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**A conceptual model on reintegration after prison in Norway.**

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## Abstract

Many offenders struggle when attempting to reintegrate into society after release from prison, and the conditions they face after release often lead to reoffending. Internationally, there is limited understanding about how to improve these conditions and thereby reduce recidivism rates. In particular, offenders' own perspectives on the challenges they face and how to overcome these are absent.

This paper presents a conceptual model that has the potential to guide practitioners in their understanding of the relationships between welfare services and the agency of the offender. The model was developed from a small-scale study in the Norwegian Criminal Justice system, which is well known for its emphasis on rehabilitation and crime prevention. Data collection aimed to explore the reintegration process from the perspective of the hard-to-reach and vulnerable population of serial offenders. Nine prisoners in two different prisons were interviewed. A thematic analysis identified two main themes that related, first, the personal challenges offenders faced in the rehabilitation and reintegration process and, second, factors in the welfare services that interacted with the prisoners' psychosocial issues in the reintegration process. Findings suggest that the interaction between the psychosocial needs of prisoners and organization of welfare services is complex and not harmonized. The model developed from the insights of this study can serve as a reflective and analytical tool for developing new approaches to support offenders in their reintegration into society from prison in the future. The model underpins the argument that current reintegration strategies for prisoners needs to be questioned and challenged.

## Keywords

Reintegration, social innovation, interagency collaboration, reoffenders, welfare services, Norway.

## Introduction

Large numbers of prisoners are released from prison every year. For instance, in 2018, the U.K. had a prison population of approximately 92,500 (Sturge, 2018). At some point, these prisoners will be released, often, however, without the health and welfare support they need, a

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3 risk factor that can result in their reoffending (Skeem and Peterson, 2011). However, despite  
4 high levels of recidivism internationally (Fazel and Wolf, 2015), little is known about  
5 offenders' reintegration processes and how offenders deal with these problems before and  
6 after release (Chikadzi, 2017, Schinkel, 2014). Poor relationships with families as well as with  
7 welfare systems have been shown to contribute to the struggles faced by offenders upon their  
8 release and to the failure of their rehabilitation and reintegration processes (Chikadzi, 2017).  
9 To better understand and address the problems of offender reintegration, it is important that  
10 the voice of the prisoner is heard and kept central to the development of future interventions  
11 designed to improve reintegration. Some of the few research studies that present this point of  
12 view, such as Chikadzi's (2017), highlight the lack of support received by support services,  
13 and it is therefore important for practitioners to better understand the experiences of the  
14 offenders these services work with and the impact such services have upon offenders' life  
15 conditions upon release. In another qualitative study (Morse *et al.*, 2014) on women in drug  
16 treatment court, the women reported experiences of an "evil cycle" of relapse and recidivism  
17 among other challenges. In addition, it was found (Binswanger *et al.*, 2012; Cepeda *et al.*,  
18 2015) that overdosing was considered by offenders after release as "a way out" of a stressful  
19 life.  
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34 The aim of this paper, therefore, is to present a conceptual model which has the potential to  
35 guide practitioners in their understanding of the relationships between welfare structures and  
36 the agency of the offender. It explains the development of the model from a small-scale study  
37 conducted in the Norwegian Criminal Justice system, which is well known for its emphasis on  
38 rehabilitation and crime prevention.  
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#### 45 *The Norwegian Context*

46 In Norway, for example, with a population of 5.1 million, around 10,000 prisoners are  
47 released each year (Dyb and Johannessen, 2013). Six out of 10 of these prisoners are reported  
48 to be dependent on drugs, two thirds have a childhood characterized by some form of trauma,  
49 3 out of 10 have been in contact with child welfare services before the age of 16, and  
50 educational attainment is low. One third of the prisoners will become homeless, and only 8%  
51 of the prison population show no sign of mental illness (Friestad and Skog Hansen, 2004; Dyb  
52 *et al.*, 2006; Cramer, 2014; Revold, 2015). Reoffenders report that they feel stigmatized and  
53 excluded from society on release (Amundsen, 2008). It is perhaps unsurprising that 20% of  
54 prisoners released will reoffend within two years, with this figure rising to over 70% among  
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3 certain groups (75% among males aged 25 to 44 sentenced for theft) (Graunbøl *et al.*, 2010).

4 Although 20% is low compared to international statistics (Fazel and Wolf, 2015), this still  
5 represents significant human and economic costs for Norway (Nystrøm and Jess, 2002; Jess,  
6 2005; Bakke, 2011).  
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11 Offering adequate support is central to the Norwegian Criminal Justice System's underlying  
12 philosophy of rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society, as exemplified in their  
13 statement that:  
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19 reduced recidivism demands many different measures. It is necessary to both do  
20 something about the living conditions and to offer measures that help transform the  
21 convicted persons themselves. It is emphasized that the measures do not have to be  
22 either in prison or afterwards – there must be continuity and a coordinated effort from  
23 all affected parties, often over the long haul. If this is done, success is possible. (The  
24 Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police, 2008, p. 13)  
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31 The general approach to reintegration and rehabilitation in Norway is operationalized through  
32 the offender participating in a process of staged release (Bjørkly, 2004; Dyb, 2006; Olsen,  
33 2012). Prisoners work their way “up the ladder,” starting in a closed facility with high  
34 security, moving to lower security prisons, and ending up, potentially, in the last phase of  
35 their sentence, under home supervision. A failure to comply with regulations, as, for example,  
36 testing positive for alcohol or drug use, will cause the prisoner to take one or several steps  
37 backwards in this process. In other countries, offenders' rehabilitation in prison may be  
38 managed through specialized reintegration programs that further manage their transition from  
39 prison to the community (UNDOC, 2012), but these kinds of programs do not currently exist  
40 in the Norwegian system.  
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50 The Norwegian welfare state and the Scandinavian welfare model are also well known for  
51 fairly generous income systems for the whole population accompanied by a higher level of  
52 taxation compared to other countries. The aim is to offer a broad spectrum of social security  
53 including housing, employment, and healthcare (Kautto *et al.*, 2001).  
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## Method

The main aim of the study from which the conceptual model discussed below was developed was to explore prisoners' experiences of the reintegration process. A critical realist stance was taken in the study with the perspective that though a reality of health and welfare services exists outside of the offender, this reality is individually interpreted (Bhaskar, 2008). Empirically, offenders' experiences with the health and welfare services were explored qualitatively using semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection.

### *Sample*

Serial reoffenders were the target population of the study. This is a hard-to-reach population. A small sample size of 9 eventually participated in the study. This makes the report of their voices all the more important. The prisoners were selected by the first author for convenience. Respondents were all men, ranging in age from 25 to 56. In the findings section, they are numbered from 1 (the youngest) to 9 (the oldest). Repeated reoffending was a selection criterion, and the final sample had been in and out of prison from 2 to 20 times. The participants all consented in writing to take part in the study. The periods in prison ranged from one month to one year, with all respondents being from a single county in Norway. Six respondents were serving at two different prisons in this county at the time the interviews took place, while the remaining three were on probation. The sample was selected through a dialogue with Norwegian Criminal Justice Staff about whom they saw as potential respondents matching the above criteria. The suggested prisoners then received an information letter about the study and were asked to participate.

### *Data collection*

A semi-structured interview guide explored inductively participants' current life conditions and how they experienced welfare services, both while in prison and when re-entering life outside prison. Typical questions included: Have you been homeless? What is that like? What is most difficult in the process of reintegration after prison? All interviews were conducted by one researcher (first author) and took place over three months. All interviews were also audio recorded and lasted approximately one hour. Six of the interviews were conducted in the visitor room in prison, and the other three at a criminal justice service office outside prison. All interviews were conducted in Norwegian and later translated into English.

### *Analysis*

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and an inductive thematic analysis of the interviews was conducted in four steps. First, all interview transcripts were read to get an overall impression of the material and to identify meaning units, for example, central concepts or sentences. Second, the interviews were coded independently by the first and third author, and central sub-themes were identified and merged into two main themes. Third, the sub-themes were discussed by the first and third author, in order to reach a common understanding of the main content of the interview and the trustworthiness of the common themes arising from the data (Kvale and Brinkman, 2012, Lykkeslet and Gjengedal, 2007; Pope *et al.*, 2000). Two main themes arose from the data and quotations from offenders' comments were found and used to illustrate each of these. Fourth, through abstraction, the two main themes were seen in relation to each other and resulted in the creation of Figure 1, presented in the discussion below. The number of subjects and interviews was driven by saturation of the concepts leading to the subthemes and the two main themes. The description of the two main themes was checked, confirmed, and adapted with the second author of this paper who was consulted during the reporting process.

### *Ethics*

The study was approved by both the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (38278/3/KH) and the Norwegian Correctional Service Region West in February, 2014. Six of the nine respondents were known to the interviewer (first author) through his earlier work in the criminal justice system as a practicing professional. Although every attempt was made to emphasize the neutrality of his role as researcher, prior relations between the researcher and participants may have influenced the nature of the data collected and their willingness to participate in the first place. To avoid this, the first author did not directly ask the respondents to attend, but, instead, respondents were asked through a letter presented by the prison staff, and it was clearly emphasized that participating in the study was voluntary.

## Findings

The two main themes that arose from the interviews with the offenders were (1) personal needs and crime and (2) reintegration after prison - needs being met (or not) by the welfare services. It is the overlap between the personal needs of the offender (Theme 1) and the interaction of the offender and the welfare system (Theme 2) that was the stimulus for the development of the conceptual framework proposed later in this paper.

### *(1) Personal needs and crime*

We identified three subthemes within this main theme: first, *drug abuse and mental health*; second, *homelessness and antisocial networks*; and the third, we identified as *crime*.

#### Drug abuse and mental health.

All but one of the respondents stated that they were problematic drug users. The use of drugs was described as unavoidable, with physical addiction being very strong and drug use a part of their lifestyle. They failed to change this condition and re-entered the cycle of substance abuse:

*There's such power in addiction. It goes far beyond a human capability of understanding* (respondent 7, age 49).

*All in all, it's drug abuse that is my biggest problem* (respondent 1, age 25).

Two of the respondents (respondents 4 and 7) especially expressed concerns regarding their mental health and antisocial behavior:

*I say yes to all the help I can get now....There is a physiologist here. Why didn't I get the information? The priest is fantastic....It is these thoughts. If they don't get turned off the right way when you are in prison, they become complete chaos when you are released* (respondent 7, age 49).

*I didn't get any money from the social service. I ended up smashing the furniture at NAV [Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration]* (respondent 4, age 45).

### Homelessness and antisocial networks.

Furthermore, respondents described homelessness as a severe problem (8 out of 9 responded that they had been homeless at least once) and reported having been homeless for long periods in general. They reported having slept on couches belonging to friends with substance use disorders, lived on the street, or, as one of them reported, stayed in a shed:

*You must stay with others, and that causes lots of crime (respondent 2, age 27).*

*If you have no home, then you will not find a reason to do anything right either ....  
Home is the place where you are safe. You can lock the door, and it is your job to keep the house clean (respondent 8, age 52).*

*Yes, I've been without a home earlier. It's been for periods from 3 to 4 months. I've then been living on a couch with friends or something like that (respondent 9, age 56).*

### Crime.

The respondents had been in and out of prison from 2 to 20 times, often on drug-related offences, in which the longest sentence among the respondents was one year. The reasons given for their crimes were described as being everything from being financially driven to a boy's dream and easy money to a lifestyle that was inevitable because of their problematic substance use:

*It's business. Money is always the motive. Which type of crime depends on what state I'm in then and there, but it all comes down to cash (respondent 5, age 47).*

*My dream since I was eight was to be a gangster. And I always kind of tried to follow that road (respondent 2, age 27).*

*It's the excitement, but I really don't do things like that when I'm sober (respondent 3, age 38).*



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3 (2) *Reintegration after prison*  
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6 Two subthemes led us to this main theme: *the will to change* and *needs being met (or not) by*  
7 *the welfare services.*  
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10 The will to change.

11 All respondents stated that they had tried to change their lives at least once, for example, by  
12 trying to stop using drugs. These periods lasted from a few months to five years. Their family  
13 -- often their own children -- were their main motivation for wanting to make positive change.  
14 However, a failure to change and re-entering the cycle of substance abuse and reoffending  
15 was attributed to a series of small coincidences, with one thing leading to another or their  
16 being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Their previous networks, or "old friends," often  
17 accounted for their not staying clean. At the time of the interview, 7 out of 9 said that they  
18 were willing to change their life (respondent 5 and 9 did not):  
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27 *I'm sick of prison. I want a life without crime. The biggest obstacle is myself*  
28 *(respondent 2, age 27).*  
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32 One was ambivalent:  
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36 *I must say I am a bit ambivalent regarding this. When I look at the older ones here in*  
37 *prison, I don't want to become like them. I don't want to look back at my youth*  
38 *spending more than half of it in prison. On the other hand, when I see how much work*  
39 *it is to straighten things out, it just seem f\*.. impossible (respondent 1, age 25).*  
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44 Respondent 9 was happy in prison and did not picture himself free of crime or drugs after  
45 prison. He could not see any reason for changing and was comfortable in prison. He knew the  
46 staff, how to get food, and had things to do. He tried to change once, though. But he claimed  
47 that a lack of economic support from the welfare system returned him to the negative cycle.  
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53 Needs being met (or not) by the welfare services.

54 Offenders spoke of a desire to be, first and foremost, autonomous and independent of the  
55 welfare system (8 of 9 respondents wanted to be independent of the welfare system and  
56 change their lives for the better). When asked what should ideally be in place if they were to  
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3 live a life without crime, they identified increased contact with close family, children, a job,  
4 and a hobby as means to making this change:  
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8 *My goal is not to be dependent on the welfare system to survive. That is an ideal state*  
9 *for me. It is most dangerous for me when I need to go through NAV and those people*  
10 *(respondent 8, age 52).*  
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15 But when asked about the role of the welfare services, respondents reported a lack of support  
16 from the public welfare system, on the one hand, and, on the other, the support offered not  
17 matching their problems:  
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21 *Training, family, housing. But I have little faith that will be settled when I get out*  
22 *(respondent 5, age 47).*  
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27 They had negative experiences with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and  
28 felt powerless and hopeless in relation to their dealings with the welfare services:  
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32 *If you are going to make it, you have to have a big system that can support you. If not,*  
33 *you will be alone quarrelling with NAV. That is how it has been the last times I've*  
34 *been released from prison. Released to nothing, and no money (respondent 2, age 27).*  
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39 One of the respondents described the support system as a static system where there is little  
40 room for flexibility. Either you fit into the welfare system, or you do not:  
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44 *They have to know we are people with different challenges. We are just as different as*  
45 *everybody else. You cannot put everyone in one kind of model and expect them to fit*  
46 *in, and if you do not fit in, there is no help for you (respondent 1, age 25).*  
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51 *I started selling (drugs) when I was in treatment.... to get some extra cash, and I got*  
52 *caught. It was like a phase system. So after one and a half years in treatment, and*  
53 *without drugs, I was back to phase 1 where I started. It felt like a disproportionate*  
54 *intervention, a violation, and it really led to a loss of motivation for me, totally (ibid).*  
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59 Another of the respondents described discrimination within the system:  
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5 *If the system is not with you, it is against you. They evaluate you as a person based on*  
6 *your past (respondent 8, age 52).*  
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10 They talk about how this lack of suitable support from the welfare system on their release  
11 from prison led to their rapid reoffending -- in one case, only two hours after release:  
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14 *Once, I was one year at [XX] prison. Then I came out and was arrested again two*  
15 *hours later, wasted on drugs. They wanted me back in prison (respondent 6, age 46).*  
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19 The degree of help they get varies a lot, the respondents report:  
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21 *Yes, the difference is huge. You have the factory-like prisons. It is shit. You have jam*  
22 *on your bread every day, and the people working there are arrogant and authoritarian*  
23 *(respondent 5, age 47).*  
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28 *They actually listen to you [at the respondent's new welfare office]. The difference is*  
29 *big, but maybe it has something to do with my name and reputation [at the former*  
30 *welfare office] (respondent 3, age 38).*  
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35 *I've been extremely unlucky with NAV this time. They have long waiting lists, and*  
36 *they won't help me. There is no will to help. When I realize that, I understand where*  
37 *this is going. I'm 100% addicted to them (respondent 8, age 52).*  
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42 Respondents did report positive experiences with the welfare services, but this was often in  
43 terms of contact with specific individuals, local outreach services, and a specific housing  
44 project:  
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49 *Yes, it was the safety, and I had a job I could handle...I felt ownership of the*  
50 *apartment. It is the first time that has happened. I have never felt at home so strongly*  
51 *before (respondent 8, age 52).*  
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56 *I think it is very good, the ambulant team, in fact. Even if there is not much they can*  
57 *do, they help me a little bit with this and that. Join me in meetings and stuff like that*  
58 *(respondent 4, age 45).*  
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5 Offenders often rely on single individuals within the welfare services, individual professionals  
6 willing to give extra and often go beyond their own authority for the offender:  
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10 *She has probably done more than she is allowed to for me, so she could manage to*  
11 *help me in get further along. The commitment she has makes me think I don't want to*  
12 *let her down (respondent 8, age 52).*  
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## 18 **Discussion**

21 Findings from this study present complex life situations for the nine offenders, demonstrating  
22 that every offender has unique needs and experiences. Factors at the level of the individual  
23 prisoner, such as drug abuse, lack of housing, mental health issues, the perceived inevitability  
24 of falling back into negative social networks, vicious cycles of substance misuse and repeated  
25 crime are common themes in the rehabilitation process. In describing these individual factors,  
26 prisoners recognize in themselves some of the main risk factors associated with reoffending  
27 found in many studies. Andrews *et al.* (2006) list the "big eight" factors included in risk  
28 assessment tools, the four greatest predictors being an established history of offending,  
29 antisocial personality patterns, cognition, and antisocial associates.  
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38 Although our respondents did not use this terminology, their feelings of powerlessness and  
39 the inevitability of falling back into negative networks and criminal activity suggest that they  
40 too recognized the factors associated with their own reoffending. Andrews *et al.* (2006) also  
41 list an additional four moderate risk factors that include substance misuse, employment  
42 instability, low engagement in pro-social leisure pursuits, and family and marital problems.  
43 These again are all factors alluded to by our respondents indicating that they share, together  
44 with the correctional and welfare services that surround them, an understanding of the key  
45 factors that may lead to them reoffending. However, it is not clear from our interviews how  
46 offenders have developed this shared understanding, and it may be speculated as to whether  
47 their own exposure to the risk and needs assessment tools used by correctional services with  
48 offenders at the beginning of their sentences may have made these issues more salient for  
49 them. This is perhaps no bad thing, as problem identification would be the first step towards  
50 empowering them to break the cycle of offending behaviour. It also suggests that making the  
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3 link between the needs assessment tool and reoffending explicit during the assessment process  
4 at the beginning of a prisoner's sentence may be important for their affecting change in their  
5 life. This paper suggests that offenders are aware of the presence of key risk factors in their  
6 reoffending, but, more importantly, it highlights how these individual-level variables then  
7 interact with the welfare systems around them. Findings suggested that the prisoners have  
8 rather ambivalent relationships with the welfare system and revealed great variation in  
9 respondents' experiences. These experiences of Norwegian prisoners mirror those of prisoners  
10 in other countries (e.g., Chikadzi, 2017; Morse *et al.*, 2014; Binswanger *et al.*, 2012; Cepeda  
11 *et al.*, 2015; Lattimore and Visser, 2014.) suggesting that these are universal struggles  
12 experienced by offenders internationally, although an understanding of the actual processes  
13 behind these outcomes remains elusive. A better analytical tool is needed, one that can  
14 identify and analyse these elusive processes.

#### 25 26 *A new analytical model*

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29 The interaction of the offender with the welfare system is key to their addressing and  
30 minimizing the risk factors associated with their reoffending. We therefore present a model  
31 for consideration that we believe can be used as a cognitive tool for analyzing and developing  
32 testable hypotheses regarding the complexity and variation in potential outcomes for an  
33 offender. The model is informed by the small-scale study reported above, but this does not  
34 mean that all hypotheses presented and discussed below appear in the findings section.  
35 Instead, the model (Figure 1) was created by the researchers and should be regarded as an  
36 illustration inspired by the findings in the present study and as a model that now requires  
37 further testing.

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40 We propose, hypothetically, that personal circumstances (related to variables such as drug  
41 use, housing, motivations to change, and mental health) lie on a horizontal continuum from  
42 negative to positive life circumstances. Poor personal life situations are related to reoffending,  
43 and positive life situations, with desistance behaviours. On the vertical axis, system effort lies  
44 on a continuum from high effort to minimal or no involvement with the service user.

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3 In Quadrant 1, the prisoner experiences the personal life situation as positive, and system  
4 efforts are high. In Quadrant 2, the prisoner experiences the life situation as negative,  
5 although system efforts are high. In Quadrant 3, the prisoner experiences the life situation as  
6 positive, and system efforts are low. Lastly, in Quadrant 4, the prisoner experiences the life  
7 situation as negative, at same time as system efforts are low.  
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13 Applying this conceptual model to our findings would suggest that prisoners struggle for  
14 independence from the welfare system. For some, total independence and a positive living  
15 situation (Quadrant 3) is a future aim. But for others, their vulnerability in the early days after  
16 release means that substantial input from the system may be necessary before and after release  
17 (Quadrant 1). For example, those with severe substance use issues may in fact need lifelong  
18 healthcare. This means that some will never make the transition from Quadrant 1 to Quadrant  
19 3. Acceptance of this fact is important in a society where negative attitudes toward both  
20 offenders and problematic substance use are strong (Amundsen, 2008). In particular, severe  
21 substance use disorders should be considered a long-term disability and treated as equal to the  
22 long-term care offered to those with a physical disability. It is also important to take into  
23 consideration motivation as a factor. For instance, do the welfare services contribute more to  
24 individuals who are highly motivated? Can motivation affect respondents' views of the  
25 welfare services, and then create a positive circle of social support? It is hard to measure in  
26 what degree motivation affects the welfare system and vice versa, and we did not ask the  
27 respondents directly about this.  
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41 If Quadrant 3 is the ideal, Quadrant 1 is a partial ideal: a well-functioning welfare system that  
42 meets the needs important to the prisoners themselves -- their actual needs -- which can affect  
43 a positive change in their life situation. A long-term overdependence on welfare support is not  
44 positive for either the prisoner or society and prisoners should be encouraged to move toward  
45 Quadrant 3 where possible. A high-system effort does not necessarily mean the outcomes for  
46 the prisoners' life situations are always positive and may in some cases make the situation  
47 worse (Quadrant 2). In this quadrant, prisoners receive a high system effort from the welfare  
48 system, but still experience their personal situations as negative. In our study, specifically,  
49 two respondents claimed that the welfare system was static and unresponsive to their  
50 individual changing needs (respondent 1), and it was either with you or against you  
51 (respondent 8). It is possible that if the welfare system is poorly adapted to the prisoners'  
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3 needs, it can result in a destructive rather than constructive development for the prisoner. It  
4 has been argued that this inflexibility may originate from a continued focus on control and  
5 discipline in the system, instead of on rehabilitation (Christie, 1987).  
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10 Our findings demonstrated that prisoners' experiences of support from the welfare services  
11 during vulnerable periods varied, both within and between services. At times, they found  
12 themselves floundering in the gap that opened up between prison and community support as  
13 they made the transition from one environment to the other. In prison, they may have received  
14 high levels of structured support (Quadrants 1 and 2), but 8 out of 9 of the interviewed  
15 prisoners experienced being abandoned upon their release (Quadrant 4); they failed to access  
16 public services such as housing, jobs, economic support, and treatment. They may  
17 demonstrate a motivation to change, but, for some reason, the welfare system is not able to  
18 meet their needs upon re-entering society.  
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27 Poor communication between prison, community services, and other organizations in the  
28 welfare system may be responsible for some of this shortfall. Prisoners reported housing to be  
29 a particular area in which the system failed to support them and gave this as a central reason  
30 for reoffending. Housing needs are one of the primary risk factors associated with reoffending  
31 (Andrews *et al.*, 2006), but, like mental health, it may also mediate the expression of the main  
32 risk factors mentioned (Skeem and Peterson, 2011). For instance, as mentioned by our  
33 respondents, a lack of housing may lead to offenders falling in with previous antisocial  
34 associates who have access to illegal substances and finding regular pro-social leisure pursuits  
35 difficult to establish. A lack of housing may also result from poor marital and family relations  
36 and is not conducive to rebuilding these relationships. On the other hand, the welfare services  
37 may have contracts and demands attached to the housing being offered, which the prisoners  
38 cannot fulfil. Also, the application process for getting public housing may be too demanding  
39 for prisoners. This leads us to question the degree to which the welfare system should adapt to  
40 prisoners -- or vice versa. When talking about their experiences of rehabilitation when in  
41 prison, most prisoners described themselves as being either in Quadrant 1 (high system effort-  
42 personal situation experienced as positive) or in Quadrant 2 (high system effort-personal  
43 situation experienced as negative). In other words, the tightly controlled environment of  
44 prison represents a high system effort or input, though this could have positive or negative  
45 impacts on their life situations. When they left prison, however, most of our respondents  
46 claimed to fall into Quadrant 4 (low system effort-negative individual situation) when they  
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3 were released. They reported having been released to nothing, in some cases, going from 24/7  
4 monitoring and care to no support at all. The respondents reported that homelessness did not  
5 explicitly lead to more crime, but was an easy way of connecting with “old friends,” which  
6 again led to drug abuse and crime. Although professionals may believe that there is a well-  
7 functioning rehabilitation plan in place, our findings from the experiences reported by the  
8 prisoners do not seem to support this.  
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### 15 *Limitations and future directions*

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19 The above is a conceptual model, intended to provide a lens from which to reinterpret  
20 offenders’ experiences of reintegration and was applied only to the small and exploratory  
21 study described in this article. As such, it requires further testing and substantiation. The  
22 model, and the study’s findings, should be regarded as tentative and cannot be generalized to a  
23 larger population. The prisoners were selected by the first author for convenience, and it is  
24 possible that this influenced the findings. Other prisoners may have described different  
25 experiences. Adding domains to the model, such as underlying physical or mental illness, or  
26 socio-demographic factors could increase the model’s utility for practitioners in the field who  
27 are responsible for planning transitional services for people leaving prison. Incorporating risk  
28 factors that may indicate whether an individual would be more likely to end up in Quadrants  
29 1, 2, 3, or 4 could help practitioners to better tailor their level of support to each individual.  
30 We suggest further investigation of this proposal is undertaken in future research.  
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### 41 **Conclusion**

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45 This paper offers a model with which to view the interaction of an offender with welfare  
46 services during the reintegration process as offenders move from prison back into the  
47 community. Based on offenders’ perspectives, it offers a range of tentative hypotheses about  
48 the relationship between welfare support and offender reintegration and rehabilitation that  
49 now requires testing. The model serves as an analytical tool for developing new approaches to  
50 supporting offenders in their reintegration into society from prison. The model underpins the  
51 argument that the current reintegration strategies for certain groups of prisoners need to be  
52 questioned and challenged.  
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## Abstract

Many offenders struggle when attempting to reintegrate into society after release from prison, and the conditions they face after release often lead to reoffending. Internationally, there is limited understanding about how to improve these conditions and thereby reduce recidivism rates. In particular, offenders' own perspectives on the challenges they face and how to overcome these are absent.

This paper presents a conceptual model that has the potential to guide practitioners in their understanding of the relationships between welfare services and the agency of the offender. The model was developed from a small-scale study in the Norwegian Criminal Justice system, which is well known for its emphasis on rehabilitation and crime prevention. Data collection aimed to explore the reintegration process from the perspective of the hard-to-reach and vulnerable population of serial offenders. Nine prisoners in two different prisons were interviewed. A thematic analysis identified two main themes that related, first, to the personal challenges the offenders faced in the rehabilitation and reintegration process and, second, to the factors in the welfare services that interacted with the prisoners' psychosocial issues in the reintegration process. Findings suggest that the interaction between the psychosocial needs of the prisoners and the organization of the welfare services is complex and not harmonized. The model developed from the insights of this study can serve as a reflective and analytical tool for developing new approaches to support offenders in their reintegration into society from prison in the future. The model underpins the argument that current reintegration strategies for prisoners needs to be questioned and challenged.

## Keywords

Reintegration, social innovation, interagency collaboration, reoffenders, welfare services, Norway.

## Introduction

Large numbers of prisoners are released from prison every year. For instance, in 2018, the U.K. had a prison population of approximately 92,500 (Sturge, 2018). At some point, these prisoners will be released, often, however, without the health and welfare support they need, a

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10 risk factor that can result in their reoffending (Skeem and Peterson, 2011). However, despite  
11 high levels of recidivism internationally (Fazel and Wolf, 2015), little is known about  
12 offenders' reintegration processes and how offenders deal with these problems before and  
13 after release (Chikadzi, 2017, Schinkel, 2014). Poor relationships with families as well as with  
14 welfare systems have been shown to contribute to the struggles faced by offenders upon their  
15 release and to the failure of their rehabilitation and reintegration processes (Chikadzi, 2017).  
16 To better understand and address the problems of offender reintegration, it is important that  
17 the voice of the prisoner is heard and kept central to the development of future interventions  
18 designed to improve reintegration. Some of the few research studies that present this point of  
19 view, such as Chikadzi's (2017), highlight the lack of support received by support services,  
20 and it is therefore important for practitioners to better understand the experiences of the  
21 offenders these services work with and the impact ~~the~~ such services have upon offenders' life  
22 conditions upon release. In another qualitative study (Morse *et al.*, 2014) on women in drug  
23 treatment court, the women reported experiences of an "evil cycle" of relapse and recidivism  
24 among other challenges. In addition, it was found (Binswanger *et al.*, 2012; Cepeda *et al.*,  
25 2015) that overdosing was considered by offenders after release as "a way out" of a stressful  
26 life.  
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33 The aim of this paper, therefore, is to present a conceptual model which has the potential to  
34 guide practitioners in their understanding of the relationships between welfare structures and  
35 the agency of the offender. It explains the development of the model from a small-scale study  
36 conducted in the Norwegian Criminal Justice system, which is well known for its emphasis on  
37 rehabilitation and crime prevention.  
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#### 40 41 *The Norwegian Context*

42 In Norway, for example, with a population of 5.1 million, around 10,000 prisoners are  
43 released each year (Dyb and Johannessen, 2013). Six out of 10 of these prisoners are reported  
44 to be dependent on drugs, two thirds have a childhood characterized by some form of trauma,  
45 3 out of 10 have been in contact with child welfare services before the age of 16, and  
46 educational attainment is low. One third of the prisoners will become homeless, and only 8%  
47 of the prison population show no sign of mental illness (Friestad and Skog Hansen, 2004; Dyb  
48 *et al.*, 2006; Cramer, 2014; Revold, 2015). Reoffenders report that they feel stigmatized and  
49 excluded from society on release (Amundsen, 2008). It is perhaps unsurprising that 20% of  
50 prisoners released will reoffend within two years, with this figure rising to over 70% among  
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10 certain groups (75% among males aged 25 to 44 sentenced for theft) (Graunbøl *et al.*, 2010).  
11 Although 20% is low compared to international statistics (Fazel and Wolf, 2015), this still  
12 represents significant human and economic costs for Norway (Nystrøm and Jess, 2002; Jess,  
13 2005; Bakke, 2011).  
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17 Offering adequate support is central to the Norwegian Criminal Justice System's underlying  
18 philosophy of rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society, as exemplified in their  
19 statement that:

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22 reduced recidivism demands many different measures. It is necessary to both do  
23 something about the living conditions and to offer measures that help transform the  
24 convicted persons themselves. It is emphasized that the measures do not have to be  
25 either in prison or afterwards – there must be continuity and a coordinated effort from  
26 all affected parties, often over the long haul. If this is done, success is possible. (The  
27 Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police, 2008, p. 13)  
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31 The general approach to reintegration and rehabilitation in Norway is operationalized through  
32 the offender participating in a process of staged release (Bjørkly, 2004; Dyb, 2006; Olsen,  
33 2012). Prisoners work their way "up the ladder," starting in a closed facility with high  
34 security, moving to lower security prisons, and ending up, potentially, in the last phase of  
35 their sentence, under home supervision. A failure to comply with regulations, as, for example,  
36 testing positive for alcohol or drug use, will cause the prisoner to take one or several steps  
37 backwards in this process. In other countries, offenders' rehabilitation in prison may be  
38 managed through specialized reintegration programs that further manage their transition from  
39 prison to the community (UNDOC, 2012), but these kinds of programs do not currently exist  
40 in the Norwegian system.  
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46 The Norwegian welfare state and the Scandinavian welfare model are also well known for  
47 fairly generous income systems for the whole population accompanied by a higher level of  
48 taxation compared to other countries. The aim is to offer a broad spectrum of social security  
49 including housing, employment, and healthcare (Kautto *et al.*, 2001).  
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## Method

The main aim of the study from which the conceptual model discussed below was developed was to explore prisoners' experiences of the reintegration process. A critical realist stance was taken in the study with the perspective that though a reality of health and welfare services exists outside of the offender, this reality is individually interpreted (Bhaskar, 2008). Empirically, offenders' experiences with the health and welfare services were explored qualitatively using semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection.

### *Sample*

Serial reoffenders were the target population of the study. This is a hard-to-reach population. A small sample size of 9 eventually participated in the study. This makes the report of their voices all the more important. The prisoners were selected by the first author for convenience. Respondents were all men, ranging in age from 25 to 56. In the findings section, they are numbered from 1 (the youngest) to 9 (the oldest). Repeated reoffending was a selection criterion, and the final sample had been in and out of prison from 2 to 20 times. The participants all consented in writing to take part in the study. The periods in prison ranged from one month to one year, with all respondents being from a single county in Norway. Six respondents were serving at two different prisons in this county at the time the interviews took place, while the remaining three were on probation. The sample was selected through a dialogue with Norwegian Criminal Justice Staff about whom they saw as potential respondents matching the above criteria. The suggested prisoners then received an information letter about the study and were asked to participate.

### *Data collection*

A semi-structured interview guide explored inductively participants' current life conditions and how they experienced welfare services, both while in prison and when re-entering life outside prison. Typical questions included: Have you been homeless? What is that like? What is most difficult in the process of reintegration after prison? All interviews were conducted by one researcher (first author) and took place over three months. All interviews were also audio recorded and lasted approximately one hour. Six of the interviews were conducted in the visitor room in prison, and the other three at a criminal justice service office outside prison. All interviews were conducted in Norwegian and later translated into English.

### *Analysis*

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and an inductive thematic analysis of the interviews was conducted in four steps. First, all interview transcripts were read to get an overall impression of the material and to identify meaning units, for example, central concepts or sentences. Second, the interviews were coded independently by the first and third author, and central sub-themes were identified and merged into two main themes. Third, the sub-themes were discussed by the first and third author, in order to reach a common understanding of the main content of the interview and the trustworthiness of the common themes arising from the data (Kvale and Brinkman, 2012, Lykkeslet and Gjengedal, 2007; Pope *et al.*, 2000). Two main themes arose from the data and quotations from offenders' comments were found and used to illustrate each of these. Fourth, through abstraction, the two main themes were seen in relation to each other and resulted in the creation of Figure 1, presented in the discussion below. The number of subjects and interviews was driven by saturation of the concepts leading to the subthemes and the two main themes. The description of the two main themes was checked, confirmed, and adapted with the second author of this paper who was consulted during the reporting process.

### *Ethics*

The study was approved by both the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (38278/3/KH) and the Norwegian Correctional Service Region West in February, 2014. Six of the nine respondents were known to the interviewer (first author) through his earlier work in the criminal justice system as a practicing professional. Although every attempt was made to emphasize the neutrality of his role as researcher, prior relations between the researcher and participants may have influenced the nature of the data collected and their willingness to participate in the first place. To avoid this, the first author did not directly ask the respondents to attend, but, instead, respondents were asked through a letter presented by the prison staff, and it was clearly emphasized that participating in the study was voluntary.

## Findings

The two main themes that arose from the interviews with the offenders were (1) personal needs and crime and (2) reintegration after prison - needs being met (or not) by the welfare services. It is the overlap between the personal needs of the offender (Theme 1) and the interaction of the offender and the welfare system (Theme 2) that was the stimulus for the development of the conceptual framework proposed later in this paper.

### *(1) Personal needs and crime*

We identified three subthemes within this main theme: first, *drug abuse and mental health*; second, *homelessness and antisocial networks*; and the third, we identified as *crime*.

#### Drug abuse and mental health.

All but one of the respondents stated that they were problematic drug users. The use of drugs was described as unavoidable, with ~~the~~ physical addiction being very strong and drug ~~abuse~~ ~~being a~~ part of their lifestyle. They failed to change this condition and re-entered the cycle of substance abuse:

*There's such power in addiction. It goes far beyond a human capability of understanding* (respondent 7, age 49).

*All in all, it's drug abuse that is my biggest problem* (respondent 1, age 25).

Two of the respondents (respondents 4 and 7) especially expressed concerns regarding their mental health and antisocial behavior:

*I say yes to all the help I can get now....There is a physiologist here. Why didn't I get the information? The priest is fantastic....It is these thoughts. If they don't get turned off the right way when you are in prison, they become complete chaos when you are released* (respondent 7, age 49).

*I didn't get any money from the social service. I ended up smashing the furniture at NAV [Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration]* (respondent 4, age 45).

### Homelessness and antisocial networks.

Furthermore, respondents described homelessness as a severe problem (8 out of 9 responded that they had been homeless at least once) and reported having been homeless for long periods in general. They reported having slept on couches belonging to friends with drug-addicted substance use disorders -friends, lived on the street, or, as one of them reported, stayed in a shed:

*You must stay with others, and that causes lots of crime (respondent 2, age 27).*

*If you have no home, then you will not find a reason to do anything right either ....  
Home is the place where you are safe. You can lock the door, and it is your job to keep the house clean (respondent 8, age 52).*

*Yes, I've been without a home earlier. It's been for periods from 3 to 4 months. I've then been living on a couch with friends or something like that (respondent 9, age 56).*

### Crime.

The respondents had been in and out of prison from 2 to 20 times, often on drug-related offences, in which the longest sentence among the respondents was one year. The reasons given for their crimes were described as being everything from being financially driven to a boy's dream and easy money to a lifestyle that was inevitable because of their problematic substance addiction use:

*It's business. Money is always the motive. Which type of crime depends on what state I'm in then and there, but it all comes down to cash (respondent 5, age 47).*

*My dream since I was eight was to be a gangster. And I always kind of tried to follow that road (respondent 2, age 27).*

*It's the excitement, but I really don't do things like that when I'm sober (respondent 3, age 38).*

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10 (2) *Reintegration after prison*

11 Two subthemes led us to this main theme: *the will to change and needs being met (or not) by*  
12 *the welfare services.*

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15 The will to change.

16 All respondents stated that they had tried to change their lives at least once, for example, by  
17 trying to stop using drugs. These periods lasted from a few months to five years. Their family  
18 -- often their own children -- were their main motivation for wanting to make positive change.  
19 However, a failure to change and re-entering the cycle of substance abuse and reoffending  
20 was attributed to a series of small coincidences, with one thing leading to another or their  
21 being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Their previous networks, or "old friends," often  
22 accounted for their not staying clean. At the time of the interview, 7 out of 9 said that they  
23 were willing to change their life (respondent 5 and 9 did not):

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28 *I'm sick of prison. I want a life without crime. The biggest obstacle is myself*  
29 *(respondent 2, age 27).*

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32 One was ambivalent:

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35 *I must say I am a bit ambivalent regarding this. When I look at the older ones here in*  
36 *prison, I don't want to become like them. I don't want to look back at my youth*  
37 *spending more than half of it in prison. On the other hand, when I see how much work*  
38 *it is to straighten things out, it just seem f\*.. impossible (respondent 1, age 25).*

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41 Respondent 9 was happy in prison and did not picture himself free of crime or drugs after  
42 prison. He could not see any reason for changing and was comfortable in prison. He knew the  
43 staff, how to get food, and had things to do. He tried to change once, though. But he claimed  
44 that a lack of economic support from the welfare system returned him to the negative cycle.

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47 Needs being met (or not) by the welfare services.

48 Offenders spoke of a desire to be, first and foremost, autonomous and independent of the  
49 welfare system (8 of 9 respondents wanted to be independent of the welfare system and  
50 change their lives for the better). When asked what should ideally be in place if they were to  
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10 live a life without crime, they identified increased contact with close family, children, a job,  
11 and a hobby as means to making this change:  
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14 *My goal is not to be dependent on the welfare system to survive. That is an ideal state*  
15 *for me. It is most dangerous for me when I need to go through NAV and those people*  
16 *(respondent 8, age 52).*  
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19 But when asked about the role of the welfare services, respondents reported a lack of support  
20 from the public welfare system, on the one hand, and, on the other, the support offered not  
21 matching their problems:  
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24 *Training, family, housing. But I have little faith that will be settled when I get out*  
25 *(respondent 5, age 47).*  
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28 They had negative experiences with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and  
29 felt powerless and hopeless in relation to their dealings with the welfare services:  
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32 *If you are going to make it, you have to have a big system that can support you. If not,*  
33 *you will be alone quarrelling with NAV. That is how it has been the last times I've*  
34 *been released from prison. Released to nothing, and no money (respondent 2, age 27).*  
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37 One of the respondents described the support system as a static system where there is little  
38 room for flexibility. Either you fit into the welfare system, or you do not:  
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41 *They have to know we are people with different challenges. We are just as different as*  
42 *everybody else. You cannot put everyone in one kind of model and expect them to fit*  
43 *in, and if you do not fit in, there is no help for you (respondent 1, age 25).*  
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46 *I started selling (drugs) when I was in treatment.... to get some extra cash, and I got*  
47 *caught. It was like a phase system. So after one and a half years in treatment, and*  
48 *without drugs, I was back to phase 1 where I started. It felt like a disproportionate*  
49 *intervention, a violation, and it really led to a loss of motivation for me, totally (ibid).*  
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53 Another of the respondents described discrimination within the system:  
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11 *If the system is not with you, it is against you. They evaluate you as a person based on*  
12 *your past (respondent 8, age 52).*

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15 They talk about how this lack of suitable support from the welfare system on their release  
16 from prison led to their rapid reoffending -- in one case, only two hours after release:

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18 *Once, I was one year at [XX] prison. Then I came out and was arrested again two*  
19 *hours later, wasted on drugs. They wanted me back in prison (respondent 6, age 46).*

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21 The degree of help they get varies a lot, the respondents report:

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23 *Yes, the difference is huge. You have the factory-like prisons. It is shit. You have jam*  
24 *on your bread every day, and the people working there are arrogant and authoritarian*  
25 *(respondent 5, age 47).*

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28 *They actually listen to you [at the respondent's new welfare office]. The difference is*  
29 *big, but maybe it has something to do with my name and reputation [at the former*  
30 *welfare office] (respondent 3, age 38).*

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33 *I've been extremely unlucky with NAV this time. They have long waiting lists, and*  
34 *they won't help me. There is no will to help. When I realize that, I understand where*  
35 *this is going. I'm 100% addicted to them (respondent 8, age 52).*

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39 Respondents did report positive experiences with the welfare services, but this was often in  
40 terms of contact with specific individuals, local outreach services, and a specific housing  
41 project:

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44 *Yes, it was the safety, and I had a job I could handle...I felt ownership of the*  
45 *apartment. It is the first time that has happened. I have never felt at home so strongly*  
46 *before (respondent 8, age 52).*

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49 *I think it is very good, the ambulant team, in fact. Even if there is not much they can*  
50 *do, they help me a little bit with this and that. Join me in meetings and stuff like that*  
51 *(respondent 4, age 45).*

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11 Offenders often rely on single individuals within the welfare services, individual professionals  
12 willing to give extra and often go beyond their own authority for the offender:  
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15 *She has probably done more than she is allowed to for me, so she could manage to*  
16 *help me in get further along. The commitment she has makes me think I don't want to*  
17 *let her down* (respondent 8, age 52).  
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## 22 Discussion

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24 Findings from this study present complex life situations for the nine offenders, demonstrating  
25 that every offender has unique needs and experiences. Factors at the level of the individual  
26 prisoner, such as drug abuse, lack of housing, mental health issues, the perceived inevitability  
27 of falling back into negative social networks, vicious cycles of substance misuse, and repeated  
28 crime are common themes in the rehabilitation process. In describing these individual factors,  
29 prisoners recognize in themselves some of the main risk factors associated with reoffending  
30 found in many studies. Andrews *et al.* (2006) list the “big eight” factors included in risk  
31 assessment tools, the four greatest predictors being an established history of offending,  
32 antisocial personality patterns, cognition, and antisocial associates.  
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37 Although our respondents did not use this terminology, their feelings of powerlessness and  
38 the inevitability of falling back into negative networks and criminal activity suggest that they  
39 too recognized the factors associated with their own reoffending. Andrews *et al.* (2006) also  
40 list an additional four moderate risk factors that include substance misuse, employment  
41 instability, low engagement in pro-social leisure pursuits, and family and marital problems.  
42 These again are all factors alluded to by our respondents indicating that they share, together  
43 with the correctional and welfare services that surround them, an understanding of the key  
44 factors that may lead to them reoffending. However, it is not clear from our interviews how  
45 offenders have developed this shared understanding, and it may be speculated as to whether  
46 their own exposure to the risk and needs assessment tools used by correctional services with  
47 offenders at the beginning of their sentences may have made these issues more salient for  
48 them. This is perhaps no bad thing, as problem identification would be the first step towards  
49 empowering them to break the cycle of offending behaviour. It also suggests that making the  
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10 link between the needs assessment tool and reoffending explicit during the assessment process  
11 at the beginning of a prisoner's sentence may be important for their affecting change in their  
12 life. This paper suggests that offenders are aware of the presence of key risk factors in their  
13 reoffending, but, more importantly, it highlights how these individual-level variables then  
14 interact with the welfare systems around them. Findings suggested that the prisoners have  
15 rather ambivalent relationships with the welfare system and revealed great variation in  
16 respondents' experiences. These experiences of Norwegian prisoners mirror those of prisoners  
17 in other countries (e.g., Chikadzhi, 2017; Morse *et al.*, 2014; Binswanger *et al.*, 2012; Cepeda  
18 *et al.*, 2015; Lattimore and Visser, 2014.) suggesting that these are universal struggles  
19 experienced by offenders internationally, although an understanding of the actual processes  
20 behind these outcomes remains ~~elusive~~ ~~allusive~~. A better analytical tool is needed, one that  
21 can identify and analyse these ~~elusive~~ ~~allusive~~ processes.  
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#### 26 27 *A new analytical model*

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30 The interaction of the offender with the welfare system is key to their addressing and  
31 minimizing the risk factors associated with their reoffending. We therefore present a model  
32 for consideration that we believe can be used as a cognitive tool for analyzing and developing  
33 testable hypotheses regarding the complexity and variation in potential outcomes for an  
34 offender. The model is informed by the small-scale study reported above, but this does not  
35 mean that all hypotheses presented and discussed below appear in the findings section.  
36 Instead, the model (Figure 1) was created by the researchers and should be regarded as an  
37 illustration inspired by the findings in the present study and as a model that now requires  
38 further testing.  
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43 We propose, hypothetically, that personal circumstances (related to variables such as drug  
44 use, housing, motivations to change, and mental health) lie on a horizontal continuum from  
45 negative to positive life circumstances. Poor personal life situations are related to reoffending,  
46 and positive life situations, with desistance behaviours. On the vertical axis, system effort lies  
47 on a continuum from high effort to minimal or no involvement with the service user.  
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10 In Quadrant 1, the prisoner experiences the personal life situation as positive, and system  
11 efforts are high. In Quadrant 2, the prisoner experiences the life situation as negative,  
12 although system efforts are high. In Quadrant 3, the prisoner experiences the life situation as  
13 positive, and system efforts are low. Lastly, in Quadrant 4, the prisoner experiences the life  
14 situation as negative, at same time as system efforts are low.  
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18 Applying this conceptual model to our findings would suggest that prisoners struggle for  
19 independence from the welfare system. For some, total independence and a positive living  
20 situation (Quadrant 3) is a future aim. But for others, their vulnerability in the early days after  
21 release means that substantial input from the system may be necessary before and after release  
22 (Quadrant 1). For example, those with severe drug-substance addictions-use issues may in fact  
23 need lifelong healthcare. This means that some will never make the transition from Quadrant  
24 1 to Quadrant 3. Acceptance of this fact is important in a society where negative attitudes  
25 toward both offenders and problematic drug-substance addiction-use are strong (Amundsen,  
26 2008). In particular, severe drug-substance addiction-use disorders should be considered a  
27 long-term disability and treated as equal to the long-term care offered to those with a physical  
28 disability. It is also important to take into consideration motivation as a factor. For instance,  
29 do the welfare services contribute more to individuals who are highly motivated? Can  
30 motivation affect respondents' views of the welfare services, and then create a positive circle  
31 of social support? It is hard to measure in what degree motivation affects the welfare system  
32 and vice versa, and we did not ask the respondents directly about this.  
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39 If Quadrant 3 is the ideal, Quadrant 1 is a partial ideal: a well-functioning welfare system that  
40 meets the needs important to the prisoners themselves -- their actual needs -- which can affect  
41 a positive change in their life situation. A long-term overdependence on welfare support is not  
42 positive for either the prisoner or society; and prisoners should be encouraged to move toward  
43 Quadrant 3 where possible. A high-system effort does not necessarily mean the outcomes for  
44 the prisoners' life situations are always positive and may in some cases make the situation  
45 worse (Quadrant 2). In this quadrant, prisoners receive a high system effort from the welfare  
46 system, but still experience their personal situations as negative. In our study, specifically,  
47 two respondents claimed that the welfare system was static and unresponsive to their  
48 individual changing needs (respondent 1), and it was either with you or against you  
49 (respondent 8). It is possible that if the welfare system is poorly adapted to the prisoners'  
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10 needs, it can result in a destructive rather than constructive development for the prisoner. It  
11 has been argued that this inflexibility may originate from a continued focus on control and  
12 discipline in the system, instead of on rehabilitation (Christie, 1987).  
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15 Our findings demonstrated that prisoners' experiences of support from the welfare services  
16 during vulnerable periods varied, both within and between services. At times, they found  
17 themselves floundering in the gap that opened up between prison and community support as  
18 they made the transition from one environment to the other. In prison, they may have received  
19 high levels of structured support (Quadrants 1 and 2), but 8 out of 9 of the interviewed  
20 prisoners experienced being abandoned upon their release (Quadrant 4); they failed to access  
21 public services such as housing, jobs, economic support, and treatment. They may  
22 demonstrate a motivation to change, but, for some reason, the welfare system is not able to  
23 meet their needs upon re-entering society.  
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29 Poor communication between prison, community services, and other organizations in the  
30 welfare system may be responsible for some of this shortfall. Prisoners reported housing to be  
31 a particular area in which the system failed to support them and gave this as a central reason  
32 for reoffending. Housing needs are one of the primary risk factors associated with reoffending  
33 (Andrews *et al.*, 2006), but, like mental health, it may also mediate the expression of the main  
34 risk factors mentioned (Skeem and Peterson, 2011). For instance, as mentioned by our  
35 respondents, a lack of housing may lead to offenders falling in with previous antisocial  
36 associates who have access to illegal substances and finding regular pro-social leisure pursuits  
37 difficult to establish. A lack of housing may also result from poor marital and family relations  
38 and is not conducive to rebuilding these relationships. On the other hand, the welfare services  
39 may have contracts and demands attached to the housing being offered, which the prisoners  
40 cannot fulfil. Also, the application process for getting public housing may be too demanding  
41 for the prisoners. This can lead us to a question of what the degree to which the welfare  
42 system should adapt to the prisoners -- or the opposite vice versa. When talking about their  
43 experiences of rehabilitation when in prison, most prisoners described themselves as being  
44 either in Quadrant 1 (high system effort-personal situation experienced as positive) or in  
45 Quadrant 2 (high system effort-personal situation experienced as negative). In other words,  
46 the tightly controlled environment of the prison represented-represents a high system effort or  
47 input, though this could have positive or negative impacts on their life situations. When they  
48 left prison, however, most of our respondents claimed to fall into Quadrant 4 (low system  
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10 effort-negative individual situation) when they were released. They reported having been  
11 released to nothing, in some cases, going from 24/7 monitoring and care to no support at all.  
12 The respondents reported that homelessness did not explicitly lead to more crime, but was an  
13 easy way of connecting with “old friends,” which again led to drug abuse and crime. Although  
14 professionals may believe that there is a well-functioning rehabilitation plan in place, our  
15 findings from the experiences reported by the prisoners do not seem to support this.  
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### 18 19 *Limitations and future directions*

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22 The above is a conceptual model, intended to provide a lens from which to reinterpret  
23 offenders’ experiences of reintegration and ~~was applied to~~ only to the small and exploratory  
24 study described in this article. As such, it requires further testing and substantiation, ~~and~~  
25 ~~the model, and the study’s findings, should be regarded as tentative and cannot be~~  
26 ~~generalized to a larger population. Hence, the model and the parallel study findings should be~~  
27 ~~regarded as tentative, and cannot be generalized to a larger population.~~ The prisoners were  
28 selected by the first author for convenience, and it is possible that this influenced the findings.  
29 Other prisoners may have described different experiences. Adding domains to the model, such  
30 as underlying physical or mental illness, or socio-demographic factors could increase the  
31 model’s utility for practitioners in the field who are responsible for planning transitional  
32 services for people leaving prison. Incorporating risk factors that may indicate whether an  
33 individual would be more likely to end up in Quadrants 1, 2, 3, or 4 could help practitioners to  
34 better tailor their level of support to each individual. We suggest further investigation of this  
35 proposal is undertaken development on this in future research.  
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### 41 **Conclusion**

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44 This paper offers a model with which to view the interaction of an offender with welfare  
45 services during the reintegration process as offenders move from prison back into the  
46 community. Based on offenders’ perspectives, it offers a range of tentative hypotheses about  
47 the relationship between welfare support and offender reintegration and rehabilitation that  
48 now requires testing. The model serves as an analytical tool for developing new approaches to  
49 supporting offenders in their reintegration into society from prison. The model underpins the  
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argument that the current reintegration strategies for certain groups of prisoners need to be questioned and challenged.

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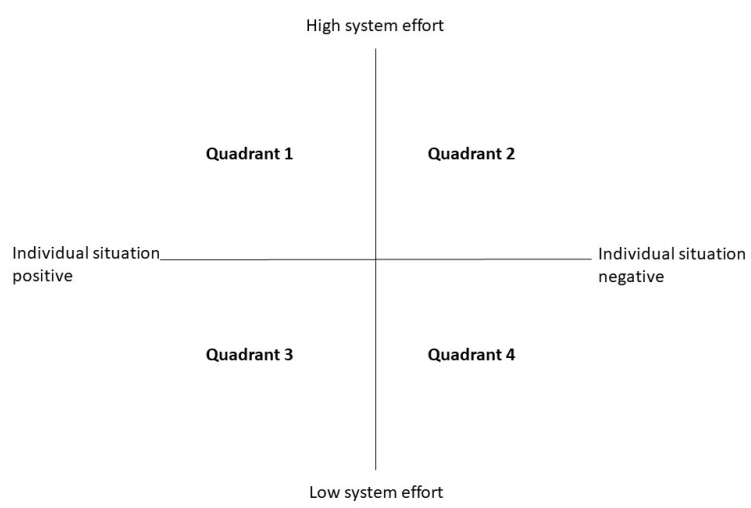
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A conceptual model on reintegration after prison

338x190mm (96 x 96 DPI)

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5 Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

6 Reviewer: 1

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8 Recommendation: Accept

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10 Comments:

11 These are very minor grammatical issues that if addressed would improve readability of the paper.  
12 Otherwise, I think the changes made since the first review have improved the paper nicely and it  
13 adds something useful to the literature.

14 Page 14, line 41 "does not conduce" may read better as "is not conducive" (see R1, C1)

15 Page 14, line 46 "can't" should be replaced with "cannot" as contractions should not be used (see  
16 R1,C1).

17 Page 15, line 33 "..., socio-demographic factors" may read better as "..., or socio-demographic  
18 factors" (see R1, C1).

19 Page 15, line 57 "...groups of inmates needs..." may read better as "...groups of inmates need..."(see  
20 R1, C1).

21  
22 We agree and have done the changes suggested.

23  
24  
25 Additional Questions:

26  
27 <b>1. Originality: </b>Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify  
28 publication?: n/a

29  
30 <b>2. Relationship to Literature: </b>Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of  
31 the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any  
32 significant work ignored?: n/a

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34 <b>3. Methodology: </b>Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts or  
35 other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well  
36 designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: n/a

37  
38 <b>4. Results: </b>Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions  
39 adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: n/a

40  
41 <b>5. Practicality and/or Research implications: </b>Does the paper identify clearly any implications  
42 for practice and/or further research? Are these implications consistent with the findings and  
43 conclusions of the paper?: n/a

44  
45 <b>6. Quality of Communication: </b>Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the  
46 technical language of the fields and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has  
47 attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon  
48 use, acronyms, etc.: n/a

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50 Reviewer: 2

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52 Recommendation: Minor Revision

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54 Comments:

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3 The article and subsequent model is interesting. I think your article would be improved by not using  
4 the terms 'drug addict' and 'inmate' (see R2, C1).  
5

6 Additional Questions:

7 <b>1. Originality: </b>Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify  
8 publication?: The suggested model is interesting  
9

10  
11 <b>2. Relationship to Literature: </b>Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of  
12 the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any  
13 significant work ignored?: yes  
14

15 <b>3. Methodology: </b>Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts or  
16 other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well  
17 designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: Were prisoners able to withdraw from the  
18 research at any point? Were they informed about this?  
19

20  
21 <b>4. Results: </b>Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions  
22 adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: Yes

23 <b>5. Practicality and/or Research implications: </b>Does the paper identify clearly any implications  
24 for practice and/or further research? Are these implications consistent with the findings and  
25 conclusions of the paper?: The model is useful.  
26

27  
28 <b>6. Quality of Communication: </b>Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the  
29 technical language of the fields and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has  
30 attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon  
31 use, acronyms, etc.: I suggest that the term 'drug addict' should be changed to 'problematic drug  
32 user'. Similarly, I recommend that 'prisoner' be used rather than 'inmate' (see R2, C1).  
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34 We agree and have done the changes suggested.  
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