

THE IMPACT OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONTROLS ON RECIDIVISM IN
NORWAY AND THE UNITED STATES: THE CASE OF NORTH DAKOTA PRISON
EXPERIMENT

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The goal of this research is to investigate to what degree the differences in recidivism rates can be accounted by differences in the dynamics of interaction between informal and formal aspects of prison organizations and their cultures in the United States and Norway. Effectiveness of prison policies as impacted by interactions of informal and formal groups within and outside the correctional systems is analyzed by using U.S. and Scandinavian Census data, official reports, and secondary literature review. Data on the North Dakota Prison Experiment was collected on a visit to two of North Dakota's correctional facilities. A counselor from the Organization for Families and Friends of Prisoners based out of Oslo, Norway was also interviewed. Scandinavian policy implications for strategies to reduce recidivism in the United States are discussed.

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NORWAY AND THE UNITED STATES: THE CASE OF NORTH DAKOTA PRISON
EXPERIMENT

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Yvonne Mae Peiffer. Her constant wisdom and kindness are the foundation for my passion and understanding of sociology.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to acknowledge and thank all of the people that assisted me in the completion of this thesis. Traditionally my research is within the areas of romantic relationships, family, sexuality and gender, not criminality. The inspiration for this research comes from when I was in high school, after moving in with my mother's third husband and his three children. He and his children all had experience with the criminal justice system in the United States and they taught me that just because you were a "criminal" does not mean that you are a "bad" person and undeserving of a full, happy life. During this same period, I came across an article about the humaneness of Norwegian prisons. Altogether, I would like to acknowledge and thank them for sparking my interest in the concept of more humane prisons in the United States.

Dr. David Knox is undoubtedly the person who most inspired me to pursue research and my master's degree. His encouragement, advice, and overall support means more than I could ever express. I also wish to acknowledge the support of my husband, Nick Hilliard, who always supports me in pursuing my passions. Alongside my husband, I am grateful for my extensive family who, even if they did not understand the process, always supported me.

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Indeed, we are a product of our environment and the people within it. I would not be here today, completing my thesis, were it not for my life experiences, both good and bad, and the people that have been there throughout.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States houses more inmates than any other country in the world and accounts for half of the incarcerated population worldwide (Mowen and Vishner, 2015). There are over two million inmates behind bars in the United States or 655 per 100,000 residents (ICPR, 2018). In comparison, Norway's incarcerated population is 3,300 or about 63 inmates per 100,000 residents (ICPR, 2018). Especially significant are differences in recidivism rates between US and Norway. The recidivism rate in Norway is about 25% or about one-third of the United States' recidivism rate which is about 75% (Encartele, 2018).

A number of studies have investigated why rates of recidivism are so different. Studies have found that recidivism is lower if interpersonal and family relationships are successfully managed during incarceration (Comfort, et al. 2018). While there are a number of reentry policies and programs, it is assumed that the primary means of support upon release will come from family and friends and the familial and friendship ties to those individuals that are necessary to reduce recidivism can be more successful if created before and during the incarceration period (Bales and Mears, 2008; Haapanen, Britton, and Croisdale, 2007). For the individuals to successfully reintegrate into society they may need to gain acceptance from family and the community (Mowen and Vishner, 2015). A large part of Norway's claim for low recidivism comes from their mission to create a sense of normality, which they accomplish through structuring the prison facility to resemble the outside society as much as possible, and maintenance of inmate's dignity (Sapra, 2018).

In this thesis I would like to argue that differences in recidivism rates can in part be accounted by differences in dynamics of interactions between informal and formal aspects of

prison organizations and cultures/subcultures in the United States and Norway. Meaning that the informal and formal groups interact in Norwegian prisons in a way that contributes towards a reduction in the likelihood of their inmates reoffending in a way that does not occur in U.S. prisons. In literature on prisons as formal organizations, differentiation between their formal and informal hierarchies and cultures are well known and studied. Caldwell (1955) observes that there are a formal, administrative, institutional relationships between the personnel and inmates in prisons, and the informal, inmate groups residing in the prison community.

Formal as well as informal interactions between the two groups have a direct impact on the success or failure of a prison's administration and their rehabilitation initiatives. The acculturation of inmates in prisons, also known as prisonization, is the way in which informal groups incorporate prison culture traits while residing within the prison (Caldwell, 1955). Inmates that are considered rebellious are well-integrated into informal, inmate subculture and have the most difficulty adjusting to the formal institutional culture, particularly because the inmate subculture closely resembles the ghetto that they already experienced. The shared attributes of rebellious inmates include poorer backgrounds with less family support, being a young age at first arrest and having a non-white and reformatory experience, each of which contributing to recidivate behavior (Goodstein, 1979). Inmates need help learning how to navigate those informal and formal groups in society upon release in order to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

Therefore, I would like to argue that higher recidivism rates in the U.S. are owed to the more developed and influential informal inmate structures in the United States prison system thus competing with, modifying, or even subverting the formal prison structures designed to limit impacts of prison subcultures and rehabilitate inmate. In Norway, on the other hand,

formal/informal prison subcultures differ in that Norwegian prison staff engage in more informal, reward-based actions, therefore reversing and reducing the combativeness between the informal and formal groups, lowering their recidivism. In particular, Norway incorporates family and community interactions within the formal structure of their prisons, which aids in diminishing the informal/criminal subcultures, potentially reducing recidivism.

To illustrate this, I will analyze the impact of culture, family and community interactions in a North Dakota prison that has incorporated various aspects of the Norwegian carceral system, known as the North Dakota prison experiment, to determine the degree to which these interactions changed their prison structure. I also investigate how these factors impact formal and informal prisons' organization in the U.S. and Norway and their impact on recidivism rates in both countries through an interview with an administrator working with inmates and their families in Norway, a tour of the facilities in North Dakota conducting an experiment based on the Norwegian prison model coupled with an extensive literature review on prison structure and programming and culture.

For this purpose, I will analyze a project on reducing recidivism based on the Norwegian prison model, specifically Halden prison, that is currently being implemented at the correctional system in North Dakota. This experiment came about when administrators in North Dakota visited Halden prison in Norway in an attempt to gather insight on their approach to prisons in order to better understand how they are able to keep their recidivism rates low. In an attempt to see if the same concepts are applicable in the United States, the administrators for the North Dakota correctional system began slowly implementing similar policies which have already begun to show success. In order to see how the prison model in Norway can be applied in the United States and to what degree they will see similar reductions in recidivism, I visited with

North Dakota administrators in the summer of 2019, that are supervising the North Dakota prison experiment.

I will address the factors impacting recidivism in both countries by considering how the interaction of formal and informal structures impact recidivism. I used two questions to assist in guiding my research: (1) How do the informal structures in United States interact with their formal structures, affecting their current recidivism rate? (2) How do the informal structures in Norway prisons interact with their formal structures, affecting their current recidivism rate? Such a comparison will allow a better understanding of the applicability of Norwegian prison policies in the context of the relationships between the informal and formal structures of their penal system with the potential for offering insight to how those policies can also potentially improve recidivism in the United States.

Through this contribution to literature, this study is significant in that it can offer additional knowledge towards the goal of reducing the U.S. high recidivism rates. There are a few limitations to this study. One, obtaining access to research in prisons is difficult. Two, the experiment in North Dakota that I analyze is in the beginning stages of their reforms with no long-term data available to support their successes yet. Finally, the U.S. is a large country with many states, each of which have extensive freedoms for their prison policymaking, making wide sweeping reforms difficult.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE UNITED STATES AND NORWAY

I. LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE UNITED STATES PRISON SYSTEM

The U.S. incarceration system is shaped heavily by a legacy of slavery. Before the abolition of slavery, prisons housed mostly poor men of European ancestry while enslaved blacks and Native American populations resided outside of prisons, subjected to harsh physical punishment (Hernández, Muhammad, and Thompson, 2015; Adamson, 1983). When slavery was abolished, the incarceration of black and native populations in the prisons began to increase. Adamson (1983) explains that during slavery, blacks experienced plantation justice, a method of settling debts between the slave and his owner for varying reasons including theft, and they were punished by the slave code, which treated blacks as property. Following the abolishment of slavery, despite some important changes to the criminal justice systems, similar policies of punishment remained. Incarceration rates climbed as governments discovered a method of assisting the economically struggling South, through a convict leasing system which allowed convicts to be leased out to private companies for cheap labor long-term, also benefitting the governments through a reduction in prison housing (Adamson, 1983; Browne, 2010).

In the early 1900s, medicalization of social pathologies became more acceptable in the United States, with physicians claiming professional control over anything they could deem an illness, which were then cast as medical conditions (Showalter, 2019). The purpose of such institutes was to remake the prison system into one that focused on rehabilitation and work. However, a diagnosis of psychopathy within these prison clinics increased punishment, rather than treatment-based rehabilitation. Medicalization emerged as socioeconomic inequalities continued to grow, and the desire for control lead to increased penalization that was utilized to combat the emerging poverty (Wacquant, 2014). Wacquant (2014) points to an emergence of

restrictive social policy, by means of replacing protective welfare with mandatory workfare causing assistance to become conditional based on degraded employment (pg. 1693). This change in policy became the management policy for the growing dualization, widening or creation of societal divides, particularly within the urban areas.

In the 1970s, there was an escalation in policing and incarceration which took on a more paternalistic approach, in which the government increased restrictions on freedom because the government saw it as being in the best interest of their citizens (Hernández, Muhammad, and Thompson, 2015; Soss, Fording, and Schram, 2009). Roberts (2004) contributes high levels of incarceration, particularly of blacks, to the War on Drugs. The War on Drugs contributed strongly to the increased racial disparities in prisons as the government began more arrests for drug offenses in combination with longer mandatory sentences, despite dropping crime rates. The criminal justice system in the U.S. turned to supervising the poor through expanded imprisonment and monitoring through probation and parole (Soss et al., 2009). Browne (2010) explains that at the same time, the U.S. government began implementing policies that moved a large portion of production jobs to the South, employing blacks for their cheap labor. As the U.S. industries began to shift from manufacturing jobs to service jobs over the following decades, poor and primarily blacks faced overwhelming rates of unemployment. As a result, the prison population increased seven-fold especially impacting the poor and minorities (Soss et al., 2009).

While the increase in incarceration rates is often attributed to an increase in crime, data suggest this is not the case (Arvanites, 1992). This “tough on crime” stance, which was supported by a majority of the U.S. public who believed penalties were not strong enough, maintained through the following decades, influenced by politicization of crime, American culture of individualism, and the growing conservative political climate (Mauer, 2001; Arvanites,

1992). Arvanites (1992) says that by abandoning the previously used “rehabilitative model,” legislators across the country began to increase the use of mandatory sentences and longer sentences. Politicians often took up the “tough on crime” stance on the basis of public demand. As incarceration rates climbed to levels unseen in any other country around the world, the United States’ entire infrastructure and culture became more and more integrated with the penal system.

Beyond the direct effects that incarceration has on individuals, impacts of mass incarceration can be seen in the development of spaces, electoral maps, distribution of state and federal resources, promotion of social movements, gender and cultural norms (Hernández, et al., 2015). Poor black men and women live in economically and racially segregated neighborhoods which suffer extensively from high incarceration rates with approximately one in four adult males being imprisoned on any given day and typically returning to the same communities they resided in prior to incarceration (Roberts, 2004: 1276). With money being funneled into developing and maintaining prisons, resources are diverted from developing public safety measures, services for crime victims, and programs meant to promote effective reintegration for inmates upon release (Travis, Western, and Redburn, 2014). This is all especially impactful for the aforementioned economically segregated communities.

Oliver (2008) explains that as members of society attempt to protest and promote movements in opposition of mass incarceration, they are met with a distorted history of the civil rights that does not often acknowledge the rioting that played a part in the success of the movement. For this reason, the social justice movements, particularly those led by the black community, are discredited if violence erupts in the movement. Further, Roberts (2004) states that gender expectations differ drastically for women who have family members incarcerated. Having an incarcerated partner or relative creates a struggle, both emotionally and financially,

for the entire family but primarily on the women caregivers. Frequently, the difficulties lead to “women struggling to manage budgets consumed by addictions; women trying to hold families together when ties are weakened by prolonged absence; women attempting to manage the shame and stigma of incarceration; and women trying to prevent children from becoming casualties of the war on drugs” (Roberts, 2014: 1282).

Further, mass incarceration has a significant impact on the United States’ economy and democracy. Beginning in the early 1970s, employment within the penal system grew significantly, making the U.S. Department of Justice one of the biggest employers in the country (Hernández, Muhammad, and Thompson, 2015). Several politicians embraced the U.S. society’s demand for “getting tough,” continuously expanding institutions, directing more resources towards incarceration (Travis et al., 2014). As private prisons expanded, lobbyists continued to pressure legislators for more punitive laws and less restrictions on prison labor. Pelaez (2014) indicates that utilizing prison labor is appealing to investors because they do not have to worry about their cheap laborers striking, paying unemployment, providing vacation or comp time. As one of the fastest growing industries in the United States, for investors in the prison industry, it is imperative that they maintain the current high incarceration rates.

The geographical location of the prison facilities as well as the disfranchisement of felons also skews voting within the country. This can often lead to prisoner incarceration in areas which benefit a voting party but often places them at a distance from their family and community (Hernández et al., 2015). In the United States, the Census Bureau counts inmates in their local prisons as residents and counted as constituents, over-representing that area (Stinebrickner-Kauffman, 2003). In some states, this becomes an issue because the prisons tend to hold minorities with more left-leaning political ideologies, but the prisons are located in

predominately white, conservative areas, causing disproportionate representation. Additionally, with approximately 1 in 40 adults in the U.S. disenfranchised and unable to vote, multiple elections nationwide have been effected (Shannon and Uggen, 2012).

With approximately fifty percent of the world's total incarcerated population residing in the United States, 1 in 37 adults within the country will serve time at some point in their lifetime (Mowen and Vishner, 2015). Arguably, such high levels of incarceration are not due to an increase in crime rates within the United States but are a result of the country's increasing punitive crime prosecution policies (Mowen and Vishner, 2015). Ultimately, without support services, contact with family or friends and learning of coping skills, the incarcerated individuals are more likely return to conditions that lead them to prison in the first place (Blumburg and Griffin, 2013; Haapanen et al, 2007). The prisons in the United States are a reflection of their society and I begin to explore this by analyzing the race and culture in U.S. society.

Race and Culture in the U.S.

You cannot begin to discuss the structure of prisons in the United States without first understanding the role of "race" within the system. While Norway has maintained a mostly homogenous society throughout its history, the U.S. has been a melting pot of people since the beginning of its existence. Currently, the demographic makeup of U.S. prisons consists of 1.5% Asian, 2.3% Native American, 37.5% black and 58.7% white (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2019). Building upon the previously outlined history of U.S. prisons, it is important to understand that a great deal of literature contributes the current penal system to have been impacted by the legacy of slavery in the United States (Hernández et al., 2015). Sampson, Wilson and Katz (2018) proclaim the most difficult issue facing U.S. criminology to be race and violent crime. They synthesize that the macrosocial patterns of residential inequality by race created social isolation

and geographical concentrations of the disadvantaged. This created structural barriers which promoted behavioral adaptations, therefore causing unaccepted deviant behavior and attempt to control the crime and violence. Within these socially isolated areas, there is a deterioration of informal neighborhood controls and institutional or organizational strength, which ultimately leads to the formation of a peer control system: the formation of gangs.

The United States penal system is now significantly impacted by the of the War on Drugs that created policies allowing for a large numbers of drug arrests, disproportionately targeting African Americans through the implicitly biased police patrolling of inner-city areas (Mitchell and Caudy, 2015). Mitchell and Caudy (2015) also contribute the racial differences in these mass arrests of minorities to the racial differences in drug distribution, which place minorities in more public areas, increasing their visibility and likelihood of arrest. Parallel to the War on Crime period, gangs became particularly organized and while some gangs formed within prisons as a result of inmate conflict, most prison gangs were a reflection of the gang membership inmates had with the larger society's organized crime (Sánchez-Jankowski, 2003). Increased arrests of gang members paired with extensive sentencing resulted in unintended consequences for the structure of the prisons.

Sánchez-Jankowski (2003) points out that unification between prison gang members and street gang members created more organization and increased resources amongst the gangs and their stark increase in numbers within prisons demolished the preexisting social structure, replacing it with a new one. While prison gangs are not well studied mainly due to lack of access and transparency from gang members, they deeply interest researchers as much as they effectively complicate prison management (Fleisher and Decker, 2001).

Many researchers present gangs as causing the most prison violence (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). Through exploitation of the structural weaknesses of overcrowding and understaffing, gangs place themselves at the top of the inmate power structure. Small prisons foster close interactions between inmates and staff, something that Norway has embraced and the U.S. experiences difficulty with maintaining with such high levels of incarceration (Johnsen and Fridhov, 2018). The prisons present a context in which the drug dealers and customers are all residing in close quarters (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). Those close quarters make escaping violence difficult. Unlike on the street, “turf wars” between gang members are difficult to escape with no place to retreat.

It is natural for people to form groups as they attempt to fulfill the need to form an identity, personal interest, belonging and race/ethnicity. Fleisher and Decker (2001) say that while attempts to suppress these tendencies have been proven to be ineffective, super-maximum-security prisons attempt to do so still today. Weak management controls in prisons leading to violation of inmates’ civil rights contributes to their coping mechanisms which may push them to join cliques or gangs (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). Making the prison environment harsher as a means to combat the gangs will likely fail to reduce the issue of gangs; rather, meaningful alternatives to offer assistance to inmates should be considered.

Prison Structure and Programming in the U.S.

The United States prison system is run by the Department of Justice, currently maintaining 2,121,600 inmates, employing approximately 415,000 staff across 4,455 institutions at 103.9% capacity (World Prison Brief: United States, 2020; BLS, 2018). Prisons in the United States do face overcrowding, particularly in mega-prisons, making it difficult for correctional staff to maintain control over all inmates’ activity (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). This likely

reduces the guards' willingness to follow through with formal controls which result in extensive paperwork, allowing the informal controls of the inmates to increase within the prison, further increasing the difficulty for guards to maintain control.

The United States has continuously elected officials who demand tougher punishment within the penal system (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). While European countries are obligated to follow rules requiring them to provide rehabilitation, education and vocational training programming, the United States does not have any constitutional or statutory requirement to have such programs (Dick, 2018).

There is formally structured rehabilitative, educational and vocational programming in United States prisons, but without the legal right to invoke consistency in these programs, the inmates are at an increased risk of recidivating (Dick, 2018). While the rehabilitative programs primarily emphasize inmates' ability to function in their informal roles without relying on delinquency, the educational and vocational programming helps inmates to better navigate the formal roles within society. Researchers found that if inmates were to participate in just one type of programming (rehabilitation, educational or vocational), there is a 25% decrease in the targeted behaviors, including recidivism (Dick, 2018).

Regarding rehabilitative programming specifically, cognitive-behavioral therapy was found to be the most effective in reducing recidivism in the United States. While educational programs in U.S. prisons are offered focusing on more basic educational knowledge and the GED in particular, very few secondary and post-secondary programs are provided. Educational programming is proven to reduce recidivism in the United States and those rates continue to decrease with higher educational achievement. Additionally, the use of vocational training programs to train inmates with skills in professions such as electrician, carpenter, cook, welder

or HVAC technician are all deployed in the United States and have been proven to also reduce recidivism rates.

All of these types of programming have been proven to assist in the reduction of recidivism rates in the United States by assisting the inmates in navigating the formal groups of society, but there is a large variance in their utilization across states and institutions (Dick, 2018). This also goes for the structure of all of the institutions across the United States. With allotted discretion and deviation among federal, state and local prison policy, there too are differences in the facility structures. Overcrowding and lack of funding prevents any consistent, beneficial formal control and assistance to inmates across the country.

The effectiveness of family involved programming could also be beneficial in United States prisons. U.S. Research indicates that family interactions have a positive impact on reduction of recidivism (Bales and Mears, 2008; Tewksbury and DeMichele, 2005; Pierce, 2015; Granja, 2016; Blumberg and Griffin, 2013). Although there are policies and programs established to aid in transitioning back into society, it is assumed that the inmates will have family and friends to provide the necessary social support (Bales and Mears, 2008; Haapanen, Britton, and Croisdale, 2007).

If the prisons do not offer formal assistance in navigating informal controls outside of the prison, the inmate will be more likely to recidivate without the knowledge to act differently. Generally, a prisoner's right to having a family life has been well established within the human rights laws in many national jurisdictions. However, a legal rights approach emphasizes the prisoner's perspective while less attention is paid to the impact that informal family interactions have on recidivism (Smith, 2018). An emphasis has been placed on "utilitarian, reformatory and crime control aspects of punishments rather than on its emotive, passionate and moralizing sides"

which has hampered the rehabilitation efforts for prisoners (Smith, 2018: 7). Programs designed to implement visitation programs focus on expectations, experiences and perceptions of the visitors and neglecting to consider this can result in an unbeneficial visitation (Tewksbury and DeMichele, 2005). Administrators struggle to fulfill the appropriate structure, process and experience of visitors due to financial and logistical constraints (Tewksbury and DeMichele, 2005). It is more common to have spaces for interactions between inmates and their children at female facilities (Pierce, 2015). Male inmate-fathers could also benefit from such arrangements (Pierce, 2015). Imprisonment can either strengthen family relations or result in a disruption of familial ties (Granja, 2016).

Integrating Family Interactions in Recidivism Prevention Strategies in the U.S.

Incarceration is a family experience with parenting and partnership continuing across the prison's walls (McKay et al., 2019). Family separation as a result of incarceration can lead to relationship and financial constraints, making it important for U.S. policy to recognize this and provide better assistance. Other versions of probation have been tried as alternatives to incarceration for parents. Particularly in Washington state, judges can sentence eligible offenders with children to one year of close community supervision rather than incarceration. They can also allow for eligible inmates to be released one year in advance to finish their sentence under electronic monitoring in home with a supervisor. Preliminary evaluations of these programs in particular were found to reduce recidivism for these eligible participants compared to previous eligible inmates who were in prison before the initiative was launched.

Contact between inmates and their families has long been believed to improve outcomes for after release. With increased methods of communication being introduced to prisons, contact with family has been found to lead to a variety of positive outcomes for inmates while in prison.

Additionally, in-person visitations specifically have been found to be correlated with positive outcomes upon release, including reduced recidivism rates (Eddy and Schumer, 2018).

Acknowledging the importance of assisting in creating healthy informal relationships between inmates and their families through formal methods can have great potential for reducing recidivism. Policies and programming in the United States need to consider the obstacles for families with maintaining contact with inmates and address them by understanding their informal culture and constraints, if they hope to increase the likelihood of maintenance and stability of these relationships upon release (Comfort et al., 2018). Ultimately, numerous studies have proven the benefits of genuinely promoting healthy family interactions in addition to other types of programming similar to that of Norway's. In North Dakota, they are attempting to implement those Norwegian style policies and programming.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW OF NORWEGIAN PRISON SYSTEM

Beginning in the 1900s, Norway experienced major developments that has led to the current penal structure in Norway. As Norwegian society transitioned through each stage of incarceration over the century, views on penalty also changed. Initially, penalty as paternalism, through the government limiting people's freedoms for their "own good", saw prisons as warehouses to be used to separate and monitor the poor and disreputable from society, particularly those who were unemployed, alcoholics, vagrants or thieves (Shammas, 2017; Smith and Ugelvik, 2017; Mathiesen, 2006). At the end of this era, around 1945, growing recognition of the poor circumstances of the industrial working-class led to attempts at reform the penal state (Shammas, 2017; Smith and Ugelvik, 2017).

In the post-World War II era, medicalization of social pathologies, referring to labeling social problems as medical problems, brought forth a resurgence of prison labor schemes aimed

at reintegrating prisoners back into society through employment (Shammas, 2017; Maturo, 2012; Smith and Ugelvik, 2017). In the years of reconstruction following the war, the Norwegian Labor party gained control through parliamentary majorities (Shammas, 2017). The aim of the party was to provide security to society by focusing on employment, gender equality, leisure and a right to an education. The Norwegian Labor party's agenda did not include any plans for remodeling Norway's penal system at that time.

The primary objective of the Norwegian Labor party was to create reforms based on the origin of the deviance and crime, which were attributed to the social conditions at the time. Shammas (2017) views these reforms as "macroeconomic policies [that] were criminal justice policies in disguise" (Pg. 66). As Norwegian citizens began to realize that former inmates would eventually be reentering the fold of Norwegian society, they began to push for Norway's prison system to change. As this change in societal attitude towards prisons heightened, the direct institutional effects were minimal, but the fostering of social safety through political and economic stability limited crime and deviance. Resources were not aimed at particular problem groups and instead were provided to all Norwegian citizens, regardless of social or geographical location (Smith and Ugelvik, 2017).

As drugs became increasingly popular within Norwegian society beginning in the sixties and seventies, similar sentiments of intolerance of drug use, like in the United States, could be seen in new policies. Mathiesen (2006) indicates that drug offense classifications were changed from misdemeanors to a felony. Eventually, the maximum penalty for drug-related offenses was increased from fifteen to twenty-one years, although the maximum penalty was primarily geared towards drug dealers rather than small users or peddlers. Towards the end of the 1980's, about 60% of inmates were confined for drug offenses (Shammas, 2017: 69).

The third and current period, penalty as dualization, established a dividing line between native-born citizens who received a more rehabilitative structured facility, and the increasingly growing population of non-Norwegian citizens who are subjected to a more punitively structured arrangement (Shammas, 2017). Wealth and income inequality began to increase in the early 1980's when tax reforms were implemented. The country adopted more punitive policies, causing a 25% increase in incarceration rates between 2000 and 2012 (Shammas, 2017). Despite this, they have been able to avoid the exploitation of their citizens and inmates by preventing workfare and prison-fare (Smith and Ugelvik, 2017). Prison-fare refers to mass incarceration and workfare is the replacement of welfare for more demeaning, unskilled work. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Norway also increased penalties for acts of terrorism and saw penal expenditures grow by eighty percent between 2005 and 2012 (Shammas, 2017).

As politics in Norway leaned more moderately right, the stance of "tough on crime" became increasingly popular. However, both politicians from the left and right of the spectrum alleged that the immigrants from all over the world consisted of criminals, sex offenders and drug dealers. Galloway and Aaberge (2005) indicates that there is a greater percentage of poor immigrants in Norway, compared to the native population. For this reason, those that face difficulty assimilating based on financial inability, often fall into the woes that are generally experienced during poverty, including depressed neighborhoods, stigmatization, social unrest, and increased crime. Shammas (2017) explains that, through Norway's Immigration Act, the surge in immigration is met with more punitive policies aimed at non-natives. These policies include the potential for deportation, without legal conviction based on the lower evidentiary standards required for deportation.

Almost a third of the prison population consists of foreign-born citizens. A segregated facility was established in 2016 for the sole purpose of housing foreign citizens. Restricted spending for new prison construction caused Norway's government to seek help within other countries in the European Union to house a portion of their inmates (Shammas, 2017). Norway strives to remain the model for rehabilitating their inmates as the country manages the expanding foreign-born citizen population.

To explore how formal/informal prison subcultures differ in Norway, I will be reviewing the history of Norwegian prisons, the current prison structure, policies, programming, race, culture, and family/community interactions to demonstrate how they reduce informal/criminal sub-structure and criminal culture, potentially reducing recidivism. The model of Norwegian prisons is based on being in accordance with the principle of normality, which Norway includes in their prison law and service rules (Kriminalomsorgen 2019; Smith and Ugelvik, 2017). This means that the sentences are meant to embody life outside as much as possible (Kristoffersen, 2013). This is important when considering the society from which the inmates in Norway come from, the welfare state, meaning that their citizens of Norway are entitled to certain rights and their government must protect their well-being.

Their exceptionalism stems from Norway's culture of equality and the homogeneity of Norwegians up until the recent increase in immigration to the country (Ugelvik, 2012). Ugelvik (2012) states that while Norwegians place a strong emphasis on equality, there is still the cultural expectation amongst their citizens to conform and those unable to conform will face the consequences. Despite this, studies have shown that Norwegians, given the opportunity, would prefer to punish people to a lesser degree than the Norwegian court system currently does (Smith, 2018). These studies align with Ibsen's (2013) research into Norwegian prison officers

who focus their informal control within their prison facilities on a system based on reward, rather than punishment. Further, the culture of equality extends across socioeconomic classes and particularly with inmates, as demonstrated by the Norwegian royal family's visitation to Bastøy prison after their chapel's reconstruction (Pratt, 2007).

Race and Culture in Norway

Norway's history with race has been minimal, therefore race has had a different impact on their prisons. While they do have some minority groups, their assimilation into Norwegian society produced small disruptions based on the demand to conform (Ugelvik, 2012). Despite that, Ugelvik (2012) asserts that Norwegians are known for marginalizing those considered as "other" because of their longstanding history of looking, thinking and feeling the same. Norway is also known as being one of the most gender-equal societies in the world and has historically few instances of social class differences. This mostly stems from the country's motto: "Norwegian is being of the same worth as other Norwegians" (Ugelvik, 2012: 6). The less favorable result of this ideal is that there is strong pressure to conform. This culture of egalitarianism in their society enables them to minimize any profound differences that have emerged in Norway. Conformism prevalent in Norway can be summarized as: "keep your place. Don't think you are somebody. Be in control of yourself. Live as others do, think as others think. Be similar. Embrace equality. Pay your taxes. Belong." (Ugelvik, 2012: 7). This plays a large part of who Norwegians are, a group that sees themselves as "same."

Following WWII, the notion of race as a biological difference was challenged and while other countries continued to discuss race as a social construction in academia and politics, Norwegian politicians, academics and bureaucrats ignored or dismissed the concept of "race" within literature and policies (Kyllingstad, 2017). The issue of race has mostly evaded prison

development in Norway for most of its history mainly because of the small number of immigrants and for those that do, the push to conform to Norwegian culture, reducing the potential conflict of being “different.” Therefore, race has not been a major influencer like it has in U.S. prisons. Killingstad (2017) says that Norway also has no historical connection with race-based slavery and racial segregation, nor has it been a colonial power. However, this does not mean that they do not have a history with “race.” Norwegian society did have a historical notion of a hierarchy of race and being considered “white” or “Caucasian race” as a prerequisite for being Norwegian (Kyllingstad, 2017: 320). They did experience periods in which minorities and those considered to be “more Norwegian” had a supposed inferior versus superior complex. Despite this, Norway’s harsh policy of assimilation forced any minority groups to culturally assimilate into the homogenous nation (Kyllingstad, 2017).

More recently, Norway experienced exponential growth in immigration from all over the world, now contributing to 16% of its population with about half of them having African, Asian or Latin American backgrounds (Kyllingstad, 2017). Because of changing demography, immigration policy became one of the most heated and polarized topics in Norway. While the debated topics do include points on racism, ethnicity, discrimination, national identity, social integration, culture pluralism, culture and religious differences, these issues are rarely considered to be “racial” issues, therefore race is not statistically measured in their social science research (Kyllingstad, 2017). Leading politicians from both the left and right sides of the political spectrum determined that this mass increase in “otherness” was a penal crisis (Shammas, 2017). Shammas (2017) notes that the political media was extremely negative as it alleged that the incoming immigrants were predatory criminals, sex offenders and drug dealers. Those suspected of a crime were faced with a more punitive application of Norway’s Immigration Act, forcing

some immigrants to be deported. Those that are not deported were originally placed into an ethnationally segregated cell block until the construction of Kongsvinger prison in 2012, an all-foreigner prison (Shammas, 2017; Ugelvik and Damsa, 2018).

Currently, foreign prisoners make up 30.9% of the prison population in Norway (The World Prison Brief: Norway, 2020). Norwegians are facing a polarized situation and challenges to their penal exceptionalism. However, while not perfect, the foreign prisoners are entitled to the same material conditions as Norwegian inmates and the prisons do attempt to alleviate any frustrations raised by inmates (Ugelvik and Damsa, 2018). Ibsen's (2013) research confirms that through their time conducting ethnographic research within a Norwegian prison and jail, they never witnessed explicit discrimination from guards.

While Norway does not have an extensive history with race, they do experience ethnonationalism which can create implicit biases. Norwegians have emphasized conformity and "sameness" throughout their history. Despite this ethnonationalism having a minimal impact historically, globalization has increased immigration throughout the world, including Norway. With this, there is the potential for implicit biases to occur as their prisons deal with unprecedented levels of foreign inmates.

Prison Structure and Programming in Norway

Norwegian prisons are run by The Ministry of Justice and Public Security, currently maintaining 3,373 inmates and approximately 3,600 full-time staff across 37 prison units and 59 prisons which are at 83.9% capacity (World Prison Brief: Norway, 2020; Kriminalomsorgen, 2019). This creates a low average amount of inmates in each facility. In Norway, prisons are not overcrowded and if there is a lack of space, future prisoners are placed on a waitlist until there is

room for them to serve their sentence (Johnsen, Grabheim, and Helgesen, 2011). There are a few benefits that come from preventing overcrowding in their facilities.

First, the utilization of formal controls is followed by paperwork that must be filled out by guards, sometimes causing guards to choose not to follow through with formal controls (Santos et al, 2012). Minimizing overcrowding can make it easier for staff to follow through with formal controls that they may not otherwise if they were at or beyond inmate capacity. While the work culture among prison staff is not well known, it is known among the staff and prisoners, that inmates are seen, heard and respected as the human beings they are. Ethnographic research within Norwegian jails and prisons has identified an informal method of control exercised by prison guards (Ibsen, 2013; Johnsen, Granheim, and Helgesen, 2011). This research found that a pragmatic, reward-based approach to certain situations is learned through the observation of seasoned guards and perpetuated because of its success.

The principle of normality within their prisons asserts that the punishment is the restriction of inmate liberty, with no other rights removed, no stricter circumstances than necessary and a prison life that closely resembles life in society (Kriminalomsorgen, 2019). While the formal structure of Norwegian prisons still requires security and rehabilitation measures, through informal interactions and understanding the informal culture of inmates, the prison is meant to act as a mirror to society, with liberty being their main restriction. Norway abides by the European Prison Rules which impose some of the following rules to assist in inmate treatment: emphasis on continued inclusion with the community, right to educational programs and right to vocational programs (Dick, 2018). Governor of Bastøy prison's policies are based on the assumption that the most crucial component of the rehabilitation process of inmates is to work together with that inmate's outside network (Nagy, 2014).

To maintain informal and formal relationships between the community and prison inmates, community agencies are enlisted in as many areas as possible within the prison facility (Dick, 2018). The prisons will not have medical, educational or library services specific to their facility, rather they are imported from the community (Kriminalomsorgen, 2019). Their argument is that the more institutionalized the facility is, the more difficult the return to freedom will be. Further, the benefits from the community involvement is extended by the geographical positioning of prison facilities and inmates, with the goal to keep them close to home. Prison facilities in Norway tend to be in close proximity to childcare facilities and in general, close to society as a whole (Pratt, 2007). Social proximity is increased in order to reduce stigma through easier access to the community and vice versa. This reduced stigma makes returning to society after imprisonment easier by allowing the inmates to maintain the informal relationships they have with friends and family, as well as give them an opportunity to improve and create formal relationships with local businesses, potentially creating an avenue for employment after release.

There are closed and open style prisons within Norway with Halden (maximum-security/closed) prison and Bøstøy (minimum-security/open) prison being the most discussed within the media and academic literature. North Dakota Corrections relied on the model of Halden prison in their reforms. Completed in 2010, Halden prison was built to encompass a “hard and soft” perspective with the deprivation of freedom and rehabilitation working hand-in-hand (Kriminalomsorgen, 2019). While they are still a maximum-security prison with walls and necessary security measures, the facility was built to incorporate the nature surrounding it and includes a style of living that allows for cooking together, all of the essentials (free of charge) and dorm style living (Life in Norway Editorial Team, 2018). This is an example of an

incorporation of both formal and informal controls that together, creating a positive influence (Kreutzer et al, 2016).

Bastøy prison is located on an island outside of Oslo. Fenceless with an open-campus policy, Bastøy contains 80 buildings, roads, farmland, beaches, forests, a library, church and even a football pitch (Life in Norway Editorial Team, 2018). Inmates work the prison farm and are encouraged to spend time outdoors as a part of their “human ecology” focus, encouraging the relationships between the inmates and the environment. Another major advantage comes from the ability for visitors to visit by ferry three days a week and potentially stay in the designated apartments on the island for extended weekend visits which includes a special house with toys and games for families (Life in Norway Editorial Team, 2018; Nagy, 2014). Visits like this allow for a monitored/mediated visit between the inmates and their family, as well as provide perspective for families as to what life is like within the prison with the ultimate goal of assisting the inmate in improving their navigation of the informal control of their family.

Common programming focuses on rehabilitative and vocational programs. Norway includes programming towards the social rehabilitation of inmates and their families. Examples of family programming include the encouragement of family visitations, particularly through a family-conscious environment, availability of deferred unconditional prison sentences, returns home, father/family relationship classes and the availability of technological interactions (Pratt, 2007; Nagy, 2014; Hansen 2017). By providing rehabilitation that is structured towards assisting the inmates with navigating informal controls, inmates have an increased likelihood of continuing these habits upon release and decreasing the possibility of reoffending.

Integrating Family Interactions in Recidivism Prevention Strategies in Norway

In a small country such as Norway, a prison space can be provided fairly close to the inmate's home residency (KSF, 2019). This enables family to more easily visit its incarcerated member. One of the biggest concerns for encouraging interactions between inmates and their family members is that of the safety and positive environment, an aspect that is prioritized in Norway (Nagy, 2014). While keeping safety the top priority, Norwegian prisons work to create an environment in which they can optimize the rehabilitation and maintenance of family's relationships, particularly between inmates and their children (Nagy, 2014).

Perceptions and experiences of the visitors are very important in creating a successful system of positive interactions between inmates and their families (Tewksbury and DeMichele, 2005). Therefore, providing an experience for visitors that parallels life outside of prison increases the quality and impact of interactions. This can only be accomplished through by the facility through their understanding of both the inmate's and their family's informal culture and expectations. An example of this being done can be seen at Bastøy prison where a special house is set aside for highly encouraged family visits (Nagy, 2014). The house comes complete with toys, games, a backyard swing-set all of which can be used for a weekend stay on the island. If a weekend stay at the prison does not work for the family, there is also an option for the inmate to petition a stay at home a few times a month.

For these interactions between inmates and their families to be effective, Norwegian prisons offer formally structured "father classes" (Nagy, 2014; Hansen, 2017). While this program does aid in providing father inmates with the tools to be an active parent during and after release, it also establishes fatherhood as a role for inmates to embrace and hopefully encourage them to desist from criminal activity (Hansen, 2017). There is a wide variety of programs for inmate fathers, some of which include interacting children directly with the

additional goal being to reduce the negative effects of incarceration on the children. Key elements of these types of programs include: network map, family, and family situation; communication; developmental theory (child development); role theory (roles and role models); emotions (how to relate to emotions, coping); challenges and problem solving; child health (prevention and treatment); children's rights (parents' responsibilities); and public services (who we can cooperate with) (Hansen, 2017: 176).

During this four-week program, the inmate participants are also required to plan and implement a family day at one of the many Norwegian prisons that include family quarters (Hansen, 2017). This type of programming has not only been crucial to inmates' relationship with their children, but also with the relationship of the inmate and their informal family and networks.

III. Theoretical Framework

Based upon the above literature review, and in order to investigate the degree to which societal influences such as culture, family dynamics, race and prison structure in Norway and the United States play a part in their penal system's recidivism rates, I will consider the informal and formal controls of the inmates, prison employees and the prison structure through comparative research. This type of research draws on the style of some of the most notable sociologists including Aristotle, Marx, Comte, Durkheim, and Weber (Szalai, Petrella, Rokkan, and Scheuch, 2016). With the goal of revealing similarity and variance in the aforementioned factors in each of the countries, this research contributes to literature by revealing the differences between the social groups of each country, specifically as it relates to their prison structures, which may otherwise not be easily detected (Mills, van de Bunt, and Brujin, 2006).

The formal structured personnel groups and informal structured inmate groups constitute the prison community, having constant exchanges and developing their own norms and values (Caldwell, 1955; Santos, Lane, and Gover, 2012). In this thesis, formal controls of recidivism will be operationalized as legal and administrative policies of correctional institutions, including prisons, directed at reducing recidivism such as creating spaces that promote better interactions with family and having prison guards engaging with inmate's and providing resources in a way that assists in reducing the need to align with gangs or cliques. Similarly, informal controls of recidivism will be constituted as policies and strategies that are using family and communal relationships and settings to reduce recidivism such as increased opportunities for interactions between inmates and their family/community, rehabilitation focused on assisting inmates in navigating relationships appropriately, and assisting prison guards with better understanding the needs of inmates and their families.

Caldwell (1955) suggests that informal groups form within prisons based on inmates' similarities in social attitudes, values, group loyalties or mutual interests and develop to satisfy the unmet needs from formal groups. Therefore, the informal groups can separate themselves from the formal groups and hierarchies. She says that these informal systems develop out of the restrictions from formal systems.

Santos, Lane, and Gover (2012) argue that prison officers are also capable of demonstrating informal controls which are undocumented but commonly exist to assist in maintaining the status quo. This informal control exercised by the prison officers can play an integral part in the workings of the facility and outcome for inmates, which can be difficult to accomplish without proper monitoring or documentation if prisons are overcrowded. An example of this would be allowing or denying recreational activities such as watching television or

weightlifting as a means of informal social control. As a result of the lack of proper informal control on behalf of the prison officers, the existence of inmates controlling the informal prisons systems poses a threat to formal prison functioning. This model applies to my research question which asks, “How do the informal structures in United States interact with their formal structures, affecting their current recidivism rate?” by providing a framework for understanding how the formal policies and laws can lead to enhanced criminal coping methods from the informal inmate groups, resulting in a higher likelihood of recidivism in the United States.

The countries also have different prison structures and vary in their methodology for punishment and rehabilitation. Cao, Zhao, and Van Dine (1997) provide guidance in Chapter 4 on how these prison-specific factors can be singled out as impacting formal and informal structures. Informal groups are a fixture of society and prisons. Therefore, the impact of informal groups should be taken into consideration in order to create working policies and rehabilitative programs. As a welfare-state, Norway places strong emphasis on penal rehabilitation to combat the negative influences of informal culture and to make improvements aimed at reducing recidivism (Høidal, 2018).

Ibsen (2013) explores another way that informal systems operate within prisons, on the part of the prison guards. They also point out a notable factor of Norway’s penal exceptionalism as the indiscriminatory distribution of favors as a model for punishment based on the removal of rewards. Within Norwegian prisons, guards place an emphasis on providing additional favors/rewards to promote good behavior which are subsequently removed for poor behavior such arguing with guards or having disruptive conduct. While these favors are not formally mandated, they are embedded within the process that Norwegian prison guards follow, and all incoming guards are socialized into. My second research question which asks, “How do the

informal structures in Norway prisons interact with their formal structures, affecting their current recidivism rate?” While informal and formal structures exist within Norway prisons as well, the way that they operate is different from the United States.

When looking at organizational control, there are two main theoretical views (Kreutzer, Cardinal, Walter, and Lechner, 2016). The first theory, the traditional view, asserts that context-dependent situations demand either formal or informal as the most appropriate. A more modernized theory involves a complementary approach that asserts the benefits of a combination of both formal and informal controls and further emphasizes that the value of formal controls is best realized when done in combination with their informal counterparts. Kreutzer et al. (2016: 249) confirms this theory, emphasizing that reinforcement coming from a balance of both types of control, creates a positive influence and demonstrates that the individual people/operations do not operate in isolation, instead, they regularly interact. Formal and informal structures, rules, and controls do not immediately have a negative connotation. Rather, it is important to have a balance and understanding between the two, reducing the negative consequences of each.

Based on the above literature review, Caldwell (1955) provides guidance on informal groups which can consist of just three people and extend up to twenty-five or more. Caldwell (1955: 649) defines them as those people possessing similar established patterns of daily social interaction, social values, social attitudes, group loyalties, mutual interests if they cooperate in performing day-to-day activities. Informal groups develop spontaneously, contrasting with the institutional rules established for group behavior. Long-term recidivists, those that most resistant to formal control, tend to claim leadership within informal groups in prisons (Caldwell, 1955; Haapanen, Britton, and Croisdale, 2007). Over time, the informal groups that exist within a prison create a prison culture that is passed on through generations of inmates.

Caldwell's (1955: 655) understanding of prison culture consisting of behavior patterns, habit systems, prison customs and folkways, the prisoner's attitudes toward the prison system, personnel and the "free society," as well as the prisoners' code will be used to guide my analysis. The prisoners' code is the dividing line between inmates and prison guards. This code assists prisoners through planned escapes, preventing "rats" and encouraging inmate loyalty for illegal day-to-day activities such as gambling, engaging in homosexual practices or making moonshine liquor. The stipulation of this code includes the prohibition of fraternization between inmates and guards to the extent that prisoners are not supposed to talk to prison guards at all, with the exception of business matters.

Caldwell (1955) and Santos et al. (2012) provide guidance for understanding how formal groups operate for the purpose of carrying out legal and administrative work within prisons as a reaction to inmate behavior in my analysis. Both inmates and staff can be classified as formal prison groups with responsibilities including organizing the work, maintenance and rehabilitative programs in the prison and classifying inmates within those formal groups to contribute towards that prison's objectives (Caldwell, 1955: 650). The functionaries involved in the typical hierarchy of prison formal structures consists of the warden at the top, a deputy warden for custody management, a deputy warden for rehabilitative programs, prison guards, a superintendent of prison industries, the chaplain, a recreational director, institutional parole officer and potentially other specialized personnel (Caldwell, 1955: 650).

The guards of the facility who maintain the most contact with the inmates and with little preparation or training, often find themselves confronted with problems that they are ill-prepared to deal with (Hepburn, 2013). Santos et al. (2012) points to time consuming paperwork and deeming an incident as unworthy of formal reaction as sometimes preventing the use of formal

controls and leading to the utilization of informal control methods by prison officers. Lack of training gives rise to uncertainty and conflict between the inmates and guards, increases the risk of danger guards face from inmates and puts guards in conflicting roles in which they are meant to serve in both rehabilitative and custodial positions.

Informal and formal prison controls can also be understood in the context of the formal and informal controls that are in the broader society. For prisoners, the formal controls fall under the umbrella of the criminal justice system and the informal controls come from their peers, families and employment (Kruttschnitt, Ugge, and Shelton, 2006). Researchers have found that social disadvantage and incarceration creates weakened bonds and limited social capital, leading to criminal activity. Others suggest that inmates with perpetual low self-control can be resistant to both informal and formal controls.

Haapanen et al (2007) provides direction for our analysis based on the extensive research that observes persistent criminality as maintained due to the criminal's higher tendency to act impulsively and a lesser ability to restrain their behavioral response to internal and/or external constraints (pg. 134). The prisoner's potential deficiency in navigating the informal and formal controls of society likely contributed to their criminality. Inmates need help learning how to navigate those informal and formal groups in society upon release. There is higher potential to reduce recidivism by incorporating the informal social groups such as family and community and formal networks through programming and identifying the psychological and structure constraints that prevent inmates from maintaining their responsibilities and obligations (Kruttschnitt, Ugge, and Shelton, 2006).

Finally, Bales and Mears (2008) gives direction on social bond theory for my analysis of the literature review. This theory emphasizes that stronger bonds between inmates and society

provides more access to resources which will assist in their reintegration upon release. Therefore, if inmates are provided with resources to develop appropriate relationships with their family and community, they will have increased access to resources to provide a smoother transition back into society without the need for criminality.

In summary, my analysis in Chapter 4 will be influenced by several scholars. To begin, there are multiple literatures that provide guidance for understanding formal/informal prison structures. First, the analysis will be guided by Caldwell's (1955) theories on defining informal inmate behavior and explaining how they traditionally operate within prisons. Second, both Caldwell (1955) and Santos et al. (2012) ideas regarding the formal controls of the guards and the ways that inmates can also operate formally will be used in my analysis. Third, Santos et al. (2012) and Ibsen (2013) further guide our analysis by expanding on the ways in which guards also operate informally within prison facilities. Fourth, Cao, Zhao and Van Dine (1997) theory of prison-specific factors that impact formal/informal structures within prisons will assist in guiding our analysis of prison structures and programming.

Furthermore, there are a few theoretical approaches I use to understand incarceration, social dynamics, and recidivism. First, using Kreutzer, Cardinal, Walter and Lechner's (2016) ideas on organizational control, I will analyze the relationship between formal control and informal control. Then, I will incorporate the ideas of Haapanen et al. (2007) and Kruttschnitt, Ugge, and Shelton (2006) to consider the difficulties that inmates face in attempting to reintegrate into society upon release. Finally, to provide guidance in understanding ways to reduce recidivism, I will use Bales and Mears (2008) social bond theory to analyze the impacts of societal bonds on reduced reoffending.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

I. Research Design

The research design of this study is based on cross-regional comparative social research. Szalai, Petrella, Rokkan, and Scheuch (2016) indicate that this method of research has a long history, used by historically classic theorists such as Marx, Weber and Durkheim. A contemporary feature of modern-day comparative studies is the use of cross-national data analyses which promote communication amongst scientists. This then has the potential to a more unified theoretical thinking and methods of conducting research. Comparative research is broad, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative methods with the goal of analyzing similarities and variances (Mills, van de Bunt, and Brujin, 2006). The existence of social patterns is often considered universal and comparative research separates these patterns, isolating regularities from their pronounced contextual environments. For these reasons, I have chosen to utilize a comparative research design in order to provide an appropriate analysis of the prison policies and structures in the United States and Norway.

This comparative research study looks at the informal and formal penal structure differences between the United States and Norway, guided by the theorists described above. First, I reviewed published studies on factors impacting recidivism in the United States and Norway as well as analyzed secondary sources, such as various policy papers, government publications, information and websites developed and made available to the public by prisons. Second, the I also incorporate data collected during interviews as well as by visiting facilities in North Dakota. Caldwell (1955) accurately acknowledges “group dynamics” in policies and administrative goals as the interactions between informal and formal groups within prisons. The goal is to develop a better understanding of the U.S. and Norwegian prisons by making a

comparative analysis of the formal and informal structures that operate within them.

Additionally, this comparison is meant to develop an understanding of the factors contributing to the recidivism within each country in order to provide more insight to how Norway is able to maintain lower recidivism rates than the United States.

The informal factors that are used in this comparison are each country's prison inmates, family dynamics, culture, race and gender expectations. Formal factors in this comparison are the prison structure and welfare structures within the countries. The common societal family dynamics, culture, race, gender expectations, and the welfare structure of each country were chosen as variables that tend to impact informal groups within prison. The inclusion of prison policies and structures in each country is meant to demonstrate the formal structures that operate in each country and their prisons. Together, the informal and formal structures will be discussed and analyzed using the theorists described above in order to explain the similarities and differences in their prisons and this impacts recidivism.

To expand on the literature review on Norwegian prisons, I obtained the perspective of someone that has more direct experience with the interactions between inmates and their families. To accomplish this, an interview was conducted with a counselor from the Organisation for Families and Friends of Prisoners based out of Oslo, Norway. This interview was made possible through a connection by a professor when I initially began this research.

Upon initial review of the literature, there was not extensive, modern research on the interactions between inmates and their families. In order to obtain a more up-to-date perspective of Norway's current policies regarding those interactions and how they observe success and need for improvement, I decided to take the opportunity to speak with someone who is currently in a role that allows them to remark on first-hand experiences. With the counselor residing in

Norway, an interview was conducted virtually via a webcam. Examples of questions asked include “To what degree do you believe that family interactions assists in reducing recidivism?”, “To what degree do you believe that a support system upon release reduces the likelihood of recidivism?”, “What tools/qualities do you believe are necessary to exist in residents support system to make it more effective upon release?”, “What are some improvements you believe could be made to improve communication between residents and their family/friends at these facilities?”, and “To what degree does your country’s welfare system play into the policies of the prison?”. Additional questions were asked to extend upon the aforementioned questions.

Their role as a counselor and department manager of this NGO which receives funding from Norway’s Ministry of Justice, allows them to work for and with the relatives of inmates within their prison system. Their perspective provided input on a several factors that contribute to Norway’s current penal system including the attitudes of the country’s society, the structures of the facilities and the relationship between the inmates, their family and community. I was unable to gain access to interview any administrators within the United States with relevant expertise.

Further, to obtain better context for how Norwegian prison policies can be applied in the United States, a case study is made with the correctional system in North Dakota. In researching Norwegian and U.S. prisons and their policies, I discovered an experiment that the North Dakota correctional system is conducting. Based on research that North Dakota administrators conducted starting in 2015 and continue to conduct, they gained perspective on Norway’s prison model, particularly at Halden prison. It is important to recognize that North Dakota serves as a more agreeable location to start prison reforms based on Norwegian models including factors such as

their primarily homogeneous society and prison demographics, their smaller population, their smaller government that is more susceptible to change, and overall lower incarceration rates.

Despite obtaining IRB approval from the authors university, the North Dakota correctional facility was unable to commit their resources to participating fully in the study, resulting in the IRB being unnecessary. This meant that they could not offer any formal interviews. However, I was able to visit two of North Dakota's correctional facilities with the guidance of each facility's wardens and other administrators including their executive assistant and their workforce resource coordinator, who also heads their family relations. I was able to tour all aspects of the facilities including their medical ward, recreational facilities, isolation ward, and manufacturing sector. With restrictions on the content that I was able to bring with me on the tour, including a cellular phone, my notes were based on memory from the tour. In conjunction with the tour, the I will also provide information from the research provided online about the experiment.

II. Significance of Study

The United States incarcerates more prisoners than any single country in the world. Comparatively, Norway boasts a much lower incarceration population. Additionally, the recidivism rates between the two countries vary vastly, with Norway having a much lower rate. Norway has proven success in keeping lower recidivism rates for a variety of reasons explained in this study. Understanding the ways that these policies reduce recidivism in Norway in the context of the relationships between the informal and formal structures of their penal system can potentially offer some insight to how those policies can also potentially improve recidivism in the United States. High incarceration rates and recidivism rates have extensive societal damage

that are outlined within this analysis. Through this contribution to literature, this study can offer additional knowledge towards the goal of reducing the U.S. high recidivism rates.

III. Limitations of this Study

First, obtaining access to prisons to conduct research is difficult. The authors inability to collect data in the North Dakota prisons make the study of their reformative program difficult. Further, North Dakota is in the beginning of their reforms and no long-term data is available to support their changes other than the successes in Norway and research supporting the ideas that they are attempting to implement. Also, the United States is a much larger country with many freedoms given to the states for their prison policymaking which can become more difficult for wide sweeping reforms.

CHAPTER 4

COMPARING THE U.S. AND NORWEGIAN PRISON SYSTEMS

I. Comparing the U.S and Norway: Race and Culture

The following analysis will focus on comparing race and culture within the United States and Norway. These factors are important to consider when looking at the informal and formal controls that influence prisons, the inmates and ultimately, recidivism rates. I will be comparing and contrasting the differences between the two countries and analyzing how race and culture contribute to formal and informal structures.

To begin this comparison, while Norway places strong emphasis on conforming and being the “same,” the United States is known for being more individualistic. With distinct divides in social class and race in the U.S., Caldwell (1955) explains that these informal groups within prisons seek out any sort of similarities in values, group behavior, social attitudes, mutual interests or group loyalties, including social class and race, to make up for their inability to meet the needs of formal groups. Because the end of slavery created a surge of black male incarceration, over time, the informal groups that existed in the prison created a prison culture that has been passed on through generations of inmates and their families.

Therefore, divisions were created within the prison’s informal groups of inmates contributing towards growing cliques and gangs forming to meet the needs of the inmates. These gangs and cliques are responsible for a majority of the violence within the U.S. prisons (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). Because these informal groups often form due to the restrictions of the formal systems, there is also divisions between the informal inmate groups and the formal groups of guards, otherwise known as the prisoners’ code. This can contribute towards reduced effectiveness of the prisons guard’s authority.

The relevancy of race in U.S., particularly in prison systems, is evident based on the abundance of literature that analyzes the topic. In comparison, historically, Norway has very little literature discussing race in the country, especially within their prisons. With the issue of race mostly evading Norway's prison development due to the small number of immigrants and the push to conform to Norwegian culture, they do not have the same impact from gangs and cliques that the U.S. prisons experience. This reduces the conflict between inmates and prison guards, increasing the chance for more positive interactions between the informal and formal groups.

Another key impact of race on prisons in the United States is the way that it contributes to the geographical inequality. Specifically, isolated impoverished areas are routinely impacted by high incarceration rates as they lose family and community members in noticeable numbers. In addition, inmates are often incarcerated in locations far from their home, isolating them further from their family and communities (Sohoni and Rorie, 2019). Already facing the difficulty that comes with having a family member incarcerated (i.e. loss of income, loss of parent etc.), families may be less willing or unable to commute to the prison to visit their family member if it is considerably far from their home. If family visits are minimal, or even nonexistent, prisoners have less of an opportunity to maintain or fix relationships with their family and community. Social bond theory would emphasize that reduced contact between the inmates and their families causes a deterioration to those bonds, hindering the prisoner's access to resources they may provide and increasing the possibility of recidivating (Bales and Mears, 2008).

In contrast, in most circumstances, Norway is able to keep prisoners fairly close to their homes. They also provide equal assistance and welfare regardless of economic and geographical

location (Smith and Ugelvik, 2017). In Norway, by keeping inmates closer to their families and communities, they are able to have increased access to resources that can assist in their transition back into society, reducing the need for criminality (Bales and Mears, 2008).

Both the U.S. and Norway dealt with an uptake in drug use which led to both countries' increased punishments for drug-related crimes, although the U.S. took more extreme measures (Mitchell and Caudy, 2015; Mathiesen, 2006; Shamma, 2017). As the United States declared War on Crime, gangs began to organize within prisons as a reflection of the continuously developing organized crime outside of prison (Sánchez-Jankowski, 2003). Through increased arrests of gang members and extended sentencing minimums, unintended consequences resulted in prison structures (Mitchell and Caudy, 2015). While U.S. prisons did have gang presence before the War on Crime, the mass uptake in the amount of arrests and sentencing minimums created an unparalleled increase in incarceration levels of those groups. This, again, contributes towards the disruption between the informal groups of inmates and formal prison staff and an imbalance between the groups, resulting in less benefit to the overall goal of reducing criminality (Kreutzer et al., 2016).

Norway differs strongly in this respect because they did not experience a serious uptake in prisons inmates like the U.S. during the War on Crime, resulting in minimal changes to prison structures during this time. Further, there was no indication that they experienced any dramatic gang-related activity that shaped their prison facilities. Caldwell's (1955) ideas assist in explaining the impact of strong cliques and the inmate vs. prison guard mentality. The prisoner's code is emphasized in the U.S., demanding inmate loyalty to their gangs and cliques and limiting the interactions between prison guards and inmates. This creates a disconnect between the informal and formal groups. Kreutzer et al. (2016) explain that the most beneficial outcome

within organizational structures is a balance of informal and formal controls, creating a positive influence. In Norway, the benefits of balancing formal and informal controls is demonstrated through their ability to reduce the need for cliques by creating more of a space for dialogue between guards and inmates, and creating a more comfortable atmosphere within prisons, made possible by preventing overcrowding.

With U.S. prisons struggling with overcrowding and understaffing in their facilities, gangs are able to exploit the structural weaknesses, and place themselves at the top of the inmate power structure (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). The guards, who have the most contact with the inmates, often find themselves to be unprepared to deal with these problems (Hepburn, 2013). Those weak management controls often lead to violations of prisoners' civil rights, impacting their coping mechanisms, pushing them towards cliques and gangs. Santos et al. (2011) supports the idea of a cycle emerging in which inmates are continuously experiencing inadequate resources from the formal structure, pressuring them to align with the gangs and guards are introduced to amplified violence and danger, hindering their ability to interact with the inmates in the rehabilitative and custodial manner they are meant to.

In contrast, Norway maintains smaller prisons that allow for close interactions between inmates and staff (Johnsen and Fridhov, 2018). Overall, overcrowding and understaffing creates dangerous circumstances for the guards and can reinforce inmates' need to conform to cliques and gangs, maintaining their criminal relationships and increasing the risk of reoffending upon release. Norway avoids these situations by purposefully not overcrowding their prison facilities, creating an environment in which guards have the time and resources to respond both informally and formally with inmates. This allows more of an opportunity for a balance and understanding

between the informal and formal groups in the prison facility which Kreutzer et al. (2016) supports as being optimal for creating a positive outcome.

II. Comparing the U.S. and Norway: Prison Structure and Programming

The following analysis will focus on comparing prison structures and programming within the United States and Norway. These factors are important to consider when looking at the informal and formal controls that influence prisons, the inmates and ultimately, recidivism rates. I will be comparing and contrasting the differences between the two countries and analyzing how prison structures and programming contribute to formal and informal controls.

In starting this comparison, a crucial difference between the United States and Norway that must be observed, is the drastic difference in the amount of penal institutions and number of prisoners. The United States prisons hold many more inmates than Norway and face overcrowding, particularly being that they are above institutional capacity. Again, this overcrowding, understaffing and underfunding leads to many of the aforementioned problems in prisons. If guards and inmates are not given the proper resources or ability to follow through on utilizing the proper tools due to lack of time, there are likely unbeneficial outcomes for both inmates and prison guards, increasing the risk of recidivism for prisoners.

Further, Ibsen's (2013) research allowed him to observe the informal culture of the guards in Norway which revealed a system that was based on indiscriminatory distribution of favors as a means of punishment based on the removal of those rewards. By utilizing informal methods, the guards are able to interact with the inmates on a more personal level because they need to understand the needs and desires of the inmates in order to know what informal methods of reward and punishment would work. At the same time, inmates have the opportunity to earn additional awards through their contribution to the formal controls such as the appointment of

“floor boy” which requires inmates to have additional cleaning and practical responsibilities but also adds additional freedoms, such as more access to exercise equipment and the television (Ibsen, 2013). This is an example of balancing the formal and informal controls of the prison by having the guards engage in some informal controls as well as inmates participating in some formal controls, leading to an overall balance between the informal and formal groups of the prison (Kreutzer et al., 2016).

Norway has had success in accomplishing this through continuous socialization of guards to follow these methods to maintain peace within prisons in a way that does not take away from their prisoner’s rights. Maintaining below capacity incarceration rates, adequate staffing, and resources, contributes towards making these types of interactions possible. U.S. prisons will continue to struggle with creating a similar system so long as they are overcrowded, understaffed and underfunded.

In the United States, citizens have frequently elected and support officials who demand tougher punishment for criminals (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). Therefore, rehabilitation and other forms of programming proven to be beneficial have not been the focus of U.S. prison goals. Dick (2018) confirms that the United States does not have any constitutional or statutory requirement to have programming. Lack of formal, mandated programming, understaffing and overpopulated prisons collectively contribute towards a lack of consistency in programming, leaving inmates with little resources to change the situation that got them incarcerated in the first place. Additionally, even if some programming is offered, without consistency or a utilization of programming based on the understanding of the actual, informal needs of the inmates, there will be an increased risk of recidivating (Dick, 2018).

Contrasting this, Norway embraces a motto of humanness. While Norway has aligned themselves with the European rules requiring them to provide rehabilitation, education and vocational training programming, the Norwegian policy has to abide by these rules and do so through the principle of normality which asserts that punishment is to be limited to the restriction of prisoner's liberty and prison life must resemble life in society as closely as possible (Kriminalomsorgen, 2019). This creates a large divide in the frequency in which programming is utilized between the two countries. Norway's welfare-state structure emphasizes penal rehabilitation to repel negative influences of informal culture and make improvements towards reducing recidivism (Høidal, 2018).

They are able to, in part, accomplish this successful programming and prison environment, based on normal society life, because of their understanding of the informal culture of the inmate's. This creates a blend between the formal controls in the form of the standard prison policies (including safety precautions) which are needed and also incorporating and acknowledging the needs of the informal groups of inmates such as effective rehabilitation or increased access to "rewards" rather than just punishments.

Cao et al. (1997) asserts that informal groups are a permanent fixture in society and prisons. Understanding the impacts of these informal groups is imperative when creating efficient policies and rehabilitation programs. Further, effective prison programming has been proven to reduce recidivism within both Norway and the United States (Dick, 2018). Therefore, by committing to providing effective programming, based in a genuine understanding of the needs of informal groups, the U.S. has the ability to reduce the risk of reoffending.

Despite prisoner's having the right to a family life being a well-established right within human many other national jurisdictions, the U.S. does not guarantee this right, nor do they

guarantee assistance in navigating those relationships. Despite continued, proven research indicating that family visits are beneficial when trying to reduce recidivism, the U.S. is unable to implement effective means and spaces for these interactions to occur for varying reasons including understaffing, overcrowding and a lack of resources. Additionally, continuing with the United States' emphasis on punishment, they have neglected to utilize empathetic or moralizing methods (including considerations for family interactions) towards controlling their crime rates.

Including family-involved programming has been proven in the U.S. to have a positive impact on reducing recidivism. Haapanen et al. (2007) describes the difficulties that many inmates face due to their common higher tendency to act impulsively and their lack of ability to restrain behavioral responses to both internal and external constraints. In particular, the inmates are likely entering the prisons because of their deficiency in operating within rules of the informal formal controls within U.S. society and need assistance in learning how to do so if they want to decrease the likelihood of reoffending. For this reason, prisoners need guaranteed, consistent assistance in maintaining healthy relationships with their families through proper programming. To allow limited family interactions, like the U.S. often does, is simply not enough to make a meaningful impact on reducing recidivism.

Norway does offer more extensive opportunities and assistance for inmates to have effective communication with their families. To create effective interactions between inmates, their families and communities, Norway's prisons offer formally structured programming including "father classes," network map, family, and family situation; communication; developmental theory (child development); role theory (roles and role models); emotions (how to relate to emotions, coping); challenges and problem solving; child health (prevention and

treatment); children's rights (parents' responsibilities); and public services (who we can cooperate with) (Hansen, 2017: 176).

Finally, for the visitations and interactions that the United States does allow, they often do not strongly consider the perceptions of visitors, creating a potentially unrewarding visit between the inmates, families and community. With the overarching assumption that the families will take a primary role in assisting the inmates upon release, it is imperative that those relationships are maintained and better yet, improved. In the U.S. in particular, special attention needs to be directed at understanding the informal needs of the family with a majority of them facing financial constraints due to the incarceration of their family member. Incorporating this understanding and empathy into practice, towards the entirety of the situation for both the family and inmate, will increase the likelihood of visitations, as well as the success of those visits. As a result, the risk of recidivating will be reduced.

Contrasting this, Norway attempts to increase the quality and benefit of these interactions by creating a setting in the prisons that safely parallels life outside of prison as much as possible (Nagy, 2014). This is accomplished by the prison staff through their attempts to understand both the inmate's and their family's informal culture and expectations, with the addition of assisting in maintaining the informal and formal relationships between the community and prison inmates by importing community agency services in as many areas as possible (Dick, 2018). The potential for reducing recidivism increases extensively through the incorporation of informal social groups, including family and community members and formal networks, in conjunction with programming and identifying the constraints which hold prisoners back from maintain their responsibilities and obligations (Kruttschnitt et al., 2006).

Haapanen et al. (2007) indicates that the inmate's inability to navigate informal and formal controls within society, is likely what led to their criminality in the first place. The inmate's informal relationships, particularly with family, will likely still exist upon release. This is why it is imperative to have those informal groups involved in the inmate's rehabilitation and assisting in navigating those formal structures. There is an increased likelihood of family involvement as well as effectiveness of the involvement, if the prison structure considers the needs of those family members, which is a concept that Norway embraces.

III. North Dakota Case Study

Already attempting to reduce the penalty within their system, North Dakota director of corrections and rehabilitation and president of the Association of State Correctional Administrators Leann Bertsch saw reason to speed up these reforms after a visit to Halden prison in Norway in October 2015, organized by U.S. prison reform groups (Corley, 2018). This was made possible because of Donald Specter, executive director of the Prison Law Office who, after a visiting Europe and seeing more humane incarceration policies, started funding trips for state correction chiefs, judges, and lawmakers to make the journey and see the prisons for themselves (Slater, 2017). Bertsch realized that punishment, without intervention to help inmates understand how they can handle situations more appropriately in the future, did not create a change in inmates' behavior.

The main factor that she wished to initially address was the use of solitary confinement within their prisons. Solitary confinement was a method of punishment for all different types of negative behavior which caused inmates to be locked away alone for weeks, months or sometimes, years. This method of punishment can cause prisoners to lose their sense of identity and connection to societal groups, potentially increasing their risk of recidivating (Gordon,

2014). Bertsch acknowledges the desire for more severe punishment and punitiveness in the United States, something that Norway does not place emphasis on. Instead, the focus in Norway is to figure out what is necessary to create more law-abiding citizens, and prevent future reoffending (Corley, 2018). As they prepared for their trip across the world to Norway, leaving their facility in Bismarck, North Dakota, she felt fairly good about their current system. However, Bertsch experienced a revelation in Norway as she was confronted by what has been dubbed “the world’s most humane prison” (Slater, 2017).

Bertsch was able to make several discoveries in Norway that she brought back to their system in North Dakota. She used adaptations from examples she witnessed in Norway in order to begin to adopt the principles of Norwegian prisons in ND prisons. These principles have to be initiated slowly in order to comply with state laws and not overwhelm inmates and guards. First, with solitary confinement rarely in use in Norway, Bertsch sought out Norway’s method of reducing their inmate solitary confinement. Changes included dropping minor infractions, the development of a top ten list of dangerous behaviors and a name change, the Behavior Intervention United. No longer were inmates placed in isolation for minor reasons, only those that caused endangerment and the expectations for release were clear, with emphasis on rehabilitation, rather than punishment (Slater, 2017).

Corley (2018) explained that rather than immediately adhering to previous formal rules, ND prison guards took a more informal approach to more minor infractions, like talking back to corrections officers, which they found success in. They approach their rehabilitation by requiring all inmates to go through a mental health screening, understanding who they are informally, to determine if they have suicidal thoughts, provide therapy to cope with issues such as anger and distribute reports for positive behavior, rather than just negative behavior. The North Dakota

State Penitentiary was successful in making these changes and went from 80-90 people in isolation when they first began their reforms to just 20 as of June 2018 (Corley, 2018).

The author was able to travel to North Dakota to visit two facilities within the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation: the North Dakota State Penitentiary (NDSP) and the Missouri River Correctional Center (MSCC) also known as “The Farm.” An entire day was spent touring each of the facilities with the guidance of the Executive Assistant of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, each of the facilities’ wardens, as well as other assistants in charge of inmate family relations and work placement. The NDSP can accommodate approximately 800 residents and currently houses over 700. The residency quarters consists mainly of double-bunk rooms with over one hundred single-occupancy rooms. The MSC can house 151 inmates and has a more open-concept layout at its facility.

At North Dakota State Penitentiary, a maximum-security facility, there have been many changes as a result of the new reforms. They are most proud of their reduced population in the isolation ward and their reduction in inmate violence. In addition to this, there are many different family and community-based initiatives that they have begun and continue to develop. Upon arrival at NDSP, there is a waiting room with children’s toys which had recently been updated through donations. There is also a display case with different apparel created by inmates which are available at a cost which is taxed and divvied up to cover varying expenses, including child support. Within this waiting room, which does not require official clearance to enter, there are eight booths set up to allow for free phone and video chats between families and inmates who are allotted two 20-minute conversations a day.

There are several ways that the NDSP attempts to create interactions between inmates, their families and the community. First, they have a system called JPAY which is system that

allows inmates to have video chats with family members that they can pay for through the facility as well as access to traditional telephone booths. In addition, inmates have the ability to purchase tablets which allow them to freely exchange emails, go online call and video chat. Sixty percent of the inmate population have a tablet.

With the ability to then have those conversations privately, one inmate indicated that the inmates can avoid much of the violence that they usually experience when they are unable to do so. By giving privacy to the inmates and removing them from the violence of the informal culture in the prison, more successful interactions with family can happen. There is also a visiting room within the facility that is decorated with child-friendly paintings done by inmates in an art class taught by a fellow inmate. Staff indicated their plans to incorporate more art into the room to make it feel more comfortable.

The toys within this room were given similar updates to those in the waiting room, all made possible by donations from the community and selected by mothers to make sure they are relevant. Using a local mother to determine which toys were most relevant to today's children, the facility was able to capture the perspective of the inmate's informal life outside of the facility. Precautions are made by having tables that are short and run parallel to the chairs to prevent exchanges underneath. Additionally, rules are outlined on the walls as reminders that embracing is only allowed at the beginning and end of the visit and kissing is only allowed once at the end for no longer than 20 seconds. As NDSP attempts to incorporate more informal input from inmates and families to make the appropriate improvements to the facility, they also maintain some of the necessary formal rules, those that involve safety in particular.

At NDSP, there are several regular events held with family and initiatives that give the inmates access to the community. For each national holiday, the facility hosts an event. For

Father's Day specifically, there are two events held including a BBQ outside where the families can cook together. On this day in particular, the outdoor area is closed to the rest of the inmate population for the day with only ten inmates receiving visitations for the event, which initially the warden assumed would be an issue. Instead, he was surprised to find that the other inmates gave no complaints, and instead praised the idea.

By experimenting with these ideas/events and obtaining the actual feedback from inmates, they can make a more accurate interpretation of what is successful. These types of rewards are not required by any rules or regulations, rather they are enacted through staff and administrators who are attempting to enact informal controls through reward-based opportunities (Ibsen, 2013). I found examples of these same attempts through conversations with the warden and an inmate living in a single occupancy room. The inmate indicated that they often "bother" the warden with requests, one being that of a videogame console. Both the inmate and the warden laughed together as they told the story of the inmate finally getting the console, revealing the connection that they had made with one another.

Another instance of informal interactions is through a game, "cornhole," that is played between those in isolation and the prison guards. Within the isolation sector, there are hallways that guards can seal off in order to take turns playing the game. In order to create a better connection with the community, the inmates initiate several programs including the development of food-drive vehicles and maintaining gardens within the facility to distribute during the food drives. The warden also emphasized the importance of a local connection they have with an important community figure who is involved in many donations to the inmates, particularly for apparel for when they are released.

The Missouri River Correctional Center, a minimum-security facility, obtained the nickname “the farm” based on their previous agricultural endeavors and their facility atmosphere which is located in rural Bismarck. In this wooded area with no fences, exists close-quartered housing units where inmates are initially placed, unless their good behavior earns them a spot in one of their 36 private rooms. These private rooms come with their own key and a shared bathroom with one other inmate, moreover, resembling a college dorm. These private rooms do not allow private visitations and also come with a curfew.

Inmates that reside here are usually either placed here for lesser crimes or more often, serving out the last few months of more lengthy sentencings, usually beginning at NDSP. The average length of stay at this facility is six months, creating a significant barrier for staff trying to promote events to create access for family and friend visitations. With the turnover rate so high and long distances for families to travel, staff have limited time to understand the needs of the inmates and their families before they are released, and new inmates arrive. Work-release programs were among the first of reforms to be revamped at this facility with hopes of also allowing ways for inmates to earn more freedoms such as shopping trips, day passes home and the right to wear civilian clothes at the facility (Slater, 2017).

Coordinators at MRCC are working hard to promote family and friend visitations at their facility. They have a room within the main building, which is used for family visitations and events, including a graduation ceremony they hold for completion of an inmate’s GED, which family is welcome to attend. This room is small and holds a few tables and a vending machine, all of which they are hoping to revamp. Their program reforms were not the first to be undertaken and they are still in the process of trying to determine what works the best and what changes are necessary to make these visitations and interactions more successful.

Events that they have found the most success in include their STEM events, their Scholastic book exchange with inmate's children program and book bingo. The most popular STEM event was one in which inmates and their children were able to build boats to hold marbles for a friendly competition that allowed them to work and learn together. Their most popular event overall is their scholastic book event in which the facility purchases books twice a year, records the fathers reading them and sends the Scholastic book and the recording to their children. Through experimenting with a variety of programming, the staff can determine what is most successful by listening to the informal demands of the families and inmates, not just by choosing programs they assume are best.

Parenting classes are also available to assist the father's in having better interactions with their children. In order to alleviate tension with the community, inmates also take day trips into Bismarck. Notably, they regularly visit the North Dakota museum and over time have built a rapport as being respectable and are known for visiting. Staff overseeing these programs are trying to gauge what inmates and families enjoy most, with the goal of understanding the informal inmate and family culture and needs, rather than simply following what facility administrators might see as best. There are several barriers that the staff indicated which make facilitating these programs difficult.

First, North Dakota's large geographical region and small population often places inmates at a distance from their families and with an average sentencing period of six months, makes visitation trips unattractive and often unaffordable for families. While I did not visit the one female-populated prison facility in North Dakota, staff at NDSP and MRCC explained that with only one facility that is located on one side of the state, far from any major cities, imprisoned mothers found it especially difficult to have exchanges with family members.

Second, since the average period spent at this facility is so short, the staff are constantly catering to an ever-changing group of people, making it difficult to determine their needs. This quick turnaround can be difficult for the prison staff to engage and understand the inmate and their family's informal culture.

Third, staff noted that weather often creates complications in hosting the events and for travel, based off their geographical location, which often experiences extreme weather. Fourth, programs must be introduced slowly because residents are easily overwhelmed by even the smallest change and exhausted by multiple events in one day. This speaks to the staff's acknowledgement of the importance of engaging informally with the inmates and understanding their needs and limits, which are not outlined in formal rules. Finally, implementation must also be slow in order to make sure that programs align with protocol and to create change in protocols. The objective of the prison facility and staff is to experiment informally with ideas stemming from their research into Norwegian prisons in a way that does not overstep the current formal rules and can, over time, develop into standing formal rules.

There are advantages that North Dakota correctional officials admit their state has which sets them apart from the rest of the United States.

First, the state is mostly homogenous with the largest minority group being Native Americans, and very little control from gangs compared to other states (Corley, 2018; Slater, 2017). This makes their new solitary confinement policy less difficult to implement; however, there are some inmates who they say are still too dangerous to keep out of confinement entirely.

Additionally, North Dakota has an incarceration rate of 240 prisoners per 100,000 residents compared to the U.S. average of 655 and Norway's 73. Slater (2017) goes on to point out that they also have a smaller state government which is more susceptible to the ideas of a

visionary leader. While they do not argue against the Norwegian prison policy applicability on a national level, they admit that North Dakota provides an easier setting to implement these policies. Above all, while some policies were initially met with resistance by staff, by implementing them at a reasonable pace, they hope to continue the progress that they've seen so far (Slater 2017).

IV. Interview

An interview was conducted with a counselor from the Organisation for Families and Friends of Prisoners based out of Oslo, Norway. They served in this role as a counselor and department manager of this NGO for fifteen years. They have been able to provide insight on their take of the Norwegian penal system, particularly as it pertains to family interactions with inmates. They believe that stigmatizing and treating people badly is the least effective policy in reducing recidivism. People that are respected and treated with dignity will come back to society without hatred inside of them. Regarding family interaction, they believe that it is important for positive family contact to be facilitated because research shows that inmates who have someone to go back to will be less likely to reoffend. Having a stable partner is important and they have heard firsthand from inmates that while the situation can be harrowing, it made them realize what this is about and that the children suffer more than they do. By facilitating these informal interactions through a formally controlled space, professionals can assist inmates in appropriately navigating their relationships, and potentially reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

The counselor does acknowledge that some relationships between inmates and their family start good and stay good. However, there are others that need to be worked on and sometimes those interactions are not always the best thing for the child and the family, therefore it should be done for the good of the family. If promoting a relationship between the inmates and

their family is good for the family, that is the number one goal, but there also happens to be the added benefit of reducing recidivism. The counselor emphasizes the importance of comfortability within the spaces provided for these interactions. Some facilities do have apartments meant for visitations to have a more “natural” feel which can be stayed in for 24-48 hours. While there, they can cook together, watch tv, and put the children to bed, which is a very different way of being together: a normal family situation. These types of spaces embrace the incorporation of the inmate and their family’s informal culture, allowing the inmate to exercise the skills they were formally taught within an informal space that would more closely align with their life outside the facility.

In the smaller rooms that are more "customary” for visitations, it can be difficult to talk about things and relax. The counselor says that having a support system upon release is crucial because the time of release is a vulnerable time for inmates. The organization of the prison provides a structure which can make for a difficult transition back into society where you operate on your own. Some people have bad friends that they were aligned with and need new connections. The expectations from both the inmates and family members can be conflicting with reality, adding to the vulnerable state that they are in. This is why it is important that Norwegian prisons try to utilize businesses in areas such as medical, educational, or library services from outside of the facility, allowing the inmate to create relationships with people that are outside of the criminal network that they may have previously been associated with.

Their organization works throughout Norway to influence all prisons in Norway. As a part of their programming, there is a children’s officer who works in the prison to help facilitate visitations including those made available through Skype for families that are far away. Physical visitations are permitted at a minimum of one hour per week with some offering more. If you

have children, you can apply for additional visits. In addition to access to Skype and apartment stays, inmates often have access to gardens for visitations in which they can cook together with their family, or each bring food. Currently, the organization are running a program based on reflective dialogues as a means of facilitating the visit between the inmate and the family. A meeting is held in the prison with the inmate and prison counselor along with the family and their outside counselor to facilitate discussion with more structure.

The counselor does say that there is not enough time allotted for visitations nor enough flexibility. Another issue comes from the length of time it takes to be allowed a visitation. Visitors must receive a background check and sometimes wait up to three weeks before the first which can be hard for both the inmate and family for the beginning of the incarceration period. The counselor considers this to be a negative in Norway when other countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, allow for visitation the day of the arrest. The counselor believes that, even in Norway, the inmates do need more support. While some prisons in Norway do a wonderful job at providing the resources for inmates to get support, there is a wide variance and some prisons do not.

Recently, the focus has been primarily on the building of new prisons rather than having a focus on human resources. Other changes they believe would be beneficial include investing more into Skype, which they have experienced a lot of positive outcomes from. This also provides a cheaper means to call because it is quite expensive, particularly for foreign prisoners. Skype is particularly beneficial because Norway's population is spread widely across the country and for some people it takes 13 hours to get to the facility which can be expensive. The use of Skype is another example of acknowledging the constraints of distance on the inmate's informal relationships and working to bridge that distance through a cheaper means of communication.

The counselor believe that additional investments should also be made in the programming that already exists including relationship counseling and parenting classes.

The counselor believes that Norway's culture contributes a lot to their current prison policies, particularly with Norway being a welfare state. Norway is also a very small country and so "everyone knows everyone in a way." The government of Norway is currently attempting to become tougher on crime which, to them, is not a positive. The government also needs to see the facts that reveal that at-home electronic tagging makes people less likely to reoffend, and that it works. Being a welfare state and the country's view of crime makes people generally understand that the inmate's crime more often is a result of a social problem such as poverty or addiction, not that they are an evil person. They know that you need to invest in people and for example, give inmates an education, which ultimately helps reduce recidivism. They need to be trained in a human way and offered trainings, an education and help them to have the skills and innovation which will give them a better chance upon release; believe in themselves. The counselor says that the question asked in our society is, "who do you want to have as a neighbor?"

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. Discussion/Summary

Many factors contribute to the type of formal and informal groups and controls that develop and there is no way to prevent them from forming. By understanding the way that the informal groups operate and why they formed the way they did, formal controls can adjust to operate more productively. By having formal and informal controls balanced appropriately, they can reinforce each other, creating a more positive outcome (Kreutzer et al, 2016). For a prison facility to operate, the administrators of prison administrations and prison programs need to be aware of how these relationships function to have success (Caldwell, 1955).

The degree to which informal and formal groups function within prison in Norway and the United States clearly differs. Particularly, the way that formal programming works to reduce recidivism differs. In order for formal programming to optimally operate, administrators need to acquire a better understanding of the informal controls and culture experienced by inmates. The formal controls in Norwegian prisons do operate at a higher cost than the United States currently, but that could be adjusted with lower incarceration rates. Currently, Halden prison spends over \$93,000 per inmate each year with the United States spending an average of \$31,000 (there are variations by state) but if the United States had the same low incarceration rate as Norway, they could spend the same amount as Norwegian prisons and still save over \$45 billion a year (Benko, 2015).

The cultures within Norwegian society and U.S. society are also very different. Norway is a welfare state that has been primarily homogenous with an emphasis on conformity (Gullestad, 2006; Shammass, 2017). Norwegians also have a higher standard of living, emphasize equality and have strong negative connotations toward racism. Norway's exceptional standards

of living are a testament to their motto, of maintaining a ‘principle of normality’ while in prison (Toreld, Haugli, Svalastog, 2018; Høidal, 2018). In comparison, the United States is not a welfare state and has always had a very diverse demographic makeup. The United States has greater social-class disparities with many middle and upper-class whites living socially isolated from the poor minorities who are facing such disproportionate incarceration rates (Sohoni and Rorie, 2019). Further, the United States has a fewer rehabilitative initiatives in their prison system with an emphasis of tougher punishment from politicians which is reflected in their prison policies (Fleisher and Decker, 2001).

In Norway, their government believes that the social pathologies that contributed towards crime were able to be fixed through political and economic stability, particularly for those in need (Shammas, 2017) They also began to realize that the inmates would eventually become their neighbors and pushed for a system that would rehabilitate them into worthy neighbors (Nagy, 2014). This general stability within Norwegian society allows them to embrace their emphasis on normality within their prisons, making the prisons a reflection of their secure society. The United States could not necessarily embrace this “principle of normality” when many of the inmates come from a society of disadvantaged areas which have weaker formal and informal controls, not of one which may promote less criminality.

Further, unlike Norwegians who are a more dependent, equality-focused people, U.S. culture places an emphasis on individuality and independence with little room for empathy (Sohoni and Rorie, 2019). This is likely where their tough-on-crime stance developed from and continues to be emphasized today. Conservative ideologies pushed for formal structures that would combat the urban poor who they saw as irresponsible criminals abusing the welfare

system (Soss, Fording, and Schram, 2009). These formal structures were enacted through policy changes focused on the War on Drugs.

Additionally, upon release, U.S. offenders feel a sense of inability to ever escape their “owed debt to society” with the harm experienced during and after their sentence for both the inmate and their family (Alexander, 2010). After being released from the formal structure that is the jail or prison, former inmates are included into a new formal structure of supervision to monitor their behavior. In fact, changes in criminal justice policy has placed more people under state surveillance than institutionalization within prison facilities (Soss, Fording, and Schram, 2009).

The informal groups in the United States operate much differently than they do in Norway. This large difference can be traced largely to the cultural and political-economic arrangement that Norway has relied on to ensure their long-term success (Shammas, 2017). By creating strong informal and formal social controls on the outside, they have had an easier time facilitating their formal controls on a less subversive group within their prison system. This is not to say that it is impossible for the United States to do so, but a better understanding of the informal groups operating within their prison system and an investment in more consistent, effective prison programming has been proven to assist in reducing recidivism rates (Dick, 2018). Programming proven to reduce recidivism comes in the form of rehabilitation, educational, vocational-training and family/community facilitated interaction (Dick, 2018; Smith, 2018). Focusing on the programming meant to assist in maintaining relationships between inmates, their families and communities, Norway does a particularly good job by having their formal controls assist inmates in interacting with their informal networks outside of the prison.

Prisoners' right to have a family life has been well established within the human rights laws in many national jurisdictions. In the United States, an emphasis has been placed on "utilitarian, reformatory and crime control aspects of punishments rather than on its emotive, passionate and moralizing sides" which has hampered the rehabilitation efforts for prisoners (Smith, 2018: 7). However, a legal rights approach emphasizes the prisoner's perspective, while less attention is paid to the impact family interaction has on recidivism (Smith, 2018). Formally structured programs that are designed to implement visitation programs need to focus on expectations, experiences and perceptions of the visitors who are a part of the informal groups that the inmates come from. Neglecting to consider this can result in an unbeneficial visitation (Tewksbury and DeMichele, 2005).

Prison administrators struggle to fulfill the necessary appropriate structure, process and experience of prison visitations for the creation of beneficial visits due to financial and logistical constraints (Tewksbury and DeMichele, 2005). It is more common to have spaces for interactions between inmates and their children at female facilities (Pierce, 2015). Male inmate-fathers could also benefit from such arrangements (Pierce, 2015). Imprisonment can either strengthen family relations or result in a disruption of familial ties depending strongly on whether or not the inmates and their families are given the tools to properly navigate those informal relationships (Granja, 2016).

Richard Tewksbury suggests that allowing family visitation is likely to be appealing to both liberals and conservatives (Bales and Mears 2008). Experiencing a single parent household as a result of imprisonment has a uniquely disruptive impact on children (Pierce, 2015). The family experiences incarceration of its member as an "ambiguous loss" incomparable to loss produced by breakup, divorce, or death for children of inmates (Pierce, 2015: 371). For children,

incarceration of their parents tends to generate feelings of abandonment and isolation, often leading them to develop an attitude that rarely fosters sympathy for others (Pierce, 2015). Additionally, the children of inmates are more susceptible to criminality (Pierce, 2015). There is evidence that interaction between inmates and their children reduces intergenerational criminality (Pierce, 2015).

In addition to a reduction in recidivism, familial visits can improve mental health of inmates and their families, increasing the likelihood of the family staying together after release and better overall social adjustment (De Claire and Dixon, 2017). Key benefits of preserving these primary relationships in prison is the inmate's ability to maintain their social identity within their informal groups which provides a sense of well-being, security and self-worth (De Claire and Dixon, 2017).

The informal support network maintained during incarceration enables released inmates to better cope with the challenges of formal structures upon reentry (Bales and Mears 2008). It is critical to understand that "wives and families of prisoners are a valuable resource for the prison, the community, and the nation. There is no policy more decent and more basic than validating the ties and roles we hold as human beings" (Pierce, 2015: 385). By facilitating family interactions during incarceration, the family is able to develop an acceptance of the individual's criminal record, resulting in less stigmatization for the inmate upon release (Mowen and Vishner, 2015).

Maintaining family relations is contingent upon the formally established environment within the prisons that facilitate the family interactions (Arditti, 2003). The spaces in which these interactions occur acts as a "portal" via which the family's experience is mediated (Pierce, 2015). Attitudes of the correctional staff will influence the quality of the prison environment and the

family's' visit (Arditti, 2003). Negative visitation experiences can undermine any potential value from the family's visitation (Pierce, 2015). Therefore, more explicit identification of the needs of the informal groups that are the inmates and their families could benefit the visitation experience (Pierce, 2015).

In Norway, the formal structures incorporate many of these considerations for the informal groups of family and community. North Dakota correctional staffers also recognized this during their trips to Norway to learn more about their prison model. Although they are still in the early stages, North Dakota corrections has started by working on the attitudes of employees and inmates in order to reduce violence and through already experienced success, they are working towards reforming their programming as well. Again, North Dakota is in a particularly better position to enact these reforms successfully due to their similarity to Norway in that they have a smaller, more homogenous population and lower incarceration rates as well as a smaller government, more open to the ideas of reforms. Regardless, both the counselor from the Norwegian prison system and North Dakota's prison chief recognize the importance of taking a more humane approach on incarceration. This human approach involves less punitiveness and more understand of those informal groups that are operating within their systems in order to meet their needs appropriately.

II. Conclusions

Sociologists understand that group dynamics are relevant to understanding how society operates. In order for prisons in the United States to see success in reducing their recidivism, they need to not only understand the theory behind informal and formal groups, they need to understand how they operate in real life within their system (Caldwell, 1955). Operationally, Norway runs its country differently as an extensive services welfare state compared to the United

States which residual, means-tested welfare creates a weak safety net. If there was additional space, I could have examined how differences in intergovernmental systems, namely, America's decentralized federal system and Norway's (centralized) Unitary system have affected prison structures and incarceration rates. Further, the U.S. also has both private and public prisons, both of which operate separately with different structures, policies, and desired outcomes. This is something that Norway does not have.

Certainly, we can utilize some of the policies and programming that Norway offers in U.S. prisons, but Norway's success comes from those policies but is rooted and longstanding because it works to prevent individuals from falling into crime in the first place (Shammas, 2017). Norway is able to accomplish this by providing strong formal structures that provide security for the informal groups and recognizing that the formal structures need to operate in a way that caters to these informal groups.

Part of the reason why North Dakota is able to incorporate some of these Norwegian modeled policies stems from their state's requirement to provide all inmates with rehabilitation. North Dakota staffers even noted that people will purposely get arrested to take advantage of this entitlement to rehabilitation. Effective programming has been proven to reduce recidivism and until the United States establishes a legal entitlement for inmates to receive it, it will continue to be deprived of those opportunities to participate in them (Dick, 2018). Additionally, the prison facilities in North Dakota that were analyzed in this study were state prisons. This also makes their structures more comparable to prisons in Norway. Further, the racial composition in North Dakota makes it a better comparison to Norway than just looking at Norway and the United States as a whole.

If I wished to expand further on this comparison, more analysis of issues of race in America would have been introduced, such as America's legacy of slavery. But, more importantly, by examining how inequality in the American educational system and in economic opportunity structure (ex. A lack of access to high-paid professions, higher unemployment and poverty for racial minorities) are connected to prison incarceration rates.

Additionally, this research can also be expanded to analyze the impact of gender. While men overwhelmingly account for the prison populations in the United States, women's incarceration rates have increased at twice the pace of men's, causing women to account for approximately 10% of the U.S. prison population (Kajstura, 2019). Norway, on the other hand, has had fluctuations with the amount of females in their prisons with an increase from 5.1% in 2015 to 6.3% of the total prison population in 2020 (The World Prison Brief: Norway, 2020). Increasing incarceration rates for women and separate prison facilities in both countries likely creates a much different context that would also benefit from similar exploration.

Ultimately, the United States can see success in reducing recidivism by implementing effective programming and including those policies that put an emphasis on creating and maintaining healthy relationships with their family and community. By having a better understanding of the operating relationship between the informal and formal groups within the prisons, they can administer those programs effectively. However, ultimately, unless the U.S. addresses the causes for criminality within their country in an attempt to prevent criminal activity, they risk having their inmates reenter the same situations that got them imprisoned in the first place.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

5/11/20, 5:42 PM



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building, Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284
www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Initial Approval (Committee)

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Taylor Hilliard](#)
CC: [Arunas Juska](#)
Date: 7/18/2019
Re: [UMCIRB 19-001242](#)
Research on The Dakota Prison Experiment

I am pleased to inform you that at the convened meeting on 7/17/2019 of Social/Behavioral IRB, the committee voted to approve the above study. Approval of the study and the consent form(s) is for the period of 7/17/2019 to 7/16/2020.

The Social/Behavioral IRB deemed this study Minimal Risk.

IMPORTANT:

This study has been approved prior to site approval secondary to the research site requiring IRB approval prior to determining whether they will allow the study to be conducted. Research related procedures should NOT BEGIN until the following items have been submitted via an amendment application and approved by our Chairperson.

- 1) Where applicable: Your research hypothesis should be updated per your comments made in an email response, which was presented to the IRB committee for review.
- 2) Where applicable: Describe how the surveys will be delivered: paper, electronic, or both.
- 3) Screen view 1.4 conflict of interest, question 6.0: Please answer this question.
- 4) Screen view 1.5 study locations, question 3.0: A fully executed site approval letter should be uploaded.
- 5) Screen view 7.1 consent forms & process of consent, question 1.2 (residents): 4th paragraph, 1st line should say "Please call (add faculty supervisor name) at (add faculty supervisor office or department phone number) and then change Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) to University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914.

6) Screen view 7.1 consent forms & process of consent, question 1.2 (employees): 3rd paragraph, 5th line should say "Please call (add faculty supervisor name) at (add faculty supervisor office or department phone number) and then change Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) to University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914.

7) Screen view 7.1 consent forms & process of consent, any applicable questions: There needs to be a clear description of how the consent process will occur, when/where it will occur (along with a description of what, if any, confidentiality practices are allowed surrounding the consent process) and who will be obtaining informed consent.

8) Screen view 8 data privacy & confidentiality, question 5.0: There needs to be a clear description as to where all data/source documents will be stored (if both paper and electronic, both methods should be clearly described).

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review and approval except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Document	Description
Employee consent form(0.02)	Consent Forms
Employee survey(0.02)	Surveys and Questionnaires
Protocol(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Resident consent form(0.02)	Consent Forms
Resident survey(0.02)	Surveys and Questionnaires
Thesis Proposal(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application

The following UMCIRB members were recused for reasons of potential for Conflict of Interest on this research study:

None

The following UMCIRB members with a potential Conflict of Interest did not attend this IRB meeting: None

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
 IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

