University of
South-Eastern Norway

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Troublemakers, firefighters and safe havens

Lived experiences of staff support for desistance during resettlement

Dissertation for the degree of Ph.D
Person-centered Health Care

Faculty of Health and Social Sciences

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South-Eastern Norway

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Abstract

Transitions from prison to the community have been portrayed as long-lasting experiences of vulnerability, challenges and deep discomfort. Scholars have also illustrated the pains of imprisonment and release, as well as complex processes of resettlement. Throughout this phase of adaptation or readjustment to new environments, desistance from crime is often an explicit goal for re-entering persons and the Correctional Services. However, similar vulnerabilities, challenges and harm have also been described as accompanying desistance processes following imprisonment. The conditions for desistance support within the Norwegian Correctional Services have recently been portrayed as worrying and demanding. This has been partly related to changes in budgeting, sentencing and execution of punishment; however, it is pertinent to clarify that these changes might also, to some extent, have influenced desistance processes in positive ways. In this context, the Correctional Services have formalized close partnerships with penal voluntary organizations to assist rehabilitation and desistance. Despite extensive international research on desistance support, such assistance during resettlement in Norway has scarcely been touched upon.

Based on this, the aim of this thesis is to provide a broader understanding of how desistance can be supported by probation staff and staff of penal voluntary organizations during resettlement, by asking: 1. What are considered ideal interactions with staff to support desistance processes in the transition from prison to community? 2. How are daily practices of desistance support experienced during resettlement? As the perspectives of people in resettlement, probation staff and staff of penal voluntary organizations on supported desistance during resettlement in Norway have largely been ignored, this thesis builds on their lived experiences of walking through the prison gate or from interacting with those who did. The study is based on 19 individual interviews with 13 resettling persons, using a qualitative, longitudinal design, and five focus group interviews with 17 staff. Participants were recruited from six sites in eastern Norway. Interpretations of the interviews were inspired by various narrative and reflexive thematic approaches.

This study shows that people with lived experience of imprisonment highlight the value of interaction with staff when this is based on recognition, continued relationships and comprehensive approaches. Such supportive relationships are exemplified throughout the whole resettlement process in this research. However, by contrast, misrecognition and fragmentation in encounters with prison employees often caused pain and frustration, while withholding otherwise achievable opportunities for gradual sentence progression. Occasionally, prison staff were perceived as ‘troublemakers’, as these experiences caused trouble and made life more difficult after imprisonment than it had been before.

Moreover, in the later phase of imprisonment, staff in penal voluntary organizations and in probation offices underline the importance of establishing early contact with imprisoned persons. However, this phase often revealed limited contact and poor preparation for transfer or release. Further, the obstacles people face as they approach society outside the prison gate are presented as both expected and unexpected. Barriers often seemed to grow higher outside the walls, and were highly related to pains of anticipated and actual labelling and stigma. A shining example of an ideal facilitation of desistance during and after the transition to the community, from all three perspectives contributing to the study, is illustrated by 'umbilical cord' support. This metaphor was emphasized by penal voluntary organization staff to visualize how close relationships allowed them to guide and assist people when they faced hindrances in these phases. Despite similarities in *what* probation staff and penal voluntary organization staff considered ideal assistance to overcome frustration and obstacles, this research demonstrates differences in *how* they were able to challenge and support attitudes and actions, and address societal barriers and stigma. Whereas penal voluntary organization staff *actively helped* in navigating the troubled waters of resettlement, probation staff often expressed dissatisfaction at only being given the possibility to *advise* people in this context. Probation staff described preparations for release in prison as deficient, which turned their role in meetings with resettling persons into that of 'facilitator-coordinators'. Additionally, they compared their present work to a kind of firefighting, as practical tasks overshadowed their previous relational work. By practising 'umbilical cord' support, through a resource focus and by establishing close, continued relationships, penal voluntary organization staff managed to reduce barriers related to identity change, stigma and navigating the welfare system. These examples provide useful insights into how connections and transitions can be drawn between identity desistance and relational desistance. Furthermore, this thesis presents decisive insights into how unforeseen obstacles which frustrate positive trajectories for desistance also occur *after* completion of the sentence. It exemplifies how staff can facilitate positive outcomes in these situations, representing stepping stones and safe havens to provide competent and open-minded reflections. Nevertheless, this study has illustrated nuanced manifestations of daily practices that frustrate as well as facilitate desistance. The Probational Services' interaction and assistance also shows how their resettlement practice seems to have moved away from the ideal support. These findings also suggest that current practice in broader terms is too narrow, fragmented and blurred to reflect the shared ideal.

Based on these findings, I sketch out an ideal perspective on desistance support during resettlement. Here, I advocate that desistance should be supported as a continuous process, from the point when people enter the prison gate to far beyond their transition to society. Moreover, I recommend a broadened definition of and approach to resettlement and an overarching desistance focus throughout this process. I further argue that my list of added pains during and after imprisonment in this thesis pokes holes in the absolute claim of Norwegian penal exceptionalism. However, my findings also convey how macro-structures and attitudes in broader society may help to reduce stigma and support a sense of

belonging. This reflects aspects of Norwegian society which could be regarded as exceptional in both absolute and relative terms.

Keywords: Resettlement, Supported desistance, Lived experiences, Prison, Probation, Penal voluntary organizations, Norwegian Correctional Services, Pains, Nordic penal exceptionalism

Sammendrag

Overgangen fra fengsel til samfunn har blitt fremstilt som en langvarig opplevelse av sårbarhet, utfordring og ubehag. Tidligere forskning har omtalt hvordan smerter fra fengselsoppholdet fortsetter gjennom rehabiliterings- og reetableringsprosessen. I denne omstillingsfasen er desistance (gjerne forstått som veien bort fra kriminalitet og fram imot en opplevelse av tilhørighet til samfunnet) ofte et eksplisitt mål, både for kriminalomsorgen og personen selv. Lignende sårbarheter, utfordringer og smerter har imidlertid blitt beskrevet å ledsage desistance-prosesser etter fengselsoppholdet. Kriminalomsorgens vilkår for å bygge opp under desistance-prosesser har den siste tiden blitt fremstilt som bekymringsfulle og krevende. Dette har blant annet vært knyttet til endringer i budsjettering, straffutmåling og gjennomføring av straff. En relevant presisering er imidlertid at enkelte av disse endringene også i noen grad påvirker desistance-prosesser på en positiv måte. Kriminalomsorgen har i denne konteksten formalisert tette samarbeid med frivillige organisasjoner for å fasilitere rehabilitering og desistance. Til tross for omfattende internasjonal forskning på desistance-støtte, har slik bistand under reetableringsfasen i Norge i liten grad vært utforsket.

Målet med avhandlingen er å gi en bredere forståelse av hvordan desistance-prosesser kan støttes av friomsorgspersonale og ansatte i frivillige organisasjoner gjennom reetableringsfasen ved å spørre: 1. Hva anses som ideell samhandling med ansatte for å støtte desistance i overgangen fra fengsel til samfunn? 2. Hvordan oppleves bistand til desistance i daglig praksis gjennom reetableringsfasen? Siden perspektivene til personer i reetablering, friomsorgspersonale og ansatte i frivillige organisasjoner på desistance-støtte under reetablering i Norge i stor grad har blitt oversett, bygger denne avhandlingen på *deres* erfaringer enten med å gå ut gjennom porten etter endt fengselssoning eller med å samhandle med dem som har gjort det. Studien er basert på 19 individuelle intervjuer med 13 personer som er i en reetableringsfase, gjennom et kvalitativt, longitudinelt design, samt fem fokusgruppe-intervjuer med 17 ansatte. Deltakerne ble rekruttert fra seks baser på Østlandet. Tolkninger av intervjuene er inspirert av narrative og refleksive tematiske tilnærminger.

Denne studien viser at personer med levd erfaring med soning fremhever verdien av samhandling med ansatte når denne er basert på anerkjennelse, langvarige relasjoner og helhetlige tilnærminger. Slike støttende relasjoner er eksemplifisert gjennom hele reetableringsprosessen i denne forskningen. Fragmentering og manglende anerkjennelse i møte med fengselsansatte viste seg ofte å forårsake smerte, frustrasjon og tilbakeholdte muligheter for gradvis straffeprogresjon. I enkelte tilfeller skapte dette trøbbel og gjorde livet vanskeligere etter fengslingen enn det tidligere hadde vært. Betydningen av å etablere tidlig kontakt med fengslede personer understrekes av ansatte i friomsorgen og frivillige organisasjoner. I den senere fasen av soningen framstår likevel både kontaktetablering og

forberedelse til overføring eller løslatelse som mangelfull. Videre presenteres hindringene folk møter når de nærmer seg samfunnet utenfor fengselsporten som både forventet og uventet. Barrierene så ofte ut til å vokse seg høyere utenfor murene, og sprang gjerne ut av utfordringer relatert til forventet og faktisk stigma. En ideell tilrettelegging for desistance illustreres gjennom en 'navlestrengs-praksis'. Metaforen bringes frem av ansatte i en av de frivillige organisasjonene for å visualisere hvordan nære relasjoner tillater dem å støtte opp under desistance-prosesser. Til tross for samsvaret mellom ansattes beskrivelser av ideell bistand viser denne forskningen forskjeller i hvordan de var i stand til å utfordre og støtte holdninger og handlinger, samt manøvrere sosiale barrierer og stigma. Mens ansatte i frivillige organisasjoner aktivt hjalp til med å støtte opp gjennom reetableringsfasen, uttrykte kriminalomsorgens ansatte ofte misnøye over å bare få muligheten til å veilede folk i denne fasen. Ved å praktisere 'navlestreng'-støtte, gjennom et ressursfokus og ved å etablere nære relasjoner, klarte de å redusere barrierer knyttet til identitetsendring, stigma og navigering i velferdssystemet. Disse eksemplene viser nyttige innsikter i hvordan sammenhenger og overganger kan trekkes mellom identitets desistance og relasjonell desistance. Avhandlingen gir også innsikt i hvordan uforutsette hindringer som utfordrer desistance-prosesser også oppstår *etter* fullført straffegjennomføring. Studien gir eksempler på hvordan ansatte kan bistå i slike situasjoner, som 'springbrett' og 'trygge havner' som legger til rette for kompetente og fordomsfrie refleksjoner. Til tross for dette har denne studien illustrert varierende former for desistance-frustrasjon og desistance-støtte i daglig praksis. Utover dette viser den hvordan friomsorgens ansatte har beveget seg bort fra å praktisere reetablering støtte i tråd med idealet.

Basert på disse funnene har jeg skissert et ideelt perspektiv på desistance støtte gjennom reetableringsfasen. Denne skissen tar til orde for at desistance bør støttes gjennom kontinuerlige prosesser, fra det tidspunkt personer går *inn* fengselsporten til *langt utover* overgangen deres til samfunnet. Videre anbefaler studien en utvidet definisjon av og tilnærming til reetablering, samt et overordnet fokus på desistance gjennom hele denne prosessen. I tillegg til dette argumenterer jeg for at min liste over tilleggssmerter under og etter soning i denne avhandlingen bidrar til å slå sprekker i påstanden om norsk eksepsjonalisme. Funnene formidler imidlertid også hvordan makrostrukturer og holdninger i samfunnet for øvrig kan bidra til å redusere stigma og støtte opplevelsen av tilhørighet. Dette gjenspeiler sider ved det norske samfunnet som kan betraktes som eksepsjonelle i både absolutte og relative termer.

Emneord: Reetablering, desistance-støtte, levde erfaringer, fengsel, friomsorg, frivillige organisasjoner, kriminalomsorg, smerter, Nordic penal exceptionalism

List of papers

Paper 1

Koffeld-Hamidane S, Schinkel M, Andvig E and Karlsson B (2024) Nuances of fragmentation, (mis)recognition and closeness: Narratives of challenges and support during resettlement. *Punishment & society* 26(1): 187-207. DOI: 10.1177/14624745231203961

Paper 2

Koffeld-Hamidane S, Karlsson B and Andvig E (2023b) Spotlighting the probation meeting - Lived experiences of desistance-supporting interaction following imprisonment. *European Journal of Probation* 15(3): 218-237. DOI: 10.1177/20662203231199397

Paper 3

Koffeld-Hamidane S, Andvig E and Karlsson B (2023a) 'Facilitator-coordinators' or 'umbilical cords': Staff experiences of supporting desistance following release from prison. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*. DOI: 10.1177/17488958231173610

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1 Setting the stage

The vulnerabilities and challenges which often accompany the transition from prison to the community have been communicated through literature for centuries. Well-known authors who have experienced this transfer, such as Oscar Wilde in Ireland and Jens Bjørneboe in Norway, have portrayed it as deeply uncomfortable and as a form of suffering that persists long after release. In his novel 'Den onde hyrde' (The Evil Shepherd), originally published in 1960, Bjørneboe describes the protagonist's anguish and anxiety a few days ahead of release as follows:

> *He knew what it would be like to be released again;*
> *his body would miss the walls, he would feel dizzy from having all the space around him,*
> *from having a whole street to walk in.*
> *He would feel lost, and his body would be unnaturally loose and free,*
> *like when you have carried a heavy rucksack for some time,*
> *and then suddenly take it off and move without it.*
> *Likewise, he would be helpless without the walls and iron bars around him.*
> *It would be a dizziness that left him completely dazed, dull and weak*.
>
> (Bjørneboe, 1982: 18. Author's translation)

Similar ambivalences, as well as extensive and persistent marks of imprisonment, appear in a letter from Oscar Wilde, who was released from Reading Gaol in 1897:

> *The Prisoner looks to liberty as an immediate return to all his ancient energy,*
> *quickened into more vital forces by long disuse.*
> *When he goes out, he finds he still has to suffer.*
> *His punishment, as far as its effects go,*
> *lasts intellectually and physically, just as it lasts socially. He still has to pay.*
> *One gets no receipt for the past when one walks out into the beautiful air.*
>
> (Conrad, 2006: 174)

Beyond these portrayals, scholars have illustrated the complexity of the re-entry process and the pains of release (Durnescu, 2019; Warr, 2016). In line with the quotes from Bjørneboe and Wilde, these complexities and harms are shown to be personal, social and structural. More specifically, Durnescu (2019) describes various pains that arose in adapting or readjusting to new environments, related to social isolation, stigma, instability and fighting bureaucracy. These pains all occurred during the first six months after release, which seemed to be the most acute phase following imprisonment. During this challenging process

of resettlement, desistance from crime is often the goal for both re-entering individuals and the Correctional Services. However, desistance processes following imprisonment have been described in terms of similar vulnerabilities, challenges and pains as those illustrated above (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016).

In Norway, the Correctional Services aim to support rehabilitation and desistance all through the penal sanction (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2021), which in many cases continues outside the prison walls. From the exceptionally positive portrayal of penal practice in Norway, as in other Nordic states (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b), one could assume that support for desistance processes in this context was strikingly good. However, the exceptional presentation has been criticized for its methodological approaches and for scarcely considering the lived experiences of incarceration (see for example Mathiesen (2011), Ugelvik (2013) and Crewe et al. (2022)). Moreover, since Pratt and Ericsson's study was conducted, sentencing and execution of punishment in Norway have also undergone certain changes, described as creating a prison population which will be more demanding to rehabilitate (Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet, 2019). The Correctional Services have also recently been criticized for their use of solitary confinement and for unsatisfactory preparation for release (Riksrevisjonen, 2022; Sivilombudsmannen, 2019). Under these circumstances, they have also formalized closer and more extensive collaboration on rehabilitation and desistance with penal voluntary organizations.

Based on these descriptions of how processes of desistance can be demanding for the individual and difficult for staff to facilitate in the transition from prison to community, the aim of this thesis is to provide a broader understanding of how staff can support these processes. Despite the extensive international research on desistance support, the ideals and practices of such assistance during resettlement in Norway have scarcely been touched upon. As the perceptions of people in resettlement, probation staff and staff of penal voluntary organizations on this issue have also been largely ignored, this study is based on their experiences.

To set the stage for this research, I introduce my process towards writing this thesis, before moving on to broader presentations of the theoretical approaches, main concepts and reviews of the literature. In the section 'A sociology of being together', I elaborate on my way of making proximity a gift in my research, which leads on to how I proceeded to bring forth the voices of people with lived experience. The section 'Nuances, safe havens and the ideal of umbilical cord support' provides an overview of the three papers included in the thesis. Each article is presented in full text, followed by the contribution of its findings to the overarching aims of the thesis. The subsequent discussion elaborates on how the integrated findings of these papers provide broader knowledge and understanding of the aim of the study. In conclusion, I point out implications of this study for policy and practice, and suggest some ways forward for research on the topic.

2 Theoretical frameworks, main concepts and literature review

I start this section by introducing some of the perspectives and experiences I bring into my research, and how these inspired me to write about resettlement and supported desistance. I demonstrate how this study is informed by my affiliation to the traditions of criminology and sociology, as well as the ontological influence of interactionism. These elaborations are inspired by the framework of Creswell and Poth (2018), which situates philosophy and theory within the research process. Drawing upon this, I present theoretical and conceptual frameworks and previous research on resettlement, desistance and assisted desistance. In my introduction to the context of resettlement in Norway, I point out that the volunteer sector has been shown to play a more prominent part in recent years. My intention is also to reveal throughout this section how the Nordic penal exceptionalism thesis influences and frames this study.

2.1 The process towards this thesis

I entered the black metal porch leading up to the largest Norwegian prison at that time,
eager to start my fieldwork for my bachelor's degree in criminology.
A new unit had just opened, aiming to support people towards
crime-free lives following release: 'the motivation unit'.
I was excited about interviewing and spending time with imprisoned persons and prison staff,
in order to learn how they worked to accomplish their goals.
An older man with long experience of serving prison sentences asked me what I was
studying. 'Throughcare,' I answered, optimistically.
'There's no such thing', he replied.

That was a glimpse of my first encounter with a prison, back in 1998. Later that same year, I started working as a substitute prison officer in the motivation unit, in addition to my studies in criminology and the sociology of deviance. After graduation, I started as a probation worker in the Correctional Services, and later as an advisor and social worker in Oslo Prison. I went on to work in research and development in an in-patient substance abuse treatment unit, where many people were serving sentences during their stay. When I wrote my project draft for my PhD, I was a senior advisor at the University College of Norwegian Correctional Service, teaching and collaborating with experienced Correctional Service staff and students in training to be prison officers. I present this as a backdrop to how my research traditions and professional experience have influenced and shaped my research project.

Whether we are aware of it or not, we always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research. Sometimes these are deeply ingrained views about the types of problems that we need to study, what research questions to ask, or how we go around gathering data. (…) Often, at a less abstract level, these philosophical assumptions inform our choice of theories that guide our research. (…) Qualitative researchers have underscored the importance of not only understanding the beliefs and theories that inform our research but also actively writing about them in our reports and studies.

(Creswell and Poth, 2018: 15)

My assumptions, approaches, reflections and choices have clearly been influenced by my background of professional and academic experiences. One major source of inspiration in writing this thesis was my reading about Nordic penal exceptionalism (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b). The picture the authors painted of exceptionalism, based on prison tours early in 2000, differed from my own experiences from working in Norway's biggest prison during the same period. High standards and quality of life in Nordic prisons were exemplified through such aspects as 'glass tanks containing tropical fish in the library and on some of the wings' in a Helsinki prison, where some of the incarcerated men were responsible for feeding the fish and cleaning the tanks. This was familiar to me from the motivation unit. But I had *also* experienced how some of the fish were smashed against the glass as a punishment for not behaving well towards the other fish. To me, the exceptional presentation appeared to lack nuance, and to demonstrate more interest in policies and documents than in lived experiences. In practising and discussing resettlement and throughcare during the 25 years since I first entered a prison, I have often met professionals and people with lived experience of the Correctional Service system with positive stories to tell. But I also met many people with the same view of throughcare as I heard during my first encounter: 'There's no such thing'.

Even though my interest and engagement have long-established roots, the development of this project started when these elements encountered captivating research based on studies of Bastøy Prison by the University of South-Eastern Norway. My first inspiration for this study sprang out of two meetings under the heading of 'captivating research', where representatives from the Correctional Services, penal voluntary organizations and the University discussed topics for further research in the field. My project proposal was based on ideas and dialogue regarding persons with lived experience from imprisonment, professionals, volunteers, policymakers and researchers in the fields of recovery and desistance. Some of these took part in my research as door-openers, participants, supervisors and reflection partners from this early beginning. My academic and professional background has been shown to influence my research interest, but it also inspired my philosophical ground.

2.2 An interactionist backdrop

Interactionism informs my research on two levels. In the methodology section, I reflect on its significance for how knowledge is constructed. In the following, I present how it formed the background to my understanding of how social life unfolds. During my years of resettlement practice, my perception was that resettling persons often faced obstacles to finding their place in, and connecting to, society. Sometimes they seemed to lack motivation, self-confidence, or suitable tools to approach these barriers. Further, society often appeared to fail in accepting and including them adequately. In addition, the Correctional Services did not seem to be using their full potential to support them. This influenced my assumptions and curiosity regarding how social structures, as well as interaction and relationships, were intertwined in individuals' change processes and challenges of belonging. My approach is inspired by interactionist philosophy and stigma theory. Interactionist perspectives propose that people and actions achieve meaning through social interaction. 'No individual has a mind which operates simply in itself, in isolation from the social life-process in which it has arisen or out of which it has emerged, and in which the pattern of organized social behaviour has consequently been basically impressed upon it' (Mead, 1963: 222). Self-conceptions thus arise from perceptions of how others view and respond to the self as a social object.

2.2.1 An interactionist theory of deviance

Interactionists such as Goffman and Becker explored earlier work on stigma and labelling, and linked it to sociology and deviance. They proposed that the application of deviant labels to individuals led to changes in their self-perception and social opportunities. Goffman (1963) described stigma as a process based on the construction of a social identity. In his view, the occurrence of stigma as a new social identity is assumed through interaction with socially constructed categories. Goffman used the concept of stigma to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting:

> *While the stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind – in the extreme, a person that is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is very extensive; sometimes it is also called a failing, a shortcoming, a handicap. It constitutes a special discrepancy between virtual and actual social identity.*
>
> (Goffman, 1963: 2)

One type of stigma is what Goffman describes as ‘blemishes of individual character’ being inferred from a known record of for example mental disorder, addiction or imprisonment. To Goffman, as soon as these dynamics of shameful differentness were seen as a general feature in interaction, they related to the study of ‘deviance’. Like Goffman, Becker (1973) had an ambivalent approach to the term ‘deviance’. To him, ‘labelling theory’ did not live up to the obligations and achievements of a theory and did not focus exclusively on the act of labelling. It was rather a way of looking at an area of human activity. Hence, he distanced himself from ‘labelling theory’ by referring to it as `an interactionist theory of deviance` (Becker, 1973: 181). He understood deviance as created by society. Social groups made the rules which constituted deviance, applied those rules to particular people and labelled them as outsiders. To Becker, deviance is not a quality which lies in behaviour or a committed act, but rather in the interaction between the individual and those who responded to it. The deviant person is an individual to whom one applies the label of an ‘outsider’. Becker is concerned with the process in which society regards individuals as outsiders, and these persons’ reactions to this judgement. A person needs only to commit *one* act of a certain kind to be labelled ‘a criminal’, a status which often overrides all other statuses and is given certain priority, which in Becker’s terms becomes a ‘master status’. The deviant identification of a ‘criminal’ then becomes the dominant one, which produces a self-fulfilling prophecy that shapes the person in the image of certain other people. The public reaction might thus force the person into further unlawful behaviour.

2.2.2 A social, subjective and relational understanding of stigma

Yang et al. (2007) elaborate on how *current* definitions of stigma have often moved away from addressing its social dimensions. They argue for bringing social concepts back into theoretical models of stigma. Also, they seek to build on a sociological approach that conceives of stigma as embedded in the interpretive engagement between social actors, where macro-structures limit the possibilities of interactions and responses. They want to bring back the moral component into the understanding of stigma, which was also recognized by Goffman (1963). Yang et al. (2007) focus on lived or social experience in a local world where people have something to gain or lose. To them, this perspective of `moral experience` allows us to understand the behaviour of stigmatized people by seeing how stigma threatens a loss of what is most at stake to them. As stigmatized people are engaged in processes of holding on to things of value to them and warding off danger, stigma can intensify the sense that life is uncertain and dangerous. Their interpreting, living and reacting relate to what is vitally at stake and what is crucially threatening. From this perspective, stigma might threaten the moral experiences of individuals and groups, so that their responses arise from *feelings* of danger and uncertainty. This means that e.g. formerly incarcerated people, as an often stigmatized group in society, *anticipate* discrimination or rejection, which in turn shapes their coping responses. By taking place both within and outside the individual, stigma is social, subjective and relational. Stigma occurs in the intersubjective space *between* people at the level of words, gestures, meanings, feelings,

etc., during engagement with what matters most (Yang et al. 2007). Therefore, negative consequences might originate from *expectations* and *beliefs* of devaluation and rejection. In line with these theories of deviance and stigma, society can label and stigmatize people through language and conversation. Moreover, it can certainly also reverse this process.

2.2.3 The de-stigmatizing approach of person-centred language

Making lasting behavioral changes presents challenges for everyone,
and such challenges are magnified when
other people believe failure is more likely than success.

(Willis, 2018: 738)

The words we choose to describe (formerly) incarcerated individuals can shape their perception of themselves and their processes back to society. Hence, academics and people with lived experience of imprisonment have advocated a person-centred language to de-stigmatize and to facilitate inclusion and belonging (Cox, 2020; Willis, 2018; Ortiz et al., 2022). According to Cox (2020), the use of person-centred language has been implemented more slowly in the field of criminal justice, but has gained increasing traction. Yet until today, we continue to label persons in the criminal justice system by the behaviour we do not want them to repeat (Willis, 2018). In the light of an interactionist theory of deviance, labelling words and descriptions can deprive people of their complex identities. Due to stigmas and prejudices related to these labels, this makes re-entry into society increasingly difficult. As highlighted by Cox (2020), the stigmatizing effects of language can hinder people's ability to participate fully in social life, but also deprive them their full personhood. By avoiding terms such as 'prisoner' or 'offender', one might mitigate the identification of people by their conviction. As Askheim and Borg (2010) point out, the terms and definitions researchers choose strongly reflect their own values.

In current criminal justice practice and research, it is emphasized that labelling terminology can in fact increase the experiences of marginalization of persons who are often already marginalized in the community (McNeill, 2016). An implementation of de-labelling language is exemplified through the removal of stigmatizing language from books and articles (Willis, 2018). More neutral terms can be used in academic writing in order to separate individuals from their former behaviour and society's responses to them. One step in this direction is when journal editor boards, book publishers and conference organizers require this use of language (Willis, 2018). The editor of the journal Probation Quarterly, Jake Phillips, highly recommends all contributors to avoid exclusionary and stigmatizing language (Phillips, 2020). This recommendation is rooted in an underlying value and a belief in the ability of people to change, and is based on the Probation Institute's Code of Ethics (Probation Institute, 2020). A more neutral language, such as 'person on probation', 'supervised

individual' or 'person with lived experience of the criminal justice system', is highly encouraged, unless referring to historical documents or quotes from participants (Phillips, 2020). This guidance was co-developed with a team of persons with lived experience from the Revolving Doors Agency, which stresses the importance of such language in probation contexts to build honest and trusting relationships necessary for good probation practice (Breakspear and Mullen, 2021). Probation Quarterly's recommendations, particularly their co-creation of the Probation Institute's Code of Ethics, represent a positive exception to what Ortiz et al. (2022) argue was the first mistake criminology made when discussing criminal justice labels, namely not to include input from criminologists with criminal records.

This interactionist philosophy also frames the understanding of this study that interaction with staff influences people's trajectories during and after imprisonment. Before I introduce the conceptual framework of assisted desistance in this thesis, I present a short, broader theoretical understanding of 'desistance'.

2.3 The theoretical framework of desistance

I emphasize how desistance is seen as a process heavily intertwined in individual and contextual factors and how it may develop within a penal context.

2.3.1 Desistance as a process

Desistance research has regularly explored how people stopped committing criminal acts, but has increasingly investigated processes of moving away from criminal lifestyles (Farrall et al., 2014; McNeill, 2016b; Villman, 2021; Doekhie and van Ginneken, 2020; McNeill et al., 2012; Maruna and Farrall, 2004). The concept of 'desistance process' has been presented and dealt with in different ways, and has therefore been characterized as 'a fuzzy concept, difficult to pin down' (Gålnander, 2020: 23). Maruna and Farrall (2004) illustrated the shift from focusing on criminal acts to exploring transformed identities, by distinguishing between 'primary' and 'secondary' desistance. The former refers to 'any lull or crime-free gap in the course of a criminal career', and the latter to 'the movement from the behaviour of non-offending to the assumption of a role or identity of a non-offender or "changed person"' (Maruna and Farrall, 2004: 174). Farrall et al. (2014) also underline that people might go through crime-free periods in their lives for various reasons, but without making changes to their identities. Processes towards desistance are often accompanied by ambivalence and relapses, and might therefore be considered to be lifelong. Building on the concepts of primary and secondary desistance, McNeill (2016a) introduced 'tertiary desistance', referring to a shift in the person´s belonging to the community. In moving the understanding of desistance from merely focusing on behaviour or identity towards that of belonging, McNeill highlighted the political and social process of desistance. These presentations of primary,

secondary and tertiary desistance have been seen partly as presenting a linear process of change by Nugent and Schinkel (2016). They highlighted a dynamic approach, and introduced the terms ‘act-desistance’, ‘identity desistance’ and ‘relational desistance’. Building on this notion of a linear process, Ugelvik (2021) later reflected upon how relational desistance might appear before act-desistance and identity desistance. In a recent work, McNeill and Schinkel (2024) review and elaborate on the concept of tertiary/relational desistance, and reflect on how and with what consequences criminalized people experience, or fail to experience, belonging.

2.3.2 Desistance processes in penal contexts

Desistance theory has focused on agentic or structural factors, or on attempts to combine the two, in understanding movement away from crime (Weaver, 2019; Farrall et al., 2014; Maruna and Farrall, 2004; LeBel et al., 2008). Some researchers have argued that over the last two decades approaches to punishment and rehabilitation have focused too narrowly on supporting personal change. According to McNeill and Graham (2019), this has led to the neglect of other forms of rehabilitation, such as moral, social and judicial. From focusing on personal transformation and individual change, more attention has been paid to society and the people around the individual (Healy, 2012; McNeill, 2016a; McNeill and Graham, 2019). Hence, there has been increased interest in questions that touch upon what people are desisting into (Gålnander, 2020). This development is reflected in desistance research in penal contexts.

Theorists such as Giordano et al. (2002) draw on Mead’s symbolic interactionist perspective in developing an understanding of early desistance. They argue that desistance processes involve four stages that depend on the actor´s openness to change, the actor’s exposure to “hooks of change”, the envisioning of an appealing “replacement self” and a transformation in the way the actor views the deviant lifestyle itself. This interactionist theory of early desistance has been further developed in a qualitative analysis of the transitions of people on probation towards desistance (King, 2013). King underlines how individuals’ priorities change in accordance with the availability (or otherwise) of certain roles and resources. Agency is then conditioned by a person’s social context, which limits the range of possibilities available. Hence, desistance emerges in the interplay between structure and action, as the structural environment accounts for various cognitive transformations in desistance processes. Would-be desisters thus begin to construct early desistance narratives, involving identification and envisioning of alternative identities. From this, early facilitation of such identity reconstructions can increase the likelihood of desistance. By this understanding, King underlines how early desistance narratives can be built upon in penal contexts, and how greater involvement in this early phase may reveal co-operation and inter-personal trustworthiness which can facilitate longer term desistance. This highlights the significance of studying this very early desistance period more thoroughly (King, 2013). From this

perspective, and in line with the dynamic desistance processes drawn forward by Nugent and Schinkel (2016) and Ugelvik (2021), facilitation of identity reconstruction by professionals can build and support act-desistance and identity desistance.

My theoretical understanding of desistance has developed from the knowledge presented above, and builds on the definition of desistance as '… a dynamic process of human development – one that is situated in and profoundly affected by its social contexts – in which persons move away from offending and towards social re/integration' (McNeill, 2016b: 277).

2.3.3 Developing knowledge of assisted desistance

I have exemplified how desistance processes might evolve through interaction between staff and former and current incarcerated or convicted persons in penal contexts. Researchers have increasingly during the past two decades elaborated on how this interaction interferes with the individual's transition from offending towards social integration. The studies of Farrall (2002) and McNeill (2006) are examples of early developments in this field with the recognition that desistance can be understood within human relationships in these contexts. Research by Rex (1999) suggests that displaying an interest in the lives of people on probation is valuable for developing supportive relationships. In line with elaborations by Maguire and Raynor (2006), this research explicitly explores resettlement in light of the emergent desistance research.

Through the Desistance Knowledge Exchange Project, research in this area was taken further through several publications. The insight 'How and why people stop offending: Discovering desistance' (McNeill et al., 2012) was among these, arguing that staff in the criminal justice system should work *with* people, recognize and harness the power of relationships, strive to maintain hope, assist with attempts to develop social capital, and avoid identifying people with behaviours they want them to leave behind. Relationships have been shown to facilitate 'hooks for change' (Giordano et al., 2002) through practical and concrete assistance, and thereby set the stage for narrative or identity changes (Healy, 2012; King, 2013; Schinkel, 2014). Also, much in line with the research of McNeill et al. (2012), staff honesty, authenticity, trustworthiness, concern and care have been shown to be important in supporting desistance (Healy, 2012; Farrall et al., 2014; Villeneuve et al., 2021; Ugelvik, 2021). Additionally, the benefit of proximity is highlighted by Bottoms and Shapland (2019), suggesting that local criminal justice systems and their staff should develop 24/7 services to support persons facing temptations during their desistance processes. In their longitudinal research on how probation practice might assist desistance, Farrall et al. (2014) showed how some criminal justice workers leave imprints on people they supervise. More interestingly, they illustrated how these imprints might take some time to acknowledge. Participants in their study did not recognize the help they received during and shortly after their supervision, but they acknowledged this help some years later. This research suggests

that the impact of probation support might not be valued until long after the probation has ended.

In their model of structural and individual level processes and criminal careers, Farrall et al. (2014) also underline how social interactions and relationships between individuals in a criminal justice context intervene with desistance. In their recent review of assisted desistance in formal settings, Villeneuve et al. (2021) build on this model. They elaborate on how individual circumstances, understood as the degree of embeddedness in disadvantageous factors as well as the individual´s desire and willingness to change, influence the possible impact of formal assistance on desistance. This model also takes life changes imposed by the sentence into account when considering the social context surrounding the individual in her or his desistance processes. One of their arguments is that correctional service staff can facilitate identity change through supportive statements and encouragement, which has been particularly evident in the early stages of desistance (Doekhie et al., 2018). This early period is often characterized by ambivalence and pain related to personal change (Healy, 2012; Hunter and Farrall, 2018; King, 2013) and correctional service staff have occasionally been seen to provide safe and stable foundations for dealing with these challenges (Villeneuve et al., 2021).

This recognition of desistance as a social process, in addition to a personal one, was also underlined through the work of McNeill et al. (2012), as illustrated by this excerpt:

> *For too long, social workers and probation officers have been compelled to support a narrow form of rehabilitation; one focused on tackling the individual's problems and developing their capacities to live and to act differently. Important though that work is, it falls short of delivering the commitment to social justice that is also required of social workers and probation staff. 'Psychological' or 'correctional' rehabilitation can take a person part of the way towards a better life, but if the route is blocked, for example, by the practical effects of a criminal record or by the stickiness of the criminal label and the refusal of the community to accept that someone has changed, then desistance may be quickly derailed.*
>
> (McNeill et al., 2012: 10)

One of the challenges highlighted by this contextual broadening of assisted desistance is the barrier that arises from social labelling. Maruna (2004), King (2013) and Maruna and LeBel (2012) have introduced and elaborated on how processes of 'de-labelling' and 'pro-social labelling' may be crucial in helping individuals towards desistance. Freedom from prejudice among criminal justice staff has been shown to be one such important source of de-labelling (Villeneuve et al., 2021; Epperson et al., 2017).

Despite this presentation of how desistance might be supported in penal contexts, there is considerable research acknowledging how this interaction can also frustrate these processes. In the words of Farrall et al.: 'These relationships can help to kick-start and sustain desistance, whilst others may interrupt it' (Farrall et al., 2014: 238). In his discussion of what might hinder desistance processes, McNeill (2016b) presents different forms of possible 'sabotage'. One of these, which might be found in supervision practice, is that of using a pathological language of risk and need that undermines people's resources. In line with labelling theory, they highlight how this form of labelling, which underpins failure, might also provoke it.

2.3.4 Approach to assisted desistance in this thesis

In line with the consideration of broader social contexts where probation practices might assist desistance processes, Villeneuve et al. define assisted desistance as 'any intervention with juvenile or adult offenders aiming at, directly or indirectly, maintaining his [sic] abstention from crime and fostering changes in identity' (2021: 77). Additionally, Farrall elaborates on the understanding of assisted desistance, '(…) – that is desistance supported by a formal organisation such as a probation service or drug or alcohol treatment provider' (Farrall, 2022: 231). In his development of a theory of assisted desistance, Farrall underlines that despite the fact that probation staff might *guide* people towards desistance, they can do little to *force* it to happen. In this thesis, I am particularly concerned with how desistance processes can be facilitated and frustrated in contexts of resettlement. Building on my above-mentioned understanding of desistance, I am interested in how interaction with staff intertwines with how persons in resettlement develop their identities and move towards social integration.

2.4 Desistance processes during resettlement

I would argue that desistance processes during resettlement will need somewhat different support from when sentences are served entirely in the community. In light of the model of Villeneuve et al. (2021), the individual's degree of embeddedness in disadvantageous factors influences the possible impact of assistance from staff. This understanding also takes *life changes imposed by the sentence* into account when considering the social context surrounding people in their desistance processes. In the following I will present some of these possible impacts of imprisonment, and how they have been shown to be disadvantageous to personal change and social integration. However, before this presentation, I will briefly describe what I mean by the term 'resettlement'.

2.4.1 What is resettlement?

Resettlement can be understood as a process aiming to integrate people in society after imprisonment, taking place under the control and supervision of the Correctional Services. The term ‘resettlement’ is not the only term to describe what happens (or what *should* happen) when preparing for and following release from prison (Dünkel et al., 2019), and the terminology describing resettlement also frequently changes (Cracknell, 2021). One of the related terms is ‘throughcare’, which can be understood as a way of providing advocacy and support to people in the transition between prison and community, such as to facilitate access to key services and to support motivation and relationships in society. In their book ‘Prisoner Resettlement in Europe’, Dünkel (2019) uses the term ‘prisoner resettlement’ to cover the whole process of preparation for release in prison as well as probation and aftercare. This perspective is similar to that of Cracknell (2021), who outlines how the process has been seen as starting pre-release and continuing ‘through the gate’ into the community. McNeill and Graham (2019) also elaborate on how the term is interchangeably and inconsistently used in different countries. Based on aims and approaches to resettlement from different places in Europe, they highlight two prominent emphases. The first system pursues resettlement mainly in order to manage risk and reduce reoffending (which they exemplify through approaches in England and Wales). The other system bases resettlement on the rights of those who have served their punishment (as exemplified through aims in Norway and Sweden). Hence, they present differences based on understandings of who resettlement is aimed at: the returning imprisoned person or the public. However, there appears to be no either/or answer to this question. Resettlement policy and practice thus, to varying degrees, balance human dignity, human rights, public safety and desistance from crime (McNeill and Graham, 2019).

2.4.2 Pains and burdens accompanying the ‘journey’ of desistance during resettlement

Scholars have underlined and described pains and negative implications of imprisonment for several decades. Sykes (1958) documented the pains of deprivation of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships and autonomy during imprisonment, and has inspired researchers to explore and describe variations of pains in the penal field. This has resulted in a large body of work on the topic. From a review of this literature with explicit references to Sykes, Haggerty and Bucerius (2020) identified four key trajectories that have contributed to this expansion. These trajectories are *additional pains*, described as ‘a straightforward additive logic whereby new pains in the mold of Sykes’ original formulation are identified’, *disaggregated pains*, where pains are identified ‘in relation to different inmate populations’, *pains beyond prison walls*, which focus on how ‘pains manifest outside of the prison walls’ or ‘by non-incarcerated individuals’, and *distinctively modern pains*, concerning ‘the suggestion that current changes in the dynamics of incarceration have produced distinctively new pains

of imprisonment' (Haggerty and Bucerius, 2020: 3). The boundaries between these trajectories are described by the authors as fluid, evolving and overlapping. I would argue that to understand the complexity of resettlement and desistance, it is crucial to identify the pains and burdens which often accompany these processes. Some of these are therefore presented below. Here, I draw on the typology of Haggerty and Bucerius, concentrating on their orientation towards *additional pains* and *pains beyond prison walls.* More precisely, I highlight literature on experiences of pains and burdens from open and closed prisons, from the moment of release, from the broader impact of imprisonment on life outside, from supervision following imprisonment, and from the intertwined process of desistance.

Crewe (2011) has shown how the 'softening' of penal power in certain modern prisons might cause pains of uncertainty and indeterminacy, psychological assessment and self-government. Imprisoned persons' experiences of uncertainty and indeterminacy, and thus the lack of predictability, are based on perceived unreliable connections between actions and consequences. This partly relates to officers' shortcomings in answering questions about sentence conditions, relevant courses, achievable progress and future planning. Because of their experiences of inconsistency in decision-making in prison, incarcerated persons also feel uncertain about what is required from them to make progress. These obstacles to sentence progression might be perceived as tests or threats. Crewe uses the metaphor of 'tightness' to describe these impressions of modern penal attitudes, giving a sense of both the firm and soft experience of power. The term captures feelings of tension and anxiety caused by uncertainty and of being surrounded by an invasive power. Under these circumstances, 'There are few zones of autonomy, either spatial or psychological, where the reach of power can be escaped' (Crewe, 2011: 522). Also, Schinkel (2014) has presented how the pain of being cut off from friends, family and daily life outside the prison is shown to increase the burden of imprisonment. In her research, Schinkel shows how incarcerated men reduced this pain by living their lives as if there was no outside to miss. Their powerlessness was illustrated by their acknowledgement that it was not in their power to remain in contact, only to cut it off. This narrowed horizon thus helped to speed up time during imprisonment. This way of adapting to pains through self-isolation and by shutting down emotionally has been shown to be painful in itself (see e.g. De Vos and Gilbert (2017), Patton and Farrall (2021) and Reiter et al. (2018)).

The pains of imprisonment literature has also described how even prison regimes that might be described as liberal, progressive or change-oriented will involve an element of pain. Shammas (2014) has highlighted what he calls 'unusual pains of freedom', produced in 'a new generation of prisons' such as Norway's open 'Prison Island'. Even though Shammas found many of Sykes' original forms of pain, he underlines how they do not capture the full scope of prison pain. Through his ethnographic fieldwork, Shammas classified these pains of freedom, closely related to the transitions from closed to open prisons and from open prisons to the world outside, into the sub-categories of confusion, anxiety and boundlessness, ambiguity, relative deprivation and individual responsibility. Through this work, he

emphasized the 'pains of freedom', where '(…) freedom within constraint is itself the source of experienced pain' (Shammas, 2014: 109). The highlighting of 'painful confrontation with freedom' by De Vos and Gilbert (2017) is inspired by Shammas' work, as they gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between the perceived severity of punishment and the degree of liberty deprivation. Based on observation and interviews in four prisons in Belgium and Norway, they discuss how ongoing confrontations with freedom affect experiences of detention in closed prisons, open prisons and electronic monitoring. Their research shows the ambivalent effects of confrontations with freedom, exemplified by such reactions as self-isolation and shutting down emotionally to avoid the problem of missing people after visits in closed prisons, and the pain of not being able to close their minds in similar ways in open prisons (De Vos and Gilbert, 2017).

The transition from prison to society can be harsh or bumpy to varying degrees. In researching the *moment* of release from prison in Norway and England and Wales, Doxat-Pratt et al. (2022) describe how people prepare for release, how they experience significant moments on the day of release and in their first encounter with the outside world. Some participants perceived prison staff members, with whom they had spent considerable time and even connected with, as absent and 'useless' during their preparations for release. In such contexts relationships with staff were described as meaningless, and as causing particular pain as participants were made to feel worthless. The very moment of release was described in bland terms. If was often presented through a dullness of being 'nothing special' or of just being 'on the other side of the wall', but also as being 'chucked out' or 'thrown out the door'. The lack of meaning, interest and belief conveyed by the same staff who had previously seemed to care often felt bewildering and hurtful. Upon release, many felt powerless and embarrassed to be recognizable as 'prison leavers'. Some also shared their perceptions of being in the 'liminal state of being neither still in prison nor truly free (…)' (Doxat-Pratt et al., 2022: 12), similar to insights described by De Vos and Gilbert (2017).

Beyond this very moment of release, Crewe (2015) operationalized the 'breadth' of imprisonment by considering how prisons seep outwards and have effects even outside the walls. He underlined how internalized habits, distance from family and friends, and 'being branded by the invisible stripes of one's offence' might challenge resettlement. Similarly, pains related to the distance to people on the outside, and of how this might impact on life after imprisonment, are also presented and discussed by Schinkel (2014). Schinkel shows how the limited horizon caused by isolation in prison left imprints of institutionalization after release, and how this made it difficult to cope with the complexities and demands of the outside world. Her participants often struggled to develop relationships as they approached life outside the prison, which caused additional challenges related to employment and socialization in general. Furthermore, De Vos and Gilbert highlighted how some of their participants described '(…) the paradoxical feeling of being free in theory but not actually feeling free' during electronic monitoring after being conditionally released from prison (2017:

142). In line with Schinkel (2014) and Crewe (2015), they thus spotlighted the reach and impact of penal sanctions *beyond* imprisonment.

More specifically related to desistance, barriers and pains such as stigma and exclusion from the labour and housing markets have been highlighted (Farrall et al., 2014). Additional challenges reaching *beyond* the individual are also described in detail by Nugent and Schinkel (2016) and Patton and Farrall (2021). Patton and Farrall find that criminal convictions lead to rejections and exclusion by families and employers, which might cause pains of isolation and shame. Similarly, Nugent and Schinkel (2016) show how failure to access community goods led to goal frustration, and over time also to feelings of hopelessness. Negative reactions from social networks and wider local communities were seen as key barriers post- release in Patton and Farrall's work. Their participants wrote about anticipated and experienced rejections based on their imprisonment, and of how these would be a constant reminder of their convictions and thus negatively impact their identity and belonging (Patton & Farrall, 2021).

Despite the best intentions of individual scholars in expanding the concept of pain, Haggerty and Bucerius (2020) question whether this widening of the concept might paradoxically be a 'victim of its own success'. They suggest that an overextension of the concept might rest on the aim to attract attention and interest to less severe experiences. This way of formulating traumatic, uncomfortable, unwelcome, embarrassing or inconvenient experiences in more interesting ways through the 'pains' framing, they argue, might have removed the understanding of pain from the universal notion, based on Sykes' original presentation. The downside of using what they call a rhetorical, political strategy to attract interest to less severe experiences, Haggerty and Bucerius argue, is that it risks diminishing more acute and severe forms of suffering. Furthermore, they state that this overuse of the concept, deriving from "pain spotting" by individual scholars, might suggest that more positive prison developments and initiatives act to 'mask' darker and more painful dimensions.

Following this line of argument, it is important to exemplify how De Vos and Gilbert (2017) emphasize that, despite the pains of confrontation with freedom, their participants agreed that detention in open prisons and electronic monitoring after conditional release from prison create better opportunities for reintegration. Further, even though imprisonment and release under surveillance might cause pains and negative implications, there is some evidence that under certain circumstances it exerts certain positive effects (McNeill and Schinkel, 2016). In line with Haggerty and Bucerius (2020), I see how the use of 'pains' in the studies I present here, instead of using terms such as feelings of uncertainty, confusion, anxiety, ambiguity, worthlessness, powerlessness, hopelessness, embarrassment, shame or frustration, might dilute the concept. Nevertheless, the presented research underlines the heavy burdens of individual and social disadvantages experienced by persons in resettlement. These burdens accompany people through what is often, somewhat paradoxically, referred to as 'journeys of

desistance'. These challenges and negative feelings that might accompany people in different stages of their resettlement processes shed light on the complexity of this process. Additionally, Phillips (2017) underlines how the metaphor of 'desistance as a journey' is insufficient for conveying the complex, social, unpredictable and 'messy' processes of desistance from crime. Despite the choice of terms, I argue that it is important to identify these pains or burdens to understand the complex processes of resettlement and desistance.

2.5 Resettlement in the Norwegian context

Imprisonment in Norway has been portrayed as mild, in light of the Nordic penal exceptionalism thesis (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b). However, in this section, I present some of the debates around this portrayal and show how pains and burdens are still evident in this context. I move on to elaborate on how recent changes in the Norwegian penal system have affected interaction, quality of life and preparations for release, and thereby negatively influenced possibilities for assisted desistance. This section is based on parts of the background presentations of these topics in the three papers included in this thesis.

2.5.1 The portrayal of Norway as a penal exceptional state

Scandinavian exceptionalism was introduced by John Pratt in a two-part article, focusing on the roots and prospects of what he presented as exceptional penal practices in Norway, Sweden and Finland compared to those in England, Australia and New Zealand (Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b). In the first part, he described how he saw low rates of imprisonment and humane prison conditions as emerging from cultures of equality and welfare state security in the Nordic countries (Pratt, 2008a). In the second part, he examined the current prospects for Scandinavian exceptionalism, and discussed broader political and sociological implications of this exceptionalism in the era of penal access (Pratt, 2008b). His sociological account was based on research undertaken in the three Scandinavian countries in 2006, which included '(…) visits to 16 prisons and discussions with academics, policy makers, criminal justice practitioners, politicians, judges and prisoners, as well as observations of everyday life in these countries' (Pratt, 2008a: 119). In their more comprehensive discussion of Nordic penal exceptionalism, Pratt and Eriksson (2013) summarized the differences between the clusters in the areas of 'prison size', 'officer/inmate relations', 'quality of prison life', 'prison officers', and 'work and education programmes'. The extraordinary interaction portrayed between staff and imprisoned persons in Nordic prisons was highlighted in the thesis through what seemed to be an institutional feature of the employees' respect for incarcerated persons (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013). This was exemplified by how officers knocked on the cell doors before entering, how the two parties ate together in shared

canteens and how they used first names when addressing each other. It was also underlined that the two parties got to know each other well through shared daily tasks and activities, and that staff were involved in counselling and planning. The presentation also emphasized the personal freedom and high amount of time spent outside the prison cells, how most Norwegian prisons arranged weekly meetings between prison officers and representatives for the incarcerated persons, as well as the previously mentioned glass tanks of fish that the latter looked after.

The penal exceptionalism thesis has been criticized for being idealizing and superficial (Mathiesen, 2011), for representing narrow areas of Norwegian punishment (Ugelvik, 2013), and the question has been raised of whether it has painted too rosy a picture of Scandinavian penal practices (Ugelvik and Dullum, 2011). In particular, the presentation has been considered as disregarding the pains of imprisonment and variations of mild treatment in the Norwegian penal context (Mathiesen, 2011). The portrayed exceptionalism is also criticized for demonstrating more interest in penal discourse than in lived realities (Crewe et al., 2022). When Shammas underlined the 'unusual pains of freedom', as mentioned above, he stated: '(…) as the nature of imprisonment changes, so too must the conceptual toolbox which prison scholars deploy' (Shammas, 2014: 120). In a later publication, he argues that changes in the Norwegian welfare state in recent decades are linked to transformations in the penal state. This is an interesting statement, which I address in my discussion. Shammas argues that this has resulted in a shift towards more punitiveness, shown in e.g. the 'othering' of immigrants as unworthy outsiders through differentiated confinement (Shammas, 2016). However, I wish to balance this statement in a broader perspective, by highlighting the example of the increased numbers of offences which are now processed in the community rather than behind the prison walls (Kriminalomsorgen, 2021). As a result, many sentenced persons avoid imprisonment, as well as the challenges that often accompany and follow it.

Recently, scholars have delved into the difficulties and challenges of comparative criminology. Ugelvik and Dullum (2011) highlighted that Pratt's articles are important contributions to comparative criminology, yet they also state that Pratt's task of connecting macro levels of prison rates with experiential levels of humane prison conditions is ambitious, bold and difficult. To enhance the relevance of the criticism of the penal exceptionalism thesis, Crewe et al. (2022) argue for a twofold distinction, depending on whether the claims (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b), are viewed as *absolute* or *relative*. This involves a clarification of whether the review originates from a focus on whether Nordic imprisonment *is* humane or on whether Nordic imprisonment is *more* humane than imprisonment elsewhere. Related to the *relative* view, their empirical findings have shown consistently more positive results in Norway than in England and Wales (Crewe et al., 2022). This finding relates particularly to the higher use of open prisons, which are felt to be safer, less restrictive and less degrading than closed prisons. Problems and frustrations are also considered to be significantly less severe and acute in open facilities (Mjåland et al., 2021). These findings thus balance and elaborate on the 'pains of freedom' and 'painful

confrontation with freedom' in open prisons underlined by Shammas (2014) and De Vos and Gilbert (2017) respectively. On the basis of their study, Crewe et al. find little doubt that the typical experience of imprisonment is *more* humane and *less* damaging in Norway than in England and Wales, and they therefore claim that much of the criticism of the claims of exceptionalism seems unduly harsh. Based on how the exceptionalism thesis is seen as emerging from cultures of equality and welfare state security (Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b), Shammas suggests that changes in the Norwegian welfare state might lead to '(…) a homogenization of Europe's penal landscape' (Shammas 2016: 70). It will be interesting to follow how these *relative* results unfold.

Related to the *absolute* view on claims of exceptionalism, the perspectives of lived realities form the basis for discussion of the exceptionalism described. It has been shown that although people incarcerated in Norwegian prisons often feel that they are being kept safe in decent and harmless conditions, imprisonment is also often perceived as empty, careless, negligent and meaningless (Ievins and Mjåland, 2021). Mjåland et al. (2021) also show how the highest ranked problems, frustrations and pains in Norwegian prisons relate to deprivation of contact and connection with the outside world, unfairness, meaninglessness, boredom and guilt. Similarly, in their examination of lived experiences in Danish prisons, Reiter et al. (2018) find that pains and suffering are fundamental to incarceration, especially through distance from normalcy and deprivation of liberty and autonomy. By highlighting the 'messiness' inherent in the punishment system, 'reproduced on the ground through interactions between staff and prisoners', Reiter et al. (2018: 17) reveal what they maintain is hidden in the macro theory of Scandinavian exceptionalism. In a later publication, Pratt (2022) addresses how his exceptionalism thesis has been disputed by some Nordic scholars, and underlines how he had attempted '(…) to explain how it was that *formal accounts of punishment* differed so much between the two clusters of societies, and what this then told us about the different ways in which they were governed, and the different penal cultures that informed their respective modes of imprisonment' (2022: 112). He underlines that what (in retrospect) was neglected in his first paper (Pratt, 2008a) was the recognition of the pains of imprisonment in the Nordic region. Beyond this, Pratt maintains that penal exceptionalism in Nordic countries was never a 'myth', and that it has not disappeared.

2.5.2 Developments of and the current state of resettlement in Norway

A further factor that is highly relevant to these presentations and debates about exceptional practices is some recent changes in the Norwegian penal system that have affected the prison population, prison conditions and release patterns, with a detrimental effect on staff members' ability to facilitate desistance during resettlement. Their ability to assist in the current context has thus decreased. Firstly, increased numbers of less serious offences are now processed in the community, particularly through electronic monitoring (Kriminalomsorgen, 2021; Todd-Kvam and Ugelvik, 2019). Despite some positive

consequences of these changes, such as the reduction in the prison population from 3968 in the peak year of 2016 to 3029 in 2020 (SSB, 2022), they have also negatively affected resettlement practice in some ways. On average, incarcerated people now serve longer sentences for more serious offences. Additionally, there has been a proportional decline in persons assessed as suitable for early release on parole, which aims to facilitate transitions from prison to society (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021). An increasing proportion therefore serve their full sentences in prison. In 2010, 15% completed their entire sentence in prison, compared to 21% in 2020. Altogether, these factors have resulted in a more challenging prison population and more difficult conditions for desistance support (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021). Secondly, as stated in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023a), constant budget cuts due to de-bureaucratization and efficiency reforms have caused staff reductions and decreased activity during imprisonment. Recent reports describe less interaction between staff and imprisoned people, and many face solitary confinement (Sivilombudsmannen, 2019). Cognitive programmes, aimed to facilitate change and reduce recidivism, have also been significantly reduced (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021). A recent report also indicates that Correctional Service staff possess poor knowledge of imprisoned people's needs and challenges, and therefore provide insufficient rehabilitation support during imprisonment. In a sample of 1860 persons, there was a decline in individual future plans from 10% in 2016 to 3% in 2019 (Riksrevisjonen, 2022). In addition, several low security prisons, regarded as providing soft and well-prepared transitions to society and more manageable imprisonment experiences (Andvig et al., 2021; Mjåland et al., 2021), have been permanently closed down (Kriminalomsorgen, 2019).

As stated in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023a), Correctional Service staff and management have expressed concerns about this turn within policy and practice. Managers of three large prisons have been concerned about the consequences for throughcare and rehabilitation. They confirmed that interaction and relationships between employees and imprisoned people suffered from budget cuts and lack of human resources (RøverRadion, 2021). Furthermore, 75% of prison staff found that the quality of resettlement work had decreased over the past two years (Actis, 2020). Probation staff have also expressed concerns about the negative impact of budget cuts on general activity and rehabilitation work in prison, and about how increased containment will affect prospective desistance processes (Todd-Kvam, 2022). This uneasiness regarding throughcare implies that quality and stability in transitions to the community are diminishing.

One of the main goals of the Norwegian Correctional Services is to provide gradual and continuing progression during imprisonment, and facilitate rehabilitation and positive change *throughout* the sentence. However, they must also strive to ensure safety and security for the general public (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2021). These ambitions require seamless collaboration between prison and probation staff.

2.5.3 The Probation Services' follow-up after imprisonment

As presented in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023b), the Probation Services manage several non-custodial penal sanctions such as community sentences, programmes for those convicted of driving while intoxicated, community service in lieu of a fine, early release on parole, and sentences served outside prison (such as in drug treatment institutions, on electronic monitoring, and home detention). Under the Norwegian Execution of Sentences Act, the Correctional Services can release imprisoned persons on parole when two-thirds of their sentence and at least 60 days have been served. If it appears necessary to implement parole in a secure manner, the person must appear before the Probation Service for a limited period. Parole shall *not* be granted if an overall assessment makes it reasonable to assume that the person concerned will commit crimes during the probationary period. Additionally, a person might be allowed to serve the remaining two-thirds of an unconditional prison sentence outside prison, with or without electronic control. Parole and alternatives to prison might be implemented as continuations of the person's sentence, to approach the goal of a gradual transition to society.

Nevertheless, as stated in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023b), 76% of the 4622 persons who were released or transferred to the community after imprisonment in 2021 walked through the prison gate without any further control or support from the Correctional Services. This means that only 24% were subject to post-prison measures by the Probation Service[1]. Overall, despite good intentions, current practice largely seems to cut connections between the Correctional Services and incarcerated people at the prison gate.

2.5.4 The penal voluntary sector's contribution to resettlement practice

During this period of changed penal practices, austerity measures, reduced levels of interaction and worries about resettlement work, the voluntary sector has taken ever greater responsibility to support people upon release. The Correctional Services have embraced this contribution, and annual funding to the sector has been provided through the state budget. The purpose of this funding is to establish binding, systematic collaboration between the Correctional Services and the voluntary sector, and to encourage voluntary efforts to help people lead crime-free lives after imprisonment (Kriminalomsorgen, 2021). In 2021, for the first time, almost the entire budget of NOK 36.2 million was distributed to the sector following an application procedure. This equals about NOK 10 000 per released person

[1] Numbers and percentages of transfers from prison to the community and full-term sentences were provided and reviewed by Espen Michaelsen, Directorate of Correctional Services, 2023.06.14.

(Kriminalomsorgen, 2021; Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023a). Funding has thus improved in recent years.

The penal voluntary sector comprises a broad spectrum of companies and charities, working in varying degrees of partnership with justice agencies (Tomczak and Buck, 2019a). In light of what they describe as a tendency towards polarized commentaries, Tomczak and Buck (2019b) also present a hybrid framework to provide nuanced accounts of the range, fluidity and hybridity of the organizations' programmes and practices. Their framework highlights how individual-focused therapy, often provided through these organizations, despite contributing to personal change, fails to acknowledge the burden resulting from punishment and marginalized backgrounds. Voluntary organizations' struggles to reduce structural barriers to resettlement have also been pointed out by Miller (2014). A broader presentation of this area of research is provided in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023a). That paper also relates the Norwegian organizations included in this thesis to these understandings, within a previously 'fragmented and overlooked' research field (Tomczak and Buck, 2019a).

2.5.5 Aim and research questions

As a response to Pratt's presentation of penal exceptionalism (Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b), Dullum and Ugelvik (2011) widened his perspective and 'thickened' his description and analyses, and provided a discussion from a broader field of international research. In line with this, and based on the discussions of the exceptionalism thesis as well as the knowledge of how pains of imprisonment often last beyond the prison walls, I aim to further elaborate on these descriptions and analyses by exploring the field of resettlement in Norway. Shammas (2016) argued that changes in the Norwegian welfare state in recent decades are linked to transformations in the penal state. Based on the above-mentioned recent developments in Nordic penal policy and practice, I rely on Shammas' call for a link between changes in penal practice and the 'conceptual toolbox' which prison scholars deploy (Shammas, 2014). As the presentations of (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b) focused on the *roots* and *aims* of relationships between staff and imprisoned persons, I will concentrate on how these relationships are *manifested* in daily resettlement practices in Norway. More specifically, the aim of this thesis is to provide a broader understanding of how resettlement and desistance can be supported by professional staff in the transition from prison to community in Norway. As the perspectives of people in resettlement, probation staff and staff of penal voluntary organizations on supported desistance during resettlement in the Norwegian context have largely been ignored, the research questions derive from their experiences, and are as follows:

1. What are considered ideal interactions with staff to support desistance processes in the transition from prison to community?
2. How are daily practices of desistance support experienced during resettlement?

I will examine how pains are experienced within and beyond the prison walls, and how desistance might be supported despite these challenges. Furthermore, I will elaborate on how trajectories of desistance unfold within the Norwegian penal context, and on how this context might be regarded as exceptional. Finally, I will consider the role of the state, and professionals as state representatives, in guiding imprisoned persons towards resettlement and ensuring that resettlement can take place. In the following, I will present the methodological approaches I have chosen to answer these questions, and elaborate on the basis for these choices.

3 Methodology: Bringing forth the voices of people with lived experience

My background affects how I read and interpret research in the field, and shapes my topics of interest, my arguments and my methodological pathways. This became particularly evident to me when I first read the presentations and reflections on Nordic prison conditions (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b) and their methodological approaches. I used to work in Norway's biggest prison at the time Pratt carried out his prison visits in Norway. As mentioned in the background section, my insights differed tremendously from the mentioned written presentations which followed from these tours. They described guided 'tours' through a few prisons, meetings with policy workers, prison management, and a few staff and imprisoned persons, as well as written descriptions and policy documents. Despite Pratt's 'revisiting' of the Nordic exceptionalism thesis (2022), it still appears paradoxical to me how 'humane prison conditions', 'officer/inmate relations', and 'quality of prison life' (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b) can be presented or compared unless lived experiences are elicited. My reflections on their presentations of prison practice were that they were rather theoretical and shallow, and that much of the information provided had been taken as face value. Most importantly, the voices of people with lived experience appeared to me to be urgently absent.

I relate this absence to a personal experience from my time in Oslo prison, when the Minister of Justice visited. I worked at the 'motivation unit' at the time, which was one of the forerunners of today's drug rehabilitation units. Compared to the ordinary wings, this one was better staffed and had a more welcoming environment, and unique relationships between imprisoned persons and staff had been established. Admission required a written application and an interview, and attendance at work, meetings and activities was mandatory. Two floors below was a quite different wing, where I had worked throughout the summer months. There, staff scarcely had any contact with incarcerated persons in the course of a day, except from locking and unlocking their doors to deliver their meals, and offering one hour of fresh air and two hours of socializing. Fresh air was usually offered in isolation, and social contact was generally denied. People were often transferred to this unit as a punishment for taking drugs or breaking the prison rules in other ways. Between these two wings, both literally and in terms of rehabilitative efforts, were the ordinary units. However, it was the motivation unit that welcomed and hosted the Minister of Justice and his staff on behalf of the prison. This decision caused annoyance and frustration to many people who lived and worked in the prison. Based on their knowledge of the huge variations between different wings and floors, they argued that this reception would give an unrepresentative impression of everyday life in the prison.

As stated in one of the papers of this thesis: ‘We would argue that the visiting “tours” that Pratt joined would have illuminated different descriptions if they had been guided by people imprisoned in the various units. This is because, behind the presentations of exceptional quality of prison life and relationships, there are lived experiences’ (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2024). Drawing on this, as well as on my reflections on how presentations of Nordic penal practice appeared to lack nuance and to be most interested in policies and documents, one of my main points is that I cannot present knowledge of interaction and relationships during resettlement without bringing forth lived experiences. In this chapter, I present an overview of my procedure in gathering the data for my analysis. In my thesis I define ‘people with first-hand/lived experience’ as those who have direct personal experience of a social issue. I therefore bring forth the voices of people with experience from the transition from prison to society, either from walking through the prison gate themselves or from interacting with those who did.

This thesis is based on 19 individual interviews with 13 resettling persons and five focus group interviews with 17 staff from probation offices and penal voluntary organizations. The five recruitment sites were chosen to represent a variety of experiences, specializations and approaches to resettlement work, as well as geographical locations, financial support, and composition of employees. Staff at these sites worked with persons who had been imprisoned throughout Norway, and were therefore able to recruit participants with broad experience from sentences in different prisons and wings.

3.1 Approaching the perspectives of staff and resettling persons

The staff perspectives were derived from focus group interviews with employees at two probation offices and three penal voluntary organizations in three Norwegian cities. Both men and women were represented in all groups. Participants were recruited via the management of the five initial sites, and the main inclusion criterion was experience in supporting resettling persons. Five in-person focus group interviews were conducted, audio recorded, and transcribed before analysis. The methodological approach, resting on an interactionist perspective, as well as the implementation of and reflections around the focus group interviews, are presented in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023a). The paper also presents the five focus groups in more detail. I argue that my background as a former social worker in prison and probation settings, with my knowledge of and co-operation with some of the staff many years ago, aided my access to the field. The recruiters’ role was therefore one of door-openers rather than gate-keepers.

Resettling persons’ perspectives were approached through individual in-depth interviews, to facilitate participants’ narratives of the transition from prison to society. These interviews

were conducted within a qualitative, longitudinal design, inspired by Farrall et al. (2014). The need for this approach in understanding desistance processes, focusing on change over time as well as participants' relationship to and understanding of such change has been highlighted by Farrall et al. (2014). This provides an excellent opportunity to study relationships between phenomena as they unfold over time. Their model of understanding presents macro-level inputs that change in different ways and interfere with the desistance process. The micro-level inputs of the model involve changes in values and cognitive orientations, as well as subjective views of structures, relationships and abilities. The meso-level inputs in this model include relationships between individuals over time within a situational context, such as a correctional system. This approach underlines the value of the relationship between past and future, as well as the micro-, meso- and macro-level impacts on desistance processes. This model provided me with a solid theoretical and methodological platform on which to base my longitudinal design. It also enabled my research to capture the complexity of participants' lived experiences during resettlement and desistance processes, and to dive deeper into the *early stage* of the transition from prison to society.

3.1.1 A COVID-19 informed process of recruitment

Resettling persons were recruited through employees from three parole offices and three penal voluntary organizations (the reason for including a third probation office is explained later in this chapter). I approached the managers at the six sites with an email including a short presentation of my research design and an invitation to participate. The formal information sheet for participants about the research, ethical considerations and approvals was also attached (Appendix 6). They passed this information on to their staff, who identified possible participants in their area of responsibility. This process was implemented in different ways. Staff at one of the sites sent me a list of persons who had shown interest in taking part in the research, along with their contact details. I called them, presented myself and my research, and we planned the interviews. Other staff sent me names and contact details as soon as they met people who seemed to fit into the project.

Obviously, recruiting participants to a research project on resettlement, which is often a vulnerable context, during the COVID-19 pandemic, did not always proceed smoothly. During periods of lockdown, the hardest part was not to recruit participants, but to find suitable places to conduct the interviews. In those periods, I had to do without some people who wanted to be interviewed, because I could not find a suitable place to meet them. I started my first week of interviews optimistically, with three planned meetings. But the pandemic hit me, I fell ill and had to cancel them. Because of the long quarantine at the time, I unfortunately lost all three participants during this period. During the second wave of interviews, I also had my second wave of COVID-19, and had to cancel several

appointments again. During this period, some participants also had to withdraw for the same reasons.

Some of the struggles of recruiting were also related to the challenging transition people were in. In one case, the person I reached on the phone did not remember anything about talking to his contact person in the voluntary organization about participation, and did not understand what I was talking about. Additionally, I lost a woman who had stated her interest when talking to her caseworker in one probation office. She was on early release on parole, lived in temporary housing and had no phone. I called her a few times on the staff number at her housing facility, but she never returned my calls. As the recruiting caseworker knew I had only managed to recruit one woman, she invited me to join a scheduled parole meeting at the temporary housing facility, so that I could conduct an interview after their meeting. This was one of the situations when I had to decide against possible participants due to ethical considerations. Although the recently released woman had stated her interest in taking part and left me her contact details, the setting was a formal correctional meeting, which I decided not to interfere in for ethical reasons.

Due to these struggles in recruiting and keeping appointments, I made two smaller changes to my design. The first was to include an additional probation office to help with recruitment. The other was to widen my focus from people *released* from prison to those *transferred* from prison to community. This allowed me to concentrate on *transitions*, without narrowing my focus to those on early release on parole. This caused no changes to the knowledge building, as I was already concerned with what happened when people walked through the gate and tried to establish themselves in society and what influenced this. It led to further dialogue with the recruiting staff, where I asked them to change their focus in recruitment in line with this. There was, however, a noticeable change in the language, where I shifted from writing about *released persons* to *resettling persons*. Through this process, twelve men and one woman took part in the first wave of interviews.

A more substantial change to my initial research design, also due to COVID-19, was to abandon the idea of conducting longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork. My plan was to construct data from fieldwork in one of the research contexts, in addition to the individual and focus group interviews. Being ‘out in the field’ among participants in situations in their daily lives could make it easier to understand and describe the field with greater empathy and familiarity than through interviews (Fangen, 2010). Such an approach could have provided a comprehensive picture of what both staff and returning individuals encounter during the resettlement process, and of how they act and interact. Experiencing these interactions and practices as they unfolded would have added insight to details that participants might find it difficult to share in an interview. Such observations might have given me access to their challenges and opportunities, and how they coped with them, from different angles. It could also have balanced a possible coloured or distorted image that participants might have

presented of themselves during an interview encounter. By being combined with ethnographic fieldwork, the interviews could have helped to validate the observation data (Fangen, 2010). Observations and fieldwork might thus have provided insights that are not revealed in either individual or focus group interviews.

I conducted focus group interviews because my study particularly aimed to explore attitudes, ideals and experiences of staff in the different study contexts. This approach is considered highly suited to present dominant values in particular cultures and subcultures (Lerdal and Karlsson, 2008). In a context where participants feel safe and relaxed, this approach allows them to share insightful knowledge from their everyday practice. On the other hand, the exchange of ideas, opinions and practice could also be influenced by varying degrees of social control in such a context. In the latter case, ethnographic fieldwork could be preferable to highlight insights into daily practice, rather than what participants felt free and safe enough to present within the group.

The choice of individual interviews with resettling persons rests partly on this latter refection. The guiding principle for the choice of qualitative interviews in general is that they should be open enough to explore the perspectives of the participants, while also revealing details relevant to the research questions one wishes to answer (Kvale et al., 2015). To enable the sharing and reflection of personal and challenging experiences from persons in the often vulnerable transition from prison to society, individual interviews were considered the most comfortable and safest context. Based on my best efforts to build rapport in this setting, my impression was that participants felt quite safe to share their stories in these encounters. Despite this impression, I have exemplified above how participants seemed to test out identities and maybe also present themselves in what they considered more favourable ways in the interviews. Even though fieldwork could have shed more light on their actions and interactions and thus contributed additional insight, the interviews elicited invaluable experiences and reflections that would presumably not be revealed through observation.

However, due to COVID-19, ethnographic fieldwork could unfortunately not be conducted in my study. Thus, this additional insight into the practice of resettlement and desistance was not revealed. Nevertheless, by presenting the voices of both staff and persons in resettlement in this study, interviews with the latter also formed a way to dwell on practice and experience beyond discussions and conversations between staff. Additionally, I consider my perceptions developed through my lived experience to form a valuable contextual base for how these processes might evolve “out in the field”. Further, as mentioned above, my prior knowledge of the field provided me with easy access to participants through “door-openers”. Therefore, the advantage of establishing contact and rapport with possible participants through ethnographic fieldwork, as emphasized by Todd-Kvam (2020), was less of a loss in my study.

3.1.2 The balancing of ethical considerations against ´sociological stalking´

Follow-up interviews might involve certain risks, implying the balancing of ethical considerations against 'sociological stalking' (Sharpe, 2017). Farrall et al. (2014: 24) highlight attrition as the Achilles heel of longitudinal research, and state that retracing participants might be resource intensive. Farrall et al. (2016) present practical suggestions for retracing sample members, including keeping contact sheets with several ways of approaching each participant, being flexible, building rapport, and the two no's rule of no longer pursuing people after their second refusal. Despite my short interval between the interviews, and the limit of only two waves of interviews, this balancing of retracing and ethics inspired my longitudinal design. I ended all the first wave interviews by checking participants' interest in taking part in the second wave, and asked them to state any additional ways I could retrace them other than by phone or email. All participants expressed willingness to meet me for another interview and signed a consent that I could contact them again. They all underlined that I would be able to reach them through the sources they provided. I later sent messages to each of them for the second wave of interviews, where I informed them about my plans and asked if they still wanted to participate. The need to discuss ethics and power, as well as researcher background and personality, has been emphasized in longitudinal qualitative desistance research (Sharpe, 2017; Gålnander, 2020). This is particularly important in research involving re-tracing what Sharpe describes as 'an over-surveilled and highly stigmatized population'. Considering these reflections on retracing, I viewed my own effort to establish rapport, hold personal meetings, be non-judgemental, as well as my own experience with resettlement practice, to be significant factors for participants' interest in attempting a second interview. As seen in recent research on why people in prison participate in qualitative research (Di Marco and Sandberg, 2023), several of my participants took part in the research because they wanted to contribute to individual or systemic change. At the end of our first interview, many mentioned the therapeutic effect of the conversation and stated that it helped them ventilate their feelings, which was also a reason for some of them to take part in the second wave. This illustrates a longing for such conversations, but also raises some ethical questions about their effects in a broader context. At the end of the first interview, and at the start of the second one, I asked how it had been for them to take part. Some replied that it had made them reflect deeply about the topics, yet I still would not know the consequences of these reflections.

In balancing ethical considerations against the danger of falling into the trap of practising 'sociological stalking' to retrace participants (Sharpe, 2017) and the rich material obtained from the initial interviews, I decided to interview the seven participants who gave a positive response the first time I asked them. Because two interview appointments with one of them were cancelled due to COVID-19 infections, six follow-up interviews were conducted. The twelve men and one woman who took part in the first wave of interviews and the six men

participating in the second wave are presented in more detail in Koffeld-Hamidane et al., (2023b). The planning and implementation of the interviews are further described in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2024) and Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023b).

3.2 'A sociology of being together': My way of making proximity a gift

From different roles and situations, and from conversations, meetings and time spent with staff and imprisoned and released persons, I have gained what I consider a unique proximity to the field of my research. However, such proximity brings both benefits and challenges. I have exemplified and reflected upon how my proximity has inspired my research design and access to the field. Before I present my methodological perspectives and the process of analysis in more depth, I will elaborate on the epistemology that frames them throughout this thesis (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Carl Rogers (1953) stated that all science has its origin in a matrix of personal and subjective experience, which is only partially and imperfectly communicable. During the 26 years since my first encounter with prison life, I have undergone processes that have influenced the design of my PhD. In Roger´s words: '… if it were written by another person, or if it were written by me two years ago, or two years hence, it would be different in some respects' (1953: 289). Resting on an interactionist understanding, I also see the knowledge I derive as developed in the interaction between participants and myself as a researcher throughout my project. Beyond this, I frame my methodological approach within 'a sociology of being together', where I consider the benefits of my proximity (Miller, 2021). From my point of view, it will therefore be impossible, but also undesirable and insufficient, to present my methodological approaches without reflecting on my own experiences with and knowledge of my research topic. Hence, I strive for transparency and reflexivity throughout this thesis. In line with my interactionist perspective, Veseth et al. (2017) emphasize 'the recognition of research as a dynamic and interactional enterprise in which the resulting findings are seen as products of the interplay between researchers and participants' (p. 257). In this section, I will reflect on how my proximity to my field of study influenced not only my access to it, but also the content of the interviews and my understandings and interpretations of them. I will start by elaborating on 'reflexivity' and what it means to me to be *reflexive enough*. I then discuss how I frame my research within 'a sociology of being together' (Miller, 2021).

3.2.1 The delicate balancing of self-awareness and self-indulgence

Veseth et al. (2017) state that: 'reflexivity is both the acknowledgement of one's own presence in the study one is conducting and the examination of how this presence influences

the research carried out' (p. 257). Further, Finlay (2002) has argued that integrity and trustworthiness depend on researchers finding ways to analyse how subjective and intersubjective elements influence their research. As the researcher engages in an explicit, self-aware meta-analysis of the research process, subjectivity in research can be transformed from what she calls a challenge to an opportunity. Finlay (2002) underlines the necessity of reflexivity, but also of balancing the extent of it. She refers to the following thoughts on this balance, offered by DeVault (1997) and Macmillan (1996) respectively, which I find illustrative:

> *I am generally enthusiastic about the reflexive turn in sociological writing, and I feel impatient with charges that personal writing is "self-indulgent" or "narcissistic." Still, I sometimes worry that the recent emphasis on the personal may signal a retreat from the attempt to interpret a wider social world. . . . It has sometimes provided an excuse for spending more time at my computer than in the field. In each particular case, then, it seems important to consider what a personal element does in an analysis and how it contributes to a larger project.*
>
> (Finlay, 2002: 225)

> *One of the imagined horrors of taking another turn on the reflexive spiral is that it will suddenly start spinning, with the researcher helplessly caught up in a whirlpool of analysis in which he [sic] writes about his studies of studies about studies about studies ad infinitum (ad nauseam), ending up with an analysis to which the reader shrugs and says "so what" as she closes the pages.*
>
> (Finlay, 2002: 30)

Finlay holds that the quality of reflexive analysis depends on how the researcher approaches this process, and that the primary focus must remain on the study participants and not on the researcher. Rogers (1953) has stated that the subjective origin of research cannot be openly communicated, and that it is more or less impossible to be transparent about how subjective assumptions impact science. Despite the hard task of reflexivity, I find this balancing of transparency and self-awareness on the one hand, and the dangers of 'self-indulgency or narcissism' on the other, to be delicate and important. My ambition is to be transparent and reflexive enough in my work for readers to form their own assessments of its trustworthiness. I will strive to do this in a way which allows my presentation of methodological choices to illuminate the soundness of my findings. This thesis will hopefully also show how these reflections expanded my awareness of how my assumptions and my research are intertwined.

3.2.2 A sociology of being together

> *Being close to a social situation allows the ethnographer (or researcher who employs any method) and the reader to understand, through what they see and feel, the social situation of others (…) A sociology of being together takes proximity as a method and an analysis, because, to the careful social scientist, proximity is a gift.*
>
> (Miller, 2021: 296-297)

In his book 'Halfway home – Race, punishment and the afterlife of mass incarceration', Reuben Jonathan Miller presents 'a sociology of being together', where he criticizes the usual striving for distance and objectivity in sociology. Referring to Goffman, he underlines the need for researchers to be close and empathetic enough to understand what happens in and to the bodies of the people in the study context, to whom the researcher has gained access 'by one sneaky means or another' (Miller, 2021: 288). However, Miller introduces a methodology where he challenges the limits of empathetic imagination, where he sees proximity and connection as a gift. He emphasizes:

> *The point is to walk alongside the people you spend time with and to do your best to learn from and communicate something about their lives with all the tools that you have. (…) If I invest the time to pay attention to the specificities of my pain as I walk aside and attend to the experiences of others, I may be able to connect with them in more than a surface way. I will see things people who are not close fail to see, and I may be able to relay what I see in ways that resonate with their lives.*
>
> (Miller, 2021: 291)

As Miller's research builds on ethnographic work conducted over several years, his data gathering differs greatly from my own. However, the proximity to the field as Miller describes it, and the way it underpinned his understanding and experience of the lives, stories and contexts he studied, was a highly significant inspiration for my own work. What I understand as one of Miller's main methodological aims and contributions is that of moving *beyond* empathy and reflexivity, and of introducing how his proximity to the field he studies allows him to understand the situations of others through both observation and feeling. My proximity to the field has been achieved through daily practice and spending a great deal of time with people in prison, in rehabilitation institutions, and during their efforts to lead their lives the ways they wanted after lengthy stays in institutions. Importantly, I have also spent time with people who shared their own experiences to support other would-be desisters on their way. Furthermore, I have gained insight into the perspectives and experiences of staff from my

own experience of being in the same professional role as some of them. These observations, interactions and experiences have, to my understanding, equipped me with a similar closeness to the field as Miller's. In the following, I will introduce and consider my analysis process in more depth, partly through the lens of what I see as the sociology of being together. Through this approach, I will also reflect on my way of striving to be 'a careful social scientist' by *making* proximity a gift.

3.2.3 Examples and reflections on the process of analysis: Angles of understanding

The value and challenge of proximity in constructing and analysing resettling persons' narratives has been evident throughout this project. I have brought up this topic in conversations with supervisors and fellow PhD students. I am quite sure that I would have regarded parts of participants' narratives as 'war stories', lies, or as extremely sensational, without my experience from the field. I have probably also occasionally normalized their stories, and interpreted them quite differently than researchers with other experiences would have done.

I will illustrate some of this through examples from my interaction with Thomas, one of the participants in the study. During our two interviews and communication via text messages, I saw Thomas as presenting himself as fearsome and unempathetic, but also as kind and caring. Early in our first meeting, when I asked him if he wanted to tell me what he regarded as the most serious offence of his sentence, he leaned forward across the table, and asked me if I really wanted to know. 'Aggravated rape' he answered, as I confirmed my interest. As he repeated during our first encounter that he was lucky to be sentenced to 'only' six years, and that he could easily have got many years added to his sentence, I understood him as trying to scare or test me. Similar perceptions of being measured up and "tried and (sometimes) true" had struck me in entering new units and wings as a member of prison staff. Thomas also highlighted that he had no interest in conversing with prison staff, whom he described as 'low self-esteem wrapped in uniforms'. Moreover, he stated that no one had asked him about his offence during his years of incarceration, and that he found that rather odd. At the end of the second interview, when we had touched upon topics related to his offence, he stated that he would have really appreciated it if staff had approached him to talk about such matters. After re-reading the interview transcripts, I interpreted Thomas' behaviour during our meetings in the light of performative narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008), and as 'narrating and testing out identities' (Schinkel, 2014: 151) in different ways as we got to know each other. I later also introduced a different interpretation from my initial one of his asking if I really wanted to know about his offence. As it turned out that no staff showed interest in talking to him about it, he might just have been confirming whether this also applied to me, rather than just wanting to test me and measure me up. However, he would have been convinced that I really wanted to hear his story since the possible impact of his

offence on the interaction with staff was touched upon several times during our conversations.

Leaning on Miller's reflection, despite the fact that 'I have never gone to prison, meaning I wasn't exactly an "insider"' (Miller, 2021: 295), I knew and understood many of the inner dynamics of a prison. I knew from experience that it could definitely be true that staff never talked to Thomas about his offence, which is supported by research by Mjåland (2022) and Kruse (2022), and that his attitudes and behaviour might have contributed to this. As a former prison staff member, I had *felt* the pressure of time and resources. I *knew* the temptation of choosing the easy way out in meeting people who presented resistance behaviour in prison. Moreover, at least to a certain extent, I had insight into what often mattered to imprisoned persons in their interaction with staff. I *had* found that they often wanted to sit down for a chat, and appreciated care and recognition from staff. I had experienced how many of them, despite this, behaved in ways that appeared paradoxical. I was very familiar with the fact that some acted in ways that provoked staff and scared them off. Also, I still carry with me the emotional moments that arose when staff saw through this behaviour and stayed put. Throughout my interviews and analysis, it therefore appeared to me that Thomas probably *would* have appreciated what he considered care from staff. My analysis of his performative narrative and testing of identities changed from seeing it as an attempt to scare or test me to considering it as an approach to find out if I *really* wanted to know. Moreover, I interpreted this as Thomas' way of gradually revealing how he longed for this type of attention and interaction, and I also realized that he considered staff as something more valuable and complex than 'low self-esteem wrapped in uniforms'.

Similarly, I have made efforts to be aware of how my proximity has influenced the data generation and analysis of meetings with current practitioners. In the paper 'Facilitator-coordinators' or 'umbilical cords': Staff experiences of supporting desistance following release from prison (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023a), my co-authors and I discussed benefits and challenges of reflexivity from the position of the researcher related to the population under study, and how we approached these. In Berger's (2015) terms, we elaborated on how it would affect my research that I had 'been there' and 'done that'.

Carrying many similar experiences as my study participants positioned me as an insider in many ways, which allowed me to approach the interviews with knowledge and insight such as 'cultural intuition' (Berger, 2015). This gave me the benefit of addressing certain topics, and of understanding implied content and 'Correctional Service terminology'. I have repeatedly met people who find that the Correctional Services lack transparency, and some have even jokingly referred to them as 'the secret service'. Accordingly, I consider that my familiarity with this system enabled me to bring up topics and understand responses in nuanced and multilevelled ways. Certainly, this position also carried the risk of imposing my own values, beliefs and perceptions upon the participants. The participants' responses might

also have been less concise and detailed than to another researcher, by taking for granted that some of their experiences would be obvious to me. During the focus group interviews, I might very well have pushed answers in specific directions, or guided them by my follow-up questions or my body language. With this in mind, I made some choices of how to conduct the interviews with staff. For example, my proximity influenced my way of introducing research topics at the beginning of the focus group interviews and inviting participants to discuss topics among themselves and not approaching me with 'answers', as well as the choice of implementing a Goffman-inspired thematic analysis. Berger (2015) states that the researcher´s familiarity might lead her to block out other voices, and to assume that the participants share the same language and experiences as herself. In line with this, and in terms of a sociology of being together, I underline that I have *experienced* how decisive for example the pre-release meetings can be for both prison and probation staff as people approach the vulnerable transition to society, and that I have *felt* the frustration and helplessness of not being able to provide decisive relational support in these contexts in both roles, as was also stressed by participants in the focus group interviews.

These reflections illustrate my understanding of how my proximity provided me with insight that moved beyond empathizing with participants. Using and paying attention to these 'tools' of proximity probably helped me to understand their lives differently from researchers who are not close in similar ways (Miller, 2021). My reflections also exemplify how this might have influenced the construction of meaning of my research data. From the perspective of a sociology of being together, of both using and paying attention to these 'tools' of proximity, I have made attempts to draw benefit from my proximity. These attempts included implementing the voices of other researchers and of people who had formerly been in prison in the processes of analysis. To illustrate the first example of co-operation, a more detailed account of this process from Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023b) is presented in the following.

I performed my initial reading and coding of the data to enable me to become more familiar with the overall content. With the aim of developing a richer and more nuanced reading and analysis of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2019), Ellen Andvig also read and coded some of the data. In this way, the initial familiarization with the data was done separately by two of the authors. In a subsequent meeting, Ellen and I reflected on and discussed the *preliminary categories* I had constructed. After my first reading of the interviews, I uploaded them and started categorizing them in NVivo. After several attempts, I found no benefit of using this tool for analysis, and my initial thematic map that I presented to Ellen therefore consisted of an 'old- fashioned' handwritten presentation with circles, colours and arrows. This initial map contained categories such as the feeling of being 'captured in freedom', lack of contact and follow-up from caseworkers, control rather than help and supervision, the wish for safety and trust instead of restrictions, indifference, 'two-sided' interaction and the ambivalence of a completed interaction. Further key categories were the safety of being 'reined in', the crucial importance of the caseworkers ('it would have ended badly without them'), the need for a conversation partner, the conversation as 'purification and therapy', the important and

pleasant conversations, and the de-stigmatizing effects of the conversations. During our meeting, as also elaborated in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023b), Ellen and I discussed these categories, the relations between them, and how they contributed to answering the research question. In this process, as we delved deeper into analysing the second wave of interviews, we found reflections on more positive experiences of interaction than we did in the first interviews with the same participants. For example, Thomas did not mention conversations with his caseworker in the first interview, but he was now more eager to talk about things that penal voluntary organizations helped him with, which 'one would normally expect the Correctional Services to do'. In the second interview it became clear that he had great benefit from therapeutic conversations with Correctional Service staff, which he had missed and worked for during most of his time in prison. Similarly, the second interview with Harald revealed his decisive conversations with his caseworker even after he finished his sentence. Hence, inspired by this meeting, I prepared a more detailed thematic map, where I allowed for more recognition of the follow-up interviews as exemplified above. Among these new themes developed was 'care and help through availability and lasting relationships'. As stated in paper 2, I illuminated the relevance of this temporal aspect in two steps. First, through the collaborative approach between Ellen and myself, where we generated broader themes to shed light on key aspects, such as how time tended to 'nuance the early negative experiences of the interaction'. Second, inspired by Riessman (2008), I explored how longer extracts of participants' stories would highlight the meaning of the temporal aspect, beyond that of the initial reflexive thematic analysis. This was followed by a process where I defined and named themes, resulting in a final thematic map which was presented and reflected upon during a final meeting with all three authors.

From this example of co-operation with other researchers, I will now move on to illustrate how I brought resettling persons' perspectives into the analysis process. To contextualize this approach, I will proceed by presenting in more detail how I implemented co-operative inquiry.

3.3 Co-operative inquiry in my study

Co-operative inquiry is one of the terms used to describe knowledge development where academics involve people with first-hand experience of the topic as co-researchers in their study (Askheim and Borg, 2010; Borg et al., 2015; Heron, 1996). Heron (1996) explains that co-operative inquiry is a form of participative, person-centred inquiry which does research *with* people, not *on* them or *about* them. He presents the approach as an inquiry where all subjects are as fully involved as possible throughout the research process, but also introduces what he calls partial forms of the method. In these approaches, researchers and participants collaborate on some aspects of the research process. Askheim and Borg (2010) present a partial form of co-operative inquiry as the most common practice in Norwegian mental health and recovery research. This is where professional researchers are responsible

for the research process, while experts by experience contribute their unique competence. This definition is, as I see it, close to what Heron calls a partial form of co-operative inquiry.

3.3.1 The background to implementing the approach

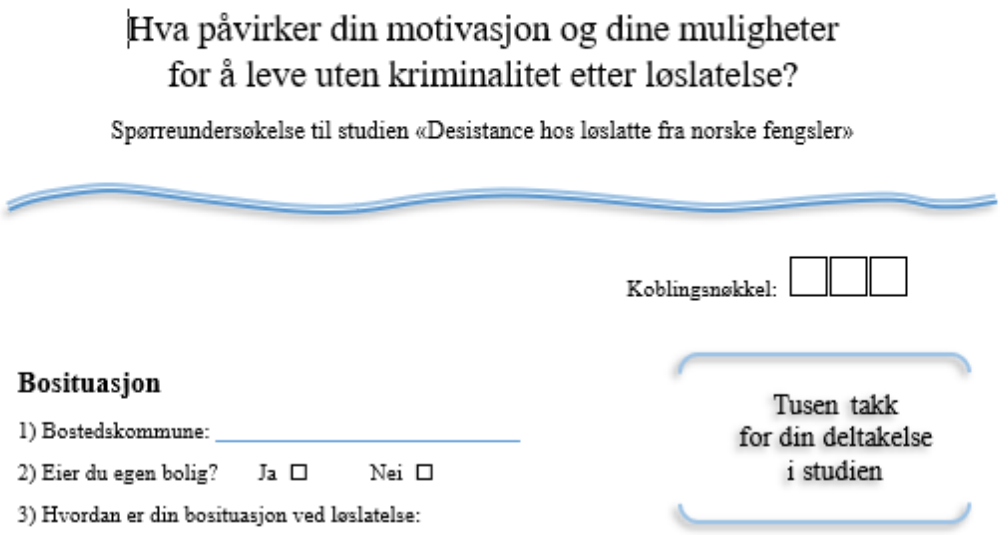
According to Borg and Karlsson (2017), persons with mental health challenges often describe negative and dehumanizing experiences with mental health services, and situations of being treated as disorders or diagnoses rather than unique individuals with strengths and competencies. They underline the need for developing collaborative partnerships by involving people with lived experience. Additionally, researchers have long been concerned with the power relations between researchers and participants. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015: 37) point out that the research interview is not a '… dominance-free zone of consensus and empathy …'. Experiences of dehumanization, stigmatization and power imbalance also occur in penal institutions and criminological research, and variations of convict criminology and co-operative inquiry have also been implemented in this field. Convict criminology has been described as the study of criminology by people with first-hand experience of imprisonment. It is argued that drawing on lived experience can sharpen the focus of criminological inquiry and expand the horizons of the criminological imagination (Earle 2018). In their participatory action research in criminology, Fitzgibbon and Stengel (2018) present the empowering possibility of working with marginalized women as co-researchers. They discuss how contradictory interpretations throughout the research process can reveal and challenge inherent power inequalities. Veseth et al. (2017) also underline how research collaboration can increase reflexivity in studies. In the interpretative part of the study, this potentially constrains the nuancing of the researcher´s initial interpretations by pointing out other important dimensions and aspects of understanding. Co-researchers can thus discuss the trustworthiness of, and further develop, initial understandings. Similarly, Askheim and Borg (2010: 106) state that in the process of analysis, experts by experience will be able to give alternative interpretations of data to those of academic researchers. This might give the research broader insights and richer and more nuanced knowledge. These papers influenced my understanding of how co-operation with people with lived experience would improve my research. Heron (1996) underlines the need for a dynamic elaboration of co-operative inquiry, which inspired me to reflect on *why* and *how* to implement this methodology in my project, as well as the pros and cons of doing so.

The Dam foundation, which finances my research, expects people with lived experience to be involved in the research. This might suggest that co-operative inquiry could be included mainly for symbolic reasons. Such symbolic involvement, along with a lack of recognition of and low expectations from co-researchers with lived experience, is often referred to as tokenism (Askheim and Borg, 2010; Askheim and Høiseth, 2019; Borg et al., 2015). Askheim and Høiseth (2019) underline the importance of building rapport with the co-researchers, to be able to *move beyond* tokenism. I understand tokenism as being in opposition to ethical

aspects such as respect, equality and reciprocity in research. A vital element here is the principle of reciprocity, understood as what participants in research projects gain from participating (see for example Di Marco and Sandberg (2023) and Creswell and Poth (2018)). My aim of building rapport and reciprocity was an attempt to make research participation a positive experience and to avoid tokenism.

3.3.2 Interaction with people at WayBack: Co-operative inquiry in practice

WayBack, a non-profit foundation *for* and *with* people with lived experience of resettlement, provided important contributions throughout this project. The initial conversations with the members and management and their support during the drafting of the funding application helped to establish the framework of the co-operative inquiry. Representatives from WayBack were not interviewed and did not recruit participants to the study. My first meeting at their premises in Oslo was with two people who were still under post-release supervision and the manager of WayBack. The aim of the meeting was to listen to their stories of imprisonment and re-entry, to discuss recruiting and retracing of participants, and to test the background survey designed for the project. Based on the meeting, I changed some of the text in the introduction sheets, which were designed to recruit resettling participants. We discussed alternative terms to ‘desistance’, a word that would be unfamiliar and awkward and therefore might have created distance rather than helping recruitment. In line with much desistance research, the experience of representatives from WayBack showed that motivation is almost worthless without stability, and the ability and support to live a life free from crime. We therefore rewrote the sentences containing ‘desistance’ to underline ‘motivation’ and ‘possibilities’, as well as the process of time and development. We also discussed improvements of the content and layout of the background survey. One example was the number of dotted lines after the open questions. These were seen as a possible source of distress, as they could be understood as requiring participants to fill them with text. Also, one positive feature highlighted was the sentence ‘Tusen takk for din deltakelse i studien’ (‘Thank you for your participation in the study’) at the top of the questionnaire, as this was considered polite and an attempt at reciprocity (see the example on the next page).



Hva påvirker din motivasjon og dine muligheter for å leve uten kriminalitet etter løslatelse?

Spørreundersøkelse til studien «Desistance hos løslatte fra norske fengsler»

Koblingsnøkkel: ☐☐☐

Bosituasjon

1) Bostedskommune: _____

2) Eier du egen bolig? Ja ☐ Nei ☐

3) Hvordan er din bosituasjon ved løslatelse:

Tusen takk for din deltakelse i studien

When it came to retracing participants, we all emphasized and agreed on the importance of stating that participants would decide on the best way for them to be contacted for an invitation to a follow-up interview.

I return now to my second attempt to benefit from my proximity to my field of study (Miller, 2021) by incorporating the voices of people who have experienced imprisonment in the analysis process. Three other representatives from WayBack contributed to the analysis of the paper 'Nuances of fragmentation, (mis)recognition and closeness: Narratives of challenges and support during resettlement'. During this collaboration, we analysed and discussed the preliminary anonymized stories. This started with a scheduled meeting at their premises, to which I had brought printed copies of the preliminary stories of the research participants. Each of the 'co-analysts' at WayBack was given a copy and a pen to enable them to mark the text and note down their ideas and impressions while I read the stories to them. This was followed by a round where each of them presented whatever they wanted to the rest of us and a final group discussion. This approach also led the co-analysts to draw connections to and present examples of their own experiences from imprisonment, which served as a form of validation of the results we discussed. All in all, this process (which is also presented in parts in Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2024) resulted in enhanced and more compact presentations of the individual stories.

Beyond these contributions there were two long, informal face-to face interviews with resettling persons at WayBack. These meetings added valuable insight and background

knowledge to the research, but were not included in the research interviews. One of them had spent time in Oslo prison during my time there as a staff member. This enabled me to understand current practices in today's prisons, by comparing them to practices we could both relate to as common reference points. In addition to the planned collaboration presented here, informal conversations and meetings were just as valuable for this thesis. One of these was an impromptu visit to the WayBack premises in Oslo at the end of December 2022, during their packing to move to another location a few blocks away. The time spent together that day resulted in some strenuous efforts in packing and carrying, but also some relaxing moments of informal talk and collaboration.

3.3.3 Co-operative inquiry within the sociology of being together

While we were packing the cooking utensils that December day, Eva and I shared half a day of energetic work, chats and laughter. She wore an ankle monitor during her last phase of her prison sentence and described some of its practical challenges. Always with some witty comments and a laugh. Suddenly she asked me 'So, are you collecting stuff now, as we work? For your research?'. Her question generated a chain of reflections over my methodological choices and framework. I started to wonder if my research had turned into ethnographic fieldwork based on numerous formal and informal conversations and meetings, and co-operative inquiry. I realized that this was partly true. Yet there was more to it than that. Parts of the reflections that culminated from this episode have been presented in this chapter. I have reflected on how the possibility of being close to the field and those constituting it, hopefully achieved by not too 'sneaky means', has benefited the different stages of this study. I have also elaborated on how my background and experience have built and shaped the different layers of my data generation. Unlike the traditional attempt at objectivity in sociological research, I have striven for transparency and reflexivity. Most importantly, I have presented my process of framing my research within what I understand as a sociology of being together (Miller, 2021). All these factors reflect my ambition of making my proximity a gift for presenting new and different insights through personal experience and closeness.

4 Nuances, safe havens and the ideal of umbilical cord support

This section provides an overview of the three papers included in the thesis, stating their titles, journals for publication, publication status and co-authorship. Each article is implemented in full text, followed by a presentation of the distinct significance of its findings for the *overarching* aims of the thesis.

Table 1: Overview of the papers

	Title	**Journal**	**Publication status**	**Co-authors**
1	Nuances of fragmentation, (mis)recognition and closeness: Narratives of challenges and support during resettlement	Punishment & Society	Published	Marguerite Schinkel Ellen Andvig Bengt Karlsson
2	Spotlighting the probation meeting - Lived experiences of desistance supporting interaction following imprisonment	European Journal of Probation	Published	Ellen Andvig Bengt Karlsson
3	'Facilitator-coordinators' or 'umbilical cords': Staff experiences of supporting desistance following release from prison	Criminology & Criminal Justice	Published	Ellen Andvig Bengt Karlsson

Paper 1

Koffeld-Hamidane S, Schinkel M, Andvig E and Karlsson B (2024) Nuances of fragmentation, (mis)recognition and closeness: Narratives of challenges and support during resettlement. *Punishment & society* 26(1): 187-207. DOI: 10.1177/14624745231203961

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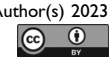

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Nuances of fragmentation, (mis)recognition and closeness: Narratives of challenges and support during resettlement

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Abstract
The transition from prison to society tends to be tough and painful for people in resettlement and challenging to facilitate for professionals. The Norwegian Correctional Services aim for a continuous reentry focus *throughout* the prison sentence. Norway has been presented as one of the Nordic exceptional penal states, partly based on 'the encouraging pattern of officer-inmate interactions'. However, this exceptional picture has been criticized for paying more attention to discourse than to lived experiences. As newly released persons' experiences of interaction and relationships with staff and of how these facilitate and frustrate their reentry processes have largely been ignored, this article draws attention to their perspectives. Inspired by narrative analysis, in cooperation with persons with lived experience, we constructed three stories of challenges and support during resettlement. Through these in-depth presentations of frustrating misrecognition, ignorance and fragmentation, but also of closeness, continuity, recognition, belonging and de-stigmatization, this study provides important insights into *how* interaction and relationships

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with staff enable and constrain reentry to society. By bringing lived experience into the discourse of Nordic exceptionalism, this article adds valuable perspectives to this still ongoing debate. Overall, we argue for a revitalization of the primary officer role and a broader approach to resettlement to facilitate support *throughout* the prison sentence.

Keywords
lived experience, resettlement, staff support, Nordic penal exceptionalism, narrative criminology

Introduction

The transitional phase from prison to society tends to be tough and painful for people in resettlement and challenging to facilitate for professionals. In light of this, improvement of resettlement practice has been discussed in several European countries (Dünkel et al., 2019). The prison and probation services aim to prepare people for crime-free lives through a continuous focus on throughcare and a gradual transition to the community (Dünkel and Weber, 2019; Pruin, 2019). Despite these intentions, reentry assistance is often fragmented and distanced (Cracknell, 2020; Dominey, 2019; Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023; Robinson, 2005). Drawing upon narratives of newly released persons in Norway, this article aims to explore experiences of the impact of staff on challenges and support during resettlement.

Literature on staff impact during resettlement

Previous research illustrates how prison and probation staff, by treating resettling people as human beings, going beyond their work duties, and including people in something meaningful, promote feelings of normality, worth and belonging. To be treated as a human being involved being respected, accepted and recognized as more than the crime one had committed (O'Sullivan et al., 2020). These experiences are often related to special units or prisons based on programmes with particular aims, such as peer mentoring (Einat, 2017; O'Sullivan et al., 2020) and treatment or rehabilitation more generally (Blagden et al., 2016; Giertsen et al., 2015). Staff who saw participants as individuals, trusted in them and believed they could change, characterized the social climate in some of these units (Blagden et al., 2016; Collica-Cox, 2018). Blagden et al. (2016) and Meek and Lewis (2014) highlighted how recognizing positive changes and reflecting them back to the participants galvanized commitment to their personal change process. This also counteracted stigma and feelings of humiliation (Stone et al., 2018). Recognition and appraisal of participants' desire for and movement towards rehabilitation and desistance helped them gain confidence to maintain crime-free lives and prosocial identities as non-offenders (Doekhie et al., 2018: 509). Experiences of being

valued as assets within a community beyond oneself appeared to facilitate positive change (Blagden et al., 2016; Collica-Cox, 2018; Einat, 2017; Giertsen et al., 2015; Meek and Lewis, 2014; O'Sullivan et al., 2020). Longitudinal studies have also emphasized the importance of continued relationships, where staff were seen as encouraging, caring and acknowledging, and practising an open-door policy. Participants felt comfortable when talking freely without being judged, allowing staff to be reliable stepping stones who provided hope and motivation for life changes (Collica-Cox, 2018; Meek and Lewis, 2014).

However, the literature also shows the pains and struggles of rehabilitation and re-entry, and how these hinder resettlement. Research by Durnescu (2019) and Miller (2021) presents and discusses how criminal records stick with the person for a long time after imprisonment, and cause difficulties in areas such as finding and keeping suitable housing, employment and supportive formal and informal relationships. Additionally, Durnescu (2019) underlines how the pains of release are often interrelated, creating vicious circles as one pain leads to another. In the US, penal voluntary organizations have been shown to be inadequate in reducing structural barriers during resettlement (Miller, 2014). In the Norwegian context, however, staff in these organizations find that they can work close to their ideal of supporting de-stigmatization and mitigating challenges following release. However, at the same time, Norwegian probation workers describe a turn away from practices that support resettlement (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023).

Resettlement is commonly understood as a process of control and supervision within the Correctional Services, aiming to integrate people into society after imprisonment. Terminology describing resettlement frequently changes, and the process has been seen as starting pre-release and continuing 'through the gate' into the community (Cracknell, 2023). Based on our findings, we argue for a broader focus, where resettlement practice starts at the very beginning of imprisonment.

Resettlement practice in Norway

Prison officers, probation staff, and staff in penal voluntary organizations hold significant but varying interests and responsibilities in Norwegian resettlement practice. The Norwegian Correctional Services aim to implement remand and penal sanctions in a manner that is satisfactory for society, and which prevents criminal offences, and to facilitate a system that allows offenders to change their pattern of criminal behaviour (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2021: 7). In line with this, prison officers and probation staff continually balance tasks of control and care. But despite being subject to the same overarching laws and guidelines, practices are differently organized behind the prison walls and in the community. Probation staff are responsible for following up individual sentences, organized in a manner that supports undisturbed, personal conversations with sentenced persons. However, they have recently expressed their frustration at seeing their practice moving away from relationship building and social work (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023). Prison officers, on the other hand, work under more dynamic and less structured conditions. The primary officer scheme was introduced

to formalize their work of facilitating rehabilitation and desistance, stating that the primary officer must carry out background surveys, coordinate future plans and interdisciplinary cooperation, and motivate and support people throughout the sentence (Justis-og beredskapsdepartementet, 2002). Despite the intention of the scheme and its potential for resettlement work, today's practice of the role has been considered as holding a huge, unfulfilled potential (Culbertson, 2021). Local and individual interpretations and prioritizations, lack of time and resources, rotation of officers, and relocation of imprisoned persons challenge relationship building and structured reentry work and lead to considerable differences in practice. Even though penal voluntary organizations in Norway have taken ever greater responsibility to support desistance during resettlement, they do not implement sentences. Penal voluntary organization staff and probation staff hold similar ideals to achieve individual change and belonging following release (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023). Despite this, only penal voluntary organization staff found that they worked in line with these ideals. By practising 'umbilical cord' support, through a resource focus and establishing close, continued relationships, they managed to reduce barriers related to identity change, stigma and navigating the welfare system.

The Correctional Services aim for a continuous focus on preparation for release *throughout* the prison sentence (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2021). However, the penal system has recently undergone changes that negatively influence opportunities to work in line with this aim. The prison population has changed due to higher penalty levels for some serious offences, while more sentences for less serious offences are served in the community, and growing numbers serve out their full sentences. Other developments are cuts and reductions in staff, high numbers of people in solitary confinement, and permanent closure of several low-security prisons (Justis-og beredskapsdepartementet, 2019, 2022; Sivilombudsmannen, 2019). Penal voluntary organizations have also taken on greater responsibility in reentry work (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023). Discrepancies between aims and practices related to resettlement have been highlighted by practitioners and researchers (Johnsen and Fridhov, 2019; Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023; Todd-Kvam and Ugelvik, 2019). Prison staff report fewer opportunities to engage in reentry work, while probation caseworkers are concerned about the impact of the recent changes on rehabilitation and desistance (Actis, 2020; Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023; Todd-Kvam, 2020), and researchers point out how the increasing risk focus has re-shaped the Norwegian penal field (Todd-Kvam, forthcoming). A recent report also criticizes the Correctional Services' inadequate rehabilitative support during imprisonment, their lack of insight into imprisoned people's needs and challenges, and their failure to draw up realistic and encouraging sentence plans (Riksrevisjonen, 2022).

Norwegian resettlement practice within the debate of penal exceptionalism

Norwegian penal practice has, as one of the Nordic penal states, been presented in exceptionally positive terms, as Pratt and Eriksson (2013) substantiated differences in punishment between clusters consisting of Finland, Sweden and Norway on the

one hand, and England, Australia and New Zealand on the other hand. The prison 'tours' that formed the basis for these understandings lasted between 2 and 4 h and were usually accompanied by a senior officer. Features of the prison were sometimes discussed with prison managers and staff, and in some cases with imprisoned persons. This approach was partly chosen because in that way '… it would be possible to observe *recurring patterns* relating to officer-inmate interaction, dining and visiting arrangements, and various other accoutrements of the material conditions of life that were common to the prisons and prison systems in each cluster' (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013: 9). The authors summarized the differences in the five areas of 'prison size', 'officer/inmate relations', 'quality of prison life', 'prison officers', and 'work and education programmes'. The extraordinary interaction between staff and imprisoned persons in Nordic prisons was highlighted through how staff took part in counselling and planning, daily tasks and activities, how the two parties got to know each other well, and how staff respect for imprisoned persons seemed to be an institutional feature.

This exceptional presentation has been neutralized by Norwegian and international penologists (Crewe et al., 2022; Crewe and Ievins, 2021; Ievins and Mjåland, 2021; Ugelvik, 2013). It has been considered as idealizing, and as disregarding the pain of imprisonment and the unevenness in mild treatment in Nordic penal contexts. Although people are kept safe in decent and harmless conditions, imprisonment in Norway is often experienced as empty, careless, negligent and meaningless (Ievins and Mjåland, 2021). The positive portrayal has also been questioned as more interested in penal discourse than in lived realities (Crewe et al., 2022).

The backdrop of an exceptional Norwegian penal practice has been the starting point for projects aiming to enhance imprisonment and working conditions internationally. The American organization Amend, based at the University of California, is one of the partners in a project where Norwegian staff participate in training prison officers to support positive change, rehabilitation and desistance (Justis-og beredskapsdepartementet, 2022). However, one of the project instructors reflected on her experience of discrepancies between methods and schemes and daily practice in Norwegian prisons: 'Every time I enthusiastically talk about the Norwegian primary officer scheme, I am increasingly convinced of the scheme's untapped potential. I find myself rather wanting to talk about how I think it should be used, rather than how I know it works in practice' (Culbertson, 2021: 105, our translation).

We would argue that the visiting 'tours' that Pratt joined would have led to different descriptions if they had been guided by people imprisoned in the various units. This is because, behind the presentations of exceptional quality of prison life and relationships, there are lived experiences. As newly released persons' stories of staff assistance during resettlement have largely been ignored, this article aims to explore *their* experiences. We ask for their perceptions of relationships and interaction with prison officers, probation staff and penal voluntary organization staff in this context, and of how this challenges and supports their reentry processes.

Methodology

This article draws on 13 interviews with persons recently released from prison. While these interviews were initially analysed thematically, during this process we increasingly became aware of the added value of a narrative analysis of the data. A narrative methodology maintains the integrity of the participants' views and keeps their narratives intact instead of fragmenting and decontextualizing them (Josselson, 1995; Schinkel, 2014). Narrative research often creates empathy for the narrator, and can narrow the distance between people from different social backgrounds (Riessman, 2002). Our analysis involved both an *analysis of narratives* (Polkinghorne, 1995: 12), that is, collecting stories as data, with their analysis resulting in descriptions of themes that held across the stories, as well as *narrative analysis*, where we collected descriptions and events and further synthesized their plots into one or more stories (Polkinghorne, 1995: 12). While the *narrative turn* is generally dated to the 1980s in most disciplines, a sustained interest in stories emerged in criminology more recently, in the 2010s (Fleetwood et al., 2019). This has enabled the discipline to explore the ways in which people's stories about their lives are shaped and their consequences in terms of perceived harm and these people's futures (Maruna and Liem, 2021), which form the basis for the present study.

Recruitment and participants

Participants were recruited through gatekeepers in three probation offices and three voluntary organizations, after discussing the research aims and criteria for inclusion. The recruitment approach was deliberately broad, including anyone who had recently experienced the transition from prison to society, with the aim of engaging a diverse sample encompassing different experiences of resettlement. Twelve men and one woman participated, aged from 19 to 66. At least three had parents born and raised outside Norway. They lived in different parts of the country and had served their last sentence in twelve different prisons of varying levels of security. Three of them had been released from high-security facilities (participants are presented in more detail in Table 1).

Data construction

Before the interviews, the researcher and participants communicated about the topic and aim of the project and agreed on a time and place for the appointment. This enabled us to establish rapport before the interview. Participants were interviewed individually, in person, from one week to three months after release. Interviews took place between April and August 2021, in meeting rooms at a university or in libraries, in cafés, and in a private home. Interviews started with a review of the information sheet, signing of consent, and completion of a background form. These initial steps facilitated informal chats and a careful movement towards the research topic. Interviews started broadly, allowing participants to talk about whatever they found relevant to the topic. Gradually questions narrowed down to how they experienced relationships with staff during imprisonment and after release. Participants were asked if they had been in

Table 1. Presentation of participants.

	Age	Length of prison sentence	Time in prison	Most serious offence	Multiple offences this sentence	Previous prison stays	Previous sentences (all types)	Type of sentence after imprisonment	Time between imprisonment and interview
Harald	36–45	7 years	4 years and 9 months	Undisclosed	No	No	0	Early release on parole	3 months
Sadiq	18–25	1 year and 6 months	1 year	Drug related	Undisclosed	No	Undisclosed	Early release on parole	14 days
Thomas	46–55	6 years and 2 months	4 years	Sexual	Yes	Yes	1	Home detention	1½ months
Knut	36–45	3 years	2 years	Drug related	Yes	Yes	10–15	Electronic monitoring	1 month
Seline	18–25	4 years	2 years and 6 months	Drug related	No	No	0	Electronic monitoring	18 days
Anwar	**36–45**	**9 years and 6 months**	**5 years**	**Drug related**	**No**	**No**	**0**	**Home detention**	**10 days**
Torkil	**46–55**	**10 months**	**7 months**	**Violence**	**No**	**Yes**	**5**	**Early release on parole**	**2 months**
Daniel	26–35	2 months	2 months	Sexual	Yes	No	0	Community sentence	21 days
Martin	36–45	1 year	1 year	Violence	Yes	Yes	33	Drug court recovery programme	1 month
Anton	66 +	1 year and 8 months	7 months	Fraud	Yes	No	0	Electronic monitoring	1½ months

(continued)

Table 1. Continued

	Age	Length of prison sentence	Time in prison	Most serious offence	Multiple offences this sentence	Previous prison stays	Previous sentences (all types)	Type of sentence after imprisonment	Time between imprisonment and interview
Steffen	**26–35**	**1 year 2 months**	**8 months**	**Violence**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**0**	**Early release on parole**	**2 months**
Glenn	46–55	8 years (preventive detention)	5 years	Violence	Yes	Yes	3	Early release on parole	14 days
Morten	46–55	1 year and 8 months	9 months	Drug related	Yes	Yes	15–20	Electronic monitoring	1 month

Presentations of Anwar, Torkil and Steffen, whose stories are presented in the article, are marked bold.

post-release situations in which they would previously have been likely to commit criminal acts, and what affected their actions in such situations. How interaction with staff affected the likelihood of them staying away from crime was of particular interest. Interviews were recorded and transcribed before analysis.

To form a general picture of our findings, we adopted a thematic approach before conducting a narrative analysis, inspired by Larsgaard et al. (2020). This allowed us to describe themes that were held across several interviews and provided an initial overview. We built this approach on Polkinghorne's *analysis of narratives*. We then selected three interviews which we found presented powerful contextual examples of participants' lived experience. The three interviews illustrate differences and similarities, uniqueness and diversity, and were deliberately selected to present varying experiences on the topic. Through a process of *narrative analysis*, we derived stories which were each based on analysed data from one interview with one person only. In this *narrative analysis* of these three interviews, we drew together the events of each story into temporally organized wholes where events unfolded chronologically and culminated in an outcome. This operation of emplotment composed places, descriptions and events into stories, in which new levels of relational significance appeared. Through this narrative analysis, we constructed stories from elements of each interview which we understood as making a meaningful contribution to answering our research question. Following this process, we ran a second phase of employment in cooperation with three persons with lived experience in resettlement. They represented WayBack, a nonprofit foundation that had an advisory capacity in the research project (Roche et al., 2010). Representatives from WayBack were not interviewed in our study. During our cooperative analysis with WayBack, we analysed and discussed the preliminary, anonymized stories, which resulted in enhanced, more compact presentations of individual stories.

This analytic approach led to broad and nuanced employment reflections on each story. Based on narrative analysis, the stories were abstracted from the data, and revealed meaning not apparent in the data themselves. They were constructed through several stages of selection and analysis, to provide illustrative answers to our questions of interest. The collaborative analysis thus involved ordering and organizing the separate interview data into coherent stories, without making further changes to the individual narratives.

We introduce our presentation with a broad overview of relevant themes from the analysis of narratives. Regardless of sentence length, participants described events and interactions with staff from all aspects of imprisonment. They often described paradoxes, where staff would either take the initiative to get to know them or were mainly 'drinking coffee in the office to pick up their salary'. Experiences of productive relationships with primary officers were referred to as 'pure luck'. Imprisonment often felt monotonous and without progression due to a lack of interest and sentence planning by the staff. Interaction with probation staff was mostly presented as either supportive or shallow, but some participants described control measures as intrusive and disruptive. Voluntary organization staff were found to provide outstanding support, which participants considered as basically the Correctional Services' responsibility.

Stories of ignorance and fragmentation, recognition and closeness

Each of the following three stories is based on analysed data from one person only. Each story is presented as a whole section preceded by a short contextualization, inspired by Klevan et al. (2016), and followed by an employment analysis in light of relevant literature. Quotes within the extracts are direct quotes, and the surrounding text is the analysed story.

Torkil's story

Torkil is in his late forties. He rented a flat and had a stable job when imprisoned. He served a ten-month sentence for violence in a low-security prison and was released on parole after almost seven months. He had previously served five shorter prison sentences, some of them in the same unit. During the interview, Torkil kept comparing his sentences. His previous, shorter stays felt like breaks from his daily life. But his latest, longer sentence had a more negative effect on his life. The interview took place at a bakery in his hometown and lasted for about 75 min.

> I didn't receive any help from the prison. I got a bunch of false promises. 'You can get electronic monitoring, you can apply for transfer to low security, … apply for this and apply for that…' I sent application after application. Lots of them were not even received at the other end. They got lost. I wasn't impressed by the prison officers. It all started with the application for electronic monitoring. One of them urged me in advance to apply after two or three weeks. So I could keep my flat while I waited for a transfer, I managed to save up for two or three months' rent before I started my sentence. I really hoped to get that application approved. But after a long time, they rejected it. I asked them 'Why? I can't just get rejected orally?' Well, it was because I was sentenced for violence, which means there's no way you get electronic monitoring. But if I had known that I wouldn't have bothered to apply, and just given up on the flat. Then I would have found a new flat after release and saved that 63000 kroner. That's a lot of money.

> Several of my applications simply disappeared into thin air and were neither sent nor processed. But one day my primary officer told me to send an application to an open institution, where I could work while serving my time. He told me they would sort it out. I said 'Okay, I'll do that'. After a while, I called the institution and asked 'Have you looked at my application? Is there any chance?' 'Yes, we have your application, but haven't received any approval from your primary officer', he said. So I had to contact him again, and he wasn't around every day. It took time. And, hah, I finally got rejected. The application had suddenly reached higher up in the prison system, and the lawyer and management thought, 'No, this kind of sentencing is not for you, you don't need it'. 'No, well, then … Okay'. I replied. What was I supposed to say? Staff in my unit advised me to apply, so I did. And they didn't quite understand this, either.

> Eventually I thought it would be brilliant to get transferred to a regular transitional home, since I had a job and a home, and was in quite a good position to return to society. But my time was limited. After a while, the transitional housing staff told me I could have got a place there, … if they'd only received my application earlier … In other words, the prison believed I wasn't allowed to apply for anything until I received a response to the first application. So, I had to serve my entire sentence in the same prison. I could actually have got a place in the transitional housing, if I had sent that application earlier. It was just bullshit. So, I've really been tricked badly, you know, all the way. At the end, I felt that it got personal. I followed the advice of the staff the whole time, and that ruined most of it. The blokes who worked with me in the kitchen asked 'Do they have their own shredder for your papers, or what? If we had half of your problems, things would have been really bad'. Fortunately, I'm very patient. But it got to be too much, heh. I got a bit pissed off and shouted at the officer a couple of times … I was a bit annoyed with him. At one point my primary officer said 'If this application doesn't get through, I'll leave. You've had enough misfortune. This is just nonsense'. He didn't understand where my papers went or how I got so many rejections either. He felt bad about it, because he was the one who helped me find information and send applications and stuff.

> You're supposed to try to get motivated to get back into society and all that, but with all the nonsense I experienced in that prison, I was close to getting my parole revoked just because they managed to annoy me that much. I could actually have been out working a lot earlier. Then I would have avoided all that debt. I borrowed 63000 just to keep my flat while I was inside. And when I was released, I suddenly got information about a possible foreclosure at home, for the last 900. I just thought 'Hello, you must be kidding!' But I'm a very optimistic person. If my financial situation calms down, life will be easier. Money isn't much, but unfortunately, it's still everything. Heh.

> They could have saved me a lot of applications, if they had guidelines to follow. No one knew what rights you have as an inmate in this or that category. You must ask over and over again, preferably other inmates who have been there before. But that's not how it should be. The staff should give you advice. So the prison staff didn't set very high standards this time. It wasn't very impressive. Heh. That's just the way it is, I've realized. But if I had known just half of this beforehand, I wouldn't even have turned up at the prison gate, to be honest.

Ignorance and fragmentation

Torkil's story is about false promises, postponements and being misled by prison officers. It presents experiences of repeated 'lacks' from staff: a lack of interest, a lack of motivation, a lack of information, a lack of communication, and a lack of professional practice. This reflects the ignorance and fragmentation of Torkil in this context, which generated emotional and financial distress. Despite following guidance from staff, Torkil did not get what he applied for. Rejections were based on his goals being unachievable, or his applications being handed in late or in the wrong order. Based on staff recommendations, he

spent much energy on trying to reach unattainable goals. Torkil's patience and acceptance in this context is revealed through laughter and modest resignation but is occasionally overshadowed by irritation and frustration. At a turning point in the story, he highlights how poor advice and missing applications prevented any sentence progression. By quoting peers and staff, Torkil underpins how this distress made him feel deceived (Riessman, 2008). This part of the story illustrates how he eventually felt that this ignorance and fragmentation was personal and stigmatizing. On top of false hopes of sentence progression, this fostered frustration, anger and disappointment. When such emotional experiences become intense, they have been shown to harm desistance processes during resettlement (Stoll, 2022).

Torkil reflects on leaving prison in a worse state than he entered it, despite his motivation and plans to resettle. He put money aside to keep his flat until he could earn enough while on electronic monitoring. However, because of the wrong advice he was given, he incurred a debt and possible foreclosure during imprisonment. Todd-Kvam illustrates how penal-related debt in general affects change processes, in that: 'The struggle to keep one's head above water financially will reinforce and prolong the liminal experience of desisting from crime' (2019: 14). As Torkil found a lack of interest in his resources and challenges, a lack of structured conversations, and a lack of preparations for a future plan, his goals were not adjusted in line with the aims of the Correctional Services. If the challenges associated with his accommodation had been addressed at the very start of his imprisonment, Torkil would not have been close to homelessness upon release.

This story illustrates a work culture of a lack of understanding and overall interest, which frustrated Torkil's motivation, possibilities and sentence progression. The disclaiming of responsibility by staff also affected the building blocks for trust and care, and hindered relationship building. Despite Torkil's characterization of his relationship with his primary officer as positive, it turned out that the officer's advice was perceived as ultimately misleading. Refusals and wrong advice caused annoyance and despair, which upset Torkil's desired return to society and probably produced pains of goal failure (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016). What might have appeared to staff as separate elements were of great significance for Torkil's broader project of getting his life back on track.

Anwar's story

Anwar is in his early forties. He has a family and owns a house. Anwar served his first prison sentence of almost 10 years for drug-related offences. He started in a high-security prison and was transferred to an open prison and then transitional housing. At the time of the interview, he was serving the last part of his sentence at home. The interview took place ten days after release, in the café at his workplace, and lasted for about 90 min.

> As a first-timer, I knew nothing about prisons. Based on what I have seen and heard in the media about Norwegian prisons, I thought 'Wow!' The Correctional Services' plans are good. But I was very disappointed to see they were just camouflage. When I served in high security, I had a nice room and plenty of space. I had my own shower and all that.

But there's so much more to it. During the two years I served there, no officer ever came to ask 'Hey, how are you? Can we help you with anything? Are there any courses you would like to attend?' or something like that. If you don't take the initiative, you're forgotten. Simple as that. When I applied for an open prison, my primary officer had to write an attachment. He said: 'I don't know exactly what to write about you. The only thing I know is that you are liked by inmates and staff. You are very nice, and never make any noise. But that's all I know'. I told him that I had been there for two years, which was plenty of time to get to know me, to invite me to meetings, to ask how I was doing and things like that. 'Yes, but we only have positive things to write about you'. I thanked him for saying that. But that was the answer I got. After two years.

But when I was transferred to the open prison, I got a completely different view of the Correctional Service. I became part of a community where everyone had something to do. I could walk around from morning to night. Staff were very helpful. I was no longer a number. I was a person, trusted and given responsibilities. That helped me a lot mentally. My brain opened. I saw new things and started thinking about the future. I thought a lot about where I was going and what I needed to address. And if I had anything on my mind, a problem or something like that, I could address it. I could knock on the prison director's door, have a cup of coffee with him, and talk about my problems or applications. I could have a cup of coffee with the lawyer. I felt that they listened to me. Not just 'La, la, la!', they listened to me. That was a good transition for me. I simply got a new perspective on life.

After a while I moved to transitional housing. I could finally start working. But I have some pride, you know, so I wouldn't call people I know. I wanted to find something on my own but wasn't sure of how to go about it. I had some contact with TFL (a penal voluntary organization) while I served at the open prison, so I continued that contact. We started with a short interview over the phone, and then Conny (staff member at TFL) came over to have a chat. We worked very closely. We communicated daily for three months, until I found my job. I searched for ads online and forwarded them to her. She replied 'Should we just go for it?' She drove for hours to get here. We met many times, for interviews or just for chats. She's been very encouraging, and she contacted the possible employers for an interview. It's not easy for an inmate to start all over again, because we live in a society where it's easy to judge people. And when you tell people you've been in prison, they think all sorts of weird things. I wasn't worried about the interviews themselves, but about how people viewed me. It was a great help that Conny made the first contact and introduced me to the employers, because she knows me. If they still wanted to interview me, my situation wouldn't shock them. That meant I could focus on what the job involved, my strengths and weaknesses, and who I am as a person. I could tell them I wasn't proud of my sentence, but it was still a part of my life. It probably took a bit of a toll on my self-confidence again. My employer is very open and non-judgmental, so I jumped straight into the job, and I'm getting more and more responsibility and confidence each day. I have TFL to thank for it. They are very efficient and stand by their promises. That's something I'll never forget.

From ignorance to recognition and belonging

Anwar's story presents feelings of ignorance, recognition and belonging, illustrated through two main transitions in the story, the move from a high to a low-security prison and from an open prison to society. It describes the staff's lack of interest in relationship building in the high-security prison, and how life there surprised and disappointed him. It also exemplifies how staff ignorance towards Anwar and his sentence progression could have complicated his transition from a high-security prison. The transition to an open prison illustrates an important shift from his experiences of being ignored, forgotten and dehumanized, to perceived attention, recognition and responsibility. This turning point also highlights the importance of being part of a community in the open prison, and of being treated as a human being rather than a number. Prison units emphasizing that people are more than the crime they committed have been shown to promote supportive relationships and experiences of positive change (Blagden et al., 2016; O'Sullivan et al., 2020).

The second transition in Anwar's story, from open prison to society, further underlines the meaning and struggle of belonging. Anwar's uncertainty and expectations of labelling challenged his return to daily work, and were probably related to experiences from his initial encounter with imprisonment. In this context, Anwar established a close and lasting relationship with Conny, based on respect, recognition, trust and effort, which have all been shown to initiate and maintain desistance processes (Collica-Cox, 2018; Meek and Lewis, 2014; Ugelvik, 2021). Conny managed to highlight Anwar's personality and resources when approaching his future employer. She enabled the employer to recognize Anwar as a person, rather than seeing him as an unemployable offender. Her 'umbilical cord' supervision (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023) challenged structural barriers and facilitated Anwar's reentry into society.

Steffen's story

Steffen is in his early thirties and lives with his mother and stepfather. He was still holding on to a job, even though he was heavily using drugs when he was imprisoned. Steffen was sentenced to 14 months for violence and released on parole after almost 10 months. He served his entire sentence in a high-security prison. Despite some previous convictions and serving his current sentence for a number of offences, he had not been imprisoned before. When interviewed, he had been released 2 months previously. The interview took place in a library in his hometown and lasted about 90 min.

> I guess it's never cool to be in prison, but it was good for me. Actually, like a wake-up call. I was completely devastated when I entered prison and was shielded from everything and everyone. When I finally got sober and came back to normal, I struggled for a long time. I was transferred to the drug rehabilitation unit where I attended courses. We were asked how we felt at daily morning meetings and motivated each other to stay away from drugs. I shared my history of addiction and what it did to me, which was important for my motivation. It was a relief to talk to others about the bad thoughts I go through 300 times by myself. It's not the same as saying it to myself, because the feeling remained inside my chest.

My primary officer had conversations with me three days a week, one hour each time, to help me stay sober. I was afraid to relapse if I didn't get that help. I was lucky I had that man as my primary officer. Because of his personality I became very attached to him. He was very calm, which calmed me too. I actually recovered in prison. But it wasn't easy to plan for my release. I didn't believe I could manage without drugs out in society. I feared a relapse, to be honest. I thought it would be tough to hear all the sounds and experience the surroundings. And I noticed that already on my first day out. I was in my mother's house when family members came to visit. I just had to go to bed. I was completely devastated. It was too much. My primary officer told me in advance, 'You should know, it's going to be tough the first couple of weeks'. It was quite extraordinary. I wasn't really prepared for it.

Now that I'm released, the probation office checks that I'm at work and that I'm at home after 11 pm. But that control is kind of classified. I never know, because they could come to my house on unannounced visits. I haven't really thought much about what it's like to have someone following me like that. My probation worker was very satisfied with everything I did, as she thought things were getting better and better. Within a fortnight after release, she told me how surprised she was that I wasn't back in. She knows everything written in my papers, that I'm a heavy addict and major criminal, and that it's impossible to keep me under control. Some conversations with her last a long time, and we talk about anything. Sometimes I answer her questions in advance because I know what she's going to ask. It's kind of funny. I've told her things that she couldn't read from my papers. That's great, because then she gets a slightly different impression of me. I was very happy that she saw me as a kind person. Because that's what I've been my whole life. I've always been kind and helped everyone.

The probation office has access to my Facebook account and my phone. If they suspect I'm into some secret chats about crime and stuff, they can take my phone. They have access to the operator to get the PUK code and can search the entire phone. Then they delete everything, so the phone is like new from the shop. And if they get suspicious again, they check what I've created and downloaded. Quite recently, I started a relationship with a girl. At the next meeting my caseworker asked 'How have you been?' I saw her smiling almost from ear to ear. 'Things are going very well. I've got a girlfriend" "So I've seen!' she replied. Because they check my Facebook account regularly. She said that's very good, and that she hoped things would turn out well. I get a lot out of our conversations. I think her advice will be useful. For example, if I'm close to relapse: 'Think of what we talked about! About how important life is, and what you could lose'. She has signed me up for regular sessions with a therapist, so I'll have someone to talk to after my parole. If I keep seeing that therapist, I think I'll be fine in the future. Better than I've ever been.

Closeness, continuity and de-stigmatization

Steffen's story illustrates a positive experience of resettlement, from the very start of imprisonment, which involved a drug rehabilitation unit, peer support and predictable, caring and long-lasting relationships with his primary officer and probation staff. It also demonstrates how conversations and relationships facilitated recovery and desistance.

Regular talks with his primary officer helped Steffen get rid of heavy thoughts. Their rapport was built on the officer's calmness, competence, motivation and prioritization. This was a continuation of Steffen's positive experiences from group work in the drug rehabilitation unit, through talk, peer support and recognition. This helped Steffen work on himself and become 'clean' in prison. A similar relationship developed with his probation staff after release. In other studies, continued relationships, both during and after imprisonment, have been shown to provide hope for crime-free futures (Collica-Cox, 2018; Meek and Lewis, 2014).

Despite Steffen's positively loaded experience of imprisonment, he faced challenges in reintegrating into society. To overcome these obstacles, he used quotes from his primary officer and probation staff as supportive self-instructions. Optimistic statements from staff can motivate and build confidence, by promoting 'bursts of energy' and 'boosts of self-esteem' (Doekhie et al., 2018; Stone et al., 2018: 396). For some, the significance of such statements and conversations has emerged long after the time in which they took place (Farrall et al., 2014).

Steffen found that he was being monitored by the probation office. Even though his probation staff going through his social media accounts could have made him feel untrustworthy, Steffen presented this in positive terms. As the probation staff got to know him beyond presentations in his papers, he felt recognized as a human being. This allowed him to hold on to the identity of 'a nice bloke', in contrast to an 'addict' or a 'criminal'. During our analysis in cooperation with WayBack, the veracity of this comprehensive amount of surveillance was questioned. Those involved regarded Steffen's experiences as exaggerated or imagined. However, regardless of the true content of the monitoring, Steffen expressed positive experiences like recognition, care and connectedness. Leaning on Sandberg's understanding that 'Whether true or false, the multitude of stories people tell reflect, and help us understand, the complex nature of values, identities, cultures, and communities' (Sandberg, 2010: 448), this part of Steffen's story illustrates what he considered valuable support. His story exemplifies perceptions of continued care in different relationships throughout resettlement. By connecting Steffen with a therapist at the end of his parole, his probation worker managed to 'wrap him up' and enable continuity. In assisting, guiding and caring for him after imprisonment, she also practised beyond a negligent approach (Ievins and Mjåland, 2021) and closer to 'umbilical cord' supervision (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023).

Discussion

The data from 13 interviews in this article, including in-depth presentations of the analysis of three of them, limits the generalizability of the findings. However, by relating our analysis and the following discussion to recent debates on Nordic penal exceptionalism, to established concepts of supervision and the grip of penal power, and to literature on recent practice, the findings still contribute to more complex understandings of resettlement assistance. Further research would be preferable to enable broader generalizations on the topic.

Based on our findings, we will discuss how lived experiences of resettlement can be understood within the perspectives and concepts of 'Maloptical' supervision (McNeill, 2019) and 'the grip of penal power' (Crewe and Ievins, 2021: 64) and how they challenge the more idealized picture of Nordic penal exceptionalism (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013). We also include implications for resettlement practice and policy.

In light of Maloptical supervision, where people '(…) suffer the pain of not being seen; at least not as they would recognize themselves' (McNeill, 2019: 225), we see how persons in resettlement might suffer from being ignored or misrecognized as individuals within a broader context, and how this may frustrate pathways of reentry. Crewe and Ievins (2021) draw on the concept of Maloptical supervision as they present ideal typical experiences related to recognition and misrecognition during imprisonment. They illustrate how the grip of penal power in prisons can be 'loose' or 'tight' in desirable or undesirable ways, and how a lack of attention and intervention can be frustrating and harmful. They compare an undesirable lack of tightness, where people are unseen, misrecognized and stigmatized, to their ideal form of tightness, where 'the grip of power makes its subjects feel held or contained, gripped supportively rather than constrictively' (Crewe and Ievins, 2021: 64). Our analysis illustrates how the grip of penal power may vary due to random and individual practices between staff members, but also due to subcultural differences. It also presents substantial insight into *how* interaction with staff enhance the desired 'grip', and *what* this brings to their lived experience. We illustrate how a looser grip of power leads to perceptions of randomness, ignorance and misrecognition, and how this, from the initial stage of imprisonment, fostered obstacles to meaningful change efforts. Additionally, our analysis adds valuable knowledge of how individual reentry processes evolve within a broad perspective of resettlement.

Our findings present a nuanced picture of Norwegian penal practice, by adding the perspectives of those who recently walked out of the prison gate to the still ongoing debate on Nordic penal exceptionalism (Crewe et al., 2022; Crewe and Ievins, 2021; Ievins and Mjåland, 2021; Ugelvik, 2013). By bringing lived experiences of fragmentation, carelessness, and a negligent approach during resettlement into this penal discourse, this article challenges the more idealized presentation of daily interaction based on consideration and acceptance (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013). Probation staff have described similar fragmented and distanced assistance following release, and how this contradicted their ideals of practising hands-on, umbilical cord support (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023). However, the current article also presents lived experiences of interaction close to this ideal, much in line with a tighter and more appreciative grip of power (Crewe and Ievins, 2021). In this way, our results also enhance the more positive perceptions of support, more in line with an exceptional practice. Unfortunately, such practice seems to occur at random, within contexts of misrecognition and a loose grip of penal power.

Seeing our findings in light of the recent critique of the Correctional Services' lack of rehabilitative practices during imprisonment (Riksrevisjonen, 2022), internal variations and non-utilization of the primary officer scheme (Culbertson, 2021), we argue for a broader and more structured understanding of and approach to reentry work. We have shown how misrecognition and a loose grip of penal power during imprisonment seem to relate to cultural differences, unstructured working conditions, and staff members'

individual interpretations, prioritizations and engagement. Some of the main tasks of the primary officer scheme are among the points criticized for not being properly effectuated (Riksrevisjonen, 2022), and therefore contributing to fragmented and frustrating assistance throughout and after the prison sentence. As the scheme aims to formalize and facilitate holistic rehabilitation work, it has been considered as holding a huge unfulfilled potential (Culbertson, 2021). Overall, we consider revitalizing and brushing the dust off the primary officer scheme together with a broader approach to resettlement to be beneficial to support people *throughout* their prison sentences.

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4.1 Nuances of fragmentation, (mis)recognition and closeness: Narratives of challenges and support during resettlement

In this article, we explored resettling persons' lived experiences of interaction with prison officers, probation staff and penal voluntary organization staff during their re-entry to the community. We elaborated on how their perceptions of interaction challenged and supported their resettlement processes. To explore this, we conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with 13 persons shortly after their release from prison or in their transition from prison to society. Initially, we analysed their narratives, followed by a more formal narrative analysis, partly in co-operation with three persons from WayBack.

Our initial analysis of the narratives revealed that communication and interaction with staff right from the *early phase* of imprisonment stood out as relevant to their resettlement. This was regardless of their sentence length, and some narratives dealt with events that had happened months or even years before the interview took place. Our findings therefore largely describe their experiences of how prison staff affected their processes of resettlement. We found that participants often described paradoxes, where prison staff would not take the initiative to get to know them but rather 'drink coffee in their office to pick up their salary'. *If* participants established productive relationships with their primary officers, they presented this as 'pure luck'. They often felt imprisonment to be monotonous and without progression due to the lack of interest and planning from the staff. Interaction with probation staff, on the other hand, was presented in a more positive light, mostly as either supportive or shallow. However, some participants described elements of control in their post-prison measures in the community as intrusive and disrupting. Participants' experiences of communication and interaction with voluntary organization staff stood out as particularly valuable and appreciated, and were found to provide outstanding support. Some participants considered it odd and absurd that the assistance from voluntary organization staff was not provided by the Correctional Services, since *they* were responsible for rehabilitation and re-entry.

Our narrative analysis brought forth in-depth stories of lived experience of resettlement. This approach facilitated complex, nuanced and varied experiences of how interaction with staff challenged and supported resettlement processes. The three stories presented in the article present nuances of feelings of frustrating misrecognition, ignorance and fragmentation, but also of closeness, recognition, continuity, belonging and de-stigmatization. Our findings show detailed examples of how prison staff were perceived as 'troublemakers', as misrecognition, ignorance and fragmentation in some cases caused annoyance and hindered sentence progression. For Torkil, this even led to a life situation after imprisonment that was more challenging than when he first entered prison. In his story, these experiences and feelings

remained more or less consistent throughout the entire prison stay. Anwar's story showed how a similar lack of interest and interaction applied to the first part of imprisonment, and how this changed when he moved to another prison. From staff in the open prison, as well as from his contact person from the penal voluntary organization when he was transferred to a community scheme, he experienced recognition, belonging and de-stigmatization. The closeness, recognition and continuity he felt in the latter relationship made it easier to approach challenges and barriers in society. Steffen's story shows how similar feelings of closeness and recognition provided positive experiences and support throughout his imprisonment and parole. This was due to initiatives from his primary officer and probation staff to get to know him, follow him up and establish predictable, continued relationships.

The analysis of narratives in this article reveals relevant themes across the participants of how they experienced resettlement support and challenges from different members of staff. It also highlights *how* facilitation and frustration take place within a *broad* context of re-entry, which applied to some participants from the moment they entered the prison gate. The narrative analysis allows for more detailed and complex understandings of how communication and relationships, and the lack thereof, interact with feelings and experiences during this broad context of resettlement. It also indicates how interaction varies due to individual, structural and cultural differences, at least within the prison service.

Paper 2

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Abstract

Probation staff in Norway are responsible for implementing the continuation of sentences following imprisonment, such as in drug rehabilitation institutions, electronic monitoring, home detention, and early release on parole. The Norwegian Correctional Service aims to support positive change and provide training in change-focused dialogue. However, little is known about the content of meetings between formerly imprisoned persons and probation staff following imprisonment. Our analysis is based on 19 interviews conducted within the first year after release or transition from prison to the community and highlights the participants' lived experiences of these meetings. We show their perceptions of the value of this dialogue, especially as it delves into the circumstances contributing to the offence, how the offence affects their self-concept and challenging barriers to approaching society. This interaction often developed within sustained relationships. Despite this, some were disappointed with a discrepancy between their longing for help and their experience of control practices. We elaborate on how the interaction facilitates and frustrates desistance processes during resettlement.

Keywords

Norwegian correctional services, probation, resettlement, supported desistance

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Introduction

More than two decades of research on supported desistance has offered valuable knowledge on how correctional service staff can facilitate and frustrate desistance processes (Farrall et al., 2014; McNeill, 2006; Rex, 1999). Relationships between staff and sentenced persons have also shown to be of great importance in a resettlement context (Maguire and Raynor, 2006). This is known to be a challenging transition where staff are perceived to be both arranging and hindering pathways away from crime. Probation staff in Norway are responsible for implementing sentences which continue after imprisonment, such as in drug rehabilitation institutions, electronic monitoring, home detention and early release on parole, and for supporting people from prison to the community. One of the main ambitions of the Norwegian Correctional Service is to support positive change (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2021), and the course descriptions of the University College of the Norwegian Correctional Service demonstrate an ambition to facilitate change-focused dialogue in the education of prison and probation staff. For example, one of the aims of the course 'Russamtalen' is to provide basic skills in the use of BaM (Improving self-efficacy) in conversations about substance abuse and crime (University College of the Norwegian Correctional Services, 2023). Meetings between formerly imprisoned persons and probation staff are central to post-prison measures. They often take place weekly or fortnightly and last for up to an hour. However, little is known about the content and emphasis in these meetings, or the topics of conversation.

This article analyses lived experiences of meetings with probation staff, based on 19 interviews during the first year following imprisonment. We emphasize the participants' perceived value of these meetings and conversations, and show how interaction often developed within sustained relationships. Despite these positive experiences, we also present the frustrating potential of this interaction. We elaborate on these findings drawing on concepts and theories of desistance, with a particular focus on supported desistance.

Background

The conceptual framework of supported desistance

In a historical context, desistance research initially considered how people stopped committing criminal acts. However, researchers have later increasingly investigated dynamic processes towards identity change (Maruna and Farrall, 2004) and belonging (McNeill, 2016a). These understandings underline that people might have crime-free periods in their lives for various reasons, without having undergone deeper changes in identity or increased their sense of belonging to a community. Similarly, Nugent and Schinkel (2016) developed the concepts of 'act-desistance', 'identity desistance,' and 'relational desistance', where act-desistance described non-offending, identity desistance expressed the internalization of a non-offending identity and relational desistance applied to the recognition of change by others. They highlighted that the two first dimensions were under some control of the individual, while the third could be seen as more dependent on

others. In this article, we build on the definition of desistance as *'a dynamic process of human development – situated in and profoundly affected by its social contexts – in which persons move away from offending and towards social re/integration'* (McNeill, 2016b: 277). Fundamental to this article is the understanding that pathways away from crime might be initiated, assisted and hindered within relationships in a correctional context. The article leans on the understanding of supported desistance as working with a person, within a relationship, to develop identity change and social rehabilitation (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023).

The Norwegian probation services' follow-up after imprisonment

One of the main goals for Norwegian Correctional Service staff in general is to facilitate rehabilitation during imprisonment and throughout the sentence, and to support convicted persons in making their own efforts to change their criminal behaviour patterns and to live crime-free lives. At the same time, interventions aim to ensure safety and security for the public (Justisdepartementet, 2001). Interaction between probation staff and persons in resettlement is therefore based on both control and support during the vulnerable transition from prison to community. The Norwegian Probation Service manages a number of non-custodial penal sanctions including community sentences, programmes for those convicted of driving while intoxicated, community service in lieu of a fine, early release on parole and sentences served outside of prison (such as in drug treatment institutions, on electronic monitoring and home detention). Parole and alternatives to prison might be implemented following imprisonment, to approach the goal of a gradual transition to society.

According to the Norwegian Execution of Sentences Act, the Correctional Service can release imprisoned persons on parole when two-thirds of their sentence and at least 60 days have been served. Parole shall not be granted if the circumstances, after an overall assessment, make release inadvisable. The Correctional Service must place particular emphasis on the convicted person's behaviour during imprisonment, and whether there is reason to assume that further criminal offences will be committed during the probationary period. If it appears necessary to implement the parole in a secure manner, the person must appear before the Probation Service for a limited period. Additionally, the Correctional Service can decide that a convicted person who has served one-third of an unconditional prison sentence can serve the remainder of the sentence outside of prison, with or without electronic control (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2001). Early release on parole and alternative sanctions are implemented as continuations of imprisonment, in order to facilitate gradual transition to society. However, 76% of the 4622 persons who were released or transferred to the community after serving sentences in prison in 2021 (the year participants in this study left prison) walked through the prison gate without any further control or support from the Correctional Service. As the Correctional Service has a strong focus on whether there is reason to assume that further criminal offences will be committed when considering early release on parole, it is natural to presume that some of those who served their full sentences in prison did so because the Correctional Service believed they would commit further criminal acts after release. This means that only 24%

were subject to post-prison measures by the Probation Service,[1] where they had regular meetings with probation workers.

Emphasis on desistance-supporting dialogues in policy and education

When the Execution of Sentences Act of 2001 was implemented in 2002, the need for structured rehabilitative conversations both in prison and probation was recognized. In consultation with the staff of several probation offices and the Directorate of Correctional Services, a handbook in BaM was published (Brumoen and Højdahl, 2007). The book was especially designed for individual interviews and reflections on the offence for probation workers. However, the content was later adapted to different areas of prison and re-settlement work, and implemented in the education of prison officers. A main point in these conversations was that staff should strive to establish trusting relationships and support people in taking responsibility for behavioural change, to stimulate their re-sources, confidence and competence (Højdahl, 2013). During this period, the Correctional Service also invested heavily in providing employees and students with skills in moti-vational interviewing (MI), a coping and resource-oriented approach to motivate change processes through collaboration and conversation (Kriminalomsorgen, 2023b). BaM is not taught to students as part of any main course in their education today, but still forms an important part of the further education and additional courses offered at the University College. This illustrates how the Correctional Service has emphasized desistance-supporting conversations for more than two decades, and how they have facilitated formal frameworks for these conversations.

The ambition to encourage and improve change-focused dialogue is still alive, as shown in the priorities of the University College of the Norwegian Correctional Service. The University College offers the only basic education for prison officers in Norway in the form of an accredited 2-year programme and supplementary courses leading to a bachelor's degree in Correctional Studies. They also plan, teach and host courses and conferences for employees of the Correctional Services and partner organizations (Kriminalomsorgen, 2023a). This year, they provided essential qualifications in moti-vational interviewing, and offered and delivered courses and programmes based on and inspired by MI and BaM. This educational training was particularly aimed at staff who had structural conversations with people who had used drugs or were convicted of sexual offences, and staff involved in programmes especially designed for women (Kriminalomsorgen, 2023b). This focus on desistance-supporting dialogue illustrates the Correctional Services' emphasis on the role of staff in motivating change in behaviour, attitude and lifestyle.

The correctional service staff's practice of desistance-supporting interaction during resettlement

People in Norwegian prisons often feel that they are kept safely, in decent and harmless conditions. Nevertheless, they also describe imprisonment as empty, careless, negligent and meaningless (Ievins and Mjåland, 2021). Despite the investment in structural

conversations and tools like BaM, conversations about the person's offence rarely take place in practice (Mjåland, 2022). Researchers have argued that the Norwegian Correctional Service thus gives imprisoned persons considerable freedom and great responsibility to bring up the subject of the moral aspects of their punishment themselves (Ievins and Mjåland, 2021; Mjåland, 2022). Research on convicted men in Norway who have acknowledged committing sexual offences shows how interaction with prison staff sometimes proved fruitful for reflection and rehabilitation. Some of them told stories of being encouraged by staff *not* to disclose their criminal acts during imprisonment, and many of them emphasized how this lack of opportunity to re-evaluate their self-perception and to process their offence had led to continued offending behaviour (Kruse, 2020). Snertingdal (2021) argues that the voices of people with lived experiences of imprisonment are central to understand the debate of incarceration and prison pain. In her review of literature where these voices are included, she shows that despite the often short sentences, high material standards and more open conditions in Norwegian penal execution when compared to other countries, prison pain is still a highly relevant topic. In a broader resettlement context, people with lived experience tell personal stories of recognition, closeness, belonging, continued relationships and de-stigmatization from prison and probation staff. However, these stories are often overshadowed by other narratives of frustrating ignorance, misrecognition and fragmentation (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023). Probation staff have also expressed their frustration at an increased risk focus in their daily work, and a decreased ability to assist with positive change following release (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023).

Within resettlement contexts, there is little research on the focus and content of probation meetings. In the light of the *emphasis* on structured change-oriented dialogue in policy and education and the *potential* for supported desistance, we explore the lived experiences of people in resettlement of the content of these meetings and conversations during probation. We also elaborate on how this interaction intertwines with processes of desistance.

Methodology

The methodological approach of this study rests on an interactionist perspective, where we understand the meaning of an action or a phenomenon as created in the interaction between people. Meaning is thus a relational phenomenon that is produced and understood situationally within a given context (Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2005), and knowledge is seen as co-created in every step of our research. In the following, we present our methodological choices and reflections in line with this, paying particular attention to why and how we included reflexive thematic analysis and narrative thematic analysis within this interactionist framework.

We used a qualitative, exploratory design to study the poorly researched topic of experiences of staff support for desistance in the transition from prison to community. Further, a longitudinal approach enabled a focus on how these processes developed over time, as well as on participants' understandings of these trajectories. It also gave us an opportunity to study interaction and relationships as they unfolded (Farrall et al., 2014).

To synthesize and present the data, we were inspired by reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) and narrative thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008). Drawing on Braun and Clarke's portrayal of qualitative data analysis as a telling of 'stories' and of interpreting and creating themes, we initiated the process by adopting a reflexive thematic approach. We then gradually included elements of narrative thematic analysis in the presentation of the findings, to better reflect relevant developments due to the longitudinal approach and the second wave of narrative interviews.

Recruitment and participants

Participants were recruited from three probation offices and three penal voluntary organizations. The first author initially discussed the aims of the research project and the criterion for inclusion of interviewees with management and staff in the six sections of recruitment. These management and staff acted as gatekeepers and door openers and helped us to come into contact with participants. In order to involve a diverse sample encompassing different perspectives and trajectories of our topic, there was no criterion that participants had expressed a desire to change their lifestyle. Those who had stated their interest in participation were approached via phone messages to arrange the interviews.

This process led to the recruitment of 13 persons. Six of them were interviewed twice, giving a total of 19 interviews. Despite extra efforts to include women in the study, we only succeeded in recruiting one. The participants were subject to various post-prison schemes. Most of these were continuations of their prison sanctions, such as early release on parole, electronic monitoring and home detention. Additionally, two of them had started separate alternative sentences directly after release, one on a community sentence and one on a drug court recovery programme. Participants had varying experiences from imprisonment and sentencing in general. All of them had been in contact with probation staff, and the vast majority had one person to relate to throughout the probation period. Their meetings with probation workers normally varied from about 15 min to an hour and were often conducted by phone or online. Although the interview periods were greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, many meetings were face-to-face. A more detailed presentation of the participants and the time of interviews is displayed in Table 1.

Interviews

The interviews lasted for 40–120 min and were conducted face-to-face. Most took place in meeting rooms at the University of South-Eastern Norway or in libraries close to where the participants lived. Three were conducted in cafés, two at participants' workplaces, and one in a private home. The first wave took place from April to August 2021, and the second from January to March 2022. Participants were interviewed 10 days to 3 months after release, and again between 6 and 11 months later.

At the first interview, participants were informed in more detail about the study. They signed an informed consent and completed a background form in dialogue with the first author. These initial steps facilitated informal chats, establishment of rapport, and careful

Table 1. Presentation of participants.

	Age	Length of prison sentence	Time in prison	Most serious offence	Multiple offences this sentence	Previous prison stays	Previous sentences (all types)	Type of scheme after release	Time between release and 1st interview	Time between 1st and 2nd interview
Harald	36–45	7 years	4 years and 9 months	Undisclosed	No	No	0	Early release on parole (§43)	3 months	11 months
Sadiq	18–25	1 year and 6 months	1 year	Drug-related	Undisclosed	No	Undisclosed	Early release on parole (§43)	14 days	
Thomas	46–55	6 years and 2 months	4 years	Sexual	Yes	Yes	1	Home detention (§16)	1.5 months	10 months
Knut	36–45	3 years	2 years	Drug-related	Yes	Yes	10–15	Electronic monitoring (§16a)	1 month	
Seline	18–25	4 years	2 years and 6 months	Drug-related	No	No	0	Electronic monitoring (§16a)	18 days	
Anwar	36–45	9 years and 6 months	5 years	Drug-related	No	No	0	Home detention (§16)	10 days	
Torkil	46–55	10 months	7 months	Violence	No	Yes	5	Early release on parole (§43)	2 months	
Daniel	26–35	2 months	2 months	Sexual	Yes	No	0	Community service (§53)	21 days	7 months
Martin	36–45	1 year	1 year	Violence	Yes	Yes	33	Drug court recovery programme	1 month	9 months

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

	Age	Length of prison sentence	Time in prison	Most serious offence	Multiple offences this sentence	Previous prison stays	Previous sentences (all types)	Type of scheme after release	Time between release and 1st interview	Time between 1st and 2nd interview
Anton	66+	1 year and 8 months	7 months	Fraud	Yes	No	0	Electronic monitoring (§16a)	1.5 months	
Steffen	26–35	1 year 2 months	8 months	Violence	Yes	Yes	0	Early release on parole (§43)	2 months	6 months
Glenn	46–55	8 years (preventive detention)	5 years	Violence	Yes	Yes	3	Early release on parole (§43)	14 days	6 months
Morten	46–55	1 year and 8 months	9 months	Drug-related	Yes	Yes	15–20	Electronic monitoring (§16a)	1 month	

approaches to the research topic. Information and interviews focused on motivation for and possibilities to lead 'law-abiding lives' following imprisonment rather than using the more academic term `desistance', based on earlier meetings and discussions with representatives from WayBack (a non-profit foundation whose members had lived experiences of resettlement, which had an advisory capacity in the research project (Roche et al., 2010)). Interviews started broadly, allowing participants to talk about whatever they found important and relevant for the topic. Gradually questions narrowed down to how relationships with staff motivated or hindered their processes away from crime, both during the last period in prison and at the time of the interview. Participants were asked if they had been in situations following imprisonment where they normally would have committed criminal acts, and if so, what affected their actions in the situation. Questions also related to how they envisioned themselves in the future. The follow-up interviews aimed to explore how participants' thoughts and perceptions unfolded over time. Narrative interviews with few questions and invitations to talk more freely, as well as questions related to 'future selves' (Giordano et al., 2002), were intended to elicit narratives of what *had been* and *was* of importance to them. All interviews were recorded and transcribed before analysis.

Analysis

The initial coding of the material was performed separately by two of the authors, in order to develop a richer and more nuanced reading of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2019). As a second step, the same researchers discussed the developed categories, the relations between them, and how they related to the research topic. In this process, as we analysed the second wave of interviews more deeply, we found reflections on more positive experiences of the interactions than we did in the first interviews with the same participants. For example, Thomas did not mention conversations with probation staff in the first interview, but was keener to talk about what penal voluntary organizations helped him with, which were things 'one would normally expect the Correctional Service to do'. In the second interview it became clear that he had had great benefit from therapy-like conversations with his probation worker, which he had missed and worked for during most of his time in prison. Similarly, the second interview with Harald revealed decisive talks with his probation worker even after he finished his sentence. Hence, through our analysis of follow-up interviews, we developed preliminary themes such as 'care and help through availability and lasting relationships', which would not have appeared without a longitudinal approach. However, some of these changes towards more positive reflections, such as a perceived shift from duty to great benefit, sometimes also appeared towards the end of the first interview. In both examples, these reflections shed light on how interaction with staff affected desistance processes over time.

The longitudinal research design was intended to enable reflection on participants' dynamic perceptions of the impact of the staff over time (Farrall et al., 2014). Additionally, efforts to develop rapport with participants might have gradually led to conversations that were safer, more open, and more conducive to reflection (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007), despite the challenges of establishing this kind of interaction with people who are often characterized as 'criminals' (Sandberg, 2010). These factors might have

encouraged a setting for the participants' stories that they might previously have longed for (Gålnander, 2020). We illuminated the relevance of the temporal aspect in two steps. First, through a collaborative approach between the researchers, we generated broader themes to shed light on, such as 'necessary factors/prerequisites for the interaction to be perceived as significant', how 'meaningful dialogue facilitated supportive relationships', and how time tended to 'nuance the early negative experiences of the interaction'. Second, we included longer extracts of participants' stories in the presentations of our findings. This differed from the initial reflexive thematic analysis, where we focused mainly on content and categories in the interviews; now these temporal aspects were highlighted by keeping the stories more intact and theorizing from each case (Riessman, 2008). Hence, in this section, stories that unfolded over the course of the interview(s) with each participant are presented to illustrate more general patterns.

Findings

Participants spoke of varying expectations, wishes and knowledge of the supervision at the end of imprisonment. Those on electronic monitoring tended to talk about early contact with staff and several long explanatory conversations. People on early release, on the other hand, often had little knowledge of the content of their parole, despite having occasional contact with the probation worker during the last part of their prison sentence. Harald, who had served almost 5 years, was uncertain as he approached release: 'I knew little about the parole. Only that it was something I *had* to do.' He was still clear about his needs after release: 'I know what I need. A conversation partner. Someone who cares and who is genuinely interested in helping me'. Despite their rather low expectations for their post-prison supervision, many called for practical support, guidance and reassurance to prevent them from committing new criminal acts.

Varied focus on topics related to the offence

Overall, our data show that participants valued conversations with probation staff, especially as they explored the circumstances contributing to the offence, how the offence affected their self-concept and how to challenge barriers to approaching society. Sometimes this interaction developed into sustained relationships. Several participants underlined that they rarely or never talked with staff about these topics during imprisonment. Although this was mainly brought up as a curiosity or paradox by some, it was something many of them had longed for. Steffen had struggled with this during his 4 years of imprisonment, but finally established such conversations with his probation worker:

> I served more than *four* years in prison, and I *never* talked about my sentence or what had led up to it. Not *once.* But I brought it up with my probation worker. Because I've served so many years, and I'm supposed to be rehabilitated, and I think that's an important thing, to get people back to normal. Not just the offence, but what led to the acts I'm responsible for. It'd be nice if someone was a bit involved in my thoughts after serving this long time. You should *understand* a person to be able to help him, I think.

Such topics were frequent and essential in meetings with probation staff, but were often initiated by the participants themselves. Many reflected on how to keep clean from drugs, avoid certain criminal networks, and stay away from crime more generally. One of these was Martin, who highly valued a feeling of safety with his probation worker and others representing different organizations and welfare institutions in his aftercare group. The group followed him closely, and challenged and supported him. His probation worker knew a great deal about him and his crimes due to his repeated sentences over a long period, including the connection between his substance addiction and his crimes. As regular urine tests were carried out post-release, it was natural to approach this topic in their meetings:

> My probation worker is outstanding. She understands things. I like it best when they can look the other way a bit, and don't punish you as soon as you do something wrong. She's read my whole story and everything, and she's seen my changes. But she also helps me keep off drugs, and tells me when I've done something wrong. Then she tries to keep me out of prison. And now I've been out for almost a year. I can't remember the last time I was. They're supportive, so it's not just chitchat. Things would be disastrous without them. So I need them to rein me in a bit.

Here, Martin describes how conversations with his probation worker and the aftercare group help him stay away from substance abuse and criminal acts by 'reining him in'. Conversations about his crimes and illegal acts, and how they might send him back to prison, seem to support his struggles for recovery and desistance. However, merely focussing on abstinence and a known risk of offending, rather than a commitment to leading the new and fuller life the person desires, might be a `shaky peg' on which fragile transformations sometimes hang (Schinkel, 2015).

In addition to this asset of support for desistance from crime, Martin elaborates on parts of the conversations that facilitate identity desistance and belonging. Like most of the participants, he emphasizes the impact of *being seen for more than his crimes*, as his probation worker read and knew 'the whole story'. Anton and Steffen also highlighted the necessity of open conversations where probation staff had time to get to know who they *really* are, 'not only through their papers'. Such conversations often appeared as therapy-like and decisive. Daniel was one of the participants who wondered *whether* or *how* their crimes related to their current identities. To him, the probation worker's counselling and recognition helped him see himself beyond his conviction for sexual assault:

> There are certain times when I suddenly have a flashback and I'm reminded that - ok, yes. I'm ... It's easy to be stigmatized, because of what I've done. But my probation worker said: "You must remember, Daniel, that your offence is not you. It's something you've *done.* It doesn't describe you as a person".

He had been advised by prison officers not to reveal his offence during imprisonment, and had overheard some of the men he served with going into detail about what they would like to do to 'sexual offenders'. He practically put a lid on his offences during

imprisonment, as do many others sentenced for committing similar acts (Kruse, 2020). Daniel explained how he was eager to explore if he would be tempted to repeat his offence after imprisonment, and he put himself in situations that could have tempted him to find out. Being able to delve into this with his probation worker facilitated this quest. The probation worker indicated that there was no point in Daniel emphasizing this as he faced society. The participants often compared these destigmatizing conversations to their opposite experiences from imprisonment. Now they were to a larger extent recognized for being more than the crime they had committed (see also O'Sullivan et al., 2020). The feeling of being appreciated *beyond* the nature of their crimes might have been especially important for those convicted of sexual offences. Blagden et al. (2016) emphasize how a non-judgemental social environment in a prison for people convicted of sexual offences laid the foundation for feelings of safety, as people did not have to portray other identities or live in constant anxiety. Hence, recognition from staff for who they were, as well as who they might become, influenced how participants felt, acted, and thought of themselves. Feelings of normality allowed for experiences of change in self-narratives (Blagden et al., 2016; Kruse, 2020; O'Sullivan et al., 2020). In a similar vein, Villeneuve et al. (2021) show how sentenced persons tend to be 'between two selves', where they do not yet feel like citizens nor offenders, and how seeing the good in people over time is required for changes to take place.

Safe havens for proving change and removing lids

Despite many participants' perceived benefit of these interactions with staff, they felt that some basic conditions were necessary for the conversations to be valuable to them. It was essential that probation staff were generous with time and availability, that they genuinely cared about and wanted the best for them, and that they were flexible and did not always 'go by the book'. This interaction, built on flexibility, trust, care and frankness (see also Kruse, 2020; Ugelvik, 2021), was often framed in everyday settings such as informal chats over a cup of coffee. Over time, these valuable meetings tended to develop into sustainable relationships. Steffen's commitment to stay away from crime helped him come across as a credible and reliable person to his probation worker:

> She (the probation worker) knew I was in a motorcycle club. I've resigned from the position I used to have, because I used to do lots of illegal stuff. She asked: "How's it going? Have you returned full-time to the club?" I replied: "No, I haven't. I mostly keep to myself." Now I'm just an ordinary member of the MC community and come and go as I want.
>
> I: But what made you leave that position?
>
> It's because me and (name of probation worker) agreed that it was perhaps the best, because otherwise I'd have gone back to where I left off. So I promised her I'd step down from the position, which the others respected. I'm proud that I've lived up to what I'd promised her.

Steffen's experience of help and care over time guided him into a sustaining relationship with his probation worker. He found it satisfying to keep his promise to her. What

he perceived as her feeling that he had become a responsible, desisting person made him feel the same way about himself. Similar strong incentives to change were found in positive interactions with probation staff in a scoping review by Villeneuve et al. (2021). In some cases, these sustainable relationships extended beyond the formal duty of the staff. In the first interview with Harald, when 3 months remained of his parole, he expressed his concern about having no one around him in the community:

> You don't have anything when you're released. Apart from probation, you don't have anything else out there. You're released with absolutely nothing. You become sort of left alone.

In the next interview, he elaborated on how his probation worker supported him as he *felt* left alone and faced obstacles, even after his parole was over:

> I went from August to the end of October without anything. But there was a period when it was hard to cope. I decided to call her for help.
>
> I: Yes, and when you say October, you had finished your parole a few months earlier, hadn't you? So you got back into regular meetings with her then?
>
> Yes, just like once a week on the phone for a period. She did it on a voluntary basis. It wasn't something she had to do, so it was really cool. (…) I wanted help because I had to start paying compensation. There was a message sent to my employer stating that some money, a compensation for the offence I'd committed, had to be withdrawn from my salary. So, when I got to work, the manager said: "What's this all about?" I went numb and didn't really want to say anything. So, I called her. Fortunately, she answered the phone, and we agreed that I should go and speak to the manager. So I did, and I told him what had happened. He said: "Ok, now I know. I'll put it behind me. It's between the two of us. No problem". So I sort of got some help.

Even though Harald stated that he had not committed criminal acts since release and did not self-identify as a person who would commit the type of offence he was convicted of, he felt distressed and upset that the claim of compensation could cost him his job. He felt that the future of his job lay in the hands of his employer. He was stressed about his manager's knowledge of his offence towards somebody else, and was embarrassed to talk to him about it. Thanks to his former parole worker responding when he reached out to her, he was given the tools and courage to begin a dialogue about the 'afterlife' of his sentence (Miller, 2021). He had been able to develop an identity by *gaining* legitimate employment in the first place, which has been shown to require struggles with structural barriers (King, 2013; Kruse, 2020; Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023). The example of Harald shows how this challenge also applies to the *maintenance* of such identities. Harald's former parole worker stood up for him *beyond* their formal relationship. This was decisive for keeping his job and his feeling of wellbeing and belonging, and was a key factor in his sustained pathway away from crime. Harald underlined that this was something the parole worker *wanted* to do, not something she *had* to do. The value of such

continued relationships for desistance processes in resettlement contexts has been pointed out by Collica-Cox (2018) and Meek and Lewis (2014). Their studies relate to the experience of establishing post-release support, to enable people to have someone they knew and trusted in the community. In line with our findings, those lasting relationships were dependent on people having the feeling that staff were encouraging and caring, practised an open door policy, and went beyond their job duties. Continued relationships were considered key factors in assuring long-term support, in motivating people for life changes, and in building social capital (Collica-Cox, 2018; Meek and Lewis, 2014). When participants felt that they were seen as whole persons, they felt comfortable in talking about whatever they wanted without being judged. This enabled staff to be reliable stepping stones who provided hope for crime-free futures (Meek and Lewis, 2014).

Frustration and ambivalence of being 'captured in freedom'

Even though most participants expressed positive experiences with the interaction with probation staff, some were indifferent to it. A few reflected on feelings of obligation and control during parts of their probation period. For them, meetings appeared as limitations and drawbacks in everyday life, which led to feelings of being unfree despite not being imprisoned. Sadiq experienced this as being 'captured in freedom':

> In half a year from now, I'll no longer have the damn parole. Well, it's very nice to talk to the probation worker and so on, but the prison thoughts keep coming back every time I do. You're free, but it's like... (grinning)… every time: "Oh, hello, it's me from the probation office." I just think: Oh, shit! Then I kind of *must* talk to them (grins) for half an hour, or however long it is. It's quite ok with me. At least I get a break from work. But I'm not gonna expect those calls in half a year from now (laughs). Then I'll no longer be captured in freedom. Now I'm free, but I don't *feel* completely free. I don't.

Sadiq presents a liminal feeling of freedom. He is in some kind of limbo where he is released but still unfree. To him, conversations with his probation worker take him mentally back to prison, and remind him of where he has come from. His description of being 'captured in freedom' reflects how this interaction constrains his growth, despite the kindness of his conversation partner. Hence, it seems to frustrate his trajectory towards a stable everyday life. Similar feelings of liminality, wasteful penal processing and a yearning for freedom have been expressed in a Scottish parole context. As in our findings, this involved reminders of otherness, and of being a criminal convict even after release (McNeill, 2019). The balancing of surveillance and rehabilitation has been shown to frustrate desistance, as people face multiple obstacles to access full citizenship and feelings of freedom (Villeneuve et al., 2021).

For some, the initial phase of supervision mainly provided constraint, but many reported a favourable experience after interacting with staff over time. Meetings with staff started out as something they *had* to do, but eventually developed into something meaningful. Glenn was among those who expressed disappointment at the distance between the help he desired and daily life on parole: 'I wanted *support* from the

Correctional Services, to stay away from crime upon release. Not a limiting device. I wanted help, not control'. In the second interview, he reflected on how his applications for long-distance travel to visit his family were rejected at the start of his parole, and how his feeling that he was not trusted gradually changed: 'They got to know me better and started to let go of me a bit'. Even though this gradual movement towards freedom might reflect how the Correctional Services practice their aim, it could also mirror a delayed feeling of support (Farrall et al., 2014). For others, who mainly experienced the *benefits* of support, ambivalent feelings were related to a relief at having completed their parole coupled with a desire to continue the valuable conversations. Daniel referred to this as a double-sided experience.

In this article, we aimed to investigate lived experiences of the content and focus of meetings with probation staff after imprisonment, and how these intertwined with processes of desistance. Overall, our data show that participants perceived this dialogue to be valuable, especially as it explored the circumstances contributing to the offence, how the offence affected their self-concept and how to challenge barriers to approaching society. Sometimes this interaction developed into sustained relationships, which in at least one case extended beyond the formal parole period. However, some also expressed their disappointment at the discrepancy between their longing for help and their feeling of being controlled. Despite these differences, the probational supervision was not perceived as *either* valuable *or* constraining and unfree. We show two-sided perceptions related to the *temporal aspect* and to *ambivalence*. The former applies where the experience *transforms* from control to support, and the latter shows the yearning for a combination of freedom *and* continued conversations. Through this analysis, we have also exemplified how the dialogue and interaction seemed to facilitate and frustrate desistance processes.

Discussion

Our analysis describes what conversations and meetings with staff contain as people approach the community after imprisonment. It shows how the offence per se is discussed to a varying extent. From a Norwegian prison context, however, Mjåland (2022) shows a clear pattern of the offence being scarcely discussed between prison officers and imprisoned persons. Additionally, in our article, the *contributing* circumstances of the offence and its *impact* on self-concept and barriers to society are often explored and highly valued in conversations after imprisonment. Kruse (2020) points out that people imprisoned for sexual offences often perceived interaction with staff as fruitful for reflection and rehabilitation. Experiences of 'friction', described as 'meeting a certain type of resistance or challenge to their reasoning and storytelling about their lives and violations' (Kruse, 2020: 202), sometimes evolved in dialogue with prison officers. However, many felt encouraged by staff *not* to disclose their criminal acts during imprisonment, and emphasized how this lack of friction hindered them from re-evaluating their self-perception and from processing their offence. In view of this lack of focus on the offence during imprisonment, our study shows how conversations and meetings with trusted probation staff outside the prison walls are often long-awaited and liberating as people face uncertainty and prejudice in approaching the community.

We argue that an awareness of act-desistance and identity desistance might be the most important and relevant priority in what Mjåland (2022) has introduced as an often 'here-and-now' focused context of imprisonment, as these dimensions are largely in the hands of imprisoned persons themselves (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016). Our findings suggest approaching the *contributing circumstances* of offences and their *impact* on self-concept and barriers to society, and framing this approach within sustainable relationships, in order to facilitate identity and relational desistance. Probation staff and penal voluntary organization staff have emphasized a similar ideal of establishing close and continued relationships during resettlement, to promote the resources of released persons and thus enable support in challenging barriers to society (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023). The probation staff also expressed frustration at low organizational priority to practice in line with the ideal. Despite staffs' similar perceptions of desistance support and hindrances, only penal voluntary organization staff managed to practise close to the ideal. They often made themselves available even in their spare time, to try to assist resettling persons when they needed their support the most. We have shown how the need to reflect on identity and individual change appeared evident as people served the last part of their sentence in the community. Drawing on the thoughts of Nugent and Schinkel (2016), we highlight how the transition from prison to society represents the first real opportunity for persons in resettlement to explore their processes of relational desistance, which strongly depend on people around them. Support for relational desistance and belonging was cherished as people faced both expected and unexpected challenges following imprisonment.

Our findings underline the importance of framing desistance-supporting conversations in safe, sustained and partially reciprocal relationships, beyond the more strategic and instrumental conversational toolkits of BaM and MI. Similar advantages of such framing were shown in a study of women's perceptions of participation in a motivational and gender-sensitive programme (Højdahl et al., 2014). The VINN programme, partly inspired by the above-mentioned toolkits, aimed to motivate women to explore what 'quality of life' meant to them, to increase their sense of coherence, and to develop confidence to desist. Based on 13 group interviews with 65 participants in prison or on probation in Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Estonia and Norway, Højdahl et al. (2014) showed participants' enhanced motivation for change as well as their specific plans to enable change. Moreover, participants increased their confidence in their ability to desist from crime and substance abuse. However, the participants also underlined the significance of the accepting group atmosphere, which largely rested on the facilitators' role modelling through resource focussing and careful listening. Likewise, positive relationships, as well as experiences of being seen and taken seriously, have been highlighted as a basic foundation for the facilitation of participants' desistance processes in the above-mentioned 'russamtale' (Aagesen and Martinsen, 2016). Much in line with the findings in our study, this suggests the importance of resource focus, trust and relationships to facilitate desistance.

As shown by Mjåland (2022) and Ievins and Mjåland (2021), the Correctional Service tends not to be interventionist with regard to people's thoughts and feelings related to the offence and imprisonment. Following this, Crewe and Ievins have pointed out how grips of penal power in prisons can be 'loose' or 'tight' in desirable or undesirable ways, and

that a lack of attention and intervention can be frustrating and harmful (Crewe and Ievins, 2021). Our study demonstrates how conversations and interaction with staff are often highly appreciated as they take place following imprisonment. However, post-prison measures by the probation service are *the prerequisite for* this support and *the framework* where it takes place. We have mentioned how such schemes only applied to 24% of those released or transferred from prison to the community in 2021. As many as 76% walked through the gates without these often appreciated, treasured and desistance-supporting meetings with the Correctional Service. Building on the reasoning of this paragraph, we suggest that an increase in the proportion of people granted early release on parole or other transitions to the community under the Probation Service could provide resettling persons with long-awaited desistance support.

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1. Numbers and percentages of transfers from prison to the community and full-term sentences were provided and reviewed by Espen Michaelsen, Directorate of Correctional Services, 2023.06.14.

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4.2 Spotlighting the probation meeting - Lived experiences of desistance supporting interaction following imprisonment

This paper narrows the focus on interaction and resettlement down to the content of meetings between probation staff and resettling persons following imprisonment. It also explores how interaction and conversations in this context intertwine with processes of desistance. The analysis of the lived experiences of these meetings is based on 19 interviews with 13 participants during the first year after release or transfer. We used a qualitative, longitudinal approach, which enabled us to study interaction and relationships as they unfolded. This approach also allowed for an insight into how participants' perceptions, reflections and understandings developed over time. We were inspired by reflexive thematic analysis and narrative thematic analysis in synthesizing and presenting our data.

Participants often found conversations with probation staff valuable. This became particularly evident as conversations revolved around the contributing circumstances of the offence, and how the offence affected participants' self-concept and challenges in approaching society. The analysis elaborates on how these meetings support act-, identity and relational desistance. Assisted act-desistance is introduced through participants' experiences of being reined in and of making commitments to take practical steps away from crime in meetings with staff. However, conversations about how participants related to the crime(s) they had committed became more noticeable in the analysis. Reflections and understandings of their identities were discussed and illuminated in these meetings with staff. Additionally, dialogue with and support from staff became evident for some, as they faced challenges and barriers in their re-entry to society. Through dialogue and support in these meetings, staff sometimes appeared as long awaited safe havens for topics related to their offences, which prison officers had often put a lid on during imprisonment.

Despite these valuable and desistance supporting meetings, we also present the frustrating potential of this interaction. Some participants pointed out their disappointment at a discrepancy between their longing for help and their experience of control practices in interaction with probation staff. This was particularly evident in the first period after imprisonment, as some felt that the dialogue with staff reminded them of their time in prison and they felt unfree despite their return to society. Ambivalent feelings around the last part of probation were illustrated by the fact that participants greatly appreciated the conversations with staff and would have liked them to continue, while at the same time being pleased that their sentence was nearing its end.

Supported desistance seemed to take place within sustained relationships, where staff were felt to be caring, appreciative and thought-provoking. Participants' retrospective reflections and deliberations over time provided deeper knowledge of how relational bonds helped to meet expected and unexpected challenges and obstacles in their transition to the community. The longitudinal approach enabled insight into how frustration and facilitation of processes of identity and relational desistance evolved over time, often towards appreciation of staff as stepping stones and safe havens in their difficult re-entry to society.

Paper 3

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‘Facilitator-coordinators’ or ‘umbilical cords’: Staff experiences of supporting desistance following release from prison

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Abstract

While research on supported desistance is increasing, little is known about practitioners’ experiences of facilitating change following release in Norway. This article seeks to expand this knowledge through the perspectives of probation caseworkers and staff of penal voluntary organizations. Despite their common challenges and shared ideals, the two groups experience varying ability to assist in change processes. While staff of voluntary organizations practice close to the ideal, caseworkers describe frustration at an increased risk focus and thus a decrease in desistance promotion. In this context, we discuss how two key developments in Norwegian resettlement practice, (1) increased discrepancies between ideals and realities and (2) the blurring of boundaries between penal voluntary organizations and the Correctional Services, are shifting probation work *away* from supporting desistance.

Keywords

Desistance, Norway, penal voluntary organizations, prison, probation, resettlement

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Introduction

Transitions from prison to society can constitute major challenges for those concerned, and many commit new criminal acts within the first year after release (Dünkel et al., 2019: 3). Imprisonment has often been shown to negatively influence health, quality of life and ties to society (Liebling, 2011; Schinkel, 2014; Todd-Kvam, 2019) and relationships with prison and probation staff have evidently frustrated people post-release and failed to help them (Todd-Kvam, 2019; Villeneuve et al., 2021). Rebuilding life after imprisonment has been shown to be demanding despite expressed desires and practical efforts (Doekhie and Van Ginneken, 2020; Nugent and Schinkel, 2016). However, imprisonment and probation have also, under some circumstances, facilitated change processes in the resettlement period. In this article, we build on conceptual frameworks of desistance and penal voluntary organizations (PVOs) to explore how caseworkers and PVO staff can support these processes.

The Norwegian context

Policies and aims in several European countries state that community sanctions following imprisonment must strive to support desistance (Dünkel et al., 2019: 6). The Norwegian Correctional Services aim for a continuous focus on preparation for release *throughout* the prison sentence, as well as a practice that supports change (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021; Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2021). Recent changes in the Norwegian penal system have affected the prison population, prison conditions and release patterns, and had a negative influence on staff members' ability to facilitate desistance during resettlement. Increased numbers of less serious offences are now processed in the community (Kriminalomsorgen, 2021; Todd-Kvam and Ugelvik, 2019). This has caused a reduction in imprisoned people from 3968 in the peak year of 2016 to 3029 in 2020 (SSB, 2022). Despite positive aspects of these changes, they challenge resettlement practice. Imprisoned people on average serve longer sentences for more serious offences than before. These changes have caused what the Correctional Services describe as a more demanding prison population and more challenging conditions for desistance support (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021). Constant budget cuts, mainly related to a de-bureaucratization and efficiency reform, have caused staff reductions and decreased activity during imprisonment. Many face solitary confinement, causing reductions in contact between staff and imprisoned people (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021; Sivilombudsmannen, 2019). Cognitive programmes are used to strengthen motivation for change and to reduce recidivism. Recently, however, numbers of participants and completed programmes have been greatly reduced (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021). The Correctional Services have been criticized for insufficient rehabilitation support during imprisonment. A recent report indicates poor knowledge of imprisoned people's needs and challenges. In a sample of 1860 persons, there was a decline in individual future plans from 10% in 2016 to 3% in 2019 (Riksrevisjonen, 2022). Several low security prisons, regarded as providing soft and well-prepared transitions to society and more manageable imprisonment experiences, have been permanently closed down (Andvig et al., 2021; Kriminalomsorgen, 2019;

Mjåland et al., 2021). This is despite the Correctional Services' goal that nobody should serve sentences at a higher security level than necessary, as appropriate progression can facilitate desistance (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021). There has been a proportional decline in persons assessed as suitable for early release on parole, and more people therefore serve their full sentences. In 2010, 15% completed their entire sentence in prison, compared to 21% in 2020. Early parole is intended to make transitions from prison to society less vulnerable (Justis- og Beredskapsdepartementet, 2021). However, recent developments seem to cut released persons' connections to the Correctional Services at the prison gate, leading to more abrupt transitions from prison to society, conflicting with the Norwegian penal system's principle of gradual progression throughout the prison sentence.

Correctional Service staff and management have expressed concern about these developments. Recently, managers of three large Norwegian prisons reported being worried about throughcare and rehabilitation. They emphasized that relationships between staff and imprisoned people suffered from budget cuts and lack of human resources (RøverRadion, 2021). Furthermore, a recent survey shows that 75% of prison staff found decreased quality of resettlement work in the past 2 years (Actis, 2020). Norwegian caseworkers have expressed concerns about the impact of budget cuts on general activity and rehabilitation work in prisons, and about how increased containment will affect prospective desistance processes (Todd-Kvam, 2020).

Within this context, the voluntary sector has taken ever greater responsibility to support people upon release and into the community. The Correctional Services aim for reliable collaboration with this sector and therefore provide annual funding through the state budget. The purpose of this funding is to prevent recidivism by reintegrating people during and after imprisonment (Kriminalomsorgen, 2021). In 2021, for the first time, almost the entire budget of NOK 36.2 million was distributed following an application procedure. This equals about NOK 10,000 per released person. The Correctional Services also recently formalized their cooperation with the Red Cross, one of their most important voluntary partners. The purpose of the agreement was to ensure binding, systematic cooperation and to encourage voluntary efforts to help people lead crime-free lives after imprisonment (Kriminalomsorgen, 2021: 41–42).

The penal voluntary sector

The penal voluntary sector comprises voluntary agencies working with pre- and post-release people, their families and victims, and community and advocacy programmes. In this previously 'fragmented and overlooked' research field, Tomczak and Buck (2019a: 289) present a conceptualization of various activities in the criminal justice voluntary sector. Here, we focus on non-state, not-for-profit voluntary organizations. Although not directly under the government, they receive state funding. They work in varying degrees of partnership with justice agencies and range from 'corporate style' registered charities with multimillion pound turnovers to grassroot style organisations (Tomczak and Buck, 2019a: 281). Voluntary organizations can be run by volunteers only, by mainly paid staff, or by various combinations of the two.

In light of a tendency towards polarized commentaries, Tomczak and Buck (2019b) present a hybrid framework to provide nuanced accounts of a broad spectrum of the sector's activities. The framework offers various ideal types of service provision and campaigning, and illustrates the range, fluidity and hybridity of the organizations' programmes and practices (Tomczak and Buck, 2019b: 898). It describes differences between actions to 'fix' people's 'flaws' or to enable people to fix their own on a micro level. On the macro level, it differentiates between 'thought changing activities', focusing on raising awareness of personal troubles as public issues, and changes in distribution to enable fairer sharing of resources. Organizations can practise hybridity by focusing on several aspects simultaneously. The framework highlights how individual-focused therapy, despite contributing to personal change, fails to acknowledge the burden resulting from punishment and marginalized backgrounds. Structural inequalities and exclusion are reinforced by 'providing selected individuals with sticking plaster solutions for chronic social needs' (Tomczak and Buck, 2019b: 907). Voluntary organizations' struggles to reduce structural barriers to resettlement have also been criticized by Miller (2014), and the resulting emotional difficulties for staff have been emphasized by Quinn et al. (2022).

The conceptual framework of desistance

Historically, desistance research mainly considered how offenders stopped committing criminal acts. In recent decades, researchers have increasingly investigated processes of moving away from a criminal lifestyle (Farrall et al., 2014; McNeill, 2016c; McNeill et al., 2012; Maruna and Farrall, 2004). Maruna and Farrall (2004) underlined that people might have crime-free periods in their lives for various reasons without making any deeper changes to their identity, and distinguished between primary and secondary desistance. The former refers to 'any lull or crime-free gap in the course of a criminal career' and the latter to 'the movement from the behaviour of non-offending to the assumption of a role or identity of a non-offender or "changed person"' (Maruna and Farrall, 2004: 174). More recently, McNeill (2016a) introduced the concept of tertiary desistance, referring to a shift in the person's sense of belonging to a community. By moving from an understanding of desistance as merely related to behaviour or identity towards a sense of belonging, McNeill (2016a) emphasized the political and social process of desistance. The concept of social rehabilitation has been further developed, highlighting the importance of social recognition and acceptance of a rehabilitated person as a full member of a community (Arnal and McNeill, in press). To build on the necessity of tertiary desistance and social rehabilitation, we draw on McNeill's (2016c: 277) definition of desistance as '. . . a dynamic process of human development – one that is situated in and profoundly affected by its social contexts – in which persons move away from offending and towards social re/integration'.

Correctional Service staff have sometimes supported desistance by introducing 'hooks for change' into crime-free lives (Giordano et al., 2002), and set the stage for narrative or identity change. Research has underlined the importance of honesty, authenticity, trustworthiness, concern, genuine care and freedom from prejudice to assist these processes (Farrall et al., 2014; Healy, 2012; King, 2013; Schinkel, 2014; Villeneuve et al., 2021). Correctional Service staff might also assist in identity change through

supportive statements and encouragement, which has been particularly evident in the early stages of desistance (Doekhie et al., 2018; Villeneuve et al., 2021). In this period, often characterized by ambivalence and pain related to personal change (Healy, 2012; Hunter and Farrall, 2018; King, 2013; Nugent and Schinkel, 2016), staff members can provide beneficial, safe and stable foundations. Research in Norway emphasizes interaction based on staff members' trust and belief in individual change (Todd-Kvam and Todd-Kvam, 2022; Ugelvik, 2022). Probational staff have also underlined interest, understanding and reciprocity as key ingredients in relationships with probationers (Todd-Kvam, 2020). This research has focused more on identity change and less on belonging and social rehabilitation. Here, we understand the concept of supporting desistance as working *with* a person, *within* an ongoing relationship, to develop identity change *and* social rehabilitation.

The relevance of this study

Despite voluntary organizations' effects on people's experiences of punishment and penal policies worldwide, their involvement has largely escaped public and policy attention (Tomczak and Buck, 2019b), and research on this topic is almost absent in Norway. Despite valuable knowledge on supported desistance, there is little research on caseworkers' and PVO staffs' preferences and experiences of this in resettlement. Research on pathways from prison to society in Norway has mainly focused on practical and collaborative challenges related to progress and normalization, work, housing and navigating the welfare system (Todd-Kvam and Ugelvik, 2019). It scarcely mentions facilitated desistance, apart from the mentioned and more recent works by Todd-Kvam and Ugelvik.

We argue that caseworkers and PVO staff find it increasingly challenging to support desistance within resettlement contexts. Particularly caseworkers see discrepancies between ideals and realities in their daily work, and thus professional difficulties. We suggest that this is partly because of recent systemic changes in the Norwegian Correctional Services. Hence, this research aims to explore and describe what caseworkers and PVO staff consider most important in facilitating desistance processes in resettlement, and their experiences of this work. We scrutinize how relationships between staff members and resettling people influence these processes. The research questions addressed here are:

- What do caseworkers and PVO staff consider most important to support desistance in their relationships with resettling people?
- How well are they able to support desistance in their daily work?

Methodology

The methodological approach rests on an interactionist perspective, where we understand the meaning of an action or a phenomenon as created in interaction between people. Meaning is thus a relational phenomenon, produced and understood situationally within a given context (Halkier, 2016; Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2005). Knowledge is

seen as being co-created in every step of our research. We present our methodological choices and reflections in line with this, focusing particularly on why and how we conducted focus group interviews, and on the purpose of reflexivity.

Data construction

Given our interactionist perspective and our interest in staff members' work experiences, focus group interviews were used to answer the research questions (Halkier, 2016; Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 2010). This approach was chosen to aid data construction through interaction between participants, and to encourage dialogue and discussion on the research topic. We aimed to achieve insight into staff members' values, attitudes, work cultures and jargon to better understand their negotiated perceptions and experiences. This would have been more difficult without the group dynamics (Anvik et al., 2021; Halkier, 2016; Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 2010).

Focus group interviews. In line with the research questions, two different types of resettlement staff were targeted: probation officers in the Correctional Services (caseworkers) and workers in penal voluntary organizations (PVO staff). The main inclusion criterion was experience of supporting resettling people. Participants were therefore specifically selected (Halkier, 2016) and recruited from five sites (presented in Table 1) in three Norwegian cities. They worked with people released from prisons all over Norway. This enabled reflections from divergent perspectives and work cultures. Probational staff in Norway perform several kinds of correctional work and are organized in different ways in the sites represented. As we focus on resettlement, caseworkers mainly reflected around their practice regarding conditional release on parole. As PVO staff perform resettlement work more independently of their participants' sentences, they reflected more broadly on the topic. Given our focus on experiences and perceptions and on the negotiation of priorities, values and practices between staff at the workplace, focus groups were constructed as 'pre-existing groups' (Kitzinger, 1995). Five in-person focus group interviews were conducted, audio recorded and transcribed before analysis.

We reflected on data construction during our work, as our well-intentioned plans met the realities of people's lives during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. The small number of focus group participants was related to various COVID-19 restrictions and sometimes to participants' forgetfulness. The smallest group represented a voluntary organization that recently lost half its staff due to unstable funding. Their financial position differed from that of the other two participating organizations, who received large grants (Kriminalomsorgen, 2021). As this organization had many years of experience and an interesting, varied approach to resettlement work and their financial challenges, we conducted the interview despite the few participants (Halkier, 2016).

Interaction. To ensure data construction in line with the study aim, we focused particularly on group dynamics when establishing the groups. Topics and questions were presented along with the concept of desistance. Lacking a Norwegian translation of the concept, we presented desistance as a series of decisions and actions that gradually move an individual away from crime (McNeill, 2016c; Maruna, 2001). As the concept was

Table 1. Presentation of the sites.

Sites	Staff	Participants	Duration of interview
(1)	Caseworkers	3	82 min
	Probation staff focusing on parole. Qualified social workers with many years of experience in their positions, some also from prisons.		
(2)	Caseworkers	4	72 min
	Probation staff. Qualified social workers with varied length of experience in their positions, some also from prisons and therapy.		
(3)	PVO staff	2	84 min
	A non-profit initiative based on collaboration between private investors, employees and the business community. Paid staff only. Focus on helping people into education and work after imprisonment. One participant was an experienced prison officer.		
(4)	PVO staff	6	95 min
	A diaconal foundation practising social work with persons released from prison. Volunteers and paid staff. The latter group was interviewed. A collaboration between professionals and people with personal experience from imprisonment, both represented in the focus group.		
(5)	PVO staff	3	66 min
	A rehabilitation centre focusing specifically on work practice and establishing social networks pre- and post-release. Volunteers and paid staff. Interview with the latter group, including people with personal experience from imprisonment.		

PVO: penal voluntary organization.

unknown to some participants, the group elaborated on a common understanding in line with our presentation. Participants underlined the importance of including imprisonment as an important aspect of the concept. Examples of questions related to the first period after release were *What are your experiences of what facilitates and frustrates desistance after release? What do you find important for people's wishes and opportunities to leave crime behind following release, and what obstacles do they meet? How do you feel about the meaning of your relationship, related to this? What do you focus on in your communication and cooperation with people upon and after release?* and *What are your experiences from cooperating and communicating with other agencies on resettlement work?* Questions also concerned experiences of preparation for release, such as communication and cooperation with prison staff, imprisoned people and others, and of how resettlement work could be organized to promote desistance. Since interviews took place 3 months after lockdown, which caused major changes in practice, they focused on experiences before COVID-19. Topics and questions were presented as an introduction to the interview, but other questions and topics developed during the group interaction. To enable data co-construction, participants were encouraged to discuss and reflect upon topics between themselves, rather than approaching the facilitator with 'answers'. An interview with caseworkers included a situation which illustrates how meaning and understanding were constructed within the group. Participants compared ideal resettlement work with today's standard. They preferred to establish relationships in prison before release, which

one participant stressed that they rarely did now. Another participant added that such pre-release meetings hardly existed any longer and checked whether the others agreed. As the first participant answered with an affirmative 'mmm', the second one rounded off by stating that at least *he* thought so. Such negotiating took place in many situations in focus groups. To encourage similar group dynamics, the facilitator emphasized the value of participation by all (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Halkier, 2016; Kitzinger, 1995). One possible advantage of conducting interviews in pre-existing groups is to provide a safe and comfortable environment for all participants to be active; however, existing group norms might constrain them.

Reflexivity. In line with an interactionist framework, we consider all focus group members as participants in data construction. We therefore paid particular attention to how the group facilitator's background from resettlement work might influence this process. Having similar experiences to the participants, she had valuable insight to understand implied content and 'Correctional Service language'. Accordingly, this probably enabled her to understand responses in nuanced and multilevel ways. Her familiarity also risked imposing her personal values, beliefs and perceptions on the group and preventing critical distance (Berger, 2015). To address these issues, research topics were presented at the start of the meeting to allow participants to reflect and discuss on their own terms, and two researchers performed the analysis.

Data analysis

To enable an in-depth content analysis of the data and focus on communication and interaction in the groups, the first and second authors performed a thematic reflexive analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2019) followed by a Goffman-inspired analysis (Halkier, 2016; Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2005). A combined inductive, theoretical thematic analysis was conducted. Themes and patterns were data-driven in that the themes developed were strongly linked to reflections in the focus groups. They were also based on questions and reflections embedded in the theoretical framework. We familiarized ourselves with the data by separately reading the transcribed interviews and noting down preliminary codes related to the research questions. This constituted an initial data construction in interaction between ourselves and the texts. We then jointly reviewed the analysis process, from the initial coding, through correlation between codes, to preliminary themes and subthemes. Data were further developed through interaction between the two researchers. We focused on similarities between the preferences, and differences between the experiences, of caseworkers and PVO staff. Our initial themes based on both groups were 'establishing close relationships' and 'struggling to practise in line with the ideal', but subsequently the differences were highlighted by re-defining and re-naming themes as 'facilitator-coordinators' and 'umbilical cords' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 91–93). The final analysis focused more on the interplay between content and group interaction (Halkier, 2016; Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2005). This was based on participants' expressions of frustration and dissatisfaction and their working overtime to fulfil their ambitions, which evolved throughout the interviews.

Findings

The analysis revealed that participants experienced very similar challenges in facilitating desistance, as well as ideals of manoeuvring or overcoming them. Despite this, they presented differences in working according to these ideals. On this basis, we constructed the following themes and subthemes (Figure 1):

Common challenges and ideals

Caseworkers and PVO staff described their efforts to establish lasting relationships with resettling people and to reduce challenges and barriers related to identity change, stigma and navigating the welfare system. They outlined common perceptions of released peoples' struggles and frustrations in approaching society after release, and the significance of overcoming these. Ideals of supporting desistance intertwined with their perceptions of these obstacles. We introduce examples of and reflections on such challenges, leading to a presentation of the importance of lasting relationships.

'Walls grow higher on the outside': Structural barriers following release

Frustrations and challenges were mainly related to external barriers of stigma and navigating the welfare system. PVO staff at (5) stated: 'Walls grow higher on the outside', and all focus groups elaborated on how the external environment might frustrate desistance through closed doors, rejection, exclusion and labelling. A prominent challenge was contacting and relating to 'NAV' (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration), illustrated in the following excerpt from the interview with caseworkers at (1).

P2: Should we say something about NAV?

P1: NAV, yeah.

P3: Do we *dare* say anything about NAV? (laughter)

P2: Oh my God!

P1: It's a bit like . . . if you say that the Correctional Services have got stricter and have less time to follow-up, that's nothing compared to NAV (. . .) And it's only got worse in recent years. It's impossible . . .

P2: . . . to get hold of anyone.

P1: Yes, to get hold of anyone. And I'm thinking about people who need help from NAV, who must contact NAV themselves, be put on hold for one hour . . . well, maybe not one hour, but . . . it can take a long time to reach the switchboard, and then you'll be transferred to a staff member who doesn't answer the phone.

P3: Probably with a prepaid phone card.

P1: With a prepaid phone card. Yes.

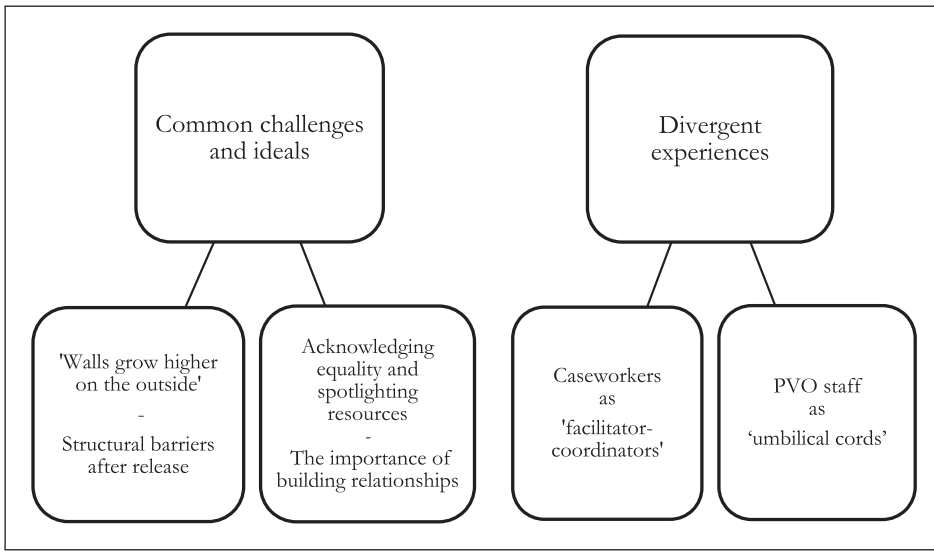

Figure 1. Themes and subthemes

P3: (. . .) I don't know how many times I've had people in my office who've borrowed my phone to wait in the NAV queue. There's been lots of frustration about contacting NAV.

This quote shows the group's shared frustration with NAV. The participants did not raise this until the facilitator reminded them of the topic of external communication and cooperation. They hesitated to bring it up, which could be understood as a feeling of hopelessness in addressing an ongoing challenge. The laughter, the mention of 'daring' to bring it up and the exclamation 'Oh my God!' also indicate their general reluctance and resignation. Strong agreement was seen within this group and between the five groups. Most staff found it difficult, at least for people they worked with, to get hold of NAV employees, to obtain proper information and ensure payments upon release. Some staff highlighted this as indirectly pushing newly released persons back to crime, as many knew illegal ways of obtaining money. Difficulty in navigating the NAV system is also discussed by Todd-Kvam (2020) and Andvig and Karlsson (2021). Caseworkers elaborated on how bureaucratic 'application processes and processing times and things that don't work' negatively affect motivation and frustrate change processes (Todd-Kvam, 2020: 12).

Participants found increasingly poor interaction with prison staff and imprisoned people before release. With many years of experience of resettlement work, they described current pre-release collaboration as more challenging and sometimes non-existent, as also highlighted by Andvig and Karlsson (2021). Problems in finding accommodation post-release have been related to this lack of interaction. Correctional Service staff and their partners emphasize starting this work as soon as possible. Late starts result in unnecessarily high rates of homelessness upon release (Dyb et al., 2006). Additional

barriers were stigma, degrading treatment and an inefficient search for accommodation (Arnal and McNeill, in press; Ludvigsen et al., 2008). Conflicting wishes and barriers often cause hopelessness and pain of goal failure, as shown by Nugent and Schinkel (2016).

Acknowledging equality and spotlighting resources: the importance of building relationships. Our analysis emphasizes common ideals of what staff consider most important in their relationships with resettling people. It shows considerable consistency within and between groups on the importance of well-established, appreciative, continued relationships. They described change as complex and time-consuming, and considered time, patience, trust and availability crucial to support desistance. In the following, we exemplify and reflect upon the establishment of good relationships.

Caseworkers presented TOG (an initiative towards people who have committed repeated offences) as an ideal example of facilitating desistance. TOG is an expanded collaboration between prison and probation staff for resettlement of reconvicted persons. Funding is available to enable Correctional Service staff to cooperate inside and outside prison, enhancing relationship building and throughcare. Some caseworkers in both focus groups had experience from TOG. They exemplified its extraordinary practice of building trusting relationships and of supporting people through social work. They valued the fundamental cooperation with prison staff and highlighted how pre-release relationship building enabled them to challenge resettling people and support them on a deeper and more personal level. For caseworkers, close contact and continuity were mainly due to extraordinary organizational resources and priorities.

PVO staff at (3) were almost always available:

P1: Well, you might say we have ordinary working hours from eight to four. But we're available all the time. Even weekends and holidays. They call whenever they want, and we tell them to. So we don't have any . . .

P2: . . . Sunday afternoons . . . (laughs)

P1: . . . That's where the volunteering comes in, I think (laughs).

F: Yes . . .

P1: But it's . . .

P2: You get personally involved in those blokes. We get to know them very well.

P1: Yes.

This excerpt illustrates PVO staffs' personal involvement in and care for people they work with, and how their efforts and values allow them to establish and maintain relationships. They expand their working hours to enable more contact. The importance of sustained relationships and post-release support has been emphasized by Collica-Cox (2018) and Meek and Lewis (2014). In such relationships, staff were perceived as encouraging, acknowledging and caring. Staff thus became reliable stepping stones, providing hope for crime-free futures. Sustained contact was considered key to long-term support, building social capital and motivation for life changes (Collica-Cox, 2018; Meek and Lewis, 2014).

Divergent experiences: 'facilitator-coordinators' and 'umbilical cords'

Despite similarities in *what* caseworkers and PVO staff considered ideal support to overcome frustration and obstacles, the interviews demonstrated differences in *how* they approached and handled these obstacles. Caseworkers often supervised and *guided* people towards assistance from voluntary organizations and official agencies. PVO staff, however, tended to *accompany* people when dealing with obstacles. They also seemed to put more time and effort into challenging and supporting their attitudes and actions, and addressing societal barriers and stigma. Caseworkers more often *advised* people on how to navigate the troubled waters of resettlement, whereas PVO staff *actively helped* them to navigate.

Caseworkers as 'facilitator-coordinators'. Caseworkers described their ideal of lasting relationships as fading in their everyday work. Being experienced in resettlement work, they outlined how changes evolved gradually. They disapproved of being now less involved in assessments of early release, and the fact that fewer people now had the opportunity for a gradual, supported transition to society. Unlike previous provision of support and care through face-to-face dialogue and cooperation, current resettlement work was increasingly based on written communication. Social work was vanishing, and they interpreted advice from management as emphasizing 'statistics rather than relationships'. This is from the interview with (1):

P3: When I get a conditional release, it's quite hard to form a relationship. Maybe you talk to a person about poor living conditions, employment, no contact with NAV. Because they haven't done that in prison. So some things are urgent. And perhaps it's only a short period of conditional release.

P2: It's such a disadvantage that things aren't planned and ready when they're released. (. . .) They're just released without anything outside.

F: Yes . . .

P2: And there are quite different releases.

P1: Yes. There will be chaos releases with constantly putting out small fires. You don't have time for anything else. So then you become like a facilitator-coordinator, and you don't get to talk to them about anything except practical stuff.

P2: Yes.

Despite caseworkers' ideal of close relationships, practical issues often took up most of their time. Under-prepared and time-limited conditional releases turned staff into 'facilitator-coordinators' with insufficient time to establish sound relationships. Similar experiences of breaking down resettlement into practical issues and needs to be met have recently been described (Cracknell, 2022). In our study, this frustrating work resulted in a focus on bridging resettling people and the welfare system and voluntary organizations, to facilitate support and practical assistance. Social capital was often built through 'referrals' and 'signposting', in making appointments or directing people to charitable organizations (Shapland et al., 2012). Caseworkers greatly appreciated how PVO staff spent

time with and accompanied people, helping them to join new communities. This enabled the caseworkers to 'wrap people up a bit', as one of them at (2) put it. This 'wrapping up' appeared to be an emergency solution for under-prepared, short-term, practically focused releases, and is related to a 'pass-the-parcel' style of supervision (Robinson, 2005). These concepts reflect trends of fragmentation and partial breakdown of the traditional relational model of probational supervision. The following quote illustrates how caseworkers considered their usual resettlement work in contrast to the ideal:

P3: They [TOG staff] have completely different starting points in these conditional releases than I have [in ordinary resettlement work]. (. . .) We used to be much more inside prisons talking to inmates before release. I hardly do that anymore. (. . .)

P1: Yes. Pre-release meetings, like we had before, they hardly exist now. Do they?

P3. Mmm.

F: Really?

P3: I don't do that anymore, to put it that way.

Caseworkers pointed out that 'old school' desistance support was now only provided in exceptional cases and through TOG. Today's approach was considered risk-focused assembly-line work. Similar findings from other areas of probation services have been called a 'McDonaldization' of probation work (Robinson, 2019), while resettlement work has been described as 'running on a treadmill' (Cracknell, 2022). The treadmill metaphor describes monotonous, repetitive supervision, reflecting a shift from the previous facilitation of long-term change. Caseworkers in our study found relational work to be downgraded, causing them frustration and dissatisfaction. Similar ethical, practical and emotional dissatisfaction has been presented by Cracknell (2022); experienced practitioners felt constrained and unable to effectuate change. During our interviews, caseworkers spoke warmly of PVO staffs' ability to practise 'old school' relational work. Considering caseworkers' frustration over their own daily practice, this also appeared as a longing for what PVO staff seemed to have taken over.

PVO staff as 'umbilical cords'. Unlike caseworkers' experiences, PVO staff practices seemed to synchronize more with desistance support. Each voluntary organization in our study focused on specific topics such as normalization, networks and employment, which were highlighted through their slogans, names or websites. Despite these differences, the interviews suggested that they all highly valued, and strove to establish, close relationships with people they worked with. The interviews showed strong appreciation for assisting them towards future pro-social selves (Hunter and Farrall, 2018). PVO staff at (4) elaborated on their ability to have close relationships:

P2: We have very close contact. We pick the person up on the day of release. Just that pick-up is very important. Many break the law on the very first day.

P1: First hour. Just *one* hour alone there . . .

P2: Yes, then we celebrate with coffee and cake down in the café.

P3: Many of the things we've talked about so far are task-oriented. They can be overwhelming. So, when we say close, we *mean* close. Doing things together. Living life together.

P4: You're connected to a new umbilical cord.

P1. Yes, we're very close to them.

This underlines staffs' perception of newly released peoples' vulnerability and the impact of the support they provide. 'Being close' was recently stressed by Sturm et al. (2022); both probationers and probation officers saw the development of a trusting relationship as important for their cooperation. Close contact has also been emphasized as crucial to build trusting relationships to support desistance (Ugelvik, 2022). PVO staffs' use of the metaphor 'umbilical cord' visualizes how their close relationships enabled them to assist people through the vulnerable period immediately after release. They demonstrated how 'umbilical cord' relationships allowed them to advise people and challenge their behaviour and attitudes.

P3: As service providers, we want to present realistic attitudes on behalf of our clients.

P1: Yes, and as for attitudes, many have totally lost faith in the system. They're so angry with NAV that they don't expect to get any help. So, they start shouting at staff on the phone for no reason. (. . .) Maybe clients who shout don't really realize what's actually happening? We must reflect a bit on those attitudes. (. . .)

P3: Yes, and what you're allowed to do, what is . . .

P1: . . . what's an OK way to behave . . .

In view of staffs' and released peoples' frustration at navigating NAV, this excerpt illustrates how being 'umbilical cords' enables PVO staff to support secondary desistance. Being present during phone calls allows them to respond to, challenge and reflect on mindsets, attitudes and behaviours. These immediate reflections illuminate resettling peoples' thoughts of who they want to be (Maruna and Farrall, 2004), and this has been called an intermediate method of supervising desistance (Shapland et al., 2012).

Challenging stigma proved important in daily work in one PVO (3). Staff talked about 'selling repaired cars' when guiding people directly from prison into daily employment. Their slogan 'From inmate to employee' highlighted their emphasis on identity change, but further elaboration illustrated how this change rested on attitudes of potential employers:

P1: That's what we often do. We *sell* former inmates. We sell a car no one wants. We try to say: 'Yes, but this car's been repaired, it's completely . . . '. We can never guarantee that the person will never do anything illegal again. We can't say that about anyone. But we *can* say something about their strengths, and we do. I think that makes it easier for former inmates to get a job.

Staff developed relationships and explored released peoples' values and interests through shared meals, exercise sessions, conversations, meetings and courses. This enabled them to support them towards their 'future selves' (Giordano et al., 2002; Hunter and Farrall, 2018), by getting to know them and focusing on their resources (McNeill, 2016c) when approaching barriers in society. PVO staff at (5) underlined overcoming stigma as crucial for desistance. They found that newly released persons usually hid their pasts and considered carefully what to reveal to others. They would thus need time and support to lead normal lives in the community, and to see themselves as normal people, equal to others. The interviews showed how they strove to provide an equitable atmosphere, and how equality was fundamental in their attempts to support.

We illuminate differences between caseworkers' and PVO staffs' desistance support by combining the framework of the penal voluntary sector and desistance theory (Arnal & McNeill, fortcoming; McNeill, 2016a; Maruna and Farrall, 2004; Tomczak and Buck, 2019b). Staff seem to promote varying hybrid practices of secondary and tertiary desistance. In mainly practising as facilitator-coordinators, caseworkers can only provide limited and decreasing support. However, PVO staff facilitate both secondary and tertiary desistance to varying degrees. As 'umbilical cords' they enable personal change and may raise awareness of personal difficulties in society. Moreover, they support social rehabilitation by stressing social recognition and acceptance of released people as full members of the community. Enduring relationships and a resource focus enables them to challenge structural inequalities and exclusion.

Discussion

We asked what caseworkers and PVO staff considered most important to facilitate desistance in their relationships with resettling people, and how well they could support desistance in their daily work. We have shown how both groups of staff highlight a resource focus and close, lasting relationships to achieve individual change and belonging. Despite these common ideals, only PVO staff followed them. Caseworkers described a turn away from social work and desistance support, which they perceived as almost taken over by PVO staff. Based on these findings, we discuss two key developments in Norwegian resettlement practice: (1) increased discrepancies between ideals and realities and (2) the blurring of boundaries between PVOs and the Correctional Services. We relate these developments to recent research and reflect on how they affect desistance-informed practice.

Our findings illustrate that parts of current Correctional Service resettlement practice do not reflect policy aims and visions. This is also highlighted related to seamless through-the-gate service provision and resettlement work in Norway (Johnsen and Fridhov, 2019; Todd-Kvam and Ugelvik, 2019). Todd-Kvam (in press) presents how recent political and policy changes to the Correctional Services influence practice. Increased electronic monitoring, a tighter budget and a greater risk focus have re-shaped the penal field and probation work. A recent analysis shows that the Correctional Services' latest strategy document emphasizes risk more than previous versions (Mjåland and Ugelvik, 2021). In line with our findings, McNeill (2016b) shows how increased risk focus hinders resettlement practice from working with and through relationships. Overall, this demonstrates how this development moves practice *away* from supporting desistance.

We show how daily resettlement practice reflects formalized funding and collaboration between the Correctional Services and voluntary organizations. State caseworkers are becoming 'managers' of resettlement work, while PVO staff are increasingly expected to, and manage to, deliver it. We illustrate how this development creates 'blurred boundaries' (Todd-Kvam, in press) of expectations and responsibilities between the two parties. This relates to Miller's concept of 'carceral devolution', where the state transfers responsibility for resettlement work to community-based actors and organizations (Miller, 2014: 327). Like Miller, we noticed PVO staffs' focus on transforming attitudes and cognitive processes to increase released peoples' human capital. However, while Miller did not find that reentry organizations sought to remove external barriers, our analysis presents PVO staffs' efforts at de-stigmatization and social inclusion. Addressing intertwined personal and social rehabilitation (Arnal and McNeill, in press) enabled PVO staff in our research to support secondary and tertiary desistance (McNeill, 2016a; Maruna and Farrall, 2004).

Mjåland and Ugelvik (2021: 229) ask what the consequences would be if the Correctional Services' more risk-focused strategy moved from text and discourse into practice. Our findings partly answer this question, by showing how today's practice differs from the vision to deliver 'punishment that makes a difference' (Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet, 2021: 8). As the Norwegian State is transferring much resettlement work to non-governmental actors, we may question whether this reflects a desirable, well-considered and distinct development. Similar blurring of boundaries are pointed to regarding distribution of responsibility between NAV, as a representative of the Norwegian welfare state, and non-governmental organizations (Fløtten et al., 2023). The latter *identify* social challenges in the welfare state's safety net and appear to *be* the last safety net in the welfare society. A central discussion in the report is whether this is an expression of a desirable or correct distribution of work between the public and voluntary sectors. In line with our findings, this portrays 'the transformations of the welfare state' (Vike, 2022), and particularly the structural change visualized through a gradual pulverization of the responsibility for realizing the welfare state's obligations towards the population. Todd-Kvam (in press) points out the lack of debate on the changing role of community sanctions, which may mean that '. . . unnecessarily harmful policies and practices can operate unobserved and unquestioned'. Hopefully, our research will contribute to further reflection, debate and research regarding these developments.

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4.3 ‘Facilitator-coordinators’ or ‘umbilical cords’: Staff experiences of supporting desistance following release from prison

While the first two articles presented explore resettling persons’ lived experiences of ideal and actual resettlement and desistance support, this paper presents staff perspectives. This provides a more complex understanding of the possibilities and challenges of assistance during resettlement. The article asks what probation staff and staff from penal voluntary organizations consider most important in their relationships with resettling people in order to support desistance, and to what extent they can provide such assistance in their daily work. While the previously presented articles were based on individual interviews, this paper draws on focus group interviews with staff from two probation offices and three voluntary organizations. This allows our analysis to focus on both individual and cultural aspects of the understandings of ideal and actual desistance facilitation, through interaction between participants as they construct and reflect on these understandings.

Both groups of staff highlighted a resource focus and close, lasting relationships to achieve individual change and belonging. They worked to bring about early contact during imprisonment, as they knew from experience that the moment of leaving prison to meet society was an uncertain and often troubled transition. This early contact stood out as central to establishing relationships. It required flexibility in their role, but also a call for co-operation from the prison. The staff presented the dual priorities of time and flexibility in these relationships to enable them to support the resettling persons’ strengths and resources. A resource focus was essential for them to guide and reflect with resettling persons in their daily lives. The ability to be close and get to know them well was decisive in this context. These relationships thus also required their authenticity, care and interest in everyday situations, to challenge, support and reflect on how resettling persons presented and understood themselves in encounters with others. To assist them when facing re-entry barriers related to their offences and sentences, staff underlined their need to know them well and be close to them. Identity and relational desistance support thus required them to be present in the individuals’ daily situations over time, which called for a flexible framework for their work.

Despite the common ideals of probation staff and penal voluntary organization staff, only the latter appeared to practise in line with them. Probation staff described a turn away from social work and desistance support in their daily work. Co-operation with prison staff had declined, and pre-release meetings were disappearing. Additionally, they described preparations for release in prison as deficient, which turned their role in meetings with resettling persons into that of ‘facilitator-coordinators’. They compared their present work to a kind of firefighting, as practical tasks such as preparing housing and income overshadowed

their previous relational work. As they understood that their role had changed, they boasted of the assistance they received from penal voluntary organizations. Simultaneously, they felt that the social work they themselves used to practise had been almost taken over by the organizations. This seemed to blur the boundaries between their own practice and responsibilities and those of penal voluntary organizations. Penal voluntary organization staff, on the other hand, seemed to find it easier to work in line with their ideals. They pointed out the same difficulty in establishing early contact, due to poor co-operation with prisons. Their close relationships with resettling persons were described as 'umbilical cord' relationships, which allowed them to be present in the individuals' everyday lives, and to support, challenge and guide them along the way. Spending time together also enabled them to get to know the people well, and thus to highlight their strengths and resources in meetings with public officials and future employers. However, this kind of support was partly enabled by the flexibility of staff to work beyond their working hours.

This section has provided presentations of the three papers in addition to the contribution of their findings to the overarching aims of the thesis. In the following, I discuss how the *integrated* findings of these papers answer my leading research questions, and how they provide broader knowledge and understanding of the topic.

5 Discussion

My aim with this study was to provide a broader understanding of how staff can facilitate and assist desistance during resettlement. Building on the perspectives of people in resettlement, probation staff and staff of penal voluntary organizations, I asked what were considered ideal interactions in this context, as well as how interaction was experienced in daily practices. On an overarching level, this study demonstrates how broad and individually tailored support arises as an ideal. Furthermore, it suggests that current practices are too narrow, fragmented and blurred to reflect this ideal. In the four main sections below (5.1 to 5.4), I amplify and discuss these findings against previous research and theories. First, by relating my findings to Haggerty and Bucerius's trajectories of pain (2020), I examine how pains are experienced within and beyond the prison walls. Second, I discuss how desistance in some cases has been supported despite these pains and point out aspects of Norwegian society which can be regarded as exceptional. Third, inspired by a utopian perspective on desistance (Patton and Farrall, 2021), I present an ideal perspective on desistance support during resettlement. Finally, I discuss how, even though professionals can play important roles in supporting desistance, it is ultimately in civil society and amongst fellow citizens that resettlement can take place.

5.1 Painful resettlement trajectories

As mentioned earlier, Haggerty and Bucerius (2020) identified four key trajectories that have contributed to the expansion of Sykes' concept of 'pains of imprisonment'. I will particularly relate two of these to my findings: the *additional pains*, whereby new pains in the mould of Sykes' original formulation are identified, and the *pains beyond prison walls*, which focus on how 'pains manifest outside of the prison walls' or 'by non-incarcerated individuals'. In the following, I argue how experiences of ignorance, fragmentation and misrecognition in my study fit into Haggerty and Bucerius' *additional pains.* I also argue that expectations and experiences of stigma reflect *pains beyond the prison walls.* I then discuss how the findings that emerge illustrate how desistance is hindered and facilitated in interaction and relationships. Further, in relation to Haggerty and Bucerius' argument that the list of pains can conceal 'good' practice, I try to 'unmask' practice and experiences that are close to the ideal, and ask if they might even be slightly exceptional.

5.1.1 From 'pain spotting' to presenting a broader picture

Firstly, following Haggerty and Bucerius' critique of identifying a wide variety of types of pain, which they call 'pain spotting', what would be the usefulness of my additions to the list of pains? Would I just be adding to a list that is already too long? I will now present two

arguments for why these additions would be useful. The first relates to the various broad presentations of Norwegian penal practice. Impressions of luxury under the Norwegian Correctional Services are being broadcast in the media worldwide, and 'best practice' is being exported to other countries (Culbertson, 2021). Furthermore, the exceptionalism thesis is widely known and debated. This might lead to an unbalanced picture, one that implies that the best intentions and policies are always reflected in practice. In other words, because of the popular media images of Norwegian prisons as luxurious places of ease, '(…) the deprivation of liberty, the loss of freedom, is no longer understood as a pain' (Warr, 2016: 588). This mismatch between media coverage and experiences of everyday practice was referred to in the beginning of Anwar's story: 'As a first-timer, I knew nothing about prisons. Based on what I have seen and heard in the media about Norwegian prisons, I thought "Wow!" The Correctional Services' plans are good. But I was very disappointed to see they were just camouflage' (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2024). By expanding the additional pains, I discuss the stress and trauma caused by imprisonment, and I also spotlight how this relates to the interaction between the different roles involved in my study. A second argument is that illustrating how these negative effects last *beyond the prison walls* is necessary for the understanding of desistance processes during imprisonment.

5.1.2 Pains of ignorance, fragmentation and misrecognition

In Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2024), my co-authors and I presented Torkil's story of ignorance and fragmentation by staff during imprisonment. Experiences of repeated 'lacks' from staff showed through false promises, postponements and wrong advice by prison officers. Despite Torkil's patience and acceptance, this ignorance and fragmentation generated emotional distress such as irritation and frustration, as well as financial distress. Based on staff recommendations, he spent much energy on trying to reach unattainable goals. The guidance of staff, or lack thereof, and missing applications in this context resulted in the lack of opportunities for sentence progression. Torkil underlines how he eventually felt this ignorance and fragmentation to be personal and stigmatizing, and how this made him feel deceived. Altogether, this fostered frustration, anger and disappointment. As he put it: 'You're supposed to try to get motivated to get back into society and all that, but with all the nonsense I experienced in that prison, I was close to getting my parole revoked just because they managed to annoy me that much'. In line with the key trajectories presented by Haggerty and Bucerius (2020), these forms of psychological distress are recognized as additional pains during imprisonment. Recently, desistance scholars have illustrated how intense emotional experiences might harm desistance processes during resettlement (Stoll, 2022) as well as how penal-related debt in general limits experiences of desistance from crime (Todd-Kvam, 2019: 14). Within a context where the work culture apparently disclaimed responsibility and lacked understanding and overall interest, relationship building was hindered. This again probably produced pains of goal failure (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016). Furthermore, Torkil's experiences of being ignored in a fragmented context of imprisonment also relates to Teejay's reference to being caught in a spider's web of probation supervision

(McNeill, 2019). Torkil and Teejay's ways of being unseseen and misrecognized resulted in similar sensations of becoming more tightly bound the more they struggled, which led to further struggles of desistance and rehabilitation in their resettlement processes. Drawing on the understanding of 'misrecognition' as people being seriously disadvantaged through norms and standards that make their voices and positions become ignored or regarded as worthless (McNeill, 2023), I would argue that Torkil's story, as well as the first part of Anwar's imprisonment, illustrate examples of misrecognition in the Norwegian penal system. Additionally, my study has demonstrated experiences of Malopticon-like supervision, where participants '(…) suffer the pain of not being seen; at least not as they would recognize themselves' (McNeill, 2019: 225). They suffered from being ignored or misrecognized, which frustrated pathways of desistance. Similar trajectories in the Norwegian penal context have been underlined by Sandbukt (2023). I will discuss these experiences of *mis*recognition in the light of work on recognition, trust and belonging later.

5.1.3 Pains of anticipated and experienced stigma beyond the prison walls

Sykes' work focused on the experiences of pain during imprisonment. As stated by Haggerty and Bucerius (2020), scholars have recently paid great attention to identifying how pains of imprisonment also manifest themselves outside the walls. Among these pains is the difficulty of coping with the stigma of having been incarcerated. Warr (2016) has addressed the social dimensions of stigma and the macro structures which might limit opportunities when people meet society after imprisonment. He highlights employment as an area where the impact of the prison stigma is all-pervasive, mainly because of the requirement of disclosing one's offences. Even though declaring an offence is rarely required for employment in Norway, my findings have shown how it might still be brought into the open. Moreover, and in line with Yang et al. (2007) and Patton and Farrall (2021), my study shows how prejudice and negative attitudes in the community might affect individuals' *expectations* of labelling. This is exemplified through frustrations in finding and keeping a job, and how these frustrations to a large extent seemed to originate in *anticipated* discrimination or rejection (Gålnander, 2020). This means that persons in resettlement sometimes respond and cope based on expectations and beliefs of devaluation and exclusion.

I will illustrate this by linking my findings to recent research in the Norwegian context. In her study of men convicted of sexual offences, Sandbukt (2023) shows how finding a job did *not* appear to be a challenge for most of her participants. However, in line with findings on female desisters in Norway (Gjeruldsen et al., 2024), Sandbukt also shows examples of how potential and current employers *have* refused to employ returning citizens as well as terminating their contracts when they became aware of their lived lives. Their research also highlights how this has caused anxiety and discouragement during resettlement. Even though disclosure is not required as such, underlying feelings of stress from fear that their

employers or other close ones may be notified of their convictions often cause isolation and anxiety (Sandbukt, 2023). Findings from Sandbukt's study and my own show the reality of this fear. Sandbukt illustrates how people who have been released from Norwegian prisons after convictions for sexual offences have been exposed by the general public. In a similar vein, Harald explained how a message was sent to his employer stating that a compensation based on his offence would be deducted from his salary, and how he went numb when his manager asked what it was all about (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023b). In line with this, the participants in my study struggled with anticipated and expected negative reactions in the context of employment. Knowing that their previous lives might cause negative reactions affected Harald's and Anwar's strategies when approaching current and possible employers. Their personal negotiations were similar to those used by female desisters when deciding on when to tell and when to keep silent about their previous convictions (Gjeruldsen et al., 2024). Anwar explained how Conny (staff member at the penal voluntary organization) contacted possible employers for interviews. He stated, 'It's not easy for an inmate to start all over again, because we live in a society where it's easy to judge people. And when you tell people you've been in prison, they think all sorts of weird things'. Conny making this initial contact was of great help to him because he would then know that his past would not come as a shock to the employer during an interview. In Harald's case, his nervousness and numbness were clearly also due to the reactions he expected from his manager. However, the manager surprised Harald and calmed him down by replying, "Ok, now I know. I'll put it behind me. It's between the two of us. No problem". Similar anticipated stigma also caused stress and anxiety in female desisters' approaches to employment. Similar to Harald's case, an employer in the study by Gjeruldsen et al. (2024) just laughed, saying, "Well, that's the way it is" when told about a participant's former stealing. Even though my study illustrates how negative reactions from employers might often just be anticipated, in line with the findings of Gjeruldsen et al. (2024) and Sandbukt (2023), fearing such reactions has still been shown to cause anxiety, stress and isolation.

5.1.4 Pains of being 'captured in freedom'

Following the challenges of anticipated and experienced stigma presented in the previous section, I now introduce the struggles of being 'captured in freedom' as another form of pain beyond the prison walls. I have shown how some participants reflected on feelings of obligation and control during parts of their probation period, and that this caused frustration and ambivalence. Hence, meetings with probation staff were felt to be restrictions and drawbacks in their lives, which led to a sense of being unfree despite not being imprisoned. This liminal feeling of partial freedom placed them in a kind of limbo where they were mentally brought back to prison and reminded of where they came from. Such experiences seemed to constrain personal growth and to frustrate their trajectories towards stable lives. Similar feelings of liminality have also been shown to frustrate desistance in other parole contexts (McNeill, 2019; Villeneuve et al., 2021). These findings are closely related to the pains of freedom and reintegration highlighted by De Vos and Gilbert (2017) and Doxat-Pratt

et al. (2022). Upon release, some of their participants shared their perceptions of being in the 'liminal state of being neither still in prison nor truly free (…)' (Doxat-Pratt et al., 2022: 12), as well as '(…) the paradoxical feeling of being free in theory but not actually feeling free' (De Vos and Gilbert, 2017: 142). These pains of being captured in freedom thus illustrate the reach and impact of penal sanctions *beyond* imprisonment (Schinkel, 2014; Crewe, 2015).

5.1.5 A fractured picture of exceptional Norwegian penal practice

Let me again return to the presentation of Norway as one of the exceptional penal states as described more than a decade ago (Pratt and Eriksson, 2013; Pratt, 2008a; Pratt, 2008b). As previously outlined, this presentation has been broadly criticized, both nationally and internationally. To enhance the relevance of the criticism, I have described how Crewe et al. (2022) argued for a separation based on the exceptional claim as *absolute* or *relative*. Initially, contrary to asking whether Nordic imprisonment is more or less humane than imprisonment elsewhere, I concentrate on experiences of current resettlement practices in Norway. I have argued how the penal field and its practices in Norway are not humane in any absolute sense, since imprisonment in itself is both painful and degrading. The list of additional pains and challenges during and after imprisonment which I have presented and discussed above illustrate this from different angles. Moreover, manifestations of interaction and assistance presented in my study shows how the Norwegian Probational Services' resettlement practice seems to have moved away from the shared ideal. Crewe and Ievins illustrate how the grip of penal power in prisons can be 'loose' or 'tight' in desirable or undesirable ways, and that a lack of attention and intervention can be frustrating and harmful. An ideal form of 'tightness', according to Crewe and Ievins (2021: 64), exists when 'the grip of power makes its subjects feel held or contained, gripped supportively rather than constrictively'. My findings present experiences far from this ideal form of tightness. In line with this, the Norwegian Correctional Services have been argued to give imprisoned persons considerable freedom and great responsibility to bring up moral aspects of their punishment (Ievins and Mjåland, 2021; Mjåland, 2022). Additionally, incarcerated persons have described Norwegian prisons as empty, careless, negligent and meaningless (Ievins and Mjåland, 2021). My list of further pains during and after imprisonment may not nullify the absolute claim of Norwegian exceptionalism, but it might still poke holes in it.

In conclusion, by adding to this list of pains, am I also '(…) suggesting that ostensibly "good" prison-related developments or initiatives actually amount to (or mask) a darker "painful" dimension', as emphasized by Haggerty and Bucerius (2020: 9)? This seems to be right to the point. My study has revealed experiences of misrecognition (McNeill, 2023) and Malopticon-like supervision (McNeill, 2019) in the Norwegian penal system. Additionally, I have shown examples of how the walls grow higher outside the prison and how 'One gets no receipt for the past when one walks out into the beautiful air' (Conrad, 2006: 174). Haggerty and Bucerius also warn that when analysts enter the field with pains of imprisonment as their

core framing, they risk overlooking the situations where imprisoned persons see specific benefits of their incarceration. In line with this, is my research not only erasing the exceptional picture of imprisonment in Norway, but also concealing the positive experiences of it? I would prefer to say that it contributes knowledge that balances and paints a more complex picture of the exceptionalism thesis. I agree that the exceptionalism thesis has masked painful experiences such as those presented above, and thus painted too rosy a picture of penal practice in Norway (see Ugelvik and Dullum, 2011). Even though I highlight the need to illuminate these challenges, I also stress the desistance-facilitating practices which this study has revealed.

5.2 Examples of exceptional resettlement and desistance support

Beyond this discussion of *absolute* exceptionalism, another important and interesting aspect of Norwegian penal policy and practices is whether it is *relatively* more humane than elsewhere. Although it has been subject to criticism, I would argue that important lessons can be learned from the Norwegian penal field. From this perspective, the fish tank example I presented earlier can represent both absolute and relative exceptionalism. As stated by Pratt and Eriksson (2013), it is exceptional to have a fish tank in a prison, but I would argue that it is also common to find people taking out their frustration and anger with the prison environment. This relates to Pratt's later reflections (Pratt, 2021), where he maintains that having a solarium in a prison is relatively exceptional. This appears to be a reasonable claim, even though my practical experience suggests that people would mostly be denied access to it. These examples show some of the divergence between the two claims of exceptionalism in the Norwegian context. In the following, I will nuance the picture of resettlement as one-dimensionally painful, mainly within the relative aspect of exceptionalism. That said, I will also present examples of positive practices in an absolute perspective. Based on my findings, I will illustrate practices that are close to the ideal and moral aspects of society, both of which facilitate desistance. Following the reasoning of Haggerty and Bucerius (2020), I thus 'unmask' some of the promising initiatives and practices.

5.2.1 Exceptional accounts of desistance support

I have previously discussed experiences of ignorance or misrecognition in the Norwegian penal context, and how they frustrated pathways of desistance. Furthermore, my findings have shown how these perceptions might be turned into recognition and trust. The concept of recognition is referred to in literature on desistance, resettlement and reintegration, and in experiences of penal supervision. In the following I will expand the knowledge based on my findings in the light of scholarly work on recognition and trust. Similar to the presentations of varying experiences of desistance support in the stories of Torkil, Anwar and Steffen

(Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2024) and the perceptions of the probation meetings (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023b), McNeill (2023) offers two contrasting examples of assistance from staff during rehabilitation processes. To understand the circumstances under which desistance can be facilitated in a broader context, I reflect on my findings on this in the light of McNeill's presentation of rehabilitation as recognition. Furthermore, I relate my findings to Ugelvik's work on the transformative power of being recognized as trustworthy in processes of desistance and reintegration (Ugelvik, 2021).

In this thesis, trust and recognition show through Steffen's and the last parts of Anwar's stories (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2024) and again in Martin's and Daniel's stories. For example, Daniel's probation worker's statement 'You must remember, Daniel, that your offence is not you. It is something you have *done*. It doesn't describe you as a person' (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023b: 11) conveys trust, de-stigmatization and forward-looking practices (Sandbukt, 2023; Ugelvik, 2021; McNeill, 2023). Further, what makes the stories of Steffen, Anwar and Daniel into narratives of supported desistance is the way staff acknowledge them and see them as more than the crimes they committed and what is stated in their papers, but rather as the kind and resourceful persons they see themselves as. Similarly, McNeill (2023) illustrates the transformative nature of recognition through hospitality, attentive listening and validation, and by focusing on worth and potential in interaction. The lengthy narrative of Anwar's story highlights the contrasting experiences of incarceration in close and open premises. It emphasizes the transition from misrecognition to recognition and belonging, and how the latter rests on openness and trust from the community and the director of the open prison. This closely reflects previous research from open prisons and resettlement in Norway (Andvig et al., 2021; Ugelvik, 2021; Mjåland et al., 2021). Moreover, Steffen's and Anwar's stories, as well as the roles of the probation officer and Conny in them, also express interaction based in recognition, trust and belonging. Ugelvik's work from similar contexts has shown how perceived trust from staff can facilitate secondary and tertiary desistance. In the light of the works of Ugelvik (2021) and McNeill (2023), my findings clearly reveal practices of the transformative powers of trust and recognition.

As previously discussed, my research has shown how Malopticon-like supervision (McNeill, 2019), suffering from being ignored or misrecognized, and anticipations and experiences of being stigmatized (Gjeruldsen, 2024; Sandbukt, 2023) frustrate pathways of re-entry. In line with the work of Schinkel and Nugent (2016), my findings have also illustrated the high walls which challenge transitions between secondary and tertiary desistance. As stated by McNeill (2023), being subjected to punishment means that one is degraded as a person. Nevertheless, against this backdrop, my findings have also underlined how staff sometimes manage to support ways out of this degradation. In addition, this work shows how supervision and support based on recognition and trust are a way into inclusion in and belonging to broader society after imprisonment.

5.2.2 Exceptional societies for a sense of belonging

Beyond these promising examples of desistance support where probation staff play important parts, my findings also convey how macro-structures in Norway may help to reduce stigma and support a sense of belonging. As exemplified in Koffeld-Hamidane et al. (2023a), staff in penal voluntary sector organizations often found that they could work close to their ideal of supporting de-stigmatization and mitigating challenges following release. By practising 'umbilical cord' support, through a resource focus and by establishing close, continued relationships, they managed to reduce barriers related to identity change, stigma and navigating the welfare system. These examples indicate how connections and transitions can be drawn between identity desistance and relational desistance. However, my study also shows the role of broader society in enabling a sense of belonging. I will illustrate this by asking whether labelling and stigma in the job market are more anticipated than 'real'. Firstly, from an international approach, the fact that declaring an offence is rarely required for employment might express exceptional values in Norwegian society. Moreover, Norwegian society has demonstrated attitudes which can be regarded as exceptional in both absolute and relative terms. This was of benefit to Harald, as his employer treated him generously, allowing him to keep his job despite the revelation of his previous conviction. Likewise, Anwar's current employer turned out to be open and non-judgemental, as Anwar was welcome to start work immediately. Furthermore, Steffen and Torkil kept their jobs despite several months of imprisonment. Similar examples of non-judgemental employers in Norway have been given by Sandbukt (2023) and Gjeruldsen et al. (2024). In conclusion, this demonstrates how broader society, besides probation and penal voluntary sector staff, play important roles of de-stigmatization in resettlement and desistance processes, as further elaborated upon in section 5.4. Drawing on the argument that we cannot effectively support desistance without carefully attending to questions of belonging (McNeill and Schinkel, 2024), this also emphasizes exceptional aspects of Norwegian society.

Thus far, based on the critique of Haggerty and Bucerius (2020), I have argued that it is important to identify pains and burdens to understand the complexities of processes of resettlement and desistance. Furthermore, I have focused on practices and experiences that are close to the ideal, and reflected on the exceptionality of the Norwegian context. Hence, I will move on to the second point of criticism of Haggerty and Bucerius (2020), namely their claim that researchers by 'pain spotting' do little to develop pragmatic policy reforms to solve the associated problems. Scholars thus concentrate on interpreting challenges related to pains, rather than on specific problems to be solved. Based on my findings, I will elaborate on this criticism and present and reflect on an ideal perspective on desistance support.

5.3 Sketching out an ideal perspective on desistance support during resettlement

Through their utopian perspective on desistance, Patton and Farrall (2021) illustrate how the individual hopes and pains of desistance of their study participants may not just indicate personal hopes and anticipated barriers. They highlight how they may also provide criticism of the present situation and a vision of radical change, with a view to enabling citizens and societies to reach their full potential of desistance. Utopia, they say, '(…) as an exploration of the critique of what is lacking or deficient in our society allows us simultaneously to envision what is desired in a future one' (Patton and Farrall, 2021: 211). My thesis illustrates how broad and individually tailored assistance and support may be seen as ideal desistance support in the Norwegian resettlement context. In this section, I elaborate on this in four segments, to highlight its benefits from both *broad* and *individually tailored* approaches, as well as from an overarching focus on desistance during resettlement. Inspired by Patton and Farrall's utopian perspective, I present and discuss this ideal approach, in order to encourage a more desistance-supportive future practice.

5.3.1 Desistance support from entering the prison gate to far beyond the transition to society

This thesis shows that the ideal of broad and individually tailored assistance is sometimes experienced in current resettlement practice. Nevertheless, stories of supported desistance which are very much in line with this ideal seem to mainly consist of fragments of resettling people's narratives. Therefore, in extension of my study, I suggest that a broader understanding of and approach to resettlement would make it easier for staff to assist. Let me return to the understanding of the *reach* of 'resettlement'. I have already elaborated on how the concept of resettlement is not uniformly or consistently used. Similar to related terms such as rehabilitation and reentry, Maruna (2006) argues, resettlement has a variety of possible meanings and interpretations. However, the process is later (although somewhat vaguely) described as starting pre-release and continuing through the gate into the community (Cracknell, 2021) and as comprising the whole process of preparation for release in prison as well as probation and aftercare (Dünkel, 2019). Due to my ambition of developing knowledge on desistance processes within the context of resettlement, I emphasize the understanding of resettlement as mainly based on the possibilities of the returning, formerly imprisoned person (McNeill and Graham, 2019). From this perspective, I propose an expanded definition of resettlement, reaching from the very start of imprisonment to long after the transition to the community. As the word implies, the process continues until the person has the feeling of having settled down in the community.

This definition is drawn from my study, which demonstrates that whatever happens from the moment people enter the prison gate may affect their chances of desistance. People with lived experience of imprisonment highlight the value of interaction with staff built on recognition, continued relationships and broad approaches. By contrast, the lack of interest, engagement and knowledge from staff in my study often caused anger and despair. Misrecognition and fragmentation precluded otherwise achievable opportunities for sentence planning and gradual progression. Occasionally, this made life more difficult after imprisonment than it had been before, and staff were perceived as making trouble during resettlement. Similar negative experiences in encounters with staff have been shown to cause feelings of powerlessness and despair both during and after imprisonment (Schinkel, 2014).

Moreover, in the later phase of imprisonment, staff in penal voluntary organizations and in probation offices underline the importance of establishing early contact with imprisoned persons. However, they struggle to achieve this in many prisons. This lack of early contact and poor preparation for transfer or release are indicated by probation staff as two of the main reasons for their changed role from social workers to ‘facilitator-coordinators’. In agreement with this, studies by Collica-Cox (2018) and Meek and Lewis (2014) emphasized the importance of continuing relationships after imprisonment. Their research found post-release support to be beneficial to provide hope for crime-free futures (see also Patton and Farrall, 2021, on this). Continued relationships in their studies developed between resettling persons and prison staff who allowed contact upon release. Moreover, such continued assistance was illustrated through transition workers in prison who helped establish supportive networks after release. This sustained contact was considered a key factor in motivating people for life changes and building social capital (Meek and Lewis, 2014). Likewise, McNeill and Schinkel (2016) stress that personal development towards desistance seems more achievable where practical help and consistent relationships are available.

During and after the vulnerable transition to the community, an ‘umbilical cord’ practice appears to reflect the ideal facilitation of desistance from all three perspectives included in this study. The use of the metaphor by penal voluntary organization staff visualizes how close relationships allowed them to support people when they faced obstacles in these phases. This form of assistance largely corresponds with the ideal of probation staff, presented through the extraordinary example of current practice in ‘TOG’ (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023a). Moreover, and in line with these perspectives from staff, people in resettlement often highlighted umbilical cord support as a shining example of how practice should be in this context. Further, the pains of imprisonment have been shown to continue far beyond the prison gate (Warr, 2016; Schinkel, 2014; Crewe, 2015), and desistance processes in the transition from prison to the community are described as frustrating and painful (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016). In this thesis, I have built on Nugent and Schinkel’s understanding that act-desistance and identity desistance to some extent lie within the hands of the returning person, but that relational desistance is largely dependent on others. I have also argued that challenges in the transition from prison partly arise because it is the first real

encounter with broader society since being imprisoned. Desistance scholars have underlined how boundaries in this transition highly relate to society's labelling of returning citizens (Gålnander, 2020; Arnal and McNeill, 2023), as well as on expectations thereof (Gjeruldsen et al., 2024; Sandbukt, 2023; Villman, 2024). This thesis shows how staff were crucial conversation partners and 'meso-brokers' (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016; Patton and Farrall, 2021) in building bridges to cope with the obstacles of anticipated labelling. On the other hand, when hesitation apparently originated from employers' *actual* concerns about hiring people who had been incarcerated, 'umbilical cord' support from staff was provided by highlighting the re-entering person's resources and positive change in meetings with employers. Thus, besides the *bridging* between individuals and societies, staff *challenged* and sometimes even *changed* the prejudice and reluctance towards returning individuals. Regardless of the different approaches from staff to help manoeuvre these types of obstacles, my study shows how support in these contexts sprang out of established relationships. Staff assistance through such barriers appears similar to what Nugent and Schinkel (2016) have described as support from 'meso-brokers', who helped people to find routes to access social and bridging capital on a meso-level. Patton and Farrall (2021) have expanded on how staff in this key role assist desistance processes and challenge the pains of desistance. However, umbilical cord support in my study seems to a larger extent to unfold within developed relationships, exemplified through those often established between voluntary organization staff and returning citizens. This has set the stage for assistance towards social integration and belonging, which has repeatedly been called for by desistance researchers (Healy, 2012; McNeill, 2016a; McNeill and Graham, 2019; McNeill and Schinkel, 2024; Gålnander, 2020).

5.3.2 Desistance support to a higher proportion of resettling persons

Among the key elements this study has pointed out are the expected and unexpected barriers that may challenge resettlement. I have shown how staff, as stepping stones and safe havens, play an important part in guiding and assisting resettling persons through these obstacles. As all the resettling participants in this study were recruited through penal voluntary organizations or probation offices, they had all access to some kind of support after imprisonment. However, most people who leave prison do not have access to this support. In (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023b), my co-authors and I mentioned the figure of 76% of people being transferred or released from Norwegian prisons facing these challenges without any further contact with the Correctional Services. They thus walked through the gates without these often appreciated desistance-supporting meetings. As the criteria for being regarded as 'suitable' or 'motivated' for assistance from voluntary organizations might also be restricted, many people leave prison without any of the interaction or relationships presented in my work. In relation to the points underlined in the previous section, namely that returning citizens are often challenged by social labelling in this first encounter with society and that relational desistance is largely dependent on others, this indicates that they would most certainly also benefit from being supported by staff in their transition to society. Many of

those who serve their full sentences in prison after long convictions do this partly due to overall assessments that it is reasonable to assume that they will continue to commit crimes. This risk assessment therefore often means that they are left to themselves in this challenging transition. On this basis, there could be an opportunity for transformation if at least some of them were given the chance to be released on parole for a period before the end of their sentences. As has been explored by Ugelvik (2021), trust can have a transformative power to facilitate desistance in these contexts. Building on this, my research could therefore contribute valuable insights to expand this transformative power, by trusting higher proportions of resettling persons with early release on parole. My findings have shown examples of the willingness of staff to stand by these people beyond the execution of the sentence by supporting them after their sentences have been completed. This illustrates how staff sometimes oppose the framing of the sentence to enable sustained relationships and support. Nevertheless, despite the support of well-being and belonging that might result from such extended relationships, one may question how sustainable they are based on the purpose of the punishment. The presented liminal feelings of freedom, and the perceived limbo of being released but still unfree, are in line with the Correctional Services' aim of implementing punishment and care. As relationships continue after the sentence, as exemplified through Harald's story (Koffeld-Hamidane et al., 2023b), one might argue that the punitive part is also extended, as these two are intertwined within the relationship.

Finally, I need to clarify that my suggestion of trusting higher proportions of people with early release on parole would not imply net-widening or penal expansionism, but rather a more gradual and less invasive transition to society. This post-release penal supervision would instead substitute for a longer stay behind the walls. Drawing on my presentation and reflections on pains in different stages of the resettlement process, I argue that pains during imprisonment are basically more severe than those experienced beyond the prison walls. This harmonizes with De Vos and Gilbert's findings (2017), that despite the pains of confrontations with freedom, their participants stated that electronic monitoring after being conditionally released from prison shaped better possibilities for reintegration. This is in line with McNeill and Schinkel (2016), who state that even though release under surveillance might cause pains and negative implications, there is some evidence that under certain circumstances it exerts certain positive effects.

In these two sections, I have elaborated on how staff might contribute to desistance processes through interaction from the early stage of imprisonment to long past the transition to society, since frustrations, barriers and challenges are experienced throughout this period. However, this is just one part of the highlighted ideal presented through this thesis. The second and equally important element is emphasized in the following.

5.3.3 Desistance support tailored to the individual

Attention has been drawn to the need for individually tailored interaction in this thesis, based on the misrecognition and fragmentation that were sometimes experienced during resettlement. The lack of interest, engagement and knowledge from staff in these situations has been shown to frustrate the individual and prevent otherwise achievable opportunities, e.g. for gradual sentence progression. Moreover, this practice reflects the absence of a holistic view of the individual in this context. In line with this, McNeill and Schinkel (2016) have stressed that interventions must be tailored to the individual, also *beyond* the prison gates, and that many obstacles upon release should be dealt with prior to release. Research on assisted desistance has underlined that the process requires time and the need for staff to consider it important in their work (McNeill, 2016b). This thesis stresses that one thing is to *acknowledge* that desistance processes take time, while it is another thing to *take this into account* in daily practice. Taking this into account could for example require an early and continuing process of familiarizing oneself with the individual's hopes, plans, challenges and resources throughout imprisonment and resettlement. It would also imply passing this competence on to relevant others, and collaboration to suggest and provide inspiring paths for resettling persons to follow. As stated above, the primary officer scheme was introduced to formalize this kind of work, highlighting the primary officer's responsibility to carry out background surveys, coordinate future plans and interdisciplinary cooperation, and motivate and support people throughout the sentence (Justis-og beredskapsdepartementet, 2002). However, despite the intention of the scheme, today's practice has been considered as holding a huge, unfulfilled potential (Culbertson, 2021).

5.3.4 Suggesting an overarching desistance focus during resettlement

In this study, practice is largely presented as nuanced and as moving away from the shared ideal. These nuances are particularly evident during imprisonment, varying from misrecognition, ignorance and fragmentation to recognition, belonging and de-stigmatization. Similar variations also emerge from descriptions of limited openness and co-operation from prison staff to plan transitions to society. The thesis also shows diversity in support in the community following imprisonment. Similar local variations and inconsistent practices within the Norwegian Correctional Services have also been underlined by Lundeberg (2018). Nevertheless, and despite experiences of extensive control and of being unfree in freedom, people in resettlement mainly describe their interaction and relationships with probation staff as valuable and long awaited. They also present support and relationships with penal voluntary organization staff as outstanding in this context. However, regardless of these often positive reflections on this support, staff themselves present varying perspectives of their own practice. Moreover, probation staff have outlined perceptions of how their mandate has shifted from social work towards a more risk-focused practice. They have compared their ideal description of support to how they used to practise back in time. They lamentably

describe how they have moved in the opposite direction of desistance support, being occupied with practical and risk-focused ad hoc tasks instead of building relationships. Similar frustrations have been presented from the perspectives of prison staff in Denmark (Damsa, 2023).

Building on this visualization of local variations and inconsistent practices, this study also suggests that practitioners and policymakers should take this broader and more comprehensive understanding of resettlement into account, and let this guide an overarching approach to supporting desistance in daily practice. In their report, the Prison Review Team (2011) in Northern Ireland described what an effective prison system, capable of reducing crime and creating a safer society, would look like. One of their key elements was a whole prison approach, aiming towards their goals of safety, respect and desistance from crime through consistent and mutual procedures across all aspects of its operation. This aimed to ensure that good work was not done in silos, with some parts of the prison working to undermine, or more passively not support, the overall approach. The overarching approach included active engagement from staff at all levels and across disciplines to create a shared sense of purpose and responsibility of creating meaningful relationships with imprisoned persons. Drawing on this, my findings suggest that a similar approach within a resettlement context could facilitate uniform and consistent desistance support related to struggles and pains from all phases of the transition.

Inspired by the utopian perspective on desistance (Patton and Farrall, 2021), I have sketched out an ideal understanding of and approach to desistance support during resettlement. Drawing on the participants' descriptions of their pains and challenges and their visualizations of promising practices, this thesis has provided criticism of the present situation as well as perceptions of essential change. The aim is to encourage the Correctional Services and broader society to reach their full potential in supporting returning citizens.

5.4 The role of the state and civil society

This study has illustrated the high walls which challenge transitions between identity desistance and belonging. Further, it has shown how supervision and support that are close to the ideal enhance inclusion in broader society after imprisonment. Beyond this, and based on my previous suggestion that the process of resettlement continues until the person feels settled in the community, I ask *how far* in this process the ideal umbilical cord support should reach, or rather where the cord should be cut. Here I will echo the question raised by Maruna (2006): Who owns resettlement? Furthermore, I will point out the challenges and uncertainties caused by the blurring of the responsibilities of the state and non-governmental organizations in this context.

5.4.1 Civil society's role in welcoming its returning citizens

Maruna (2006) states that re-integration into society can be achieved both by the formerly imprisoned person and by the local community. Resettlement is thus owned by returning persons themselves and the communities in which they come to live. Desistance scholars have later shown how identity desistance to a large extent lies in the hands of the people themselves, but that relational desistance lies in the hands of broader society (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016). In this connection, the necessity of belonging has been emphasized (McNeill and Schinkel, 2024). Maruna (2006) continues his reasoning by highlighting that professionals and state actors are not in a position to re-integrate anyone no matter how well trained they are, and that the best they can do is to *help* in this process. In line with this, McNeill (2023) underlines that beyond recognition from probation staff, in order to be socially rehabilitated, returning citizens need to be recognized as legitimate, accepted and valued members of the community. Their work emphasizes how state professionals can play important roles, but it is ultimately in civil society and among fellow citizens that resettlement can take place. Based on this argument, and drawing on the knowledge my research has contributed, probation staff can support returning citizens through the challenging transition from prison to society through practice that is close to the ideal. However, this stage is also where the 'umbilical cord' should be cut, and where civil society should do its best to welcome the returning citizen back to the community.

5.4.2 Blurred responsibilities of the state

In a broader picture, on a macro level, incarceration implies that the state *removes* people from society for a period before allowing them back in. Despite several examples of desistance support from Correctional Service staff, this study has shown that the Norwegian State largely drops people back into the community to manage more or less on their own. It has also shown how the state increasingly relies on the support of penal voluntary organizations in supporting desistance during resettlement. From this perspective, we must remind ourselves of the responsibility of the state to support people's resettlement after removing them from civil society. In the Norwegian penal context, citizens seem to have high expectations of care. They may also have higher expectations of the state's ability and desire to help its citizens than in many other countries. My study illustrates how barriers and obstacles can be either expected or unforeseen, and that the closeness and proximity of staff therefore can be crucial. Similar advantages of almost unlimited availability have also been pointed out by Farrall (2022). However, as seen in this thesis, practising in line with this has been shown to be demanding and confusing. It appears to be unclear for all parties in the study to determine the kind of support that can and should be expected in the transition from prison to society, and from whom the support should come. Resettling persons have, at least to some extent, unrealistic expectations of what post-imprisonment supervision from the Correctional Services implies. Moreover, their experiences of support from penal voluntary

organization staff largely coincide with what they expected to receive from probation offices. Similar uncertainties are conveyed by probation staff. Despite their positive reviews of the work of voluntary organization staff, they state that this is how they themselves used to practice. Further, this is how they feel that staff in all probation offices should still be working. Together, these factors lead to a blurring of boundaries between experiences of what *seem to be* and what *should be* the responsibilities of the state and non-governmental organizations in supporting positive trajectories during resettlement. Following these blurred boundaries as emphasized in this thesis, it seems to be high time to expand knowledge of the extent and consequences of voluntary organizations' support and contributions in this context, and to clarify state responsibility for resettlement.

In conclusion, similar to Patton and Farrall's (2021) *utopian perspective* on desistance, Maruna (2006) presents his outline as an *idealistic vision* of what a resettlement strategy might look like. Maruna presents four key elements which his aim of restorative re-integration would require. A significant aspect of his vision is that restorative re-integration should be community-led. He continues his presentation by highlighting the value of this contribution: 'Yet, at least it is that: a vision, a coherent narrative based on a tangible, indeed testable, theory of social behaviour. And, this might be just what has been missing from all of our considerable excitement around resettlement and reentry in recent years' (Maruna, 2006: 16). As Maruna did with his idealistic vision, and as Patton and Farrall did through their utopian perspective, I have sketched out an ideal perspective on desistance support during resettlement in this thesis. Inspired by the words of Maruna, my presentation is, at the very least, an ideal portrayal of practice and approach. And maybe it is also just what has been missing in this context.

6 Literature

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7 Appendices

Appendix 1 Approval NSD 1

Appendix 2 Approval NSD 2

Appendix 3 Approval REK

Appendix 4 Approval Correctional Services

Appendix 5 Information letter and consent form, persons in resettlement

Appendix 6 Information letter and consent form, staff

Appendix 7 Interview guide 1, persons in resettlement

Appendix 8 Interview guide 2, persons in resettlement

Appendix 9 Interview guide 3, staff

Appendix 10 Background information

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer
918268

Vurderingstype
Standard

Dato
04.03.2020

Tittel
Desistance hos løslatte fra norske fengsler - straffedømte, fagpersoner og frivillige sin erfaringsbaserte kunnskap om hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance i tilbakeføringsprosessen fra fengsel til samfunn

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge / Fakultet for helse- og sosialvitenskap / Institutt for helse-, sosial- og velferdsfag

Prosjektansvarlig
Bengt Karlsson

Prosjektperiode
01.01.2020 - 31.12.2022

Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige
Særlige
Straffedommer eller lovovertredelser

Lovlig grunnlag
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)
Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a, jf. art. 10)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 31.12.2022.

Meldeskjema

Kommentar
Prosjektet er godkjent av Kriminalomsorgen region øst (referanse: 202000434-10)

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen, så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet den 04.03.2020 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER
Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

https://nsd.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html

Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige personopplysninger, særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om helseforhold og personopplysninger om straffedommer og lovovertredelser frem til 31.12.2022.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

For straffeopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være de registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a), jf. art. 10, jf. personopplysningsloven § 11(2) a), jf. § 9 (2).

For alminnelige og særlige kategorier av personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være de registrertes samtykke, jf. henholdsvis, personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a), og personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a) jf. art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a, jf. personopplysningsloven § 10, jf. § 9 (2).

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen:

- om lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet.

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER
Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER
NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må prosjektansvarlig følge interne retningslinjer/rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET
NSD vil følge opp underveis (hvert annet år) og ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet/pågår i tråd med den behandlingen som er dokumentert.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Jørgen Wincentsen
Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer
918268

Vurderingstype
Standard

Dato
09.08.2023

Tittel
Desistance hos løslatte fra norske fengsler - straffedømte, fagpersoner og frivillige sin erfaringsbaserte kunnskap om hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance i tilbakeføringsprosessen fra fengsel til samfunn

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge / Fakultet for helse- og sosialvitenskap / Institutt for helse-, sosial- og velferdsfag

Prosjektansvarlig
Bengt Karlsson

Prosjektperiode
01.01.2020 - 01.07.2024

Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige
Særlige
Straffedommer eller lovovertredelser

Lovlig grunnlag
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)
Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a, jf. art. 10)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 01.07.2024.

Meldeskjema

Kommentar
Behandling av personopplysninger er utvidet til 01.07.2024.

Vi vurderer at behandling fortsatt er lovlig, under forutsetning om at utvalget ditt får ny informasjon, her også informasjon om endret varighet.

Merk at vi legger til grunn at du har kontaktinformasjon til utvalget ditt og vil gi dem ny informasjon.

Hvis ikke dette er tilfellet, må du sende melding til oss i meldeskjemaet slikt at vi kan vurdere om det kan gjøres unntak fra informasjonsplikten.

Region:	Saksbehandler:	Telefon:	Vår dato:	Vår referanse:
REK sør-øst A	Anne Schiøtz Kavli	22845512	05.02.2021	118673
			Deres referanse:	

Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane

118673 Deisitance blant løslatte fra norske fengsler

Forskningsansvarlig: Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge

Søker: Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane

Søkers beskrivelse av formål:

Desistance (kriminalitetsfrihet) hos løslatte fra norske fengsler
Straffedømte, fagpersoner og frivillige sin erfaringsbaserte kunnskap om hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance i tilbakeføringsprosessen fra fengsel til samfunn

Målsetting og hvilken ny kunnskap forskningen bidrar med
Studiens målsetting er å utforske og beskrive hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance hos straffedømte, sett fra perspektivene til straffedømte, profesjonelle og frivillige. Hensikten med forskningsprosjektet er også å studere de straffedømtes egenopplevde endringer relatert til desistance.

Studiens forskningsspørsmål

Hvordan opplever og beskriver straffedømte, profesjonelle og frivillige hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance?
Hvilke egenopplevde endringer, relatert til desistance, rapporterer de straffedømte?

Kunnskap om tilbakefall er et viktig hjelpemiddel for å nå det overordnede politiske målet om å redusere den totale kriminaliteten i samfunnet (Andersen & Skarðhamar 2013). I Norge har vi minimalt med forskningsbasert kunnskap om hva både personer med egenerfaring fra fengselssoning, samt profesjonelle og frivillige som følger dem gjennom tilbakeføringsprosessen, opplever at bidrar til kriminalitetsfrihet etter soning. Prosjektet har til hensikt å styrke denne forskningsbaserte kunnskapen ved å løfte frem disse perspektivene.

Metode og materiale
For å besvare forskningsspørsmålene, benyttes fokusgruppeintervjuer, individuelle intervjuer og spørreundersøkelser. Både utarbeidelse av intervjuguiden og gjennomføring av intervjuer skjer i samarbeid med brukerrepresentanter. Det benyttes lydopptak, og innholdet transkriberes før analyse.

Målsettingen med den kvantitative studien er å undersøke hvorvidt straffedømte rapporterer endringer relatert til desistance over tid (Laub & Sampson, 2003; McNeill & Weaver, 2010; Weaver, 2015; Weaver & McNeill, 2007). Spørreundersøkelsen gis til straffedømte som starter i ett av de tre tilbakeføringstiltakene i løpet av en periode på ca. 12 måneder, og som ønsker å delta. Eventuelle endringer identifiseres ved hjelp av

kartlegginger ved oppstart og etter seks måneder i tiltaket. Spørreskjemaet berører informantenes rusbruk, psykiske- og fysiske helse, livskvalitet, relasjoner, selvfølelse, fremtidshåp, sosiale deltakelse og holdninger til kriminalitet. Skjemaet er bygd opp av deler av de validerte kartleggings- og evalueringsverktøyene HSCL-10, QOL-5 og EuropASI. Flere av verktøyene har blitt brukt til å undersøke blant annet psykisk helse og livskvalitet hos innsatte i Norge (Bukten et. al, 2016; Muller, 2018). Spørreundersøkelsen kan fylles ut av informanten selv.

Utvalg og rekruttering
Til intervjuene med straffedømte, rekrutteres seks til åtte personer som deltar eller har deltatt i hvert av de tre tiltakene. Totalt 18 til 24 deltakere. Intervjuene gjentas etter om lag seks måneder, med de samme deltakerne. Deltakerne rekrutteres via ansatte ved det enkelte tiltaket, og forespørres om deltakelse i studien gjennom informasjonsskriv. Inklusjonskriteriet et at vedkommende soner eller har sonet en fengselsdom. For deltakerne fra Røde Kors vil kriteriet også være at vedkommende er løslatt med vilkår om oppfølging fra friomsorgen, da opplevelsen av oppfølgingen i tilbakeføringsprosessen blir et sentralt tema. Deltakerne i studiet generelt, er hovedsakelig løslatte fra fengsel. I tillegg rekrutteres straffedømte som starter i tiltakene på slutten av soningen, da overføringen fra fengsel anses som et tiltak for å styrke tilbakeføringen.

Personene rekrutteres i samarbeid med ansatte ved det enkelte tiltaket. Inklusjonskriteriet er at vedkommende er løslatt fra fengsel.

REKs vurdering

Vi viser til skjema for framleggingsvurdering mottatt 28.01.2021 angående prosjektet «Deisitance blant løslatte fra norske fengsler». Framleggingsvurderingen er vurdert av leder REK sør-øst A.

Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke og beskrive hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance hos straffedømte. Man vil undersøke hvordan straffedømte, profesjonelle og frivillige opplever og beskriver hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance, samt hvilke egenopplevde endringer, relatert til desistance, de straffedømte rapporterer.

God tilbakeføring og integrering i samfunnet motvirker ny kriminalitet, gir færre ofre og bidrar til bedre levekår for straffedømte og deres pårørende. Mer kunnskap om hvordan tilbakeføring bør gjennomføres for å redusere at det begås nye straffbare handlinger er derfor svært samfunnsnyttig.

I dette prosjektet planlegger man å inkludere deltakere i tre ulike tiltak; Nettverk etter soning (Røde Kors), Fri (Kirkens Bymisjon) og Sammen for livet AS. Alle som starter i tiltakene i løpet av en periode på ca. tolv måneder, forespørres om utfylling av spørreskjemaer. Eventuelle endringer identifiseres ved hjelp av kartlegginger ved oppstart og etter seks måneder i tiltaket. Spørreskjemaet berører informantenes rusbruk, psykiske- og fysiske helse, livskvalitet, relasjoner, selvfølelse, fremtidshåp, sosiale deltakelse og holdninger til kriminalitet. Skjemaet er bygd opp av deler av de validerte kartleggings- og evalueringsverktøyene HSCL-10, QOL-5 og EuropASI. Flere av verktøyene har blitt brukt til å undersøke blant annet psykisk helse og livskvalitet hos innsatte i Norge.

Det vil gjennomføres fokusgruppeintervjuer med seks til åtte straffedømte som deltar eller har deltatt i hvert av de tre tiltakene, med seks til åtte ansatte ved de tre tiltakene og med seks til åtte ansatte ved friomsorgen.

Det vil også gjennomføres deltakende observasjon ved Røde Kors sitt tilbakeføringssenter, og eventuelt individuelle intervjuer.

Det planlegges å innhente samtykke fra alle deltakerne.

Slik prosjektet er beskrevet vil det ikke kunne gi ny kunnskap om helse og sykdom. Formålet er ikke å undersøke effekt av tiltakene på deltakernes helse, men på å finne tiltak som er best egnet til å forhindre at straffedømte begår nye kriminelle handlinger.

Vedtak

Ikke fremleggspliktig

Etter REKs vurdering faller prosjektet, slik det er beskrevet, utenfor virkeområdet til helseforskningsloven. Helseforskningsloven gjelder for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskning, i loven definert som forskning på mennesker, humant biologisk materiale og helseopplysninger, som har som formål å frambringe ny kunnskap om helse og sykdom, jf. helseforskningsloven §§ 2 og 4a. Formålet er avgjørende, ikke om forskningen utføres av helsepersonell eller på pasienter/sårbare grupper eller benytter helseopplysninger.

Prosjekter som faller utenfor helseforskningslovens virkeområde kan gjennomføres uten godkjenning av REK. Det er institusjonens ansvar å sørge for at prosjektet gjennomføres på en forsvarlig måte med hensyn til for eksempel regler for taushetsplikt og personvern.

Vi gjør oppmerksom på at vurderingen og konklusjonen er å anse som veiledende jf. forvaltningsloven § 11. Dersom dere likevel ønsker å søke REK vil søknaden bli behandlet i komitémøte, og det vil bli fattet et enkeltvedtak etter forvaltningsloven.

Med vennlig hilsen

Knut Engedal
Professor dr. med
Leder REK sør-øst A

Anne Schiøtz Kavli
Seniorkonsulent
REK sør-øst

Kopi til forskningsansvarlig institusjon(er) og medbruker(e).

Kriminalomsorgen region øst

Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane
sylviaki@hotmail.com

Deres ref:	Vår ref:	Dato:
	202000434-10	10.02.2020

VEDRØRENDE SØKNAD OM Å SAMLE DATA I BUSKERUD OG OSLO FRIOMSORGSKONTORER VEDRØRENDE DESISTANCE HOS LØSLATTE FRA NORSKE FENGSLER - STRAFFEDØMTE, FAGPERSONER OG FRIVILLIGE SIN ERFARINGSBASERTE KUNNSKAP OM HVA SOM FREMMER OG HEMMER DESISTANCE I TILBAKEFØRINGSPROSESSEN FRA FENGSEL TIL SAMFUNN

Det vises til søknad med vedlegg av 27.01.2020 om tillatelse til å innhente data i Buskerud og Oslo friomsorgskontorer i forbindelse med ditt arbeide med en Phd- oppgave ved Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge.

Bakgrunn og formål
Søker skriver følgende; Forskningskontekstene er Buskerud friomsorgskontor, Oslo friomsorgskontor, Fri (Kirkens Bymisjon, Drammen), Nettverk etter soning (Røde Kors, Oslo) og Sammen for livet AS (Larvik). Wayback Oslo er samarbeidspartner gjennom hele forskningsprosessen.

Studiens forskningsspørsmål er:

1. Hvordan opplever og beskriver straffedømte, profesjonelle og frivillige hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance?
2. Hvilke egenopplevde endringer, relatert til desistance, rapporterer de straffedømte?

Bakgrunnen for studien er at vi har lite forskningsbasert kunnskap om hvilke faktorer som fremmer og hemmer desistance blant løslatte fra norske fengsler. Målsettingen er å utforske og beskrive hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance hos løslatte, sett fra perspektivene til straffedømte, profesjonelle og frivillige. Hensikten er også å studere de løslattes egenopplevde endringer relatert til desistance.

Kunnskap om tilbakefall er et viktig hjelpemiddel for å nå det overordnede politiske målet om å redusere den totale kriminaliteten i samfunnet. I Norge har vi minimalt med forskningsbasert kunnskap om hva både personer med egenerfaring fra fengselssoning, samt profesjonelle og frivillige som følger dem gjennom tilbakeføringsprosessen, opplever at bidrar til

Postadresse: Postboks 694, 4302 Sandnes
Besøkadresse: Solheimsgata 21, 2000 Lillestrøm
Telefon: 21 53 73 00
Telefaks:
Org.nr: 982 349 419
Saksbehandler: Ellen C. Bjercke
E-post: postmottak-8100@kriminalomsorg.no

kriminalitetsfrihet etter soning. Prosjektet har til hensikt å styrke denne forskningsbaserte kunnskapen ved å løfte frem disse perspektivene.

I Norge følger friomsorgen straffedømte fra løslatelse og gjennom en angitt periode, dersom dette er et vilkår for prøveløslatelsen. Som en del av kriminalomsorgen har friomsorgen potensiale til å bidra til å redusere glippsonen i løslatelsesprosessen, ved å legge til rette for en kontinuerlig og helhetlig samhandling mellom ulike aktører. Friomsorgen kan derfor ha en betydningsfull rolle i tilbakeføringsarbeidet. Det eksisterer relativt lite forskning, også internasjonalt, på friomsorgens betydning for prøveløslattes desistance-prosesser. Kunnskapsbaserte erfaringer hos ansatte i friomsorgen vil derfor være viktige bidrag til desistance-forskningen.

Metode
For å besvare forskningsspørsmålene, benyttes metodetriangulering i et design med mixed methods, gjennom fokusgruppeintervjuer, deltakende observasjon (dette er ikke aktuelt for friomsorgskontorene) og spørreundersøkelser.

Fokusgruppeintervjuer med løslatte: Til fokusgruppeintervjuene med løslatte, rekrutteres seks til åtte personer som deltar i hvert av tiltakene. Intervjuene gjentas etter om lag seks og tolv måneder. Deltakerne rekrutteres via ansatte ved det enkelte friomsorgskontoret, og forespørres om deltakelse i studien gjennom informasjonsskriv. Inklusjonskriteriet for løslatte ved friomsorgskontorene er at vedkommende er prøveløslatt med vilkår om møteplikt for friomsorgen. Planen er å starte opp disse intervjuene våren 2020.

Fokusgruppeintervju med fagpersoner ved friomsorgen: Til disse intervjuene vil seks til åtte ansatte bli forespurt om deltakelse. Forespørselen skjer via ledelsen ved friomsorgskontoret. Inklusjonskriteriet er at vedkommende har erfaring med oppfølging av prøveløslatte. Planen er å starte opp disse intervjuene våren 2021.

Spørreundersøkelse til løslatte: Alle som starter i tiltakene i løpet av en periode på ca. tolv måneder, forespørres om utfylling av spørreskjemaer. Spørreundersøkelsen gjentas etter om lag seks og tolv måneder. Deltakerne rekrutteres via ansatte ved det enkelte friomsorgskontoret, og forespørres om deltakelse i studien gjennom informasjonsskriv. Inklusjonskriteriet er at vedkommende er prøveløslatt med vilkår om møteplikt for friomsorgen. Planen er å starte med utsendelse av spørreskjemaene våren 2020.

Forskningsprosjektet involverer personer med egenerfaring, profesjonelle og frivillige, fra kriminalomsorgen, Kirkens Bymisjon, Røde Kors, Wayback og Sammen for livet. Disse representerer egenerfaringer med straffegjennomføring og løslatelse fra fengsel og med å bistå løslatte etter soning, og vil i stor grad kunne nyttiggjøre seg av kunnskapen som frembringes gjennom studien. Brukernes medvirkning vil bidra til at resultatene får høy grad av relevans og nytteverdi, både for straffedømte, deres pårørende og partene som skal samhandle for best mulige levekår for berørte av kriminelle handlinger. Prosjektbeskrivelsen er utarbeidet med bakgrunn i idéer og innspill i dialog med representanter fra blant annet kriminalomsorgen, Fri (Kirkens Bymisjon) og Sammen for livet, og i samarbeid med mine veiledere i Ph.d-prosjektet. Idédugnadene om «Fengslende forskning» i regi av Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (USN), var utgangspunkt for samarbeidet. Det er signert intensjonsavtaler mellom USN og hver av samarbeidspartnerne (foruten kriminalomsorgen).

Regelverk
Kriminalomsorgens adgang til å behandle søknader om forskning reguleres av Rundskriv G-

2007-7fra Justis- og politidepartementet, Retningslinjer for behandling av søknader om forskning i kriminalomsorgen.

Det følger av retningslinjer for behandling av søknader om forskning i kriminalomsorgen at regionalt nivå i kriminalomsorgen er ansvarlig for å avgjøre søknader om adgang til å rekruttere innsatte/domfelte og tilsatte til forskningsprosjekter og for å behandle søknader om bruk av taushetsbelagte opplysninger fra kriminalomsorgen til forskning hvor det kreves dispensasjon fra taushetsplikten. Alle søknader om forskning skal vurderes individuelt. Hvis søknaden ikke anses å tilfredsstillende krav som er skissert i retningslinjene, må det innhentes nødvendig tilleggsdokumentasjon, jf. retningslinjene pkt. 5 – individuell vurdering.

Lokalt nivå skal få mulighet til å uttale seg om søknaden. De skal vurdere om de har kapasitet til å ta imot forskeren, om prosjektet er praktisk gjennomførbart og sikkerhetsmessig forsvarlig, jf. retningslinjene pkt. 1 – vurdering av lokalt nivå. Søknaden kan avslås av etiske, sikkerhetsmessige eller kapasitetsmessige årsaker, jf. retningslinjene pkt. 8 - avslag.
Tilgang til forskning i kriminalomsorgen bør i hovedsak gis i prioritert rekkefølge til forskningsinstitusjoner, til doktorgrads- og masterstudenter. I følge retningslinjene kan bachelorstudenter få tilgang til å innhente data i Kriminalomsorgen hvis søknaden anses å tilfredsstille de krav som er skissert i retningslinjene og hvis kapasiteten tillater det.

Vår vurdering
Søknaden innvilges.

Det er en forutsetning at respondentene har fått informasjonsmaterialet og samtykkeskjemaet, og deretter har gitt klart uttrykk for at de ønsker å delta i studien. Videre må enhetene ha ressurser til å legge til rette for at forskeren kan gjennomføre intervjuene på en sikkerhetsmessig forsvarlig måte.

Saken har vært oversendt Oslo og Buskerud friomsorgskontorer som kan ta imot forskeren.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at forskeren må undertegne taushetsplikterklæringer i alle enheter der de evt. får tilgang og at de plikter å rette seg etter gjeldende regler, samt eventuelle pålegg gitt av enhetenes tjenestemenn.

Datainnsamlingen i Kriminalomsorgen må være fullført senest innen slutten av desember 2022.

Vi ber om at ett eksemplar av den ferdige rapporten sendes Kriminalomsorgen region øst, ett sendes Kriminalomsorgens utdanningssenter og ett sendes Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet.

Klageadgang
Dette vedtaket kan påklages til Kriminalomsorgsdirektoratet innen tre uker fra vedtaket er mottatt. En eventuell klage sendes til Kriminalomsorgen region øst.

Med hilsen

Brit Kari Kirkeeide
assisterende regiondirektør

Ellen C. Bjercke
seniorrådgiver

Kopi til: Oslo og Buskerud friomsorgskontor, samt region sør

Hva påvirker din motivasjon og dine muligheter
for å leve uten kriminalitet etter løslatelse?

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Desistance (kriminalitetsfrihet) hos løslatte fra norske fengsler?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å få økt forskningsbasert kunnskap om hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance etter soning. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om hensikten med prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Kunnskap om hva som virker inn på mulighetene for en god tilbakeføringsprosess fra fengsel er vesentlig for å redusere den totale kriminaliteten i samfunnet. Dette treårige forskningsprosjektet er et doktorgradsprosjekt forankret i Senter for psykisk helse og rus (SFPR) ved Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (USN). Prosjektet skal gjennomføres i samarbeid med tre ulike samarbeidstiltak mellom kriminalomsorgen og frivillige organisasjoner, og med noen av kriminalomsorgens fengsler og friomsorgskontorer. Blant disse er Nettverk etter soning, Oslo (Røde Kors), Fri, Drammen (Kirkens Bymisjon), Sammen for livet AS (Larvik), Drammen friomsorgskontor og Oslo friomsorgskontor.

I dette prosjektet vil vi utforske og beskrive hvordan løslatte, profesjonelle og frivillige opplever hva som påvirker muligheten for å leve uten kriminalitet etter løslatelse.

Problemstillingen vil bli belyst gjennom følgende forskningsspørsmål:

- Forskningsspørsmål 1: Hvordan opplever og beskriver straffedømte, profesjonelle og frivillige hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance?
- Forskningsspørsmål 2: Hvilke egenopplevde endringer, relatert til desistance, rapporterer de straffedømte?

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (USN) ved Senter for psykisk helse og rus er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Stipendiat Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane ved USN er prosjektansvarlig. Professor Bengt Karlsson og professor Ellen Andvig fra USN og professor Thomas Ugelvik fra Universitetet i Oslo er veiledere i prosjektet. Prosjektet er finansiert av Stiftelsen Dam.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du får spørsmål om å delta fordi du snart skal løslates eller nylig er løslatt fra fengsel. Vi har bedt fagpersoner fra anstalten eller tiltaket du deltar/har møteplikt ved om å sende ut dette skrivet til aktuelle personer som beskrevet over.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
For å få belyst dine opplevelser og erfaringer ønsker vi *enten:*

- Å gjennomføre *intervjuer* med deg.
  Intervjuet gjennomføres én til én, og vil ta om lag 1,5 time. I intervjuet blir det gjort lydopptak dersom du samtykker til det. Intervjuet vil bli skrevet ut etterpå. Alle detaljer som gjør at du kan indentifiseres vil da bli fjernet. Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane vil gjøre intervjuene.

Og/eller:

- At du fyller ut et *spørreskjema*.
  Skjemaet kartlegger din situasjon og dine opplevelser og holdninger i forhold til kriminalitet og på ulike livsområder. Det tar ca. 15-20 minutter å fylle ut skjemaet. Spørreskjemaet returneres anonymisert i ferdig frankert konvolutt til Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane, eller legges i låst postkasse på stedet du fyller det ut.

For å kunne studere en eventuell endring over tid, ønsker vi å gjenta både intervjuene og utfyllingen av spørreskjemaene etter ca. seks måneder. Dette kan det være aktuelt å gjøre inntil to til tre ganger etter den første.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger
Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er kun stipendiat ved USN og veilederne ved USN og UiO som vil ha tilgang til opplysninger om deg. Dette gjelder både:

- Dine person- og kontaktopplysninger som vil bli oppbevart forsvarlig innelåst i arkivskap ved USN, adskilt fra øvrige data.
- Data fra intervjuene som lagres på godkjent forskningsserver ved USN.

Det vil ikke være mulig å identifisere deg i resultatene av studien når disse publiseres.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?
Prosjektet avsluttes senest 31.12.22. Opplysninger om deg vil da bli slettet. Det er kun anonymisert datamateriale som vil bli oppbevart etter prosjektslutt. Dette materialet vil bli brukt til å skrive forskningsartikler. Anonymisert datamateriale vil bli oppbevart forskriftsmessig på forskningsserver ved USN.

Dine rettigheter
Hvis du sier ja til å delta i studien, har du rett til å få innsyn i hvilke opplysninger som er registrert om deg. Du har videre rett til å få korrigert eventuelle feil i de opplysningene vi har registrert.
Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet)

- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke. På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge har Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS (NSD) vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan du finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane, stipendiat og prosjektansvarlig ved USN, på epost Sylvia.Koffeld-Hamidane@usn.no
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost personverntjenester@nsd.no eller telefon: 55 58 21 17
- Paal Are Solberg, personvernombud ved USN, på epost Paal.A.Solberg@usn.no eller telefon: 35 57 50 53 / 918 60 041.

Dersom du ønsker å delta, ber vi deg om å underskrive samtykkeerklæringen og returnere svarkonvolutten. Når vi har mottatt denne vil vi ta kontakt med deg.

Med vennlig hilsen

Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane
Stipendiat/prosjektansvarlig

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg er villig til å delta i studien **Desistance hos løslatte fra norske fengsler.**
Jeg har fått informasjon om prosjektet og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- ☐ å delta i intervju
- ☐ å fylle ut spørreskjema
- ☐ å kunne bli kontaktet for oppfølgende intervjuer og/eller utfylling av spørreskjema etter ca. seks, tolv og atten måneder.

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 31.12.22.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Jeg kan nås på telefon: epost:

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(oppgi gjerne andre personer eller sosiale medier vi også kan nå deg via)

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Desistance hos løslatte fra norske fengsler -
Straffedømte, fagpersoner og frivillige sin erfaringsbaserte kunnskap om hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance i tilbakeføringsprosessen fra fengsel til samfunn?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg, som fagperson, om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å få økt forskningsbasert kunnskap om hva som fremmer og hemmer kriminalitetsfrihet (desistance) etter soning. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om hensikten med prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål
Kunnskap om hva som virker inn på mulighetene for en god tilbakeføringsprosess fra fengsel er vesentlig for å redusere den totale kriminaliteten i samfunnet. Dette treårige forskningsprosjektet er et doktorgradsprosjekt forankret i Senter for psykisk helse og rus (SFPR) ved Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (USN). Prosjektet skal gjennomføres i samarbeid med tre ulike samarbeidstiltak mellom kriminalomsorgen og frivillige organisasjoner, og med to av kriminalomsorgens friomsorgskontorer. Disse er Nettverk etter soning, Oslo (Røde Kors), Fri, Drammen (Kirkens Bymisjon), Sammen for livet AS (Larvik), Buskerud friomsorgskontor og Oslo friomsorgskontor. Disse kontekstene er ulike relatert til eieforhold, geografisk beliggenhet, tilnærming og erfaring, og vil kunne bidra med erfaringsbasert kunnskap fra ulike perspektiver.

I dette prosjektet vil vi utforske og beskrive hvordan løslatte, profesjonelle og frivillige opplever hva som påvirker muligheten for å leve uten kriminalitet etter løslatelse.

Problemstillingen vil bli belyst gjennom følgende forskningsspørsmål:
- Forskningsspørsmål 1: Hvordan opplever og beskriver straffedømte, profesjonelle og frivillige hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance?
- Forskningsspørsmål 2: Hvilke egenopplevde endringer, relatert til desistance, rapporterer de straffedømte?

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Prosjektansvarlige er Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (USN), Senter for psykisk helse og rus, ved senterleder og professor Bengt Karlsson og stipendiat Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane. Veiledere i prosjektet er professor Bengt Karlsson og dosent Ellen Andvig ved USN og professor Thomas Ugelvik ved Universitetet i Oslo. Prosjektet gjennomføres i samarbeid med kriminalomsorgen Buskerud friomsorgskontor og Oslo friomsorgskontor, Nettverk etter soning, Fri, Sammen for livet, Kirkens bymisjon og Wayback, og er finansiert av Stiftelsen Dam.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du får spørsmål om å delta fordi du er fagperson ved enten Nettverk etter soning, Fri, Sammen for livet, Buskerud friomsorgskontor eller Oslo friomsorgskontor, og har erfaring med å jobbe med personer som løslates fra fengsel. Til sammen ønsker vi å rekruttere seks til åtte fagpersoner fra hvert av disse tiltakene. Vi har bedt ledelsen ved tiltaket du er ansatt ved om å sende ut dette skrivet til aktuelle personer som beskrevet over.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
For å få belyst dine opplevelser og erfaringer ønsker vi å gjennomføre fokusgruppeintervjuer med deg *sammen med* andre fagpersoner ved samme tiltak. Intervjuet av dere vil ta ca. 1 - 1,5 time. I intervjuet blir det gjort lydopptak dersom du samtykker til det. Intervjuet vil bli skrevet ut etterpå. Alle detaljer som gjør at du kan indentifiseres vil da bli fjernet. Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane vil gjøre intervjuene.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger
Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er kun stipendiat ved USN og veilederne ved USN og UiO som vil ha tilgang til opplysninger om deg. Dette gjelder både:

- Dine person- og kontaktopplysninger som vil bli oppbevart forsvarlig innelåst i arkivskap ved USN, adskilt fra øvrige data.
- Data fra intervjuene som lagres på godkjent forskningsserver ved USN.

Det vil ikke være mulig å identifisere deg i resultatene av studien når disse publiseres.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?
Prosjektet avsluttes senest 31.12.22. Opplysninger om deg vil da bli slettet. Det er kun anonymisert datamateriale som vil bli oppbevart etter prosjektslutt. Dette materialet vil bli brukt til å skrive forskningsartikler. Anonymisert datamateriale vil bli oppbevart forskriftsmessig på forskningsserver ved USN.

Dine rettigheter
Hvis du sier ja til å delta i studien, har du rett til å få innsyn i hvilke opplysninger som er registrert om deg. Du har videre rett til å få korrigert eventuelle feil i de opplysningene vi har registrert.
Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet)
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?
Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke. På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge har Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS (NSD) vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan du finne ut mer?
Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge (USN), Senter for psykisk helse og rus, ved senterleder og professor Bengt Karlsson på epost bengt.karlsson@usn.no eller telefon: 906 49 078
  eller stipendiat Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane på epost sylvia.koffeld-hamidane@usn.no
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17
- Paal Are Solberg, personvernombud ved USN, på epost Paal.A.Solberg@usn.no eller telefon: 35 57 50 53 / 918 60 041.

Dersom du ønsker å delta, ber vi deg om å underskrive samtykkeerklæringen og returnere svarkonvolutten. Når vi har mottatt denne vil vi ta kontakt med deg.

Med vennlig hilsen

Sylvia Koffeld-Hamidane
Stipendiat/prosjektansvarlig

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg er villig til å delta i studien **Desistance hos løslatte fra norske fengsler - Straffedømte, fagpersoner og frivillige sin erfaringsbaserte kunnskap om hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance i tilbakeføringsprosessen fra fengsel til samfunn.**
Jeg har fått informasjon om prosjektet og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- ☐ å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 31.12.22.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Jeg kan nås på telefon: epost:

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Intervjuguide (1)

Innledningsvis: intervjuets hensikt, rettighetene i samtykke og oppfølgingsintervju

Erfaringer knyttet til **forberedelse til løslatelsen**

Generelt: Hva har hatt betydning under fengselsoppholdet for din motivasjon og dine muligheter for å leve uten kriminalitet?

Relasjoner fagpersoner: Hvordan har relasjonen til fagpersoner i fengselet/andre steder virket inn på dine ønsker og muligheter for å slutte med kriminalitet?

Kriminalomsorgen ideelt: Hvordan bør kriminalomsorgen fungere for å nå målet om at løslatte ikke skal begå ny kriminalitet etter fengselsoppholdet?

«Future selves»: På slutten av fengselsoppholdet; hvordan så du på den første tida etter løslatelse?

Erfaringer knyttet til **den første tida etter løslatelsen**

Generelt: Hva har vært viktig for din motivasjon og dine muligheter for å leve uten kriminalitet den første tida etter løslatelsen?

«Future selves»: Kan du fortelle om en situasjon der du opplevde en mulighet til å begå et lovbrudd, og hva som gjorde at du handlet som du gjorde i situasjonen?

Oppfølgingen: Hvilke erfaringer har du gjort deg i forhold til tiltaket du deltar i/møteplikten hos friomsorgen?

Relasjonen i oppfølgingen: Hvordan har relasjonen til fagpersoner ved tiltaket/friomsorgen påvirket dine ønsker og muligheter for å leve uten kriminalitet?

«Future selves»: Hvis du prøver å se et halvt år fram i tid …

Hvordan har du det da?

Hva er grunnen(e) til det?

Refleksjoner knyttet til samtalen og innholdet

Hvordan har dette vært?

Hva har du opplevd som viktig i dette intervjuet?

Er det noe du ønsker å tilføye før vi avslutter?

Kan du tenke deg å delta i et nytt intervju om ca. et halvt år?

Intervjuguide (2)

(Innledningsvis: intervjuets hensikt, rettighetene i samtykke og oppfølgingsintervju. Hvordan var forrige intervju, og hva tenker du om dette?)

- Kan du fortelle om hvordan du har hatt det siden forrige intervju?
- Kan du fortelle litt om relasjonene til ansatte (i kriminalomsorgen eller frivillige organisasjoner) og betydningen de har hatt for deg?
- Kan du fortelle om en situasjon der du opplevde en mulighet til å begå et lovbrudd, og om hva som gjorde at du handlet som du gjorde i situasjonen?
- Hvis du prøver å se et år fram i tid …

  Hvordan har du det da?

  Hva er grunnen(e) til det?

Intervjuguide til fokusgrupper med fagpersoner og frivillige –

«Desistance hos løslatte fra norske fengsler -
Straffedømte, fagpersoner og frivillige sin erfaringsbaserte kunnskap
om hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance i tilbakeføringsprosessen fra fengsel til samfunn»

In line with Maruna (2001) and Weaver & McNeill (2007), we understand desistance as series of decisions and actions that gradually move an individual away from committing criminal acts.

Overskriftene og mellomtitlene er områder for samtale. Innledningsvis presenteres intervjuets hensikt, hvordan de ulike temaene vil bli introdusert, rettighetene i informert samtykke og betydningen av «desistance»:

Hvilke erfaringer har dere gjort dere knyttet til den første tida etter løslatelsen?

Hva er deres erfaringer i forhold til hva som fremmer og hemmer desistance etter løslatelse?

Hva opplever dere at har betydning for løslattes ønsker og muligheter for desistance etter fengselsoppholdet?

Hva vektlegger du /dere i deres møte med løslatte i den første tida etter løslatelsen?

Hvordan er deres erfaringer med samarbeidet/kommunikasjonen med den løslatte i den første tida etter løslatelse?

Hvordan er deres erfaringer med samarbeidet/kommunikasjonen med andre instanser i forhold til oppfølgingen av den løslatte, den første tida etter løslatelse?

Hvilke erfaringer har dere gjort dere rundt betydningen av deres relasjon til de løslatte opp mot deres ønsker og muligheter for desistance?

Hvilke samarbeidsformer og aktiviteter bør tiltaket/friomsorgen ha, for å bidra best mulig til å oppnå målet om at løslatte ikke skal begå ny kriminalitet etter fengselsoppholdet?

(For friomsorgen) Hvilke muligheter og utfordringer er det ved både å være en del av straffegjennomføringen og tilbakeføringsarbeidet rundt løslatte?

Hvilke erfaringer har dere gjort dere knyttet til forberedelse av løslatelser?

Hvordan er deres erfaringer med samarbeidet/kommunikasjonen med den som skal løslates, ansatte i fengselet, og andre instanser, i forbindelse med forberedelse av løslatelse?

Hvordan bør fengselet organiseres for å oppnå målet om at løslatte ikke skal begå ny kriminalitet etter fengselsoppholdet?

Hva påvirker din motivasjon og dine muligheter for å leve uten kriminalitet etter løslatelse?

- Bakgrunnsinformasjon til spørreundersøkelsen -

Generell informasjon

Koblingsnøkkel: ☐☐☐

1) Initialer: ☐☐ ☐☐
(de to første bokstavene i fornavnet og i etternavnet)

2) Dato for utfylling (ddmmåå): ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

3) Kjønn Mann ☐ Kvinne ☐

4) Alder 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66 eller mer ☐

5) Hvilket tiltak deltar du ved?

Nettverk etter soning, Oslo	☐	Sammen for livet, Larvik	☐
Fri, Drammen	☐	Ingen av disse	☐

6) Hvilket friomsorgskontor har du møteplikt ved?

Oslo friomsorgskontor	☐	Buskerud friomsorgskontor	☐
Annet friomsorgskontor	☐	Hvilket? _____	
Jeg har ikke møteplikt	☐		

Løslatelse og soningserfaring

1) Når ble du løslatt (ddmmåå): ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

2) Hvilket fengsel ble du løslatt fra? _____

3) Hvor lang var dommen du sonet? _____

4) Ble du løslatt ved: 2/3-tid ☐ Endt tid ☐ Mellom 2/3-tid og endt tid ☐

5) Sonet du for flere lovbrudd under denne soningen? Ja ☐ Nei ☐

6) Vil du oppgi det mest alvorlige lovbruddet du sonet for? _____

7) Er du domfelt tidligere? Ja ☐ Nei ☐

8) Har du sittet i fengsel (mer enn 30 dager) før soningen du nå er løslatt fra? Ja ☐ Nei ☐

9) Hvis «Ja», hvor mange ganger? _____

Troublemakers, firefighters and safe havens
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