. Such psy-complexified notions are traceable in how the *jobactive* apparatus holds together various elements that produce the unemployed. I will start by looking at the new GROUP model in RESP and how these programs 'problematised' the pseudo-counselling and affective strategies of individualised case management.

6.1.1 Problematising individual case management: stagnation and transit(ion).

Programs of activation (the SDP) encompass many types of activities, like job searching (the provider must monitor compliance with the *jobactive* deed) or in-house vocational training (which providers could provide as part of their case management toolbox). These plans also act like a map for workers to guide their daily work activities. RESP had changed their SDP[18] with the move to the *jobactive* model because individual case management of the previous contract was positioned as rendering job seekers 'passive'.

The problem here is that job seeker (are considered to) do nothing while they wait for individual appointments. Additionally, individual appointments (are considered to) have no 'active components', again leaving job seekers sitting 'passively' while the worker does the administrative side of the appointment (updating Job Plans[19], checking compliance activities and the like. For example, having an appointment to update a job seeker's Job Plan was positioned by some workers in RESP as 'just' an administrative exercise of 'ticking and flicking' that does not encourage the job seeker to keep 'working' seeking jobs.

To rectify this 'problem' the SDP supposedly rearranged the office spaces of RESP, transforming them into open-plan 'activating spaces'. According to the Business Manager, offices of RESP were previously arranged with single desks (in separate rooms or open plans) with a designated computer area for job seekers and a designated training room.

[18] The SDP was positioned as 'different' and innovative' by upper management when I first started discussing the research proposal with RESP. The workers also saw the SDP as a change to their normal daily work practices under the previous model, JSA. I, as a former employment consultant, also positioned the SDP as different to what my job tasks were previously (also under JSA). However, my focus is on the 'problem' that a 'changed' SDP was developed to resolve and not ascertaining the specifics of 'changes made' (which would have required a longitudinal research design).

[19] A 'Job Plan' (known as the Employment Pathway Plan in the Social Security Act) is a legal document that spells out the mutual obligations of both Employment Service Providers to provide services and the job seeker.

With the change to the GROUP SDP there were fewer ‘sitting’ tables, and instead, there were ‘standing’ desks (although there are high chairs present) (see Appendix C for an illustration of the office space at NS2). Combining the spaces for ‘waiting’ with spaces for ‘training’ limited the possibility for job seekers to sit and wait for an appointment; thereby the spatial organisation disallowed the (assumed) ‘passive’ subject.

An interviewee explained the model thus,

> I guess my understanding is that (.) [workers] are up there (2) with the clients [job seekers] then it is giving them the um (1) the right kind of motivation to be doing it themselves just to help them out when they need help (.) really it is up to them to do their own job searching to find their own job (.) but we have got to have certain activities which will help promote (.) will help them become job-ready or get to that point where we can send them out to interviews confident that they are ready (mmhmm) so but it’s it’s (1) putting it back on them to do the actual work (.) so when someone says that they can’t do resumes ‘well here is the computer (.) here is the tools here is the template so what you can (.) start it (.) if you need assistance we will do what we can (Shay, NS2, first interview).

In the excerpt, there are subject positions for job seekers and employment consultants in the GROUP format. Workers provide the “right kind of motivation” by “being up there” because its “really up to them” (i.e. job seekers) to “find their job”. With all the interview transcripts I am not interested in ‘what was said’ in terms of hidden meaning. I am interested in what must be in place for these ‘things said’ to be positioned as acceptable or ‘truthful’. In this way, I start with the transcripts and the use them as a point of departure for exploring what is “within the true” (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017, p. 117).

The SDP aims to ‘activate’ the unemployed through group case management. One of the processes of PIA is to use the interview transcript as a starting point to look at the historical constitution of the current state of affairs (Bonham & Bacchi 2017). The purpose of the new SDP is to ‘activate the job seekers in a ‘new’ more ‘effective’ way: reducing the opportunities for ‘passive’ use of time while at an appointment with RESP. Such problematisations and design are possible because of discourses of ‘activation’. As discussed in Chapter Two, under a neoliberal political rationality, citizens should take responsibility for finding a job. Activation, however, implicitly acknowledges that unemployment ‘causes’ despair and people lose motivation (as per psychological literature, see Paul & Moser, 2009, and see Chapter Three for discussion). Hence,

‘activities’ should keep people engaged in looking for work and attached to the labour market (thereby reducing the ‘risk’ of ‘welfare dependence’ the reasons for moving to the activity test in the Cass report discussed in Chapter Two and are a long-standing part of ES in Australia, see Dean, 1995). Job seekers are assumed to be self-responsible (it is the role of the job seeker to find a job) and lacking in self-discipline (needing activation).

What is ‘different’ and ‘surprising’ is how RESP, activated by the State via the new Deed, are planning to do the governing work of ‘activation’. Using an ethnographic imagination, I utilised observations and interviews to research these ‘surprising’ problematisations. The spaces of ES, through the GROUP format, can supposedly ‘activate’ job seekers by keeping job seekers on the task of job search (or improving job readiness) while at their appointment, for the duration of the appointment. The motivation comes by modelling ideal behaviour, and monitoring job search through observation enabled by an open floor arrangement. Activation discourses here converge with psy-complexified notions of ‘motivation’, ‘intention’ and ‘model behaviour’. Together the ‘activating spaces’, as they are produced, hold the emotional aspects (motivation) alongside the technical aspects of governing (self-led activities). However, the use of motivation strategies is ‘hands-off’ (modelling) allowing intervention only ‘if [worker’s] have time’. In the text, the bulk of activation practices rely on self-governing practices of job seekers. Activation becomes more like an assembly-line process, where workers are governed through Taylorist-like practices, minimising interaction that keeps processes time-efficient, moving job seekers through SDP. As noted by Fowkes (2011), deed like *jobactive* that incentivise providers to focus on job placements (and remove servicing fees), encourage mass processing of job seekers.

The standardisation of activation processes in RESP demonstrates the conditions of possibility for unemployed subjectivities is tied to how policy, organisational practices, and material circumstances interact. In the interviews and observations the organisation of space in RESP was integral to the rationale for how best to govern the unemployed. Space, is constituted and constituting (Massey, 2005). Additionally, spatial organisation can be productive through dis/allowing social relationships or enacting coercion (West-Pavlov, 2009). In the organisation of the space with the GROUP model, job seekers are imagined to be in transit, moving through the services independently to move on and find a job. Moreover, spatial organisation can be productive through dis/allowing social relationships or enacting coercion (West-Pavlov, 2009). As I will go onto to dicuss the need to stop stagnation and keep job seekers transitioning into employment disallows affective governing

strategies that workers consider to be necesscary. The GROUP model relies on surveilience and self-governing to keep job seekers and workers on task.

Before I present the analysis of the interviews, I will detail how ‘what is said’ in these interviews are a part of a set of discursive practices that legitimate the spaces of ES and the ‘activities’ that job seeker should complete during appointments. These practices plug into activation and ‘work-first’ discourses of *jobactive*. That is, the role of ES is to ensure people are looking for work and other possible ‘activation’ practices, like skill acquisition through training, are disallowed.

6.1.2 It is time to ‘do the work.’

On top of making job seekers come to appointments (a mutual obligation requirement) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015a), job seekers are essentially ‘activated’ through ‘self-led’ activities. I used observations and interviews to locate discursive practices of RESP. The ‘activation’ of RESP office spaces is made possible and legitimated through discursive practices of work-first, legislation, policy, organisational procedures and worker routines. Observing workers as they go about their daily work helped to locate activation practices. Such practices underpinned the arrangement of furniture and the movement of bodies (as I will discuss below) but also how the space was ‘decorated’. As other research has discussed, thee landscapes where workers and service users interact are infused with meaning, including the pictures and such that both decorate a space but also portray job seekers and workers in certain ways (Punzi, 2019). During observations I noted the sorts of ‘motivational statements’ that workers would place on mobile whiteboards or coloured carboard that hang on office walls. These artefacts function to set a ‘tone’ for the space and were placed in areas were job seekers would normally congregate. For example,

> “Jobs” [cut out of fluoro cardboard – green, orange, pink, yellow]
> White a4 pages with descriptions of job position: vacation care worker; office manager; store manager; community workers
> Written underneath these: “what job will you apply for” [no question mark]
> Written underneath the above, in red: “TODAY IS THE BEST DAY TO START WORKING” (on a whiteboard, Fieldnotes, NS2, October 30, 2015).

The phrase ‘today is the best day to start working’ is ‘writable’ in these spaces since it conforms to the rationales justifying the ‘need’ for ES. The phrase makes assumptions about the motivational status of job seekers and the object of motivation: the only option is

to work and that ‘work’ includes the act of job seeking *today.* The imperative here is that job seekers need to “do the actual work” (Shay, EC, first interview) of job seeking in the *present* while *being in an RESP office*. Regardless of what job seekers do at other times, while being at RESP job seekers must comply with the, arguably, the most fundamental mutual obligation - job search and to be *seen* to be doing it (as enabled through the GROUP open plan).

Discussing looking for a job as a type of ‘work’ blurs the boundaries between unemployment and employment. In RESP, job seekers were repeatedly told to dress *as if* they were going to an interview; they should attend appointments *on time*, and were expected to stay for the *entire* length of an appointment and participate *while* at their appointment (and workers were instructed to reiterate this, as noted from a GROUP training video FN March 9, 2016). ‘Doing the work’ is an embodied act that brings together the disciplined worker-body (behaving in the ‘right way’, dressing the ‘right way’) (Foucault, 1991b) that is made ‘visible’ and governable by the open-format of GROUP, the legitimation of ES spaces (through legislation, policy); and the normalisation of the work (ethic/working self/labour time) that pervades modern Western society (Weekes, 2011). The production of activation spaces here extends to job seekers being encouraged to improve job readiness by acting as an ‘employee’ while at RESP. The generation of welfare-as-work has been noted in the literature (see Ziguras er al.2003; Sandle, Day & Muskett, 2018).

As I discussed in Chapter Four, Bacchi and Bonham (2014) used the ‘apparatus’ and discursive practices’ interchangeably. They focus on statements and how these function to ‘activate’ discursive practices across multiple sites. The activation practices noted above are enacted in relation to, and in some circumstances, contingent upon, other discursive practices in other sites. For example, employment consultants can report a jobseeker's failure to attend an appointment to Centrelink, resulting in a potential (temporary) loss of benefit. Legislative discursive practices legitimate these ‘breaching’ practices. A job seeker who cannot attend an appointment needs to provide a ‘valid reason’ for not doing so. The Department of Employment (2017b) defines a ‘valid reason’ as a reason for not coming to an appointment that “would be generally accepted by an employer if an employee were unable to attend work” (p. 21). Legal, policy, and political elements converge here, so the use of ES spaces is framed in terms of labour time; the ‘unemployed worker’ is expected to perform the embodied work-like practices of punctuality, productivity and accountability.

Work-like' but not 'paid employment'. This is an important distinction because the rate of Newstart Allowance has not increased in real terms for 20 years. Currently, the amount is reportedly forcing people to survive on $(Aus)38 a day (Department of Human Services, n.d.). The argument is that the payment must be low to keep with the replacement rate, that is, that Newstart payments cannot incentivise job seekers to not look for work. However, as others have argued (including the Business Council for Australia and the former Prime Minister behind the privatisation of employment services, John Howard), this failure for the payment to increase with inflation means that job seekers are caught in the poverty cycle (Bagshaw, 2018 and for detailed discussion see Deloitte Access Economics, 2018). Surveillance and punishment are always present in the jobactive apparatus and the risk of non-compliance can have disastrous effects considering job seekers are already deeply disadvantaged.

Discourses of activation and welfare-as-work form part of the 'lines of enunciation' (Deleuze, 1992) of the *jobactive* apparatus and these underpin the arrangement of space in RESP but also relate to 'lines of force', in this case, conditionality. Practices of conditionality are contingent upon legal and policy frameworks that also assume a certain type of subject, the passive, non-participatory and potentially deceitful job seeker. In this way, the assumed 'subject' needing reform in the SDP of RESP correlates with the assumed problematic subject of *jobactive* policy (and as I discussed in Chapter Two, this passive subject has been 'problem' of unemployment for some time). The 'ideal subject' is discernible from the technological components of the SDP. I turn to these in the following section.

6.1.3 GROUP technologies: rendering unemployment technical

The GROUP incorporated various 'technologies' or devices used to shape how a person should act (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). Together these GROUP technologies constitute a rational subject, already active, who can systematically progress through various level through a 'candidate journey', and at the end be ready for 'reverse marketing' by activation workers. 'Reverse marketing' is where workers will 'cold call' employers to try and find vacancies for 'suitable candidates' (known as 'brokered placements' in the industry). Governing practices render complex concepts (like unemployment) into a simple, clearly-defined and assessable form (which produces techniques for deployment) and also simultaneously produce the domain of interest (Li, 2011, p.57). As I will elaborate below, unemployment is rendered technical through GROUP.

GROUP activities are organised through the ‘candidate journey’ that ‘progress’ job seekers to the status ‘job ready’ via three levels. The three types of GROUPS are ‘engagement’, ‘progression’ and ‘management and promotion’. Each type of ‘GROUP’ has designated activities that need to be ‘checked off’ before the job seeker can ‘progress’ to the next ‘level’ (see Appendix D) and provide both a means of measurement (the checklist) but also the sense of ‘progressing’ (becoming) the ideal subject (‘job ready’). These are some of the practical instruments that encourage job seekers to reflect and act on themselves *as* job seekers through these self-led activities where they ‘refine’ their job seeking skills. Notably, these skills focused on ‘hard skills’ like cover-letter writing and some ‘soft skills’ like ‘effective communication’. There was a lower emphasis placed on broader personal and interpersonal skills, like developing ‘positive affect’ that has been noted in previous contracts in Australia (Howard et al., 2016).

Here the focus on ‘hard skills’ coincides with the ‘work first’ discourses of *jobactive*. For example, ‘engagement’ GROUPs are focused on administrative components (updating resume, setting up job alerts, getting a ‘professional email address’). There is a focus on identifying possible jobs (Career Quiz[20], career industry research) and “making plans, setting goals”. The aspects of identifying skills needed to job search and understanding oneself in order to identify career paths, goals, and plans involve an element of ‘confession’ insofar as you need to ‘know’ oneself in order to classify ‘attributes’ and ‘interests’ for job search purposes.

Often these job search activities are presented as a way of re-conceptualising oneself to suit the needs of the labour market (Boland & Griffin, 2015). In a highly precarious labour market, Gershon (2017) argued that the skills required (and ‘taught’ through job clubs and so forth in the US) to ‘sell’ oneself requires re-conceptualising oneself as a ‘brand’ such that people engage in business to business strategies rather than person to business strategies. To put it differently, job seekers need to become ‘entrepreneurs of the self’ (a goal of neoliberal political rationalities, Foucault, 2008). In RESP, however, the materials presented in SDP were less ‘big picture’ and more focused on smaller, measurable

[20] See http://joboutlook.gov.au/careerquiz.aspx. This website (and smartphone app) asks respondents to pick activities they “most enjoy” from fifteen groups comparing five different job tasks. The job tasks represent six job types: helping; administrative; people; technical; creative; and practical. The responses are ‘matched’ to any of the job types expressed as a proportion (e.g. 55% match with ‘helping’ and 12% match with practical etc). From here, respondents are supposed to refine their job search (accessing the links provided) to explore job profiles and current advertised job positions.

‘outcomes’ (setting up an email account) and ‘tips’. Since the activities were self-led, they were short and straightforward. The activites focsued job seeker’s eneregy on submitting applications rather than developing ‘Me Inc.’ The job seeker here is imagined to be willing and able, essentially ‘job ready’, but needing support on more practical elements of job searching.

To sum this section, individualised case management is problematised in RESP because it is deactivating, leaving the job seeker ‘stagnant’ and ‘passive’. The ‘solution’ is to ‘activate’ the spaces of RESP through GROUP to ensure job seekers are ‘doing the work’ of finding a job via self-led (self-governing) activities. Together, the production of problems, spaces and subjects are ‘sayable’ and able to be taken seriously because they are embedded within activation and work-first discourses that also underpin *jobactive.* Unemployment is made a technical problem, and more ‘governable’ by establishing a delineated set of ‘tasks’ that are easy to monitor. The subject is also easy to ‘know’ because the more complex and convoluted aspects of an unemployed person’s situation is excluded from these spaces. The model assumes job seekers are in transit, moving through ES quickly to transition into employment. GROUP in this way brings together how the *jobactive* apparatus holds together organisational priorities to cut costs and improve efficiency, with policy objectives to reduce welfare dependency, contractual obligations, governing strategies, technologies, and material circumstances of welfare provision. The focus is on using surveillance, and self-governing to keep job seekers moving ‘forward’, and by doing so, (de)professionalising workers and (de) constituting unemployment as an ‘emotional experience’.

These more personal (and more social, economic, political and affective) elements of what makes up an individual unemployed person are part of the (supposed) work involved in individualised case management. This mode of governing, of using empathy and understanding, and focusing on the more personal barriers to getting a job was called ‘heart to heart conversations’ by one worker I spoke to during fieldwork (FN Oct 30, 2015). These conversations are distinguished as ‘deactivating’ and therefore *not* appropriate in *jobactive* service provision in the GROUP model. In the following two sections, I draw on governmentality and Poststructural interview analysis (PIA, Bonham & Bacchi, 2017) to explore the subjects-in-process that are produced through workers’ problematisations of these ‘conversations’. In this way, I will discuss the various problematisations of ‘heart conversations’ and GROUP to show a more nuanced account of how the unemployed are

understood and governed in RESP. I will provide an account of how practices in RESP aligns with and slightly depart from the dominant discourses of the *jobactive* policy. In doing so I demonstrate how material context (Jordan, 2018) and organisational priorities (Marston, 2013) are needed to understand governing practices at the coalface. Of course, as mentioned in Chapter Three, I am more interested in providing topographical account, showing how governing practices are made possible, and are part of, the *jobactive* apparatus. By using PIA, I also demonstrate how the researching of unemployment and the problem of method are interlinked in terms of what is produced through the research practices. Here, I focus on the (de)constitution and then (re)constitution of job seekers as 'emotional' subjects.

6.2 De-constituting the emotional subject: case management minus the 'heart'.

The changes to the SDP in RESP may signal a change in political rationality, or the 'how', 'why', what,' and 'who' of governing (Gordon, 1991). As discussed, the focus on work-first filters into a SDP that problematises the unemployed/ment as a technical concern (of job search) and presenting the 'why' of governing' as reducing opportunities for passivity thereby increasing activity. The 'who' of the rationality is both the job seeker and the employment consultant. By rendering the problem of unemployment technical, the GROUP constitutes the unemployed as lacking technical skills. The subject is also presumed to be *homo economicus*, often assumed under neoliberalism (or advanced liberalism, Dean, 2010; Rose & Miller, 1999). This rational, self-interested, decision-making, cost-benefit-analysing subject of economic thought should respond favourably to self-led activities and see the benefit in job search/self-improvement ('doing the work') to increase the chance of being quickly (re)employed.

Correspondingly, the new SDP altered the 'how' and the 'what' of governing, by slightly adjusting how workers could and should engage with job seekers. The worker's role in the GROUP is primarily administrative and so too is the rational neoliberal job seeker subject produced as an administrative unit. Additionally, a worker's capacity for affective governing is reduced by disengaging ethically and emotionally from the jobseekers they service. Affective governing is influenced by 'affective rules' set down by organisational protocol and training (Horshchild, 1985; Glinser, 2018). Other material technologies also shape affective strategies, such as workers using sharpeners and the like to create physical barriers to remove unwanted emotional interaction (Penz et al., 2017). However, research in affective governing in ES tends to reinscribe psychologised notions of emotion by not

critiquing counselling practices or the assumptions underpinning identified affect'. I deviate from such research by focusing on 'emotions' as opposed to 'affect' Here, I follow McAvoy (2015), Reddy (2001) and Wetherell (2012) by positioning 'emotions' within the real of discursive practices and as such, emotions are invovled in the production of subjectivities. I discuss de-constitution of the emotional subject in the following three sub-sections: through forms, limiting confessional moments, and reshaping affective practices of governing.

6.2.1 Removing heart conversations: 'forming' activation

There are policy and technological elements that make and reinforce the de-constitution of the emotional subject. For example, the Employment Pathway Plan of the Job Services Australia deed (2009-2015) had a 'goal' section that was open to editing by the employment consultants. This 'goal' section allowed workers and job seekers to discuss and negotiate the 'goal' the job seeker was working towards and which would connect to their mutual obligations. A job seeker could have a short-term goal of completing a course, getting their car license or attending an addiction/therapy program. Theoretically, the mutable goal section provided space for workers to deploy their discretion and finesse goals. It was a site of potential transformation and subversion. The Employment Pathway Plan was replaced by the 'Job Plan' that had no space for crafting a 'goal'. Instead part of the text reads (for full document see Appendix E):

> I understand that my primary goal is to gain and maintain employment. I am aware that I have mutual obligation requirements that I must undertake in return for receiving income support payments. These include undertaking job search and /or other activities as specified in this plan that will assist me in finding and keeping a job, as well as attending appointments and accepting all offers of a suitable job (para.1).

The contract format illuminates the discursive practices crossing legal, policy, organisational, psychological/medical and interpersonal dimensions. The Job Plan, legitimated through legislation, exists in a template form and is written in intimidating contractual langauge. As a technology of compulsion, the Job Plan lists the activities (like job search) that job seekers "must do". Although these compulsory activities are supposed to be adjusted to be "appropriate" to the "level of their [job seeker's] capacity", a decision made by the workers in these spaces. The forms are then sent back to Centrelink through database programs so that what is done in these forms is further regulated by Government

bureaucracies (Department of Employment 2018, p. 1). If a job seeker does not agree to a Job Plan "without good reason, their payment may be cancelled by DHS until they do enter into a Job Plan" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019, para.13). These documents are not just 'red tape' exercises but have serious financial consequences for job seekers if they refuse to sign (they could also incur a 'serious penalty').

Following this, it is expected that workers should be able to individualise job plans. However, the potential for workers' discretion to take into consideration the individual circumstances of the job seeker is not reflected in the format of the Job Plan. Moreover, the potential for subversion, to inscribe a goal that is broader than labour market participation is impossible. The form itself is acting on the situation by restricting possible content of conversations between workers and job seekers concerning goal-setting. It is an instrument that stands to restrict the interpersonal, possibilities for softening obligations or challenging norms. The Job Plan becomes an administrative exercise to 'tick off' standard mutual obligations (job search requirements, work for the dole activities) all for the ultimate aim of finding a job.

6.2.2 Removing the heart, removing confession.

By taking away the need to discuss a personalised goal in a Job Plan, the emotional job seeker is de-constituted by limiting confessional moments. The job seekers cannot 'confess' themselves, their situation, or the mitigating circumstances that make their life (and job search) nuanced. Confession is a subjectifying technology, and the removal of it limits job seekers or workers understanding unemployment as an 'emotional experience'. Such (de)subjectification was (re)produced in the interviews, most notably with Saroo, who, stood out amongst the interviewees as someone who did not lament the loss of interpersonal interactions,

> ROSE: do you think though with the ability to craft a goal firstly it made it more individual to the person so they could have their you know, short-term goal medium-term goal long-term goal but it also gave you a little bit of scope to (3) address goals that maybe aren't (2) so-ah-work focused in the short term but in the long term they would be so if you were working with a guy who is I'm going to go to extremes here and say=
> SAROO: =a doctor=
> ROSE: well I was actually going to say a drug addict right who is going to rehab *S airy laugh* the first goal is to get off drugs right *S laughs* and then you move down that way

SAROO: look um the *jobactive* is all about jobs (ah huh) so we talk about jobs (.) if there is a health area like I mention before that is something to discuss with Centrelink
ROSE: so you don't have those conversations? Because we used to have those conversations? =
SAROO: =we used to have those conversations=
ROSE: we used to have um=
SAROO: =and we used to hold onto those clients for years (ah huh) we have notation for 8 years seeing psych for 11 years seeing a GP for 12 years it doesn't help it cost the individual their life to continue in that trend and we encouraged that for so many years (Saroo, LEC, second interview, NS1).

In the text, 'heart' conversations can elicit 'confessions' from job seekers, and this is both legitimated (needed to reshape goals) and problematised (as deactivating). Confession, a tool of pastoral power, is used by workers to elicit personal information for activation and has been noted in previous research (see McDonald & Marston, 2005; Pultz, 2018; Glinser, 2018). To make a personal goal for the 'drug addict' to go to 'rehab' the job seeker would be encouraged to 'confess' personal issues, to self-problematise, and then work upon themselves to 'recover' at rehab.

However, GROUP eliminates, or at the very least makes difficult, the workers' tool of eliciting confessions. In the text, removing the confessional tool also takes away the emotional worker and job seeker. Indeed, the spaces are rendered emotional-neutral by emphasising the bureaucratic purpose of RESP, "*jobactive* is all about jobs, so we talk about jobs". These practices are also positioned as moral concerns because conversations keep people dependent on welfare payments and cause harm, "cost the individual their life". Here 'care and concern' intersect with 'work-first' discourses to produce employment as beneficial to a person's 'wellbeing'. Authoritarian governing practices are legitimated by being in the best interests of the job seeker. These moralising discourses are dispersed across different 'nodes' of the jobactive apparatus. As discussed in Chapter Five, 'moral discourses' also underpin the policy focus on job outcomes because "the best form of welfare is a job" (Abbott, 2015).

In the above extract 'heart conversations' are formed as 'needed' and 'useful' through health and psychologised discourses that pathologise job seekers. They are then reformed as a 'problem' that deactivates jobseekers. Consequently, the subject positions available for workers and job seekers are also reformed. Workers use affect to 'help' job seekers

who are ‘addicted’. In contrast, the ‘semi-neo-bureaucratic’ worker emotionlessly undo affect to stop these ‘irrelevant’ conversations that render job seekers ‘dependent’. In other research, the affective labour of activating job seekers is positioned as either enacting feminised care work or affect-neutral masculine bureaucratic work (Glinser et al., 2018). The subject positions in the above extract, however, can interpreted as combining the ‘care’ into masculine non-affective labour. This type of work is produced as more effective at activating and ‘helping’ job seekers, subsequently, the feminised aspects of ‘heart to heart conversations’ is devalued.

Interpreting these ongoing-formations of practices (and related subject positions) brings together the politics of case management *and* research practices. There are multiple readings of the text. Psy discourses can be read as legitimising authoritarian goverence or they could be seen as potentially disruptive. Here the removal of these confessional/emotional strategies opens the possibility for also dismissing psy-complexified discursive practices in RESP. Confession practices are enabled through psy-complexified strategies (Hook, 2004b) such as using emotional practices of ‘empathy’, probing, and positioning the self as fixed, stable, and understandable through excavation. From a mainstream psychological position, removing the scope for understanding individual distress, and referring on, might be seen as problematic. As a consequence, researchers may recommend workers are trained in ‘mental health’, the ‘effects’ of unemployment, and psychological programs of reformation (workers’ lack qualifications in ‘psy’ related disciplines has been noted as a ‘problem’, see for example Jobs Australia, 2012, for examples of programs welfare applied positive psychology, Esher House, n.d).

However, researchers in the UK (Friedli & Stern, 2015) have highlighted how making compliance contingent on participating in psychological interventions erases social and economic inequalities of unemployment by pathologising unemployment. According to these authors psy knowledges also provide a sheen of legitimacy and authority to governance practices. From a critical psychological perspective, the removal of ‘heart’ conversations in RESP could arguably be an opening for potential transformation by providing other nodes in the apparatus to allow for new directions. The removal of ‘confessional’ practices presents possibilities for understanding unemployment, and its ‘effects’, in non-psychological ways.

In contrast, most of the interviewees took issue with the new SDP and how this rearranged their work duties, including making some 'tools' difficult to wield (like confessional conversations). Through the problematisation of GROUP these conversations, workers and job seekers, and the spaces occupied are reformulated as 'emotional', and thus (re)psychologised. To put it another way, these problematisations reform subjects so they "become psychological" by "simultaneously troubling and [making] intelligible" job seekers and governing practices "in terms that are infused by psychology" such as a "psychological taxonomy" of "abilities, personality, attitudes" (Rose, 1996, p. 60) and 'emotions'.

6.2.3 Removing the heart: reshaping affective governing

Personal interactions in individual case management form part of the governing strategies workers use to 'motivate' the unemployed to look for work and self-govern to improve job readiness. A part of these governing strategies involved 'heart to heart conversations'. Such 'heart' focused conversations revolved around a discussion of personal issues a job seeker was encountering. It involves technologies like 'confession' but also affective governing strategies were workers would wield emotions like 'empathy' (doing affect) or stop emotion like defusing anger (undo affect) as a means of working with, and activating, the unemployed (McDonald & Marston, 2005; Penz. et al. 2017; Glisner et al., 2018).

As workers discussed the changes to their workspace and roles in RESP under *jobactive*, they also discussed another 'truth'; that group management of job seekers stopped the 'heart to heart conversations'. I used observations as a way to study activation practices and how they produce unemployed as a particular problem through the spaces, decorations, jargon, rituals, and general daily activities of workers in RESP (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 34). My main focus was the problematisation of service delivery and how this informed workers' governing practices.

During one observation I was able to sit in on a 'head up', the first team meeting of the working day at NS2. At this meeting the employment consultants discussed the difficulty jobseekers were having to adjust to the new SDP. Workers portrayed job seekers as wanting to divulge personal issues during appointments. During this meeting, one worker, tongue-in-cheek, remarked that some job seekers 'just want to talk about their dead cat' (Fieldnotes, NS2, October 30, 2015). The jobseekers could only discuss their active engagement towards finding a job. That is, there were 'rules' being laid down that only certain things were 'sayable' in these spaces, and with this, only certain emotions can be

expressed and discussed. The reference to a ‘dead cat’ signals a hierarchy of emotions, with certain objects being too trivial to deserve such sentiment and definitely not the empathy from employment consultants. These ‘rules’ then extend to the role of employment consultants who do not deal with ‘dead cats’ or the emotions, feelings, detail or complexity that mourning brings; “we are not psychologists” was the general agreement at this meeting. These ‘heart’ conversations, either trivial or substantial, were presented as irrelevant to the spaces of RESP.

> Yeah yeah no need to ask them how they are (.) (yea) bullshit (.) please (.) you know (.) you’ve got to start their conversation with ‘g’day how’re you going’ or or ‘‘how’s your day going’ or ‘what’ve you been doing? What’ve you been up to?’ (Sal, LEC, SS1).

To avoid distraction from the task in hand, workers would have to limit the potential of these ‘heart’ conversation or redirect the conversation back to the worker’s objective for the appointment; they would have to ‘undo affect’. The removal of personal conversations establishes ‘affective rules’ (Penz et al., 2017) around permissible language and communication devices in these spaces, as Sal explained, “no need to ask them how they are”. Such a thing is ‘sayable’ within work-first discourses where unemployment is a technical problem. These new affective or feeling rules establish the basis for governing from a distance both morally and ethically. As I will discuss below, this ‘truthing’ of the purpose of RESP and the role of workers under ‘*jobactive* is steeped in work-first and activation discourses such that, by removing these ‘heart conversations’, the permissible governing practices de-constitute the emotional unemployed subject.

The problem of having these more personal conversations was that it takes up time for an appointment and therefore restricts the workers from ‘activating’ the workers and encouraging them to look for work. For example, a worker might be engaged in discussing a personal issue with a jobseeker instead of refining a cover letter or helping the jobseeker apply for an advertised position. Although, most interviewees disagreed with the GROUP format but this was not an ‘all or nothing position’, opening up the potential for transformation of worker subjects, and by relation, job seeker subjects. Interviewees agreed and disagreed with the changes to GROUP, seeing the problems of individualised case management (being called on to act as a ‘counsellor’) and groups case management (unable to service ‘correctly’),

JAY: but I definitely think they got more service in the last contract than this one but it's that fine line for us not getting bogged down and becoming their counsellor
ROSE: yea so you're saying their needs to be some fine line between being able to do that individualised service delivery as well as this pushy motion of the GROUPs
JAY: hmmm I don't think GROUP are doing anyone really good?
ROSE: They're not even pushing people out? The idea=
JAY: Well it is if they are job ready they are fine but they're doing their own job search like that girl you know what I mean? You know they're doing the work and they are fine and if they are not job ready they're just sitting here angry (.) whereas if it was a one on one you are taking that away
ROSE: So it's like that jobseeker this morning she has got it all worked out
JAY: Yeah yeah that is what I mean, but I give her the same level that I give a stream C that is sitting here with all these issues (Jay, EC, WS1).

In terms of "what is said", case management is positioned in the liminal space where workers need to provide "more service" but not get "bogged down" in conversations. Jay attaches workers to the psy-complexified subject position of "counsellor". The same activation discourses and work-first ideas about distancing employment service work from more emotional labour are reproduced here. However, at the same time, and almost contradictorily, GROUP is a problem because unless the job seeker is already 'active' ("job ready"), GROUP is not "doing anyone any good". Job seekers are divided into those already active and those needing to activated. In the text, those in need of activation, "stream c" are inappropriately serviced with "the same level" since they have "all these issues".

'Saying' that there is a 'stream c' that is not being serviced correctly ("giving the same level") is possible from the subjectification effects of the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) (discussed in the last chapter, see also McDonald, Marston & Buckley, 2003). These "stream c" subjects are constituted as vulnerable and disadvantaged in the JSCI and (re)produced as such in the interview by being identified as 'different' and needing specialised servicing. Within Jay's account, the 'stream C' jobseeker is sitting around being 'angry'. This 'anger' could be diffused through individual case management invoking the psy-complexified notion that through working with someone at a personal level emotion can be contained and, potentially, address "all these issues".

The subject positions for workers are in ongoing formation here since they are always walking a "fine line". The opportunity to govern by 'doing affect' is diminished in the

GROUP setting. Fortier (2011) conceives governing through affect involves sculpting opportunities for "meaningful interactions" (p. 22) for shaping people as subjects. The GROUP model makes no allowances for emotional subjects outside of the 'assumed' 'appropriate emotions' (i.e. motivated and 'job ready'). Removing the conversation to discuss more 'emotional' aspects of job seekers' lives discursively de-constitutes the emotional subject.

However, the de-constitution of the emotional subject is not fully achieved. In the ongoing-formation of subjects, interviewees (and the interviewer) (re)emotionalised (and (re)psychologised) job seekers and themselves. Below I discuss how the interviews call on psychologising discourses to constitute the unemployed as certain kinds of problematic emotional subjects: 'sad', 'bad', and 'mad'.

6.3 Emotionalising spaces: (re)constituting the unemployed as 's/b/mad.'

The de-constitution of an 'emotional' unemployed subject is mostly problematised by workers (cf. Saroo). Indeed, in the interviews, workers discuss their workspaces in RESP as *emotional* spaces, within which both the job seekers and workers are positioned as emotional subjects. These emotional discursive practices reinsert a psychological subject and psy-complexified practices into the discussion about how to 'activate' the unemployed. By complicating the processes of activation, the workers (and the researcher) re-subjectify the unemployed as 'sad', 'bad', or 'mad'.

6.3.1 Sad.

Psy-complexified practices in RESP emotionalise subjects in ways that affirm the authority and purpose of *jobactive* while simultaneously demonstrating the limitations of activation by suggesting unemployment is more than a simple lack of technical skills.

> KAREN: 'cause it is really about their self-esteem and building them up to feel good again (hmm) 'cause we all know that they have been unemployed for a period of time and I call them a millionaire with no money because they have as much time as a millionaire but you know though to get get back into their restriction (.) that discipline again and resilience it takes it takes you have got to let those guards down to get back in and to conform I suppose to get back into the working life again and I feel it is people like myself to when I when you have been out of work for 12 months that is a long time to go to developing even bad habits in regards to
> ROSE: Bad habits?

> KAREN: I believe I feel bad habits could be we have an unemployment cycle that we were training in the past contract it's called the 'unemployment cycle'
> ROSE: I haven't heard of that, yep
> KAREN: yea and it starts of quite you (.) the periods in between the emotional self (hmm) you know start off on long snapshots but that it starts to becomes quite quickly on the waves of you are not feeling good about yourself (.) over a three to six months that cycle of how you are feeling about yourself changes (hmm) because you have been not working for 6 months, so it does affect (yep) your self-esteem (Karen, EC, WS1).

In the interview workers discussed how 'heart' conversations helped to excavate the personal information they 'needed' to activate job seekers. Job seekers were seen as living complicated emotional lives that 'caused', was an 'effect of' or kept job seekers unemployed. In other words, the 'heart' conversations were needed because unemployment was not a 'technical' problem. In the excerpt above 'emotion' invoked in both "feeling bad" and developing "discipline" and "resilience by "letting guards down". Emotions here are 'causing' ("bad habits"), and effect of ("not feeling good") and maintain ("not working… does affect your self-esteem") unemployment through an "unemployment cycle". This 'knowledge' about the emotions expressed by workers is dispersed from into training and organisational practices and establishes a 'truth' about how unemployment impacts an individual for a Job Services Australia (JSA) worker.

Here 'what is being said' constitutes the job seeker as "not feeling good", they are 'sad' without being described as 'mentally ill' (say in terms of 'major depression'). For such a position to be sayable, more importantly, to be a serious statement, we need to consider the psy-complexified notions of the 'effects of unemployment' and the psychological gaze. The psychological gaze, or psychologisation, refers to the influence of psychological discourses and the turning onto oneself (or in this case 'others') reflecting about their 'behaviours' 'moods', 'attitudes' and such forth within vaguely defined psychological terms (De Vos, 2012). The job seeker "become[s] psychological" (Rose, 1996, p.60) since their emotions (low self-esteem), tied to how they think and act ("bad habits"), marks the person out as 'being unemployed' by fitting the "unemployment cycle". Unemployment is constituted not just through what it is possible to 'say' about the unemployed but also how the unemployed 'feel'.

‘Becoming psychological’ through the psychological gaze is also about ensuring people constantly ‘feel’ the need to work upon and improve the self in specific ways (Burman, 2017). The gaze here is focused on identifying and then working on the ‘sad’ subjectivities of unemployed, helping to reform them into “feeling good” about themselves and boosting ‘self-esteem’. Thus, the governing work of the unemployed is entangled with psychological knowledges and practices. ‘Self-esteem’ is not neutral but deeply embedded within political practices that link the subjectivity with power - according to Cruikshank (1993), linking the personal to appropriate social behaviours, social stability and organisation. Ensuring that job seekers have improved self-esteem improves the ability of the worker to withstand perhaps the detrimental impact of being unemployed, (as is argued by psychologists, see Paul & Moser, 2009) but also creates more resilient surplus labour for a changing labour market. The psychologising discourses here run parallel to work-first’ discourses and activation discourses (see Chapter Five). The psy-complex here maintains the problem and the solution of unemployment in terms of maintaining ‘supply’.

6.3.2 Bad.

Job seekers were also discussed in the interviews as being emotional subjects insofar as they were not displaying a range of affects and associated behaviour which were deemed ‘acceptable’. In other words, job seekers were positioned as being emotional in the ‘wrong way’, usually non-compliant, thus marking them out as ‘bad’.

> he sat down over in the corner over there and he was uh I thought he was up because almost virtually talking to himself but it looked like he was talking to himself he was down like this but he had the earphones in and he was on the phone to uh I don’t know to who but just the aggression in his voice (mm) I had an office full of people there was even a parent with a small child in here (mm-hm) and he was all ‘F this and F that and blah blah’ and I said “mate you’re going to have to settle down” and he just looked at me and he’s just gone “I’ll do f’ what I like f’ when I want to” right? “don’t you dare tell me what to do (.)” So I said “Mate I’m not telling you what to do I’m just saying settle down or get out (hmm) alright? That’s all I am saying that’s uh not open for discussion” (mm) he says “are you threatening me?” and I said “no just ju-(1) finish your phone call outside all right (ah huh) and then come back in” (.) he’s got picking it all up “you can all go and get” them that’s fine see you later (.) so you’re right did he attend? No he did not (.) I marked him as not attended (Sal, LEC, SS1).

Sal maintains that the job seeker did not ‘attend’ the appointment because he did not

‘participate’ in a certain manner. According to policy, job seekers are considered to have ‘attended’ an appointment if they “arrived on time at the correct location, behaved appropriately, and participated for the duration of the appointment” (Department of Employment, 2017b, p. 8). Thus, deciding what is ‘acceptable’ behaviour in the spaces of ES relies on discursive practices that establish what one can say, ‘within the true’. The job seeker is here discursively positioned as being outside of the grid of acceptability within the spaces of RESP through this inappropriate display of emotions. It is through the ‘gaze’ made possible by the open ‘activating spaces’ of RESP that this job seeker is marked out as a problem.

The job seeker is constituted as aggressive and acting in a ‘weird’ unintelligible way - talking (supposedly) to himself and cursing loudly. Sal attaches himself to an authoritative subject position, maintaining the social order of the space directing the job seeker to “settle down”. In turn, the job seeker is attached to the subject position of ‘bad’, because he is ‘mad’. The non-compliant job seeker is ‘angry’, ‘aggressive’ and ‘irrational’. These subject positions are formed through psychologise discursive practices that make “sayable” and “thinkable” ‘common sense’ notions of appropriate behaviours (not talking to oneself, being able to manage our emotions and not erupting in a public space, especially around children, or snapping back and making accusations and regulating our anger to respond accordingly to authority). Moreover, the psy-complex sustains the emotionalising of spaces through Sal’s description of his affective governing. The with the job seeker as irrational and aggressive and the worker has to ‘undo’ this emotion by using affect to assert control and remove the job seeker.

6.3.3 Mad.

> yea probably not so inclined to be oversympathetic towards people’s situations not that I don’t have any but you like it’s not our work it’s fix it yourself you know (.) because we do see people like counsellors people treat us like counsellors (.) I had a man the other day he has broken up with his wife and he had a form to fill out and he filled out everything on the form with things like ‘equal rights for men’ you know all that anger was just coming out and it was coming right at you so you know you have got to learn to (2) put up a barrier (Shay, EC, first interview, NS2).

Across the interviews and during fieldwork ‘anger’ was a dominant emotion in the spaces of RESP. As already mentioned in the excerpt from Jay’s interview, ‘anger’ was a problem of GROUP and one that could be ‘resolved’ by having ‘heart conversations’. However,

across the interviews, the ‘practice’ of ‘heart conversations’ was not a straight-forward solution to activating an emotional unemployed subject.

These ‘heart’ practices are produced in Shay’s interview as ‘doing’, and ‘undoing’ affect through self-governing. Shay has to “put up a barrier” in response to the ‘mad’ (read: angry) job seeker. Unlike other workers who discussed ‘heart’ conversations as needed to get personal information for activating, Shay depicts jobseekers as the ones who create these ‘counselling’ or confessional situations. It also pathologises job seekers’ desires for empathy/understanding undermining their ‘context’. What is interesting here is that Shay differentiates her governing work in these ‘heart’ conversation by attaching herself to a different emotional subject. That is, instead of governing through affect by using ‘empathy’, Shay is “not so inclined to be over-sympathetic”.

Psychologised discourses are invoked here in order for these ‘counselling’ interactions to be truthful, and for the ‘not so over sympathetic’, and ‘angry’ subjects to be understood as such. Moreover, the ‘irrationality’ of the angry job seeker that displays too much emotion in the wrong setting requires established norms about socially acceptable and situated displays of emotions. In this account, worker’s roles are unemotional insofar as “it is not our work” to counsel (even though “we do see people like counsellors”) or deal with these types of emotions so job seekers should “fix it”. Individual case management is here a problem on inviting these potentially de-activating ‘heart’ conversations. What is different about Shay’s account is that the emotional unemployed subject is uncontainable and so workers need to “learn to put up a barrier”. In the text is it the emotional unemployed subject that causes workers to engage in self-care and manage their own emotional self.

Intertwined with governing the unemployed is how workers are governed and self-govern. So far, I have discussed the governing of the governors to minimise affective governing and make activation more efficient (in terms of the time spent with job seekers). The governing of the governors is partly achieved through official forms and organisational practices that reshape SDPs, and therefore how workers ‘should’ activate job seekers. I have also discussed how reforming case management limits how workers can deploy conversations as a technology, limiting affective governing strategies. Furthermore, workers draw upon psychologised notions of the self as an emotional subject to self-govern through affect.

In the interviews, psy-complexified notions of the emotional subject also activate workers to reshape governing practices for job seekers. In the below excerpt Ray problematises the GROUP model on the grounds of 'lack of participation' and, therefore, lack of activation. This is a notable moment of differentiation (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017, p. 116) because it flags the GROUP SDP as producing the same problem of individual case management, namely those job seekers are not activated,

> RAY same sort of reaction to the group activities (.) I think (1) the first session we did was like a video session so we got them down to watch a video for 20 minutes and that did not work because there was no participation really um and =
> ROSE = is that the video where there are a set of slides and someone talking over the top of it?
> RAY yep, and you can barely hear the talking? Yep that one *laughs* Yep so um that was basically my first three weeks here and I was looking at it going "that video just does not work", and you could see people going (1) you would see (1) that the red flags were popping up in the room and you could see people becoming very (.) resistant the body language the crossed arms and stuff they were not engaging (hmm) (.) so what I found was that doing something that involved them actually hands-on doing something has actually eliminated some of that (ok) because they are actually seeing that they're doing something they are not just here to get their names marked off and then to go away for three weeks (Ray, LEC, NS2).

The GROUP SDP was constructed at an organisational level to be solving the problem of (lack of) participation during appointments by encouraging job seekers to, at a minimum, look for work while they waited for their appointment. However, the GROUP SDP format was problematised by most workers not just because it stopped the 'heart conversations' and consequently, caused friction. In Ray's transcript, the training videos are produced as de-activating technologies, failing to engage job seekers in the content because the video is poorly made.

The SDP is here in an ongoing formation where it now becomes the problem constituting the situation where job seekers will actively show their resistance to the activation technologies (video). These 'things sayable' are 'truthful' because in these spaces of ES the job seeker is 'supposed' to be 'doing something' towards finding a job. Similarly, the ES provider is 'supposed' to be 'ensuring' this activation takes place. 'Participation' is privileged in activation discursive practices because the focus is on ensuring job seekers are "doing something" while they are at their appointments. Here 'Ray' is produced as an

‘perceptive’ worker within the ‘ideal activation worker’ subject position who notices the ‘red flags’ and notices “that video just does not work” and uses initiative to create a GROUP that ensures job seekers “are not just here to get their names marked off”.
There is an element of psychological discourses producing the worker as able to identify “red flags”. These ‘red flags” are bodily displays of job seeker ‘resistance” to the video presentation, such as “crossed arms”. This “body language” produces a ‘disengaged job seeker’ within the interview. This ‘type’ of jobseeker is not ideal, and so the ‘perceptive worker’ reformulates governing practices to ensure job seekers are “doing something”. The ‘perceptive worker’ here taps into the psychology of the ‘resistant jobseekers’ and explains “elimination of some of that [resistant behaviour]” by suggesting job seekers “are actually seeing that they’re doing something”. Here workers are psychologised by being subjects that can diagnose and intervene and change the behaviour and thinking of job seekers (who in turn are psychologised as thinking subjects, reacting to the lack of activation in the GROUP).

The ‘norm’ of providing activation services in ES is maintained in this extract. Discursive practices of ES and ‘best practice’ unpin how the interviewee/er challenge the quality of the video rather than the content or purpose of the video. In the text, the spaces of ES remain a legitimate place for the activation of jobseekers.

Ray relates to himself as a ‘perceptive’ worker who draws on the psy-complexified notions of the self (common sense understandings about motivations, body language, desire to be engaged, feelings of progress and so forth). In the interviews workers repeatedly depicted their work as a form of counselling, where their expertise lies in ‘knowing people’, how to ‘motivate’ people, and helping people build self-esteem and confidence to keep looking for work and to sell their ‘human capital’ to potential employers. Ray’s relation to himself in this ideal employment consultant subject position draws upon this expertise by ‘knowing’ that the GROUP was not working and ‘knowing’ how to fix this with “hands-on” activities.

In terms of potential transformation, this section of the interview could provide moments of contradiction, ambiguity, or contestation of dominant discourses. Such moments could create space for thinking differently about ES or the problem of the unemployed. The purpose of the GROUP SDP was to keep job seekers engaged through self-lead activities while workers did the administrative side of appointments. The ‘video’ works as a technology - instructing job seekers on ‘how to write a cover letter’ and other ‘skills’ that

entice job seekers to reflect, self-problematise, and draw out ‘truths’ about themselves to put on paper, or to see ‘gaps’, in ‘knowledge and skills’ and from this plot paths of self-reformation. Work-first discourses (that underpin GROUP) are challenged by the positioning of employment consultants as experts who ‘need’ to themselves be more ‘hands-on’ to engage ‘participation’ from the job seekers. Instead of positioning job seekers as not participating, they could be seen as participating but in arms-crossed resistance.

However, in Ray’s interview, the ‘hand-on’ activities include tasks like a ‘career quiz’, where job seekers are enticed to reflect, self-problematise, and draw out ‘truths’ about themselves to put on paper, or to see gaps in ‘knowledge and skills’ and so forth. Moreover, as the interview progresses Ray (and the interviewer) move toward pathologising job seekers by classifying certain groups as really needing expertise intervention to resolve ‘personal issue’ before being able to achieve the ultimate goal, finding (and keeping) a job.

> RAY: yea it does I think I guess (1) people are not really, well you hear people saying “oh well it’s not hard to get a job” and (2) look there are people who come through the door who literally could go out and get a job tomorrow if they you know really put their mind to it (.) but there are many people who come through the door who need much assistance to get a job (hmm) um, for example, yesterday we have a jobseeker who comes into use the computer virtually every second day (.) and has an alcohol addiction and yesterday was probably the worst I have ever seen him (.) he came in two and a half hours late for his appointment. Um hurling abuse, swearing and carrying on
> ROSE: was he drunk?
> RAY: yea (.) went to sit down on the car and missed it completely landed on his backside on the floor (.) Moreover, it just managing with that is a case of well I’m not just dealing with that (.) I need to get this guy a job but if I send him down to an interview what is going to happen in an interview? (hmm) How is he going to get there? (ah huh) He says ‘oh I will just jump into a car and drive down’ ‘well you cannot the way you are now you will kill someone’. You are not just dealing with that fact, you need to get a job, it is everything else (.) and you know, having people sitting down in front of you and telling you ‘oh I have my plan to kill myself tonight’ and how you deal with that (.) you have got to have that emotional resilience to get through that. Looking at the picture of oh I will just go and get a job it is not that easy especially when you are dealing with all these extra factors out (.) there how do you combat that? (Ray, LEC, NS2).

For many of the interviewees the loss of ‘heart conversations’ meant they had lost a ‘tool’ for governing job seekers with people with complex issues, often framed in terms of ‘mental health’. The above extract is interesting for analysis because it is both a point of “excision and attribution”, “measurement”, and “self-formation” (see Bacchi & Bonham, 2016, p.115). In the text the stereotype “oh well its easy to get a job” is problematised, differentiating the ability of certain job seekers to ‘get and keep’ a job. Job seekers are divided into two groups along this measurement of ‘easiness’: those who can “go out and get a job tomorrow” and those that “need much assistance to get a job”. The latter job seekers are particularly emotional: addicted, abusive, depressed, and suicidal. In the text, reframing the problem of activation in relation to these emotional subjects could be part of subversive discourses. They are ‘sayable’ in psychologised discourses that establish normal ‘everyday emotions’ from these more ‘extreme’ emotions as ‘abnormal’ or irrational. To say that ‘it is difficult to get a job’ because of these mental health concerns challenges the ‘truth’ in *jobactive* that job seekers are able but not willing to find a job (see the previous chapter for discussions about popular discourse and production of the ‘dole bludger’ and ‘welfare cheats’). For workers in RESP, technical functions of GROUP limit their ability to service job seekers because finding a job is not always ‘easy’ or ‘technical’.

There is potential for ‘psy’ to disrupt activation discourses by adding complexity, made visible through emotion, to the unemployed subject. The unemployed subject is produced as being *more than* passive but also addicted, abusive, drunk, depressed, and suicidal. Alongside, this emotional job seeker is the worker who, in the text, has to manage the complex and emotional problem of activating job seekers “dealing with all these extra factors”. The worker has to self-govern (becoming resilient) in order to manage ‘irrationality’ (drink driving) and thus attaches to this emotionalised worker subject. Consequently, the task of motivating job seekers to ‘do the work’ of finding a job is fraught with nuances that are outside the expertise of the worker, “how do you combat that?”. In the ongoing formation of objects and subjects in the interviews unemployment becomes *more than* a technical issue (so getting a job first is no longer the obvious solution) and the unemployed become *more than* just unwilling to find work (the passive and depressed subject, or bludgers and welfare cheats, see Chapter Two for more discussion on these subject positions).

From a critical psychological perspective, however, the subversive potential of psychologising unemployment is small. One issue is that the ‘mental health’ of job seekers

is presented as the explanation for why it is 'harder' for certain cohorts to find a job. There are two main concerns that I would like to raise here. Firstly, 'mental health' is a regime of truth that presents a certain way of understanding distress legitimated through medicalising discourses, which had pathologising effects (Holmqvist, 2009). Further, psychologising unemployment in this way ignores how 'unemployment' and 'mental health' are entangled with economic, social and political practices (Boland & Griffith, 2015; Walker, 2011). Although there is potential to challenge the 'work-first discourses of *jobactive,* the job seeker, pathologised through the psy-complex, is still unable to find and keep a job because of something wrong with them as an individual. As Bonham and Bacchi (2017) suggest, we should check our research to see if, as researchers, we are challenging or (Re)producing pervasive thinking. Here, is an example of how the research (re)produces pervasive thinking about the unemployed as not only deficit but dangers ("was he drunk?"). Psy still contributes to the marginalisation and pathologisation of unemployment and does little, if anything, to politicise the 'problem' of unemployment.

6.4 Concluding comments

In this chapter, I discussed the way the RESP streamlined service by imposing Taylorist management onto the front line of ES. Despite the emphasis on individualised service provision as the best way to activate job seekers, the SDP problematised individual case management as de-activating. A key part of this problem was the way workers could and should do their governing work. Engaging job seekers in 'heart to heart' conversations are seen as irrelevant and de-activating. In this way my research follows previous literature by highlighting the way organisational priorities (see Marston 2013) and policy context (see Jordan, 2018) remake what 'governing' the workers can do in their daily work. The use of an ethnographic imagination and situating *jobactive* as an apparatus has moved past programmatic renditions of *jobactive* implementation (see Chapter Three). *Jobactive* policy sets the conditions and activates providers to deliver services to prioritise job placements within activation and work-first discourses. It is unsurprising then that the SDP developed by RESP turned unemployed into something technical, and thereby making governing a mostly administrative exercise. There is a correlation between the increasing administrative and autonomous aspects of monitoring mutual obligations in policy and the removal of more 'personal' governing strategies. In this chapter, I discussed how in the interviews and observations GROUP restructured the possibilities for workers to govern jobseekers. Workers' were restricted in how they deployed governing strategies in that they were mostly limited to 'undoing affects' of the 'sad', 'bad' and 'mad' job seekers.

Affective governing practices put emotions to use to create specific desirable outcomes (Fortier, 2010). In employment services, the objective is to get the unemployed to 'feel' motivated, enthusiastic, determined, and positive about the future. To make sure job seekers are 'job ready'. For many of the participants the main problem in the interviews was the loss of the 'heart to heart' conversations, their mechanisms to diffuse tension and 'activate' or motivate the job seekers. The strategy for doing and undoing emotion through individualised case management mirrors findings in previous research (see Glinser, 2018; Penz et al, 2017; McDonald & Marston, 2005). As I mentioned in Chapter one, I think the affective governing literature on ES miss the role of psy-complexified knowledges in its critique. Consequently, I would like to go beyond affective governing by looking at the different ways in which, what I call 'technologies of heart', are mobilised.

Here, I would like to suggest that emotions or 'heart', as they are produced though the interviews, are more than rationalisation for governing practices. I borrow D'Aoust's (2013) concept of emotion as a technology in and of itself. For D'Aoust, affective governmentality is limited to how emotions form part of the rationalisation of the 'conduct of conduct' whether that be via rules, landscapes, of constituting the inner structures of an individual. She argued that affective governmentality misses how emotions affect governmentality. That is, in her work she discusses how 'love' "shapes conduct through expectation of its 'true' manifestation by the 'feeling subject' and "connects citizenship and intimacy" (p. 264). Similarly, I suggest psy-infused 'emotions' become 'technologies of heart' that inform, activate, and sustain the problem of the unemployed and associated governing practices.

Technologies are practical rationalities that aim for a certain goal but they also constitute subjects and organise life on contingent principles. As Rose (1999) describes, technologies require connection between an ensemble of power-knowledge, skills, devices, judgements, capacities and skills. D'Aoust (2013) recommends tracing the materiality of technologies as they move back and forth between the self and the collective via practices, artefacts, language and words, and spaces. In the research, 'technologies of heart' are deployed to 'activate' job seekers through 'conversations' (practices), motivational inscriptions (artefacts), reframing job seekers as 'candidates on a journey (language), and through the 'activating' spaces or more 'hands on 'training activities'. Emotions in the transcripts make certain unemployed subjects 'visible' and assessable according to psychologised knowledges and practices of the self, the potential self and the

way we can talk about and ‘experience’ emotions. That is, what is ‘within the true’ ‘emotionally’ provides the rationale for establishing what is wrong with case management and jobseekers. These problematisations contribute to producing the experience of unemployment as ‘psychologised’ by “simultaneously troubling and [making] intelligible” (Rose, 1996, p. 60) job seekers and governing practices through a psy-complexified understanding of emotions.

Technologies of heart make job seekers visible as *not* ‘job ready’ since they are ‘recognisable’ as ‘sad’, ‘bad’ or ‘mad’. These ‘feeling subjects’ are known to be so from watching how they ‘act’ and use space (displaying resistant body language’), how they ‘speak’ (swearing at self or workers), use artefacts (write ‘rights for men’ on paper) and assumptions about how they ‘should’ be feeling because they are unemployed (low ‘self-esteem’). As mentioned, these practices, use of artefacts, space and language, are ‘knowable’ as ‘truthful’ due to psychologised discursive practices. But these technologies of the heart do more than inform; they also activate and sustain dominant problematisations of unemployment.

In the interviews job seekers are produced as deficit subjects, in need of help to find work, but also to become ‘emotionally’ job ready. This included being encouraged to develop confidence and ‘good habits, to being punished for misbehaving in a public space, to being ‘pulled back’ from engaging in dangerous behaviour. The emotional displays of job seekers are constructed in the interviews as being ‘signs’ that, knowing workers can identify and act upon. The technologies of heart are here reversed in a way, where the ‘feeling subject’ (job seeker) activates another ‘feeling subject’ (worker) to conduct themselves and the job seekers differently.

For example, in Shay’s interview she takes up a feeling subject position where she is activated to utilise technologies of the self to guard from angry job seekers and in turn this has implication for her ability to do affective governing (show empathy). Additionally, in Ray’s interview the ‘emotions’ of the job seekers ‘activates’ workers to reshape GROUP structure and activities during GROUP and change the structure and content of the GROUP to ensure the participants ‘participate’. Moreover, in Ray’s interview, ‘technology of heart’ highlights how rendering unemployment technical is idealised but incomplete. In Ray’s interview unemployment is produced as emotional but in a way that escapes the function of ES and the expertise of the workers. Unemployment as a problem of ‘heart’

exceeds the rationalisation of governing practices. However, in all of the examples, ‘activation’ is never fully unpacked or subverted. Instead, technologies of heart help to sustain the objectification of the unemployed *as* the problem of unemployment. The potential for utilising psychological knowledges as a way to challenge the practices of ES is detectable in these interviews, but ultimately fall short.

To sum, while research suggests that we need to attend to the problematisation on the ground (Brady, 2014), the material circumstances of employment service provision (Jordan, 2018), the nuances of subjectification (Binkley, 2011), organisation priorities (Marston, 2013) and triple activation (Van Berkel, 2012), this chapter shows that we can also add that researching the governing of the unemployment requires attuning to how ‘emotions’ function in these spaces. ‘Affective governing’ is nuanced by how psy-infused ‘emotions’ inform, activate and sustain the problem of the unemployed.

These concerns correlate with and overlap with discursive practices in other places. Indeed, looking at *jobactive* as an apparatus, we can trace how the relations of practices between different sites converge on the bodies of the unemployed since they do not embody neoliberalism and are on the periphery of moral citizenship. I pick up these points and develop them further in the thesis summary. However, before I can turn to the main claims of the thesis, I will return to another thesis aim, examining and critiquing research practices. I take up these issues in the following reflexivity chapter.

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7 Chapter Seven: Reflexivity

In the first chapter, I defined my 'critical psychological' perspective along four axes: deploying Foucault's 'critique'; rejection of the modernist pursuit of 'evidence'; critique of the 'psy-complex' and; researching discursive practices. For my research, this meant "suspending as far as possible the normative system" (Foucault, 1984, p. 68 cited in Lemke, 2001, p. 29) that produces unemploy(ed)ment as a 'problem' that can be 'resolved' by ES. I also highlighted that research practices should be critical since the method and methodology are interlinked with tackling the way psy knowledges are used to govern the unemployed. On the one hand, my research practices were designed to avoid (re)producing psychological research on unemployment that is fixated on getting closer to the 'truth' about 'causality' (see Chapter Three) (axis one and three). Also, it meant I departed from some governmentality researchers since I think research has (or needs) a theory of method(s) regardless of whether or not a researcher makes one explicit (see Chapter Four) (axis two and four). On the other hand, I came across contradictions and challenges in trying to enact research that conformed with my critical frame-of-reference while using methods that were already not critical, within an institutional setting(s) (a university and an Employment Services provider). The purpose of this chapter is to 'suspend' my research practices to reflexively unpack the assumptions and its implications.

In my research, I use the 'apparatus' to bring together ethnographic-like research practices (interviews and observations). I also used Poststructural interview analysis (PIA) (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017) to overcome the problem of the pre-discursive subject that is reproduced through interview practices. However, we can also examine research practices in terms of how they are enacted and what assumptions such enactments bring into the research assemblage. For example, even though Bonham and Bacchi (2017) stated that interviews "entail a highly policed set of procedures" (p. 7) that produce 'truth', 'objects' and 'subjects'. Bonham and Bacchi did encourage researchers to think about how the questions asked (re)produce or challenge 'pervasive thinking'. However, like the governmentality researchers using an 'ethnographic imagination', Bonham and Bacchi did not elaborate on how enacting research practices (like building rapport or transcription) have political implications.

Furthermore, even though I found the 'ethnographic imagination' a useful device to bring together research practices (with the help of the apparatus), Brady and other researchers

who have used this quasi-ethnographic approach (Brady, 2018; Clarke, 2017; Jordan, 2018) each uncritically describe how they did their fieldwork according to the usual social science protocols. To a certain extent, I have done the same (see Chapter Five). Nevertheless, I maintain that careful reflexive engagement can unpack these practices in line with the objectives of critique. Here, I think researchers should engage with their 'knowledge work', or what is taken to be known (has been knowledged) via research practices.

Research is productive insofar as the objects, like the 'experience(s) of unemployment', "are formed by the very practices through which they are known" (Parker, 2005, p.3). Moreover, as discussed in Chapter One, I draw on the insights of ontological politics that asks the researcher to attend to how research intervenes in the world (Mol, 1999). The question then is what subjects and objects are produced by the methods used? I will discuss how the insider/outsider dilemma of ethnographic research mark participants as employment consultants, limiting potential subject positions. I also discuss how the unemployed are (re)psychologised through the interview practices that remaking unemployment as a problem of 'mental health' via the psy-complex. Accordingly, this chapter engages with 'knowledge' in a non-epistemological frame, instead focusing on the political and rhetorical components.

I will begin by explicating my 'critical reflexivity'. From there, I turn my attention to the epistemic implications of the thesis by thinking through (meta)theoretical issues of 'coherence'. Then I will proceed to consider how the research practices *intervene* or even *interfere* in issues of 'unemployment' and 'employment services'. I raise ethical and political concerns that the research *does* reproduce some elements of the psy-complex and at times failed to contest dominant discourses about the unemployed. In closing, I will revisit my critical frame-of-reference and reflect on future possibilities for critical methodology in light of the shortcomings of my research.

7.1 Critical reflexivity

Reflexivity is commonplace in qualitative research; however, how it is defined and practised depends on the frame-of-reference. The challenge for deploying *critical* reflexivity is a focus on the 'researcher' as 'knower' can easily distort reflexivity into a confessional practice (Pillow, 2003). Reflexivity-as-confession is individualising, producing a particular kind of academic subject. Additionally, as postcolonial criticism has pointed

out, positioning the researcher as an instrument of data collection occludes how “the production of knowledge is never self-authenticating or self-legitimating” and “[d]ebate over meaning construction becomes inexorably bound up with questions of language and interpretation, the knowledge/power nexus, and the sovereign “logocentric” discourses of modern scientific rationality” (McLaren, 1992, p. 77). Reflexivity should instead focus on the constituting elements of research.

Reflexivity can be placed within institutional and discursive practices that highlight the constitution of “the narrative position of the accounter” (Burman, 2006). A part of this constitution also implicates methodology. Here a methodological reflexive lens examines the theoretical, ideological, epistemic assumptions that lead to how research practices unfold (Pillow, 2015). I join these concerns about avoiding confession and moving towards a more methodological reflexivity with problematisations. That is, I use reflexivity as an opportunity to examine how the research could and did problematise the object under study — thus examining how the research *produced* the object as a certain kind of problem *and* object (Bacchi, 2012). In this way, I also included poststructural interview analysis (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017) seventh process the politics of distribution, to consider how interviewing practices challenged or reinscribed pervasive ways of thinking (as described in Chapter Five). Thus, reflexivity is not just looking at how practices could have been done differently, changed or omitted but opens other lines of inquiry to study the power-knowledge nexus. I take the above reflexive focus on methodology to examine my research practices in terms of epistemic, political and ethical implications.

7.2 Epistemic implications of truth-telling in a critical research study

In this first section, I will discuss the epistemic implications of my research. In many mainstream approaches the purpose of research is to produce ‘knowledge’. I understand this process to be contingent on the time and place where the ‘knowledgementing’ is being done. That is, what is recognised as ‘knowledge’ differs across different cultures in different historical periods. The range of positions or frames of references that research is constituted within qualitative research is diverse. Different methodologies will start from different assumptions about ontology, epistemology, and the role of the researcher, all of which influence research design and enactment. For this section, I am interested in exploring this idea of enacting research practices, that will come with certain assumptions, in a way coherent with a Foucauldian-inspired frame of reference.

I touched on this issue in Chapter Three and four. In these chapters, I noted the methodological and analytical gaps that are left when governmentality approaches are merged with traditional fieldwork practices. I bridged these gaps with the 'apparatus' and poststructural interview analysis (PIA, Bonahm & Bacchi, 2017). Yet, I think there is still work to be done in terms of thinking through what it means to 'do' Foucauldian inspired research methods. In the more easily recognisable 'formal' analysis process, the data needs to be positioned appropriately (from the way the interview was done and justified) to make it amenable to a particular type of analysis (Frith & Gleeson, 2011). The risk we take as researchers using qualitative methods is, we can, inadvertently, (re)produce assumptions that we are rejecting, dismissing, or problematising in other aspects of our research. Indeed, it was this very issue that Larner (2008) warned could be an unintended effect from merging governmentality approaches with traditional social science methods.

As I noted in Chapter Three, I wanted my research to be critical. I drew on one of the insights from critical psychological research that it is important to be explicit about the assumptions of our research because we know what these assumptions *do* in mainstream critical psychology (the subjects, objects that are produced and the oppressive effects these may have, see Chapter One for more discussion). Being explicit about how we arrive at claims and how they are justified are also considered to be 'good practice' of 'quality' research in mainstream modernist frame-of-reference (see for example, Tracey, 2010). Thus, in a modernist frame-of-reference, I can state that this claim I have made is 'knowledge' as opposed to 'opinion' because I have followed certain ways of seeing and doing research.

Hence, I tried to shift from one 'game' of traditional qualitative research to another 'game' of poststructuralist research. In short, the issue here is that while I think I did provide a way to justify how the method could be strung together and analysed via the apparatus, I could not satisfactorily justify the enactment of methods in the same way. Playing between these different sets of 'rules' exposed the research to different criteria, and thus at times, the research practices are caught in the in-between, producing methodological tension. Casting a reflexivity lens onto my research, I use this space to lay bare these unsolved difficulties and epistemic implications. I will focus on the 'interview' since my research relies heavily on this research practice.

7.2.1 The challenge of traditional methods: the interview

A part of the difficulty in finding a Foucauldian-inspired way of doing fieldwork lays in the fact that Foucault did not do fieldwork. Admittedly, he did do plenty of interviews, and these interviews constitute a large and influential part of his work, supplementing (although sometimes contradicting) his published books and lectures. Yet, these interviews are not used to understand Foucault as a person, his inner thoughts and so forth. As I discussed in Chapter Four, using interviews in such a way creates all sorts of problems for poststructuralist researchers including critical psychological researchers. I moved away from such analytical readings of interviews with PIA. I will not repeat those concerns here although they are connected to the issues I will be discussing. Instead, what I am interested in is how an interviewer would go about *interviewing* Foucault, in a 'Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralist' manner, in a research setting. And in doing so, provide a way to justify claims made from these research practices that is consistent and (meta) theoretically coherent.

Toulmin (2003) argued that there is a difference between making a claim, the ground of agreement for a claim ('evidence' or 'data') and warranting (the theorisation of why and how the evidence are connected to the claim). These processes are linked to how a practice, for example interviewing, is enacted. Research methods are epistemically-informed practices that combine a set of research techniques. So, for example, we can identify Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as distinguishable from Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) or Narrative Inquiry (Murray, 1999). Interviewing as a technique is different in each of these approaches. While there are claims to broad generic definitions of interviewing (usually as a conversation that generates data to be analysed, see Gubrium & Holstein, 2001) and certain to establish 'good' interviewing (Roulston, 2010), 'interviewing' materialises differently depending on method and methodology.

Subsequently, it should be possible to compare and contrast interviewing in different methods. Indeed, Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) claimed that interviewing, as a technique, is a 'craft' and as such has its own 'peculiarities' that can be identified, packaged and taught. In turn, attached to these practices will be assumptions about the purpose of the interview, the interviewer/ee, appropriate behaviours and interactions, and what constitutions 'data'. For example, Brinkmann (2013) presents two broad categories of interviewing that require different 'styles' (borrowing from Wesgraf, 2001). Brinkmann describes interviewing as a "research instrument" (p. 37) that assumes the interview reflects the interviewees' reality

outside of the interview and captures ‘experience’ in a post positivist sense. Such interviewing invokes a ‘receptive’ style where the interviewee is considered the ‘expert’ and provided open questions to elaborate on the topic. In contrast d interviewing as “social practice” (p. 39) assumes interviewing is a social interaction where knowledge is co-produced and uses an ‘assertive’ interviewing style. This style is more akin to interrogation where the interviewer is trying to provoke, illuminate, and to some degree control the responses of the interviewee. All of these practices will need to cohere with the method and methodology of the research chosen.

Different approaches to interviews, with their respective interviewing ‘style’ highlights the kinds of taken-for-granted assumptions that underpin interviewing practices regardless of whether researchers make this assumption explicit in their methodology. These assumptions, are tied into dominant discourses about the role of research and how to access certain types of ‘knowledge’ about ‘individual’ or ‘collective experiences’. Although Brinkmann (2013) noted, the ‘receptive style’ is often considered to be “self-evidently right” (p.31) and thus forms the core style that gets reproduced uncritically in qualitative studies. Without being explicit about our research processes, therefore, we can (re)produce practices, such as a ‘receptive style’ in Foucauldian-inspired research projects. Does allowing the interviewer to speak ‘freely’ about their experiences as an ‘expert’, fit with an ‘ethnographic imagination’ in a critical psychological study that is heavily influenced by Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralism? It may do, but it is not ‘self-evidently right’. Researchers need to do the knowledge work to make these links explicit, to ensure the claims made are warrantable. As practices of ‘truthing’, these practices are thus acceptable ways of doing and producing ‘evidence’ that can be warranted as a claim. What counts as knowledge and what objects/subjects are produced (the connection between power and knowledge) is intrinsically connected to the concerns about field work and knowledge work done in an academic assemblage.

Making sure all of these moving parts cohere (meta)theoretically requires work: generating the research question, the way the interview is positioned (what type of data is needed, what is the role of the interviewer and participant etc), if the interview is done well in order to produce appropriate data that can then be analysed using appropriate analytical procedures. The data are subsequently warranted and used as ‘evidence’ to defend claims made by the researcher, reinserting the claims into a conversation with the appropriate literature. Interviewing as a technique thus fits into the collection of practices and devices,

interwoven with theory, to achieve research aims. How knowledgementing is done, regarding generating research questions, producing a literature review (or not, see Chapter Three), explaining methodological assumptions, methods and the appropriate techniques therein all come together, so the practices are all consistent with what the research claims to be about. The claims made, regardless of whether the reader agrees with them, are nevertheless taken seriously as 'knowledge'. There is a theoretical link that needs to be explicated between different stages of the knowledgementing process to ensure practices are all consistent.

7.3 Three attempts to rethink the interview

The unresolved issue in my thesis is that it is unclear how to justify interviews as they are enacted from a Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralist perspective without reinscribing contradictory assumptions about 'knowledge', the subject, 'experience' (as self-evident instead of the constituted) and objects. A part of this trouble goes back to the same issue I raised with governmentality researchers who utilised an 'ethnographic imagination' (as I discussed in Chapter Three and four). The ethnographic imagination does not follow dogmatic methodological prescriptions of classic anthropological renditions of ethnography but still relies on the general premise of what makes ethnography different as a research practice. Brady (2016) stated she used Forsey's (2010) term 'ethnographic imagination' to describe these new research practices that rely partly on the accounts of situated actors. These 'accounts' of situated actors come from research interviews. The trouble I discussed in the methodology chapter was that by refusing to engage with the method, the 'ethnographic imagination' still needs methodological work to tie the methods to a theory (do knowledge work). Here that same issue presents a different problem: how to enact research practices in a way that coheres (meta)theoretically?

The 'ethnographic imagination' borrows Forsey's (2010) idea that research can be interview-led and still be 'ethnographic' insofar as researchers think ethnographically. By this, Forsey meant interviews can be used as a way to access the details of the cultural world of the cohort under investigation. In the same way that ethnography usually demands the researcher to have a sustained presence in a research situation or 'participant observation' (Atkinson, 2015). In participant observation, interviewing as a technique is about gathering details from people's accounts about their lives and world. Interviews are often positioned as exploratory, with interview questions developing 'organically' in situ (Gobo, 2008). Ethnographic-like interviews are here presented as more

like ‘socialising’ since the participants are engaged with over some time (Gobo, 2008). Indeed, interview-led ethnographies still aim to write in-depth descriptions of everyday life, which is facilitated through detailed interviews that include life histories expanding beyond the research focus (Forsey).

The importance of being in the situation, or using interviews to gather as much detail about a person’s life and social world is steeped in another assumption about ethnography that this method is useful because it enables the researcher to access information that would be otherwise difficult to obtain. For example, Britzman (1991) taking a Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralist feminist standpoint used ethnography because her topic “required my presence in the world of student teachers” (p. 10) in order to research how student teachers learn to teach. Even though Collier (2011; 2013) (very influential in the cohort of governmentality scholars who are advocating for ethnographic-like studies) stated that ethnography is not necessary it does allow the researcher to come into contact with problems they may not otherwise see, hear, or learn. The interview in an ‘ethnographic imagination’ still needs to be tied to method and methodology because as a technique, it is an epistemically-informed practice. When we start pulling at the assumptions of interviews in ethnography, the ‘criticalness’ of our research starts to come undone, and we can begin to pinpoint aspects of our research that contradicts our frame-of-reference.

Here, we can quickly return to the ‘realism’ versus ‘relativism’ debates that I have already discussed (see Chapter Three). I do not want to reengage with these issues. Regardless of whether I take pains to establish my research “... is a work of nonfiction” (Desmond, 2016, p.xi) or is one ‘ethnographic narrative’ out of an array of other narratives since “‘reality’ can only be seen through a window of theory, whether implicit or explicit” (Sparkes, 1992, p. 26), I am still making claims based on evidence generated via practices, like an ‘interview’. The ‘interview’ has its own conceptual baggage. Despite the promise that ethnographic imagination’ helps researchers to escape a modernist truth regime, researchers may indeed be caught drawing on more traditional intellectual resources and assumptions in order to do the ‘knowledge work’. I made three attempts to forgo these issues as I was enacting the interviews during fieldwork (this is separate to using PIA as a way to analyse the interviews completed). I discuss these concerns in the following section.

7.3.1 Conversations, narratives, problematisations: an interview by any other name

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) provide a guide to researchers on how to design an interview study. They describe what is expected of a 'good' interview study and for my purposes show how the taken for granted assumptions create methodological tension within my critical frame-of-reference. The authors suggest that researchers clearly state the purpose of the interviews, what is being investigated, and how the intended knowledge is to be obtained. How do we present and justify the interview or observations or other forms of fieldwork in a way that rejects the pre-discursive / humanist individual, refusing the psy-complex; presents knowledge as a verb and interlinked with power relations and refusing to make epistemological claims? What was the purpose of the interview in this frame? What was the knowledge producing conversations assuming? Who was the imagined interviewee? What was the role of the researcher? What style should they use? What is the purpose of prompting? What does it mean to 'reframe' in this context?

The issue is 'how' interviews can be practised as a technique to allow these governing practices to be discernible from the data without contradicting the critical frame-of-reference. I made three attempts to try and reconfigure the interviews during my research to try and resolve different issues connected to doing Foucauldian-inspired research. Firstly, the interviews were positioned as 'guided conversations' rather than 'interviews'. The interviews were also reconfigured as obtaining the 'narrative/stories' of workers (rather than 'brute data', St Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Following the work of Laing (2008) 'problematising' interviews were also imagined to challenge the taken for granted assumptions in situ. However, the interviews were 'reimagined' they did not differ significantly, and so there were elements of a narrative approach, a problematising approach and more 'conversation' / informal' approach with the researcher moving between receptive and interrogative styles. In short, the completed interviews are not distinguishable from any other ethnography that see interviews as a research instrument to produce 'data'. I followed many of the 'normal' and expected to interview practices, and so I do although I spend time explaining the trouble with interviewing and how PIS can be a way to analyse to avoid or at least with these issues (see Chapter Four), I do not package my interviews as anything other than 'interviewing-as-usual' (see Chapter Five). In the discussion below, however, I expand on some of the thought-experiments on how to reimagine 'how' to do a Foucauldian-inspired interview from a pre-fieldwork perspective.

7.3.2 'Recorded conversations'.

In the first instance, knowing that the interview was not a 'perfect fit' with Foucauldian-inspired study, I thought ethnographic type interviews or 'recorded conversations' would be a way through the mire. Such 'conversations' are ethnographic and emergent since they are led by interaction in the situation (Behar, 2003). I considered such practices would be useful because the focus would be on gathering the details of the research situation: interactions, rituals, behaviours, artefacts (or discursive and non-discursive practices) (see DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

Interviews positioned 'merely' as conversations might be helpful to rethink the power dynamics of an interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Indeed, carrying out a "conversation with a purpose'" (Burgess, 1984, p. 102) may contribute to dynamic sense-making and encourage the respondent to take the lead in the flow of the discussion (Essien, 2009). Such research practices may challenge the traditional interview (that follows a schedule) if researchers are positioned as dominating the situation. However, such renditions of a 'conversational interview' are not 'critical' in the sense of 'critique'. In a Foucauldian-inspired purview, power is capillary and multifaceted so that both the interviewer and the interviewee are produced in various ways through power relations. While the interviewer might have the authority to 'control' the conversation, the interviewee is often infused with the 'authority' of their own experiences and feelings (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017).

Using these conversational/ethnographic interviews employs a 'receptive' style (Wengraf, 2004) that is open-ended, allowing the interviewer to direct the conversation with the interviewer prompting for more detail. 'Good' interviewing for ethnography should gather 'rich data' (Creswell & Miller, 2000) and in my research that would include what is happening in the situation, changes in the workplace service delivery, and explore the worker's experiences, thoughts and feelings about these changes. By trying to ascertain more detail about practices, artefacts and the everyday 'life experiences' of the workers also positions the interview as an 'instrument' (Brinkman, 2013) to be used in conjunction with a receptive style (Wengraf, 2004).

To use the interview data as evidence for a claim in an analysis, we need to demonstrate how this data is relevant and was produced by an appropriate method, for the analysis to be conducted. For example, presenting a segment of text from an interview transcript, that might be a worker describing a situation where a jobseeker failed to attend an

appointment. Presenting the interview transcript as ‘data’ of something that has ‘really happened’, of thoughts and feelings of workers that are deemed to be ‘going on’, and ‘representative’ of the practices ‘on the ground’ in Employment Services (ES) requires a realist methodology within an ethnographic method. The ‘data’ produced through interviews is assumed here to be “an empirical reality in which those words exist as brute data independent of the interpretive desires of the data ‘collector’” (St Pierre, & Jackson, 2014, p.716, emphasis in original). I left this idea behind them since not only was it not a ‘perfect fit’ but it raised more problems.

7.3.3 Narrative interviews.

I moved on to reimagining the interviews in a narrative frame. Narrative research has been merged with ethnographic approaches before (see Agalias et al., 2015). I saw the potential to escape the problems of accessing the ‘real’ in a naive sense but as produced, performed, and constituting. Poststructuralist informed narrative approaches showed how looking at the stories told by interviewers can focus on *what* stories *can* be told within discourse (Gibson & McLeod, 2014). These approaches did not capture the productive elements of the interview as a discursive practice itself.

I have discussed the productivity of the research interview previously (see Chapter Four). To repeat a point that is relevant to the current discussion, when interviewing is viewed as a discursive practice then what is produced, in terms of what one can say, necessarily implicates examining *how* interviews are enacted. I do not mean this in terms of the way speakers take turns, producing a ‘truth’ through their interaction (see Gubrium & Holstein, 2016 ‘active interview’ for an example of this type of ‘critical’ approach to interviewing). Rather, I mean how the interview is always already dragging certain assumptions into the research situation, and this, along with institutionalised practices (doing knowledge work), broader discourses about the role of interviewing (‘interview society’), and the spaces where interviews take place, intersect (with their various apparatuses) to produce truth, subjects, and objects.

As discursive practices interviews can produce certain types of subjects, potentially shutting down possibilities for being otherwise. Interviewing can be individualising by establishing the research participant as an ‘individual’, and often, this means as a pre-discursive subject (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017). The trouble here is that interviews reproduce a ‘psychological’ subject. The interview (in an interview society) encourages people to

‘confess’ their inner selves, experiences and meaning-making processes. These confessional practices are often psy-complexified (Parker, 2015). Interviewing is incoherent in a Foucauldian-inspired study because Foucault (2002) himself was trying to avoid the ‘psychological’ and it tends to lead the research to focus on the ‘individual’ instead of the practices that make that ‘individuality’ possible.

7.3.4 Problematising interviews.

Can we interview a person without individualising or psychologising them, the issue, ourselves? This was the main concern I had with the final, and most promising, ‘experiment’: ‘problematising interviews’. Following the work of Laing (2008), these interviews were trying to challenge the dominant discourses of ES by bringing the taken-for-granted assumptions to the fore. The task was to politicise the conversations; moving them away from the description of opinions and practices to the co-troubling of taken-for-granted assumptions of practices in these ES spaces. In this way, dominant discourses about unemploy(ed)ment in this sector should be exposed, unpacked, and unsettled. Problematising interviews would be less ‘excavating’ people’s experiences or reframing issues and more like a discourse analysis in situ (Parker, 2005). The most exciting aspect of these reimagined interviews was, for me, the potential to use the interview to be (not uncover or find) subversive.

But again, just like with the ‘conversations’ and the ‘narratives’ there was an unscalable barrier to enacting interviews that cohered (meta)theoretically with my frame-of-reference. Take this interview excerpt as an example. At this point the ‘participant’ (Saroo) is explaining the new Service Delivery Plan[21] (SDP) as a ‘hard mattress’ or and the researcher (Rose) is presents an alternative understanding of the ‘problem’ of the ‘depressed’ job seeker:

> SAROO People were used to that (.) they were used to the fact that “ I am depressed I have a problem I’ll go to Salvation [Army] and seek counselling for the next three years (.) it’s like a soft bed if you are used to a soft bed you can only sleep on a soft bed and if you are used to sleeping on a hard mattress you can sleep on a hard mattress it’s very much like that (.) so *jobactive* is very much like a firm if you have got bad back get yourself a hard mattress (ah huh) just fix it (ah huh) can you

[21] GROUP, that removed individualised case management, or heart to heart conversations, see chapter six for more detail)

> excuse me for a moment *speaks to job seeker in the hallway* *turns back to Rose*
> yep *starts typing*
> ROSE, because that is interesting though, because the psychological literature on unemployment (yes) they talk it in terms of the effects of unemployment has on people and it kind of the longer you are unemployed the kind of worse that it is for you (.) and so do you think you should not not have those feeling those heart to heart conversations with that sort of information in mind? (Saroo, LEC, second interview, NS1)

There is the problem I have already mentioned, but also, there is the issue that problematising interviews might not present opportunities to enact 'critique'. Instead, problematising interviews may trouble dominant discourses by drawing on another dominant discourse that may be just as troubling. The position that the 'depressed' unemployed need a 'hard mattress' (as opposed to counselling) is 'countered' and problematised by psy-complexifying unemployment as something that gets 'worse' without interpersonal 'intervention'. Such discourses intersected over and over again in the research interviews. The problem of the unemployed are 'spoken' 'truthfully' within activation and work-first discourses. These practices are re-problematised with references to unemployment causes mental health troubles, depression and the like. As in the above transcript, psychologised discourses are used to push against the dominant discourses in ES but these discursive practices are also highly problematic. There were no discourses 'crossing swords' (Tanggaard, 2007) as in other research. The unemployed are constituted as unmotivated, dependent, or depressed.

I do not want to suggest that the interview was done poorly or that the 'problematising' element could be improved. What I would like to draw attention to is how the topic under discussion is constituted in the 'event' of the interview, the research, as well as the spaces where the interview occurred (Gannon & Davies, 2007). The interview constructs the 'condition of possibility' for research participants. So, stepping outside of the dominant discourses (activation; work first; unemployed have poor subjective wellbeing) is harder to enact in situ because discourses are so entrenched. But in a research study that is trying to challenge the psy-complex, the difficulty in trying to refuse to understand the unemployed as passive, lazy, cheating or as 'depressed' or 'anxious' (at least not in the dominant psychologised constructions) meant I often challenged the notion of the 'lazy jobseeker' with the 'depressed job seeker'. By 'problematising' the unemployed as

‘depressed’ (psy pathology) the interview (re)produced unemployment as a psychological issue.

The three thought experiments exposed several issues with enacting interviews that all, in turn, present challenges for warranting research claims. How do you cohere a research approach that (meta)theoretically challenges the individualising (especially assuming a pre-discursive subject), psychologising, generating evidence or accessing the ‘real’ (instead of researching discourses) with interviewing practices that either relies on these assumptions to make sense as a research technique or has these effects when enacted? I suggest that this question is larger than the scope of my PhD, and so is an issue for further investigation. I also think it is important because our research practices have political implications. That is, following some of the discussions in ontological politics (Mol, 1999) and 2005) the importance of thinking about our research practices is interlinked with what is produced by our research. I discuss these concerns about the political implications on how research is enacted in the following section by looking closely as the ‘insider/outside’ concern of much ethnographic research. This conversation is related to the concern of how to warrant research claims because it raises the problem of how to ‘select’ participants as well as how to engage in research interviews as an ‘insider’ or an ‘outsider’.

7.4 Making participants visible as an ‘insider’ and political implications.

I have discussed the subjectification effects of interviewing as part of a critique of doing interviews in different parts throughout this thesis. In the methodology chapter, I discussed subjectification effects as part of the reasoning for using post-structural interview analysis. Above, I discussed the subjectification effects as a problem for warranting interviews. In this section, I extend this discussion about the subjectification of interview practices by attending to the types of subject positions that are made available through enacting interviews in an ‘ethnographic imagination’. The problem of the ‘insider/outsider’ that is often a part of reflexivity in an ethnographic study here provides an avenue for demonstrating how enacting interviews is not only tricky to cohere (meta)theoretically but also has political implications.

7.4.1 Participating as ‘employment consultants’: making up participants

Before I discuss the ‘insider/outsider’ problem, I will discuss ‘who’ the ‘insider’ is produced to be. The participants were to be employment consultants of an employment service

provider. Identifying the workers as interviewees subjectifies participants as certain types of subject. Firstly, as Foley (2012) noted, “to conduct particular kinds of research...researchers must imagine a certain type of respondent” (p. 305). I assumed that workers could and would discuss their daily work practices. Secondly, and more importantly, by selecting the workers’ as participants, I marked them out as ‘employment consultants' and nothing else. Fadyl and Nicholls (2013) suggested an interview is a discursive event wherein power, both productive and capillary, individualises subjects by identifying them as an individual subject. Thus, designing and conducting interviews, “imposes a law of truth on him [sic] which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him [sic]” (Foucault, 2003c, p 130). Fadyl and Nicholls argued that using sampling to locate participants makes them ‘visible’ hence marking them out as a particular subject. Workers in ES do governing-work and are governed as workers (as is discussed in Chapter Six about the changes to the SDP). There is minimal if any scope in the interview event to talk about oneself and one’s work outside of the parameters, of the research and perhaps even more so since the interviews were done in the workspace. Participants could only ‘take up’ the position of some kind of ‘employment consultant’.

By limiting the potential for ‘being otherwise’ (or other than a ‘kind of ‘employment consultant) may have limited the critical potential of the research. Looking back out research practices with a reflexive lens highlights how the enactment of research may not cohere (meta)theoretically but also raises other questions. In establishing the research purpose with employment consultants (and following procedures like providing information sheets and gaining informed written or verbal consent), I would, at times, identify myself as ‘one of you’ because I worked in ES previously. Therefore, I presented myself as both an ‘outsider’ (interviewer) and insider ([former] employment consultant). The building of rapport and trying to establish some credibility to encourage people to participate or answer questions in this way is occasionally considered an important researcher skill (Cresswell, 2007). I would often begin interviews this way to help create a comfortable atmosphere. Considering that the interviews mostly occurred in the openly planned workspace, this idea of creating a ‘comfortable atmosphere’ depoliticises the interview location, ignoring the power relations and how they are, “produced, reproduced, and challenged continuously during the interview process” (Herzog, 2012, p. 216). These relations extend to the interview location and what it is ‘safe’ to say about work practices in an open plan office where colleagues, superiors and jobseekers are potentially within

hearing distance[22]. Where the interviews occurred then curtailed what subject positions were available through the interview event. The institutional and discursive practices that produced the space, and how bodies moved through it, were a part of what was 'sayable' in the interview event'. In this way, the knowledge produced through interviews is partial and situated but also political.

The spaces of ES are political and contested. Beyond what it is 'safe' to say about work practices, as I discussed in Chapter Six, the design of the office space established what practices were allowable for job seekers *and* workers. The interview event is wedged into these practices during the research, forming part of the discursive practices, like socio spatial/temporal arrangements, that produce subjectivities. The provider offices were open-planned but also local and bounded. Since space is "fundamental in any exercise of power" (Foucault, 1982, p. 361), we can look to how practices that establish, maintain, or transgress boundaries contribute to what workers can do *as* workers and then what can be said in interviews. I'll draw on some fieldnotes from NS2 to explicate this point,

> I arrived by bus at NS2 at about 0820. The bus stop is just around the corner from the front of the office. As the bus rode over the last hill and the office came into view, I could see about 10 or so people hanging out the front of the office. This struck me as strange. I was early since I wanted to try and get into the office prior to the door officially 'opening' to see if I could be part of the 'heads up'- the part of the day where the workers organise their day and communicate with other sites about problems, possibilities for future practice and other organisational concerns. The front doors were locked. I waited with everyone else. Though it was early in the morning the summer sun was already starting to become unbearable. The doors should be opened at 0830 and it was 0840 and the doors were still locked. I walked around the front where some of the jobseekers were waiting. It's 0845 and one guy is knocking on the door, trying to peer through - its futile since the glass is reflective. I stand next to him to see if there are any messages on the door alerting us here waiting about possible delay; there is none and I say as much. Without looking at me he remarks, "we should dock their pay since they are late". The doors open at 0850. No explanation was given to the group. Shay pulls me aside later to tell me they [workers] had to lock the doors because they had some kind of staff training on and no one could be spared to monitor the floor had they opened on time. (Fieldnotes, NS2, 2015, December 9).

[22] Participants were alerted to this aspect of the interviews before starting, and occasionally a more 'private' space in the office was available for our recorded discussions. I go through these practices in more detail in Chapter five.

Once those front doors of the office (described above) were opened, we cross a boundary into a space where workers have some authority to enact policy and procedures. The suggestion that workers should have their pay 'docked' for opening the doors late references a change made to the *Social Security Act* (1992) where jobseekers can temporarily lose part of their pay for not coming to an appointment on time (the Non-Attendance Report, Commonwealth of Australia, 2014; also see Chapter Two). Turning this idea on its head, the jobseeker remarks signify a disparity in who gets to define, organise and monitor the use of time in these spaces. Shay pulling me aside to provide more details about why the workers did not open the office on time could be presented as an example of the 'insider' performance 'working'. Getting those extra details adds nuance to analysis by illuminating how organisation practices and priorities impact the workers' ability to enact policy, or use discretion to resist or rework these practices (Van Berkel, 2013). The governing of the unemployed and the governing of the workers are entangled processes in these provider offices.

This does not suggest that the distribution of 'being governed' are shared equally (Rasmussen, 2013). There are differences in who is taken seriously and who is placed at the centre of practices of reformation according to: the provider's organisational hierarchy; between jobseekers and workers; and between the provider other organisational bodies**.** The practices of 'governing at a distance' and 'at close range' overlap (Carter, 2016) in these spaces where institutional, policy, legislative, and vocational concerns converge. While interviewing practices 'make up' possible subject positions, the 'insider/outside' component of ethnography-as-usual, has the potential to subvert the usual 'stories' of work place practices or reinscribe them. I continue with the line of inquiry in the section below.

7.4.2 'Working the hyphen' participant-employment consultant-interviewer

It is tempting here to claim that having a prior understanding of the research spaces from a (former) 'insider' perspective was beneficial for the research because I have 'experience' doing this work. Alternatively, to claim 'insider' status may immediately assume there is an opposite 'outsider' status and it may be implied that this outsider status may hold more validity since as an 'insider' the researcher may be blind or unwilling to document certain practices (Creswell, 2013). Thus the 'outsider' position is more objective while the 'insider' position is embedded within a situation (McNess, Arthur, Crossley, 2016). Maintaining such a dichotomy is uncomfortable in poststructuralist research since subjectivities are seen as fluid, fragmented, incomplete, contradictory, and open to transformation.

Nevertheless, Cairns (2013) asserted the ‘insider/outsider’ status is interesting regarding what counts as ‘insider’, ‘outsider’, what knowledge is linked to these divisions, and how such practices impact participants. Here I focus on “working the hyphen” (Fine, 1994) trying to blur the distinction between the self-other by writing ‘myself’ into the research reflexively as an interviewer- employment consultant Shay was discussing. I argue ‘insider status’ helped to co-construct certain stories about the governing work of ES and the possibility of worker subjectivities therein.

For example, the below transcript excerpt could be positioned as demonstrating the rapport building and story sharing practices of an interview. Both interviewer (Rose) and Interviewee (Shay) were exchanging their shared experiences of being overworked in an understaffed workplace. Shay was discussing how the workers rescheduled their work day in order to finish their work tasks because “in the past we’re so under staffed that you just don’t get the resulting done” and then I soon interrupt her,

> ROSE: yeah sorry I’m having those little flashbacks of when I used to work in this industry *laughter* I remember then (.) when I first started I was they put me on like a trainer for the groups sessions (.) and I had to do that and I had to write the job search because I was doing (.) oh (.) one on ones (.) two different kinds of training sessions (.) and the job search so I was doing two people’s jobs because they only put on one casual (oh my gosh) as you do (1) and it was like only for a very short period of time and I was like (yeah) whatever I need the work (.) and I remember getting there at 8 to try and get everything set up in time like I’d have to go through and get all the training manuals ready (.) make sure that you sent out the text reminders (.) and all of those sorts of things (2) and I remember that I didn’t eat lunch (.) and I lost so much weight (.) I didn’t eat much *laughter* trying to get through (.) and it was things it was the resulting that took forever (.) and I remember I was the second last person to leave every day
> SHAY: yeah yeah it doesn't because you have to work
> ROSE: you have to ring (.) yeah
> SHAY: and um=
> ROSE: =if people don’t come (Shay, second interview, NS2)

Moving away from ‘who’ is speaking to ‘what’ is said shifts focus of analysis on to ‘how’ what is said was possible. This relates both to how the ‘things said’ are constituted within discursive practices that function in certain ways and the practices of research interviews (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017). Moreover, of course, that the subjects of policy are located the subject who are embedded within, constituted by, and enact policy and are not ‘just’

wielders of policy (Gill, 2012). The interviewee is trying to find their footing in their changing workspaces, with a new service delivery model, under a new government contract, with the interviewer joining in and reflecting on past work practices. It highlights the underlying discursive practices of spatializing ES - and the related component of temporalising ES. Both of these are, at first, highlighted through employment consultant-participants (and the interviewer-employment consultant) 'describing' their work practices in the interview.

Regarding what is said, the interviewer and interviewee are sharing stories about being in a workspace that is understaffed and consequently being overworked. The problem of being understaffed in the text is constituted as overworking, measured against the time available in a single workday — for example, the measurement of time highlighted by the (lack of a) lunch break. Regarding what is linked to an 'insider's knowledge,' the interviewer lists various daily tasks: what it is like to run training sessions, one on one case management appointments, job search groups sessions, using the database programs (government database and independent programs), shared work and organisational knowledges. The interviewer shared their 'insider story' and thus reproduces the typical way of talking about work as an ES worker or at least a typical way as it is presented in the text as the interviewee expresses shared the sentiment. The 'employment consultant' here is constituted as a subject inundated with administrative processes, stressed, and overworked.

The reference to 'if people do not come' refers to the practice of 'resulting'. Here, the diary of scheduled appointments (one on one, group training, group job search) requires a 'result' entered into the government database program by the close of each working day (Department of Employment, 2015a). If a job seeker does not attend an appointment, the employment consultant must make contact to find the reason for non-attendance - or at least attempt to make contact. Hence, the agreement between the interviewer and interviewee that it takes a long time to complete this process before the end of the working day. In the above transcript, the job seekers are briefly referred to, "if people do not come". In one quick reading, then it seems the transcript does not include discussion about the unemployed. However, job seekers are still always present as the implicit 'other'. There are no training programs without attendees; there is no 'appointment' if there is no jobseeker sitting on the other side of the desk. While the organisational practices of understaffing offices are put forward as a cause for the problem of being overworked, the

job seeker is also, implicitly, connected. While ‘resulting’ may seem like a simple (and annoying) administrative procedure there are nevertheless lived effects for job seekers (as discussed in Chapter Six). Simple office procedures then are entangled with policy and legislation and have consequences for people’s lives.

The sharing of ‘insider’ stories could be positioned as opening up the discussion of how the workers feel in these situations. However, such a move is political because it might naturalise the practices being discussed and the subjectivities being constituted within. Discussing the stress of having to say behind to ‘result’ the diary could be discussed without considering the wider policy implications for the unemployed, as mentioned above. Additionally, while the ‘insider’ status helped to co-construct stories about ‘what it is like’ to ‘be’ an employment consultant’ at times the ‘interviewer-employment consultant’ ‘problematised’ the *jobactive* contract. However, it seems that these attempts to draw out the taken for granted assumptions of the current ES model was a reproduction of the key components of the Job Services Australia contract.

The ‘ínsider/outsider’ practice is situated within the broader discursive practices that constituted (and are constituted by) ES. Although much of what is said in interviews is nothing more than what was expected or at least did not appear to be anything ‘new’, beyond common sense. The (re)production of common knowledge is illuminating since “both the interviewer and interviewee are produced within the discursive practices that make possible these things said” (Bonham & Bacchi, 2017, p. 8). In other words, the process of doing interviews has political implications for the types of subject positions available and the type of ‘knowledge’ produced.

7.5 Concluding comments

Proponents of the ‘ontological turn’ attest this approach to research “moves us past unresolvable epistemological battles” (Bacchi, 2012, p. 150; see also Law & Urry, 2004), and instead focus on the political implications of the research. In this chapter, I have used a reflexive lens to highlight some of the challenges, shortcomings and omissions that speak to how research is practised with what effects. My research was not ‘action’ oriented, but it is nevertheless still doing something since, as we know from the power-knowledge nexus, research produces knowledge about our world, who we are and how we are able to think about ourselves. I agree with Bacchi (2012) that turning to ontological politics does not upend the point of research. It does not leave us in a relativist void where

no knowledge production is ‘useful’. Instead, it demands that we pay *more* attention to our practices, especially in light of institutional pressures and expectations to think about “the realities [researchers] create and to assess the political fallout accompanying those realities” (p. 152). ‘Ideas’, ‘concepts’ and ‘knowledges’ intervene in the world in terms of practices, but can they interfere? As Deleuze and Guattari (1988) explained, we can use concepts like bricks, either to build a wall or to smash a window. The challenge that I have tried to take up in my thesis as a whole, but especially in this chapter, is this very problem of the ‘brick’. Specifically, critical psychological researchers need to think carefully about *how* we produce knowledge lest we unwittingly reinscribe a (meta)theoretical position that we wanted to contest. We (may) end up helping to build the wall.

In this chapter, I have outlined the methodological tension that exists in my research between the assumptions of interviewing practices, the need to do ‘knowledge work’ and my critical frame-of-reference. I have expanded on how this tension has not only epistemic implications but also political ones. This is a key point that I think, as I have discussed repeatedly in my thesis, that governmentality researchers have missed when they advocate for ‘ethnographic imagination’. That is, by refusing to interrogate research practices *as* methodology and/or method they could be depoliticising their research practices, even making room for other problems (modernist, pre-discursive subject; post-positivism, and so forth) to creep in through the back door. I agree with Rönnblum (2012) that we cannot do everything, and so some positions are prioritised, and others neglected. The question is, which positions do we prioritise and which ones do we, regrettably, leave aside?

This question is further complicated in a neoliberal knowledge economy. Neoliberalism has infiltrated and reshaped institutionalised knowledge production such that economic outcomes (like ‘innovation’) are prioritised over social outcomes (Kontos & Grigorovich, 2018). Research practices like constructing research questions/hypotheses and selection of methods are also influenced by these changes. As Rossiter and Robertson (2014) suggest, scientific knowledge production that focuses on making predictions, measuring data and producing findings applicable for industry, government or commercial interests marginalises “curiosity-driven research” (p. 198).

Doing critical research in such institutionalised spaces is challenging and sometimes almost impossible. However, I think part of the resistance against the neoliberalised

knowledge production is being creative with our methods and doing our best to refuse to accommodate for problematic research practices. If anything, I think the changing landscape of research requires to be more vigilant to the epistemic and political implications of our research. Method(ologie)s matter. In the next chapter, I summarise the key points of my thesis in relation to critical methodology and the subjectification of the unemployed (and workers) within an employment service provider under *jobactive.*

8 Chapter Eight: Thesis summary

The overarching aim of my PhD was to rethink the experience of 'unemployment' outside of dominant psychological and policy explanations. My thesis had three interlinked aims: to use critical psychological insights to rethink the problem of method in governmentality research; to explore how the unemployed are governed under *jobactive* and; to explore the epistemic, political, and ethical implications of my research. I utilised Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralism to make a critical reading of unemployment policy alongside analysis of quasi-ethnographic fieldwork. My research contributes to the conversation about how 'psy' knowledges are deployed to govern the unemployed in contemporary Australia. Unlike other governmentality research in this area, my research is situated within critical psychology. Consequently, I also attended to the strategic manner in which method was deployed within the research apparatus. In short, I wanted to present a critical psychological approach to researching unemployment that acted like inverted commas by (de)normalising the taken-for-granted assumptions about the problem of 'unemployment', the unemployed, and any proposed or implemented 'solutions'.

My thesis contributes to the literature by demonstrating how affective governmentality is enabled and constrained by policy, organisational priorities, material circumstances and technologies of 'heart' in one Employment Services provider (RESP). Secondly, my thesis contributes to critical methodology by highlighting how studying the governing of the unemployed is entangled with research practices. Even though I tried to distinguish my research from psy research on unemployment, the assumptions embedded within research methods, and how these methods were enacted and problematised in certain spaces, meant that the research maintained pervasive psy-complexified thinking that the unemployed are so because of some inner failing or deficiency. Analysing interviews in ways coherent with (meta)theoretical frameworks may not be enough; we need to attend to research micro-practices and rethink unemployment. A critical psychological perspective needs to move beyond psy-complexified research practices and discourses of distress, unemployment, or work-as-welfare.

8.1 Problematising psy-complexified research practices.

The main component of my thesis was to consider how it is possible to study the 'experience' of unemployment without (re)producing dominant discourses about the unemployed. As I discussed in Chapter One, following mainstream psychological research

was never an option; and there is very little explicit critical psychological empirical research on unemployment. Research that does take an explicit critical psychological approach is well done and presents important critical readings on how unemployment is produced through neoliberalism, particularly concentrated in Employment Services (ES). However, this research is not without its limitations. The research is either theoretical (Fryer & Stambe, 2014a, 2014b), in a non-Australian context (Cromby & Willis, 2014; Drewery, 1998; Frieldi & Stern, 2015), reproduces the pre-discursive subject (Walkerdine & Bansel, 2011), reproduces the psy-complex in terms of 'mental health' (Bluestein, Meldvide & Wan, 2012) or uses 'affects/emotions' to psychologise unemployment (Pultz, 2018).

I turned to governmentality studies to rethink unemployment and unemployed subjectivities. Previous research in this space has highlighted how the 'active society' manifests in policy to reduce the 'risk' of welfare dependency through pseudo-counselling governing strategies that aim to change the job seeker into an ideal affective subject (Brady, 2011; Dean, 1995; Dassinger, 2011; Howard et al., 2016; McDonald & Marston, 2005). More recent scholarship has focused on examining affective governing strategies and how 'activation' materialises on the front line (Penz et al., 2017; Glinser et al., 2018). However, although this research provides important critique of ES, it has its limitations. This research because it reproduced the pre-discursive through methods such as interviewing (Brady, 2011; Howard et al., 2016; McDonald & Marston, 2005) or does not interrogate psychological notions of 'emotions' or 'wellbeing' leaving these constructs 'self-evident' (Dassinger, 2011; Penz et al., 2017).

The productivity of research practices occupied much of my thinking during my thesis. I recognised that researching unemployment is not simply a matter of studying something 'out there' but how research is integral to how unemployment is objectified and 'truthed'. In this way, the psychological literature on unemployment produced unemployment as a problem of causality and 'subjective wellbeing' operationalised as psy-infused 'affects/emotions/feelings'. These same questions about how research practices produce subjects, objects, and spaces apply to 'critical research' including governmentality research.

As I discussed in Chapter Three, methodology has been a popular topic of debate in governmentality studies. The main argument against archival research in governmentality analysis is that it fails to capture the complexity of 'actual practices' of governing. I agreed

with these critiques and utilised Brady's (2014, 2016) 'ethnographic imagination' as a way forward. However, while the 'imaginary' approach was useful, it also presented difficulties for writing up and justifying research practices *because* it was not a method or methodology. I concluded that contemporary governmentality studies, which claim to present potential new pathways to study the 'messiness' of actual practices by relying on social science research, (re)inscribed problematic notions of the 'self'. I departed from these researchers in two ways. Firstly, I used the 'apparatus' to provide a 'theory of method' to join 'thinking ethnographically' with 'thinking with governmentality', thus 'plugging in' to the Foucault-machine (see Chapter Four). Secondly, I returned to the power-knowledge nexus to consider how research practices are an 'event' that is subjectifying and productive. I addressed the issue of the pre-discursive subject by using Poststructural Interview Analysis (PIA, Bonham & Bacchi, 2017, for outline see Chapter Five). In this way I designed a study for a critical psychological approach to unemployment that looks to research the unevenness of governing practices and how policy is enacted in the spaces of employment services while also critiquing research practices.

8.2 Enacting Foucauldian-inspired research practices and the problem of pervasive thinking.

All research has epistemic, ethical and political implications regardless of whether these processes are made explicit. As I discussed in Chapter Three, the discussions about researching 'actual practices' saw sociological and specifically, streel-level organisation research influence methodology in governmentality studies (for example, Brady 2011; Lippert & Stenson, 2010; Marston et al., 2019). Despite the sophisticated scholarship of researchers merging social science fieldwork with Foucauldian-inspired poststructuralism (see especially Brady & Lippert, 2016), there was a lack of critical theorising at the level of enacting research. Accordingly, there is a need to look at the politics of how research is *done* when researching governing practices and with what implications. This way, my research extends the debates in governmentality studies about the merits of doing social science fieldwork to research governing practices by demonstrating how uncritical enactment of methods can lead to unwittingly endorsing taken-for-granted assumptions (like the pre-discursive subject or psy-complexified knowledges). I contend that these methodological issues need to be tackled head-on, despite the contradictions and challenges.

Coming from critical psychology, I critique psychological methods, particularly in relation to unemployment, by considering how they produce 'unemployment' as an object of concern (Parker, 2005b). To be consistent, I also examined my research practices with the same scrutiny. As discussed in Chapter Seven; I completed three 'thought-experiments' to try and revise the interviews to make them cohere with a Foucauldian approach. That is, I wanted to find a way to enact research practices as a Foucauldian-informed practice. In Chapter Seven, I talked about how interviewing behaviours can be broken down to components that have 'conceptual baggage' attached and which, if not studied carefully, can undermine the (meta)theoretical coherence of the research.

I focused on the problem of enacting interviews in my research because it is a research technique that at first glance seem not to cohere with poststructuralist researcher, especially the Rogerian-type 'receptive style' to interviewing that are dominant in psychology research and that are usually considered to be 'self-evident' (Brinkmann, 2015). Such practices underpinned my initial training in qualitative research practices as a psychology undergraduate. I tried three attempts to interview differently in order to enact Foucauldian-informed fieldwork. I called these attempts 'thought experiments' because none replaced the 'receptive' style of interviewing in practice and accordingly, all incorporated elements of post-positivism and psy-complexified understandings about the self. I could not distinguish my research practices from the taken-for-granted qualitative practices in the social sciences or psychology and so in Chapter Five I described the research interviews in a way consistent with a mainstream qualitative research project.

I also discussed ethical and political implications of my research, in doing 'usual' ethnographic practices of building rapport and moving between 'insider' and 'outsider' subject positions, certain subjects and objects were produced. Notably, these productions are political because they leave out essential aspects of ES – the enforcement of conditionality via financial penalties (see Chapter Two for discussion about punitive activation). In PIA, Bonham and Bacchi (2017) encourage researchers to think about how pervasive thinking is (re)produced or challenged through interviewing practices (i.e. questions asked) but here I would add that other 'basic' practices are also in need of reflexive examination.

In the example I discuss above, 'I' as an 'interviewer-employment consultant' and the participant problematised the work practices of 'resulting' job seeker non-attendance in

terms of workload and paid work time. Analysis could and should highlight the ‘other’ of the interview exchange and what this means, especially since the unspoken effect of ‘resulting’ was potentially suspending a job seeker's income creating (more) financial hardship. However, linking to the epistemic implications of doing a Foucauldian-inspired project, the actual practices of interviewing, of ‘asking questions’, ‘probing’, ‘summarising’ and so forth, did not challenge pervasive thinking about unemployment. The importance of thinking through pervasive thinking can highlight the ontological politics and impact of our research. That is, how does our research intervene in the world (Mol, 1999)? Problematising and therefore also (re)producing objects of thought? In my research the practices of building rapport by sharing work experiences (re)produced dominant discourses about unemployment.

I did try to ‘problematise’ dominant discourses in my research though. I tried to challenge the authoritarian governmentality and the ‘work-first’ discourses that situated the unemployed as best served by being ‘pushed’ into paid employment. Bonham and Bacchi (2017) suggest interviewing are still a useful for poststructuralist researchers because of the multiplicity of power relations and the fluidity of subjectivity means there is always the potential for transformation. I think the potential was not accessed in my interviewing. In moments where I did problematise dominant practices, or interviewees challenged the work-first practices of the new service delivery plan (SDP), psychological discourses were deployed that sustained pervasive thinking about the problem of unemployment.

Pervasive thinking in ES positions the unemployed as the solution to unemployment because the unemployed are faulty citizens who have failed to embody neoliberalism via ‘job readiness’. This pervasive thinking is perpetuated through the enactment of research practices via the guise of challenging authoritarian governing and work-first practices. The unemployed are assumed to be in ‘need’ of ‘help’ to be ‘active’ and ‘enthusiastic’, ‘keen’, ‘motivated’, and ‘resilient’. By contesting work-first discourses in this way psychologised knowledges inevitably are invoked because in these spaces psy-complexified knowledges inform who needs ‘help’, if they can be ‘helped’, and how to do the ‘helping’. As I will go on to discuss below, the reliance of psychologised discourses to make sense of ‘how best to govern’ the unemployed maintains the dominant problematisation of unemployment.

8.3 Authoritarian governmentality, affective governing and work-as-welfare.

Poststructuralist research looks for practices of resistance and openings for possible escape (Foucault, 2003a). The problematisation of work-first practices through the enactment of interviewing techniques (re)psychologised unemployment and positioned the unemployed as 'needing help' in confessional-type case management practices and the pastoral/emotional labour of affective governing.

Psychological notions of unemployment may be deployed as a tactic to contest the problematic practices within employment services. However, from a critical psychological perspective, this strategy, albeit sometimes useful (Fryer, 2012), is also 'dangerous' (Foucault, 2003e). It is 'dangerous' because it provides a different set of governing practices that subjectify people in certain 'psychological', 'individual' and 'normalised' ways (Rose, 1996). Crucially, individualising/psychologising unemployment makes invisible the other possible ways of understanding (and thereby 'experiencing') unemployment.

In my research, I focused on the latest iteration of employment services, *jobactive*, to research the conditions of possibility in which unemployment can be 'experienced'. I focused on employment services because it is a space where a person is identified as 'unemployed' and governed accordingly. In my thesis, I claim that the latest iteration of employment continues to prioritise economic participation of citizens, equating welfare with work. *Jobactive* was a key moment in how punitive activation is coupled with changes in policy practices to increase opportunities to penalise job seekers. These changes are all part of a 'work-first' discourse and such discourses impacted contractual arrangements, policy objectives and legal processes.

These elements of the *jobactive* apparatus also influenced activation processes within RESP, alongside other elements that create nuanced governing practices, including affective governing. Such elements include the arrangement of workspaces, forms and checklists, training materials, workspace decorations, affective rules and organisational priorities. My research traced these elements and provided an account where the SDP (de)constituted the emotional unemployed subject by rendering unemployment a technical problem.

The restructuring of the SDP into group case management (GROUP) that renders unemployment technical should, it was argued, counteract the ‘problematic’ aspects of individual case management. Specifically, it was claimed ‘heart to heart’ conversations were outside workers’ expertise, the conversations wasted time, and these interactions encouraged job seekers to ’confess’ instead of job search. Therefore, in the spaces of RESP individualised case management deactivated jobseekers. The ‘welfare state’ and individualised case management were both sidelined as producing the wrong type of ‘unemployed subject’: the ‘passive’, overly emotional and despairing unemployed.

As a technical problem unemployment is ‘easier’ to govern, minimising the ‘need’ for potentially time and resource-intensive individual case management for easy ‘tasks’ that can be ‘ticked off’ to ‘progress’ job seekers. Provider governing practices are partly shaped by organisational priorities, and financial incentives that reward certain practices and make others less financially viable, let alone profitable. Accordingly, I suggest that RESP was activated by policy to (de)constitute the emotional unemployed subject to improve efficiency by removing the complexities job seekers bring into a providers’ office space. It also highlights that where contractual obligations and organisational priorities merge, RESP can be said to have opened the conditions of existence for authoritarian governmentality.

My research contributes to this literature by showing how the ‘affective rules’ of this governing work are part of the problematisation of individual case management. In a point of difference to the affective governing research, I paid more attention to the psy-complexified discourses that underpin ‘emotion’. I followed D’Aoust (2013) by focusing on ‘emotion’ as a technology, and in this way, my research illuminates how psy-infused knowledges inform, activate, and sustain the ‘deficient’ unemployed subject.

I considered the possibility that psychological discourses could disrupt work-first discourses in RESP. As Bonham and Bacchi (2017) point out, analyses are always political and the readings that are presented diminish other possible interpretations. In the transcripts, there was a possible reading that the workers problematised work-first discourses by drawing on psychologised discourses. Interviewees discussed trying to introduce the ‘heart’ technologies through increasing participation via ‘career’ brainstorming exercises or lamenting the loss of affective governing strategies to diffuse anger. However, the psychologising of unemployment through emotions maintained the

individualisation of unemployment, albeit a more emotionally complex one than the SDP allows. Holding onto these assumed subjectivities, in essence, does not subvert the assumption that *jobactive*, and employment services, can 'solve' the 'problem' of 'unemployment'. I argue that this emphasis on needing affective governing strategies via 'heart' technologies maintains the assumption that economic participation is and should be the goal of a good, responsible citizen. More importantly, psychologising unemployment makes it hard to challenge activation policies because of the moral imperative to get people into work is justified on the idea that work is so important to our wellbeing that the end justifies the means.

Embedded within activation discourses is the idea that "the best form of welfare is a job" (Abbott, 2015). These 'work-first' discursive practices situate 'paid employment' as crucial to individual and social wellbeing by diminishing the responsibilities of the welfare state and the rights of citizens to access its services without the stigma of shame. Instead, these practices equate 'wellbeing' with work. Psy-complexified knowledges about the meaning of work and the integral role of work to maintain 'subjective wellbeing' (notably from the influential deprivation theory, Jahoda 1971) have become 'common sense' (see also Fryer, 2019). Paid employment takes on a moral aspect by being the institution where our 'mental health' is maintained and potentially improved. Such arguments were in the welfare review for helping the unemployed to work as part of 'mental illness' 'recovery', (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015c). Similarly, the idea of work-as-welfare is reproduced in research that 'documents' the detrimental consequences unemployment has on 'emotional wellbeing' (for example, Paul & Moser, 2009). Work becomes 'therapeutic', and ES take on a moral imperative, helping to reshape unemployed subjectivities so people are 'ready' to 'work' and 'get well' (or at least, not get worse, as was part of the original argument for using 'activities' to management the unemployed, see Cass, Gibson & Tito, 1988).

These moral discourses form part of the jobactive apparatus. The "urgent need" (Foucault, 1980a, p.194) to ensure citizens are participating in the labour market gets refashioned as a moral concern to encourage citizens to take responsibility for themselves. On the flipside of this argument, the 'passive welfare state', keeps people 'dependent' on welfare and is, therefore, "letting job seekers down" (Abbott, 2015) (see Chapter Two for discussion). Changing the contractual arrangements to ensure providers focus on results (over process) is challenging to contest since, to do so, could also contest the premise that quick

reemployment is good for the individual and society. As Sandle et al. (2018) stated, this ‘psycho-politics’ entangles labour market and ‘mental health’ to legitimise welfare policy and render ‘heath’ and financial security the responsibility of the individual. It is an individual’s responsibility regardless of state economic policy and regardless of the risks opened up by global reach of ‘casino capitalism’ (Strange, 2016).

8.4 Future outlook and final comments.

What is the role of a Foucauldian-inspired critical psychology approach to unemployment considering the punitive activation strategies in contemporary Australian employment services? I argue that a critical psychological approach to unemployment should go beyond understanding the distress of the unemployed as “symptoms of mental ill health” (Walker et al., 2014, p.55) and instead see the distress as constituted. I suggest research on unemployment should study “how inner processes are reshaped amid economic and political reforms, violence and social suffering” (Biehl, Good, & Kleinman, 2007, p.1).

In my thesis, I have discussed how unemployed policy has/is aiming to produce an ‘active society’ but at the same time has become increasing conditional. I have also attended to how policy activates providers to (re)shape how workers deploy activation strategies in their daily work. Namely, I attend to how affective governing are produced through interviews and observations and how these practices make certain subject positions available for workers and job seekers in certain ways; highlighting the consequences these practices have for people's lives.

The ‘experience’ of unemployment is partially constituted through the *jobactive* apparatus, the system of relations where the focus is on “becoming-other” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 164), encouraging people to behave as they ought. Psychologising unemployment maintains the assumption that the unemployed are the problem over and above any social, political, economic explanations. Punitive activation and affective governing strategies are oppressive insofar as the interventions that try to (re)shape the unemployed into the ideal neoliberal affective subject may be the actions of a “well-intentioned society” (Young, p. 272) but it also sustains disadvantage and suffering.

In his research, Mestan (2014) cited one former policy advisor who said sanctions are justified to compel job seekers to do what is ‘supposedly’ good for them. As I edit this final chapter, Parliament is debating whether to ‘help’ job seekers by implementing random

drug testing of job seekers (Henrique-Gomes, 2019) and expand the cashless welfare card trial, which quarantines part of a jobseeker's income so payments cannot be spent on buying goods like alcohol (Elton, 2019). Alongside these proposed changes is the latest outlook for *jobactive*. In the *I want to work: Employment Services 2020* report (Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2018a), recommendations for the future of ES include using big data to "recommend the best options and interventions and drive continuous learning about what works best and disseminate 'evidence-based tools' to assist providers to 'determine' "which interventions are likely to drive the best outcomes" (p. 53). Psychological research and interventions will no doubt form part of this evidence base as it has in the past (see Sage, 2013). There is no intention to remove mutual obligations or 'soften' the increasingly punitive activation practices. Any 'evidence-based practices', psychological or otherwise, will be tied to welfare conditionality, and therefore, also connected to discourses about citizenship, activation and economic participation.

A critical psychological approach should refuse to (re)produce these practices noted above. Including at the micro-level where psychological concepts, intervention, or assumptions about the 'self' are part of the machine-like apparatus that objectify unemployment as a problem of passive and faulty citizens. A part of this endeavour is moving past concepts like 'depression' and 'self-esteem', and as I have discussed, the 'affective turn' provides a way to think seriously about the distress of the unemployed. As it has been noted affective governing does not subjectify people homogeneously (Fortier, 2011; Wetherell, 2012). Such elements should be of serious consideration, like the way that these employment spaces are classed (Murphy et al., 2011), racialised (Montenegro & Montenegro, 2013), and gendered (Brady, 2011). Future research should explore these elements and how they intersect with emotions, affects and feelings to constitute how people can experience 'unemployment'. Future research should focus on specific emotions like 'depression' to detail how unemployment, as a fluid, social, historical, economic and political practice can 'feel' 'depressing' thus illuminating how our inner processes are in the state of 'becoming-other' from the institutional, political and social reforms and practices that constitute the lives we can live.

Crucially, as I have been explicating throughout this thesis, research practices are implicated in both describing and constituting these subjectivities. Gromm (2004) argued that since postmodernism refuses any normative basis for distinguishing knowledge as more or less true, then postmodernism has "no place…in a book on research methods" (p.

2). Indeed, some poststructuralist researchers will trouble research design, data collection, and methodology to the point that engaging with these practices becomes, at best, uncomfortable, and at worse leaves the researcher 'paralysed' (Bridges-Rhodes, 2015). I do not want to imply that we should do away with research altogether or embrace postpositivist practices, leaving poststructuralism behind. I suggest a critical psychological approach to unemployment must seriously revisit, rethink and revise research practices to try and think about unemployment in alternative ways.

My thesis demonstrates that to think differently about unemployment we need to repurpose and reinvigorate the research practices in our toolbox, like interviewing. There is the possibility for otherness, or a refusal to ‘repeat ourselves’ inherent in the production of the ‘subject’ through power relations (Butler, 1990) and the partiality and situatedness of research means the project will remain unfinished. It is for future research to explore new pathways for a critical psychological approach to unemployment. Whether these different research pathways follow the affective turn in trying to experiment with research methods outside of interviewing to capture emotions, affects and feelings (see discussion in Cromby, 2015; Wetherell, 2012), finds a way to enact a Foucauldian-informed research practice, or engage in ‘sleight of hand practices’ (Kontos & Grigorovich, 2018) to function within the entrepreneurial research agenda of modern academia but still retain a critical qualitative focus. I see this thesis as contributing to a small but important body of literature engaging in “hyper-and pessimistic activism” (Foucault, 2003f, p. 104); to challenge the reproduction of ‘unemployment’ and psy knowledges through research practices.

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10 Appendix A – ISSR Ethics Approval Letters

10.1 ISSR Ethics Approval number ISSR:22042015.EA06.

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Institute for Social Science Research

Director
Professor Mark Western BA(Hons) PhD FASSA
CRICOS PROVIDER NUMBER 00025B

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Rose-Marie Stambe
Institute for Social Science Research

Dear Rose,

The Institute for Social Science Research Higher Degree Ethical Review Committee has considered your revised application for your original ethics proposal for the project titled, "Becoming an unemployed person: Study 1, the actual practices of 'activation' of a Positive Psychology training program within a Job Services Australia organisation", number ISSR:22042015.EA06.

I am pleased to report that the panel has granted ethical approval to your revised proposal, with no further changes required.

We wish you all the very best with your research.

Please contact myself or Lisa Pope should you have any further queries.

Sincerely,

Professor Janeen Baxter
Chair, ISSR Ethical Review Panel

Institute for Social Science Research | The University of Queensland Brisbane QLD 4072 Australia | T +61 7 3346 7344 F + 61 7 3346 7646 | E issr@uq.edu.au W www.issr.uq.edu.au

10.2 ISSR Ethics Approval number ISSR:22042015.EA06.2

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Institute for Social Science Research

Director
Professor Mark Western BA(Hons) PhD FASSA
CRICOS PROVIDER NUMBER 00025B

Tuesday, September 08, 2015

Rose-Marie Stambe
Institute for Social Science Research

Dear Rose,

The Institute for Social Science Research Higher Degree Ethical Review Committee has considered your application for an amendment to your original ethics proposal for the project titled, "Becoming an unemployed person: Study 1, the actual practices of 'activation' of a Positive Psychology training program within a Job Services Australia organisation.", number ISSR:22042015.EA06.2.

I am pleased to inform you that this amendment has been approved with no further changes required.

We wish you all the very best for your research.

Please contact myself or Lisa Pope should you have any further queries.

Sincerely,

Professor Janeen Baxter
Chair, ISSR Ethical Review Panel

Institute for Social Science Research | The University of Queensland Brisbane QLD 4072 Australia | T +61 7 3346 7344 F + 61 7 3346 7646 | E issr@uq.edu.au W www.issr.uq.edu.au

10.3 ISSR Ethics Approval number ISSR:22042015.EA06.3

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Institute for Social Science Research

Director
Professor Mark Western BA(Hons) PhD FASSA
CRICOS PROVIDER NUMBER 00025B

November 30, 2015
Rose-Marie Stambe
Institute for Social Science Research

Dear Rose,

The Institute for Social Science Research Higher Degree Ethical Review Committee has considered your application for an amendment to your original ethics proposal for the project titled, "Becoming an unemployed person: Study 1, the actual practices of 'activation' of a Positive Psychology training program within a Job Services Australia organisation", number ISSR: ISSR:22042015.EA06.3.

I am pleased to inform you that this amendment has been approved with no further changes required.

We wish you all the very best for your research. Please contact myself or Lisa Pope should you have any further queries.

Sincerely,

Professor Janeen Baxter
Chair, ISSR Ethical Review Panel

Institute for Social Science Research The University of Queensland Brisbane QLD 4072 Australia
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11 Appendix B – Participant Information Sheet

Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR)
The University of Queensland
Brisbane Qld 4072 Australia
Telephone (07) 3346 7866
International +61 7 3346 7866
Facsimile (07) 3346 7646

Internet www.uq.edu.au/issr

Participant Information Sheet - Employee

Becoming an unemployed person: Study 1, ethnographic engagement within the Australian Employment services.

The purpose of this study

The purpose of this Research Higher Degree research is to study the day to day activities within an Employment Services provider. I am interested in having several short conversations about what you do as a part of your normal workday. A part of our conversation may involve me highlighting the parts of our conversations that have made assumptions about what unemployment is so that we can talk about what these assumptions are and perhaps think of alternatives to these.

With your permission I will audio-record our conversation. Audio-recording conversations allows me to go over the details of our conversation accurately which will assist in my analysis.

This study is being done as part of a Research Higher Degree at The University of Queensland under the supervision of Honorary Research Assoc. Prof. David Fryer, Dr. Ravinder Sidhu and Dr. Silke Meyer.

Participation and Withdrawal

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without prejudice or penalty. You do not need to provide reason for your withdrawal.

What is required?

Your participation involves having a conversation with myself broken up into 10 minute segments during the day. This will ensure our conversations do not disrupt your work routine. We can have the conversation in a quiet corner of your work space or use an unoccupied office. If you agree our conversation will be audio-recorded and once I have transcribed the interview the original recording will be deleted. I am the only person who will listen to the audio-recordings and do the transcribing. My advisory team will be reading some of the de-identified transcripts. When I transcribe I take out all identifying information and only de-identified transcripts will be used for reporting outcomes to ensure full confidentiality.

The research and your employment within Australian employment services

The research is an independent Research Higher Degree research project and is not affiliated with any Australian Employment Services provider. Your participation in the research or decision to withdraw from the research will have no impact on your relationship with your employer.

Risks

Participation in this study should involve no physical or mental discomfort, and no risks beyond those of everyday living.

Benefits

This research aims to broaden our understanding of Employment Services in Australia by questioning how unemployment is understood, governed, embodied and experienced within these spaces. Your contribution is a valuable component to understanding how the everyday practices of

workers in Employment Services are related to employment policy and broader societal assumptions about unemployment.

Confidentiality and security of data

All data collected in this study will be stored securely. Only the lead researcher will have access to identified data. All data will be coded in a de-identified manner and subsequently analysed and reported in such a way that responses will not be able to be linked to any individual. The data will be used for the specific research purposes of this study and could be re-visited by the researcher at a later date for further theoretical examination.

Access to results of the research

If you would like to have access to the results of this research a summary of key findings can be made available upon project completion. Please contact the researcher on the contact details at the bottom of this document to request a copy of the key findings after 30/8/2017.

Further Questions

If you have any further questions about the research the contact details of the researcher can be found at the end of this document.

Ethics Clearance and Contacts

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. Whilst you are free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (contactable on r.stambe@uq.edu.au), if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact Prof Janeen Baxter, the Chair of the Ethical Review Panel on 3346 9313

Principal Researcher

Rose-Marie Stambe
RHD Candidate
Institute for Social Science Research
The University of Queensland
r.stambe@uq.edu.au
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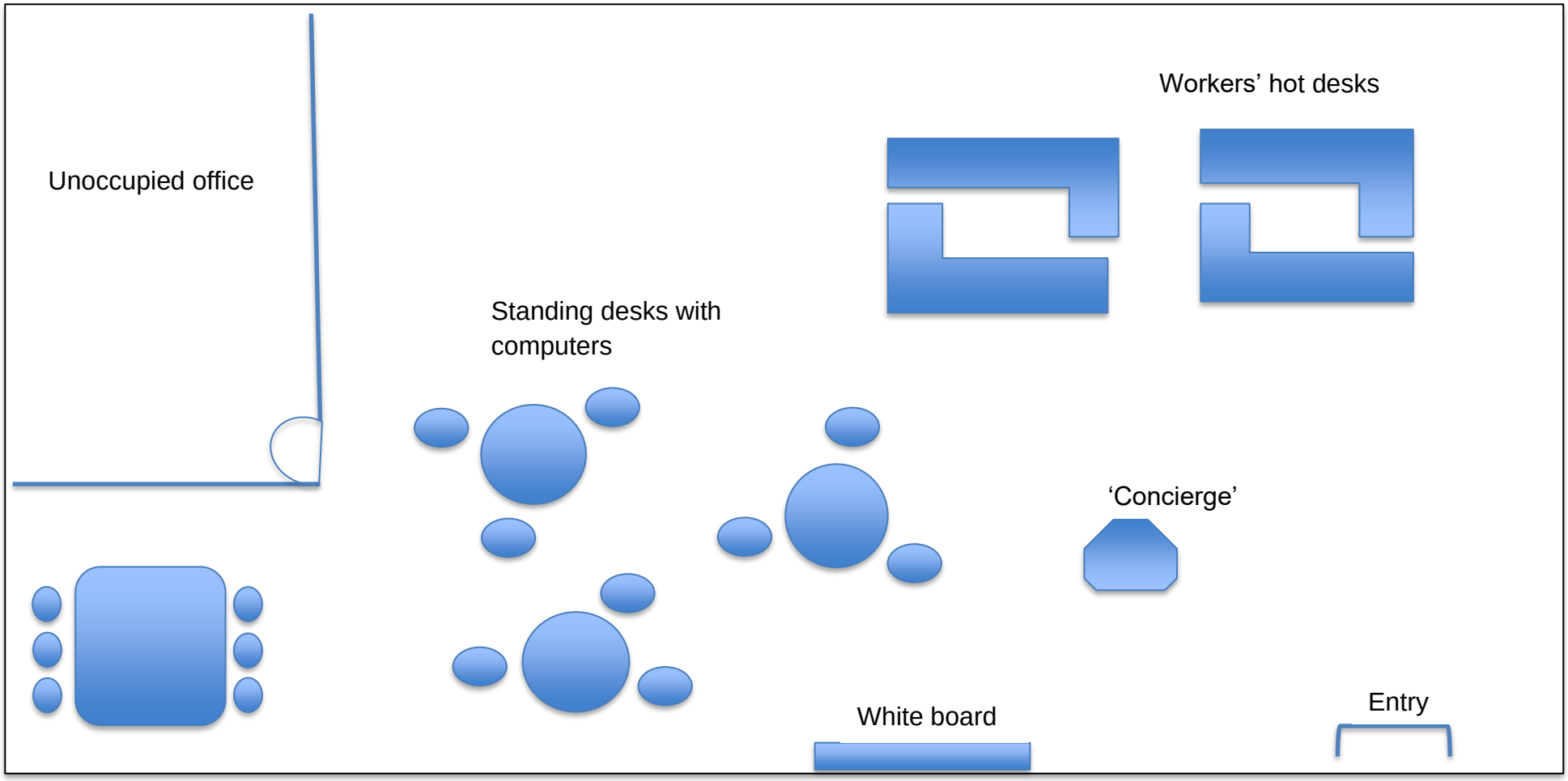
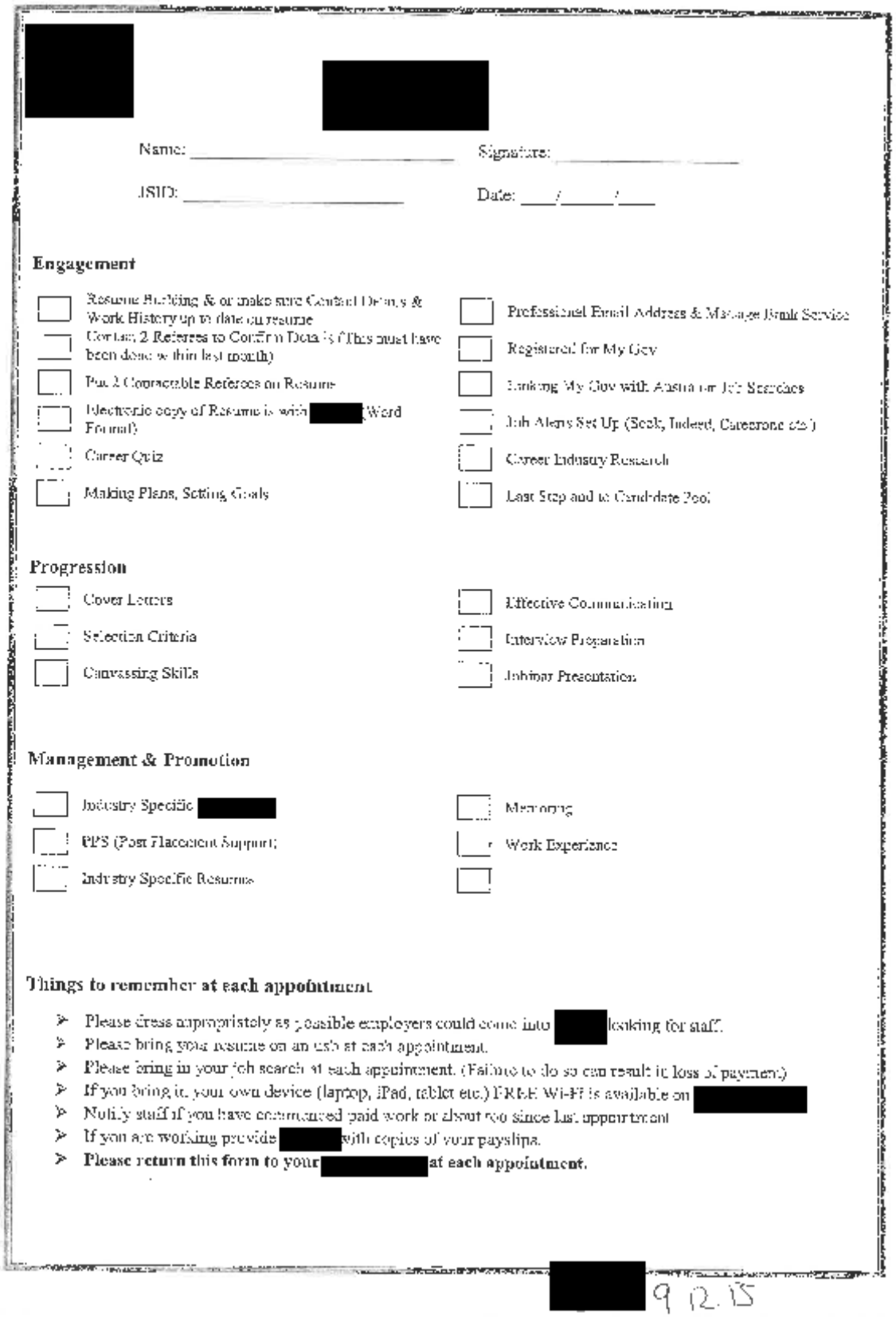
12 Appendix C – Office Plan for North Site 2 (NS2)



13 Appendix D – 'Candidate journey' for GROUP, redacted.



[redacted]

[redacted]

Name: _____ Signature: _____

JSID: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Engagement

- ☐ Resume Building & or make sure Contact Details & Work History up to date on resume
- ☐ Contact 2 Referees to Confirm Details (This must have been done within last month)
- ☐ Put 2 Contactable Referees on Resume
- ☐ Electronic copy of Resume is with [redacted] (Word Format)
- ☐ Career Quiz
- ☐ Making Plans, Setting Goals
- ☐ Professional Email Address & Message Bank Service
- ☐ Registered for My Gov
- ☐ Linking My Gov with Centrelink or Job Searches
- ☐ Job Alerts Set Up (Seek, Indeed, Careerone etc)
- ☐ Career Industry Research
- ☐ Last Step add to Candidate Pool

Progression

- ☐ Cover Letters
- ☐ Selection Criteria
- ☐ Canvassing Skills
- ☐ Effective Communications
- ☐ Interview Preparation
- ☐ Webinar Presentation

Management & Promotion

- ☐ Industry Specific [redacted]
- ☐ PPS (Post Placement Support)
- ☐ Industry Specific Resume
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Work Experience
- ☐

Things to remember at each appointment

- Please dress appropriately as possible employers could come into [redacted] looking for staff.
- Please bring your resume on an usb at each appointment.
- Please bring in your job search at each appointment. (Failure to do so can result in loss of payment)
- If you bring in your own device (laptop, iPad, tablet etc.) FREE Wi-Fi is available on [redacted]
- Notify staff if you have commenced paid work or about you since last appointment
- If you are working provide [redacted] with copies of your payslips.
- **Please return this form to your [redacted] at each appointment.**

[redacted] 9.12.15

14 Appendix E – Job Plan, redacted.

Australian Government

jobactive

Job Plan

I understand that my primary goal is to gain and maintain employment. I am aware that I have mutual obligation requirements that I must undertake in return for receiving income support payments. These include undertaking job search and/or other activities as specified in this plan that will assist me in finding and keeping a job, as well as attending appointments and accepting all offers of a suitable job. I am aware that if I can't attend my appointments, or activities, I must contact my provider (or the Department of Human Services, if I don't have a provider) before the appointment or activity is scheduled to occur.

I understand that if I don't comply with my mutual obligation requirements as set out in the items marked as compulsory below, my income support payments may be stopped or reduced.

Name:

CRN: **JSID:**

Mutual Obligation Requirements

I agree to attend [weekly; fortnightly; monthly appointments with [redacted] to discuss my job seeking progress and to review my Job Plan, if required. I will also provide Employer Contact Forms on each visit.	Compulsory
I agree to attend job interviews and do other preparatory activities as directed by my provider. I am aware that this may be in relation to any suitable work, not just work that I would like to do.	Compulsory

Provider Assistance

[redacted] will assist with the appropriate clothing for job seeker to attend job interviews and/or commencing employment with at the discretion of the Site Manager and Consultant.

Job Seeker's Statement

I have been given a copy of my Job Plan

I understand that I can have my Job Plan reviewed at any time to take into account changes in my circumstances and ways my provider will help me.

I understand that my Job Plan includes activities that I must do and appointments I must attend in order to receive income support payments under social security law. I understand that if I don't participate in the activities or attend the appointments listed in my Job Plan, my income support payment may be stopped or reduced.

I understand that my Job Plan may include activities that I have agreed to do (voluntary activities). I understand that my income support will not be affected if I do not participate in voluntary activities.

My provider has explained to me what they will be doing to support my search for work.

My provider has given me a copy of the *Service Guarantee* and the *Employment Services Code of Practice*.

It has been explained to me how my personal information and privacy will be protected.

Compulsory Plan Provider statement

Employment service provider's Statement

I confirm that I have explained the mutual obligation requirements in the Job Plan to [Job Seeker's Full Name]. We have agreed on the activities that [Job Seeker's First Name] will participate in, the appointments that [Job Seeker's First Name] will attend and the support that [employment services provider] will provide. I have also explained the consequences of failing to participate in agreed activities and appointments.

I have given [Job Seeker's First Name] a copy of the *Service Guarantee* and the *Employment Services Code of Practice* and have explained how the privacy of [Job Seeker's First Name]'s personal information will be protected.

I have given [Job Seeker's First Name] a copy of this Job Plan.

I confirm that I am engaged by [employment services provider] to deliver employment services under an arrangement with the Commonwealth. I have approved the terms of this Job Plan as a delegate of the Secretary of the Department under the *Social Security Act 1991*.

I was given access to an interpreter to assist in negotiating my Job Plan: Yes | No

Name:	**Provider Details:**
	Nortec Staffing Solutions
Signature:	**Signature:**
Date	**Date**

This Job Plan is an Employment Pathway Plan, for the purpose of the *Social Security Act 1991*.

Information You Need to Know

Under social security law, job seekers with mutual obligation requirements are generally required to enter into a Job Plan, demonstrate that they are actively looking for work and participate in activities that are designed to assist them into employment. This Job Plan is an Employment Pathway Plan for the purposes of the *Social Security Act 1991*.

Mutual obligation requirements means activity test or participation requirements under the *Social Security Act 1991*

It is important to note that you may not be paid income support if you don't enter into a Job Plan when required to do so.

Your Job Plan will include activities and appointments that you need to undertake to meet your mutual obligation requirements.

You must make every effort to find and maintain a job. If you are persistently non-compliant, refuse a suitable job, leave a suitable job or are dismissed from a job due to misconduct, you may lose your income support payments for up to eight weeks or 12 weeks for job seekers receiving relocation assistance.

Your payment may also be stopped or reduced if you do not attend a job interview as directed by your employment provider or if you attend a job interview but deliberately act in a way that results in a job offer not being made.

What should I do if I can't do the things I have agreed to?

You must let your employment provider (or the Department of Human Services, if you don't have a provider) know if you can't attend an appointment or participate in an activity for any reason. You must do this before the time of the appointment or activity. If you don't do this, your income support payments may be stopped or reduced, even if you had a good reason(s) for not attending.

If there are good reasons why you are unable to look for work, attend appointments or undertake the activities in your Job Plan, you must discuss these with your provider (or the Department of Human Services, if you don't have a provider).

What happens if I get some paid work?

If you or your partner has undertaken any paid work then you must tell the Department of Human Services about any income you or your partner have received, in the same fortnight you worked. This will help the Department of Human Services to make sure you are paid the correct amount of income support. If you are overpaid, you may need to pay the money back to the Department of Human Services.

What if I disagree with a decision that has been made?

If you disagree with a decision that the Department of Human Services has made which impacts on your payment or a decision the Department of Human Services has made about your Job Plan, or have concerns about the service you have received, you should contact the Department of Human Services feedback and complaints line as soon as possible on 1800 050 004.

If you disagree with a decision your provider has made about your Job Plan, or have concerns about the service you have received, you can contact your provider to discuss your concerns or you can contact the Department of Employment's National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260, who will investigate your concerns.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you may take the matter further by contacting the Ombudsman's Office on 1300 362 072.

Privacy

Your personal information is protected by law, including the *Privacy Act 1988*. It can only be collected, used or disclosed where you give permission, or where it is permitted by law. We have provided you with important privacy information about the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information. More information is available from www.employment.gov.au/privacy, your provider, the Department of Human Services, or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner at www.oaic.gov.au. You should ensure that you read and understand this information.