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God, I Hope This Part of My Life is Over: A Focused Ethnography of a Correctional Youth Facility's Therapeutic Climate

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GOD, I HOPE THIS PART OF MY LIFE IS OVER: A FOCUSED ETHNOGRAPHY OF A CORRECTIONAL YOUTH FACILITY'S THERAPEUTIC CLIMATE

By

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ABSTRACT

GOD, I HOPE THIS PART OF MY LIFE IS OVER: A FOCUSED ETHNOGRAPHY OF A CORRECTIONAL YOUTH FACILITY'S THERAPEUTIC CLIMATE

Eric Russell Meyer, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2019

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Although all prisons have the same goal of isolating offenders from society, the precise strategies used vary from one jurisdiction to the next. Some prisons use means of punishment to gain inmate compliance. Other prisons concentrate their limited resources on rehabilitation. Contained within the following pages are details of a focused ethnography that was completed in a state correctional youth facility that housed males between the ages of 15 and 21 years, all of whom were convicted of violent crimes. This study had the objective of exploring the climate of therapy in this correctional youth facility where rehabilitative programs were administered as attempts to transform the youth into law-abiding adults. Although the youth inmates were mandated to live in the correctional facility, their participation in rehabilitation was voluntary. Thus, this study explored the incentives that motivated many inmates to their participation. This study explored what few scholars referred to as the *therapeutic climate,* which can be thought of as the conceptual spirit that determines the rehabilitative experience of its participants. A therapeutic climate is a subjective concept of a complex system of social processes, filled with symbolic interactions, where the intent is to provide rehabilitative programs to its participants. It includes but is not limited to the rules and how they are enforced, peer and mentor support, leadership at all levels, group cohesion, physical architecture, and program integrity. Despite a therapeutic climate not including methods of punishment, as this study occurred in a correctional facility, the climate of punishment was explored as one climate affected the other. The results from this focused ethnography led to the development of a nested ecological model for a therapeutic climate. This model reveals the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem levels of influence that make a therapeutic climate. For instance, the interrelationships between the staff and the inmates; the use of incentives; staff buy-in; and program integrity that lead to program participation. The ecological model for a therapeutic climate can be used as a theoretical platform for the determination of what a therapeutic climate resembles.

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IIP	Inmate Incentive Program
MR	Misconduct Report
SMU	Segregation Management Unit

Alone, without treatment of the soul, the *conspicuous deprivations of autonomy, self-identity, or even security* for our imprisoned youth, not only goes against the current of *parens patriae*; but more importantly, they are an *unethical means of reforming docile bodies*, largely of the minority, into the expectations of society, rather, the *demands of the majority*.

-Anonymous

Chapter 1

Introduction

Many people are curious of what life is like in prison. They obtain their answers from a multitude of sources. Some people use the movies and imagine life is like *The Shawshank Redemption* (Marvin & Darabont, 1994) or *The Green Mile* (Darabont, Darabont, & Valdes, 1999). Others will use the latest reality television program, such as *60 Days In* (Gregory, Woodard, & Grogan, 2019). No matter the popular cultural source, prison life is portrayed as having its own unique culture and every moment of an inmate's day is filled with tension and danger. Other people, however, turn to scholarly research for their answers. They read and analyze seminal research, such as Goffman's *Asylums* (1961), where life for the inmates is not a culture at all. Inmates are forced to live within prison and the staff members in charge use incentives that remind the inmates of their home cultures to encourage behaviors the institution desires. No matter the source it seems, all paint a picture that life inside prison is a *complex system*, filled with *symbolism*, that work together under an *authoritarian structure*, which has the united goal of isolating criminals away from society (Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958, 2007)). Although all prisons have this same goal, the precise strategies used in prison vary from one jurisdiction to the next. Some prisons are privately owned and use more means of punishment than rehabilitation. Other prisons concentrate most of their limited resources on rehabilitation (Inderbitzin, 2007). Thus, the questions turn from description to effectiveness. Which strategy is better and why?

Prison wardens often face the dilemmas of how to best prepare their inmates to move from an environment of razor wire to one of freedom, while also maintaining a setting that is safe for all who live and work inside its walls of confinement (Sykes, 1958, 2007). In deciding these best practices, wardens favor what many consider as conflicting strategies (i.e., security or rehabilitative). These differences lead to unavoidable questions where it seems they are often answered not by the wardens themselves, but rather society who obtains their information from sources of popular media. Society's influence on prison practices is not new to our current era of mass incarceration, as Cressey (1958) previously wrote, "In short, society assigns *incapacitation, retribution, deterrence*, and *reformation* goals to prisons" [emphasis in original text] (Cressey, 1958, p. 43). This strategy has resulted in many offenders that have "'served their time,' 'paid their debt to society,' and, perhaps, 'learned a lesson'" (Cressey, 1961, p. 1). Although the system of penology that Cressey described was for adult inmates, a question to ask is, should this *get tough* and hope for the best approach apply to youth offenders?

Contained within the following pages are details of a qualitative research study that was completed in a state correctional youth facility that housed males between the ages of 15 and 21 years (and ten months). All inmates were adjudicated by state criminal courts as adults for the violent felony offenses they committed. Most of the inmates will eventually return to their home communities, while others might not see beyond the prison walls that surround them. This study had the objective of exploring the climate of therapy in this correctional youth facility where rehabilitative programs were administered as attempts to transform the youth into law-abiding adults. Although the youth inmates were mandated to live in the correctional facility, their participation in their rehabilitation was voluntary. Thus, this study explored the incentives that led many inmates to their participation.

This study explored what few scholars referred to as the *therapeutic climate,* which can be thought of as the conceptual spirit that determines the rehabilitative experience of its

participants (Becket, Beech, Fisher, & Fordham, 1994; Beech & Fordham, 1997). Put differently, a therapeutic climate is a conceptual space that is like Bourdieu's *field* where its occupants are working for a position that reflects their interests but are influenced by the power structures within its boundaries (Bourdieu, 1996). A therapeutic climate is a subjective concept of a complex system of social processes, filled with symbolic interactions, where the intent is to provide rehabilitative programs to its participants. It includes but is not limited to the rules and how they are enforced, peer and mentor support, leadership at all levels, group cohesion, physical architecture, and program integrity (Day, Casey, Vess, & Huisy, 2012). Despite a therapeutic climate not including methods of punishment, as this study occurred in a correctional facility, the climate of punishment was explored as one climate affected the other.

To explore a therapeutic climate at a correctional youth facility, this study used a method of ethnography as its primary method of research, as it has been determined by many corrections' scholars, ethnography is the best method to answer questions in the *deep end* of prison research (Liebling, 1999; Sloan & Drake, 2013; Wacquant, 2002). This study was conducted under a limited time frame of only 3 months; thus, a focused ethnography was used. Focused ethnography is suitable method of research for studies that occurs in institutional settings that are under time constraints (Wall, 2014). The purpose of this research was to extend our limited knowledge of the rehabilitative processes of juveniles adjudicated as adults that received sentences to live in adult facilities. The primary data collection method was *participant observation* as it was determined this was the most appropriate for an exploration of this type. The results from this focused ethnography led to the development of a nested ecological model for a therapeutic climate. The ecological model for a therapeutic climate can be used as a platform for the determination of what a therapeutic climate resembles.

Contained in the following sections of this introduction are details that serve as an overview of this study. This introduction describes what I did and why—that is, my argument. I

describe how the elements of my study worked together to not only answer the research questions, but also led to a new theory of the therapeutic climate. The next section is a description of the *background of the problem*, which is followed by the *research question*, *research significance*, *theoretical perspectives*, and an overview of the *research participants*. Lastly, I offer a brief *conclusion* before we enter the next chapter.

Background of the problem: macro to micro

According to the National Center for Juvenile Justice, across the US in 2015, 48,043 youths (12 to 20 years of age) were convicted of serious offenses (e.g., murder, assault, robbery, burglary, drug offenses). Although this number is about a 50 percent decrease from 2003, the offenses in 2015 led to over 27, 000 youth males (ages 12 to 20 years) placed in confinement as part of their court-ordered disposition. Of these youth inmates, over 40 percent were Black, about 32 percent were White, and 21 percent were Hispanic (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2019).

Today—nearly all the jurisdictions in the U.S. adjudicate juveniles as adults. This trend has resulted in many juveniles not only serving sentences that take years to complete, but also reclassifying them as adults so state prisons can house them with adult offenders (Scott & Steinberg, 2006). However, the original intention of the juvenile justice system was not to punish troubled youth as adults, but rather it was for practitioners to rehabilitate them into law-abiding members of society, so they could return home to live with their families (Rendleman, 1971). Many wardens today struggle with the original intent of rehabilitation versus society's *get-tough* approach, as wardens realize their decision can affect the safety of the communities where nearly all inmates will eventually return to live (Inderbitzin, 2005; Scott & Steinberg, 2006; Singer, 1996).

In 2010, the number of juveniles held in correctional *adult* facilities across the US was significantly higher than 20 years ago. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), in 1990 there were approximately 2,300 juveniles held in correctional adult facilities. This count rose to its peak in 1999 with approximately 9,500 juveniles. In 2006, the count decreased by 35% (6,100 juveniles). However, this rose again in 2010 to 7,600. In 2010, juvenile inmates serving their sentences in adult facilities accounted for about 1% of the total US prisoner population (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014). Feld (1998) argued the drastic increase in juveniles sentenced to adult prisons is the result of,

> Public frustration with crime, fear in the recent rise in youth violence and the *racial characteristics of violent young offenders* [emphasis added] fuel the desire to "get tough" and provide political impetus to prosecute large numbers of youth as adults. (Feld, 1998, p. 189)

Problem in Nebraska

In 2015, the state of Nebraska ranked 8th in the US for their rate of confinement of juveniles (12 to 20 years of age) with 307 per 100,000 youths. In 2015, of the 330 youth inmates housed in Nebraska correctional facilities, 40 percent were White, 25 percent were Black, and 25 percent were Hispanic (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2019). In 2017, Nebraska prosecuted 265 juveniles (< 19 years of age) as adults, with over 74 percent of the juveniles being male. Of these males, about 9 percent were sentenced to adult prison with at least a one-year sentence. Of those who went to prison, most were 17 years of age (60%) and Black (52%) (White=21%, Hispanic=17%, unknown=9%) (Nebraska Juvenile Justice System, 2017).

Although Nebraska does not track juvenile recidivism for juvenile inmates adjudicated as adults, on average, the state of Nebraska releases more than 2,000 adult inmates every year with more than 400 inmates returning to their homes in the city of Omaha. Although Nebraska does far

better than most states with their low levels of recidivism, Nebraskans can still expect 25% (approximately 500) of released inmates to return to prison for committing new crimes (Sample & Spohn, 2008). As argued by Sample and Spohn (2008), recidivism not only increases money expenditures on an already overburdened criminal justice system, it also affects the levels of public safety in communities. It is not be a far stretch to assume that the consequences of adult recidivism also apply to juvenile offenders, as over 85% of inmates who were rearrested within 5 years across the U.S. were under the age of 24 when they were initially released from prison (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014). An assumption could be that many of these young men were under the age of 18 years when they received their original sentence by the courts, as juveniles are often adjudicated as adults and receive sentences that last into their adulthood years (Scott & Steinberg, 2006). With the information highlighted, the question turns from descriptive of what is occurring to a description of the consequences.

The public health consequences of prison

Among developed countries, the United States has the highest incarceration rate, with more than 2 million Americans residing behind bars (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). For the most part, the research about incarceration has focused largely on the *downstream* criminal justice topics, usually in the field of criminology, such as the quantitative examination of the growth of prison populations (e.g., Guerino, Harrison, & Sabol, 2011); the downsizing prison populations (e.g., Sundt, Salisbury, & Harmon, 2016), and the consequences of growth in incarceration (e.g., Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014). Although research in topics after the problems occur is necessary, it does little for prevention (Turnock, 2012). However, for public health researchers; however, their strengths are *upstream*, studying the modes of prevention—which programs people participate in or how program leaders respond to problems—which may just be as captivating, as questions like these can lead to answers in prevention (Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, & Richie, 2005).

Thus, before we proceed, a definition of *public health* is needed. For Turnock (2012), public health is defined as "a broad social enterprise, more akin to a movement, that seeks to extend the benefits of current knowledge in ways that will have the maximum impact on *the health status of a population* [emphasis added]" (p. 11). Turnock continues his broadly-based definition with "It [public health] does so by *identifying problems* that call for the *collective action* to *protect, promote, and improve health*, primarily through *preventive strategies* [all emphases added]"…"Above all else, it is a collective effort to *identify and address the unacceptable realities* that result in *preventable and avoidable health and quality of life outcomes* [all emphases added]" (p. 11). From this definition, the question shifts from defining public health in terms of the consequences, to not only individuals but also to the communities to which they belong.

Individual level health consequences

Public health researchers often study health and well-being, but they do so on mostly non-inmate populations, such as the influence of school architecture on eating (Frerichs, Britten, Sorensen, Trowbridge, Yaroch, Siapush, Tibbits, & Huang, 2015); the effects of leadership in public health (Grimm, Tibbits, Soliman, & Siapush, 2017); and how program staff's perception effect program delivery (Dinkel, Huberty, Beets, & Tibbits, 2014). Smith (2016) wrote, "In terms of physical health, individuals who regularly interact with the criminal justice system disproportionately share the burden of infectious disease and poor health; with the presence of an extensive criminal history remaining a predictor of physical illness" (p. 1). Smith continued with, "With regard to mental health, the failures of the deinstitutionalization movement have produced a social group who receive their housing, food, psychiatric assessment, medication, and therapy entirely within the criminal justice system" (p. 1). Smith added that it should not come to anyone's surprised that criminal justice and public health "have become increasingly enmeshed" (Smith, 2016, p. 1).

The health consequences that affect individuals in communities, also affect inmates in prison, such as prison architecture and its influence on inmate health (Fairweather & McConville, 2013), leadership roles for public health management in prison (Weinbaum, Williams, Mast, Wang, Finelli, Wasley, Neitzel, and Ward, 2008), and how the prison staff's attitudes and perceptions affect rehabilitation of inmates (Young, Antonio, & Wingeard, 2009). There are numerous other health consequences that disproportionately affect inmates. Rates of incarceration have been linked by researchers to poverty, drug addiction, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV (Thomas & Torrone, 2006). Binswanger and colleagues (2007) concluded during the first two weeks after release, the risk of death among former inmates was 12.7 times higher than non-incarcerated people. The leading causes of death for inmates included drug overdose, cardiovascular disease, homicide, and suicide (Binswanger, Stern, Deyo, Heagerty, Cheadle, Elmore, & Koepsell, 2007). Freudenberg and colleagues (2005), concluded that lack of rehabilitative programs for inmates on issues, such as employment, drug treatment, housing, and health care access often prevent successful reentry for inmates back into society (Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, & Richie, 2005). Mears, Wang, Hay, and Bales (2008) argued that not only did resource deprivation affect reentry, but racial segregation influenced reentry and recidivism. Childs (2016) concluded that juvenile offenders are suffering as well, as she examined the relationship between juvenile misconduct and their general health. She identified key latent constructs with gender differences. Childs concluded that mental and physical health illness among juvenile offenders could overwhelm the current limited resources of institutions in juvenile justice.

The health consequences that many inmates' experience is often examined by public health researchers in communities outside of prison, as they are ideal candidates for successful prevention. Public health research that examined modes of prevention had focused on changing the behavioral, social, and environmental climate that lead to the health disparities in

communities (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002). However, only recently have public health researchers realized the contributions they can make in their efforts to mitigate the health consequences that inmates experience in prison (Binswanger, Nowels, Corsi, Long, Booth, Kutner, & Steiner, 2011). Cullen, Jonson, and Nagin. (2011) concluded that when high-risk inmates participate in evidence-based rehabilitation programs, they are less likely to recidivate; thus, programs can be an important part of a successful rehabilitative climate for prisons that *protect the safety of the public*.

Communities experiencing the pains of imprisonment

The under studied health consequences of individual inmates in prison can also indirectly affect the communities where most inmates will return to live. Western (2007) noted the consequences of incarceration go far beyond the walls of a prison:

> In the era of mass incarceration, whole communities are engulfed by this [incarceration] paradox. When the pains of imprisonment are felt not just inside the prison but also in its *penumbra* [emphasis added], the society of captives is perhaps broader than we ever imagined. (p. xxv)

Despite the lack of research that considers the indirect health consequences of incarceration, Wildeman and Wang (2017) concluded that non-incarcerated females who have partners in prison or children who have parents in prison experience significantly more mental and physical health problems than those who do not. In the same study, the authors discovered that communities with the highest prevalence of incarceration, which tends to be impoverished Black communities, also experience higher levels of health disparities than the communities who do not, with the strongest evidence implicating increased levels of HIV infections. The authors concluded that as the US incarcerates more individuals than other developed countries, the mass incarceration may have contributed to the lagging performance of health indicators such as life

expectancy (Wildeman & Wang, 2017). Moore and Elkavich (2008), determined the stress of family separation experienced by incarcerated individuals was a likely cause of recidivism and contributed to an increased risk of children being imprisoned for crimes they committed. Thus, the authors concluded:

> The circular pattern of prison and eventual release with limited rights has presented health risks that have gone unchecked by the public health system, creating a public health issue with no system to handle the outcome. (p. S179)

Therefore, to prevent the public health consequences that communities are suffering from high rates of incarceration, public health researchers must increase their efforts in this field, "because these are our communities and their stories are our stories" (Moore & Elkavich, 2008, p. S179).

Why should the public health community be involved in prison research?

The public health community should concern themselves with incarceration not only because of the impact it could generate on the health and health services for inmates but also for the contributions it could make in reducing the negative consequences of incarceration at the community level. The public health community can take the lead to reduce negative outcomes through prevention, scientific methods, its ability to coordinate interdisciplinary efforts (e.g., criminal justice, sociology, psychology, and medicine), and role in assuring access to services for those in need (Krug et al., 2002). According to Mercy, Rosenberg, Powell, Broome, & Roper (1993), public health compliments many of the reactive strategies already in use in criminal justice. Thus, by focusing research on the *climate of prevention* efforts for inmates in prison (i.e., rehabilitation and therapy), public health researchers could be successful in changing the behavioral, social, and environmental determinants that lead to health disparities and consequently recidivism. However, Woodall, de Viggiani, Dixey, and South (2016) stated that neither public health nor criminal justice alone can obtain positive social health outcomes. The

authors argued that partnerships that feature diverse academic and practitioner contributions, between criminal justice and public health, could result in positive improvements in population health outcomes.

Research Question

The research questions this study developed involved a correctional youth facility's effort to maintain an environment that was peaceful and safe for its inmates and staff, while also providing rehabilitative programing to reduce the likelihood of the inmates returning to prison after their release. Although it was clear at the beginning of the study of who I wanted to observe, the research question did not come into full focus until later. Most researchers advise (and insist) that you state the research question clearly and then decide the best method for investigating it. However, I took a different approach. As I spent time in the facility, I continuously revised my research question and my approach as the research continued. This allowed me to inductively let the evidence tell me the story and not try and fit my perspectives into my observations (Becker, 1998). It wasn't until I spent a couple of weeks in the correctional facility that I determined my research focus.

The research focus of this study was to explore the therapeutic climate, which included the relationships among and between correctional staff members (e.g., custody staff members, program staff members) and inmates, as well as its rules, leadership styles, buy-in, and architecture, as well as other structures. Therefore, the question this study answered was, what does a therapeutic climate look like in a correctional youth facility and how do the varied structures operate as a complex system? Furthermore, what are the meanings people hold for the structures they experience and how does leadership affect their behavior for rehabilitation? To answer these questions, I explored others as well, such as was there cohesiveness among and between staff members and inmates? Did buy-in by staff members and inmates influence the

therapeutic climate? What role did leadership play at all levels? What about the physical architecture of the facility? Although a therapeutic climate does not include methods of punishment (e.g., segregation), does punishment affect the therapeutic climate? What do the inmates believe is working in their rehabilitative experiences and why? The working hypothesis is that correctional staff members, as well as the inmates and the relationships among and between them, and all the structures that were just mentioned (as well as others) determine a therapeutic climate. In other words, a therapeutic climate, as conceptual field, is a complex nested system that is filled with symbolic meaning of all who occupy its authoritative space.

Significance of this study

The outcome of this study is a substantial increase in our limited knowledge and scholarship of what the current therapeutic climate is like in a maximum-security correctional youth facility that house together juveniles and adult prisoners. Specifically, this study developed a new theory for a therapeutic climate. The ecological model for therapeutic climate is a nested systems model that can be used as a starting point for what a therapeutic climate should resemble. I expect this theory to have a significant positive impact in contributing to the knowledge base needed by academics and state correctional institutions in the design, implementation, and evaluation of rehabilitation efforts for their inmates. The rehabilitative programing that occurred at a state's correctional youth facilities were efforts to reduce recidivism while also providing a safe living environment for inmates as well as staff. Thus, this study has the potential of significantly benefiting not just inmates and the institution of corrections, but also the communities where the inmates are likely to return, which makes this study one of public health.

Theoretical perspectives

Grounded theory

The goal of this study was to develop a new theory for a therapeutic climate. Thus, the study was inductive in its approach and used *grounded theory* to help with the organization of the vast amount of collected data (Charmaz, 2006). Although for the grounded theory purist, researchers are to enter the field as *blank slates* (Kelle, 2007), I realized this was not likely nor possible. I had reviewed much of the literature while developing my researcher questions. I used grounded theory as a means of tracking, coordinating, and developing my final theory (Charmaz, 2006).

Furthermore, this study did not test an existing theory. Nonetheless, I was still influenced by the knowledge I had gained throughout my lifetime. Thus, I intentionally recognized and coordinated the theoretical perspectives that I knew would influence this study. Specifically, I used Bourdieu's concepts of *field* and *habitus* and applied it to my existing knowledge of *systems thinking*, and *therapeutic climate*, while using the lens of a *constructivist structuralism* (Bourdieu, 1990). By writing and revealing where I received my inspiration, I believe I am providing transparency for my results. Furthermore, this approach allowed me to explain what I was learning in the field, so I could efficiently observe and collect my data.

Structural functionalism

Structural functionalism addresses questions that examine how social organization in society function as a *complex system*. The concept was developed by Durkheim (1858-1917), as he first wrote about it in his doctoral dissertation, *The Division of Labor in Society* (1933) [translated to English from *De la division du travail social*]. Durkheim (1933, 1997) wrote:

The word *function* [emphasis in original text] is used in two somewhat different ways. Sometimes it designates a system of living moments, divorced from their effects. At other times it expresses the corresponding relationships existing between these movements and certain needs of the organism. Thus, we speak of the digestive or respiratory functions, etc. But we also say that the digestion fulfils the function of controlling the absorption into the organism of fluid or solid substances intended to make good its losses. We likewise say that the respiration fulfils the function of introducing in animal tissues the gases necessary for sustaining life, etc. It is in this second connotation that we intend the term…Once this question has been resolved we shall be able to see that need is of the same kind as those to which correspond other rules of behaviour whose moral character is undisputed. (p.11)

Although structural functionalism was inspired from the natural sciences, it was adopted primarily by sociology to analogize the function between society and an organism. In the same way a natural scientist (e.g., biologist) may identify structures of a cell, and their function, sociologists who use structural functionalism will attempt to examine the structures of society and how they function (Brinkerhoff, Weitz, & Ortega, 2014).

The assumptions of structural functionalism

The researchers who use structural functionalism bring three assumptions to their research: (1) *stability*, the main criterion for social pattern evaluations is whether it contributes to society's maintenance; (2) *harmony,* like *parts* of an organism*,* the parts (i.e. *components*) of societies usually work harmoniously together for their collective good; and (3) *evolution*, changes happen primarily through evolution—the mostly peaceful adaptation of social structures and behavior patterns that lead to new needs and demands and the elimination of unnecessary structures (Brinkerhoff et al., 2014).

Using structural functionalism in research

Researchers who use structural functionalism study the *nature* and *consequences* of social structures and patterns of behavior (i.e. *complex systems*). They refer to the *positive* or *intended consequences* of complex systems as *functions* and the *harmful* or *unintended consequences* as *dysfunctions.* Structural functionalism also makes a distinction between *manifest* (recognized and intended) *consequences* and *latent* (unrecognized and unintended) *consequences* (Brinkerhoff et al., 2014).

As it concerns prison research, one study that used structural functionalism was Sykes' ethnography, *The Society of Captives* (1958, 2007). Crewe (2014) wrote about Sykes' ethnography:

> This glimpse of autobiographical detail, at a time when structural–functionalism was the dominant paradigm in sociological research, explains a great deal about the assumptions built into Sykes's analysis. (p. 395)

Throughout Sykes's text, structural functionalism can be seen. He described society's involvement as well as response to crime as *complex.* Sykes described how society's response to crime *changed*; thus, *evolved* creating new demands. As Sykes (1958, 2007) wrote:

> Yet in a modern, *complex* society, the punishment of the offender has grown *complex* and we are no longer satisfied to stone the individual for his crime. We have created a social organization—the prison—which stands interposed between the law-abiding community and the offender. We have *created new demands* concerning how the offender should be handled and we have *continually changed the limits* [all emphases added] in which the demands should be fulfilled. The result has been something of a jerry-built social structure, pieced together over the years and appealing to few. (pp. 38-39)

Western (2007) wrote of Sykes work, "Sykes puts the basic paradox of imprisonment better than most: you cannot promote free will—acting in self-control and foresight—by extinguishing it" (p. xxv).

Complex systems thinking: A structural-functional approach to research

Persig wrote in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974):

> If a factory is torn down but the rationality which produced it is left standing, then the rationality will simply produce another factory. If a revolution destroys a government, but the systematic patterns of thought that produces that government are left intact, then those patterns will repeat themselves…There's so much talk about the system. And so little understanding. (p. 44)

Once researchers see the relationships between structure and behavior, such as in society, an understanding of complex systems –what makes them produce unintended consequences, how they shift into positive intended outcomes—becomes clear. Societies change rapidly. They become increasingly complex, and complex systems thinking can help us analyze the systems we see before us (Meadows, 2008).

What is a *system*? A system is a set of components–people, cells, attitudes, rehabilitative programs–interconnected in a manner that it produces its own pattern of behavior over time. Extrinsic forces might be affecting the system (e.g., politics, resources, leadership), but the behavior of the system is its own and the response is seldom simple in its analysis (Meadows, 2008).

Whether you are attempting to understand a backyard vegetable garden, a family, or a prison, three fundamental questions must be answered to construct a complex systems analysis model: (1) what components should we include in the systems model?; (2) what components should we leave out; and (3) how should we present the relationships between the components?

There are three skills that can help answer these questions: (1) *10,000-meter thinking*, (2) *system-as-cause skill*, and (3) *filtering skills.* The 10,000-meter thinking skill involves viewing the system as though you were flying 10,000 meters above it. In other words, a *big-picture* perspective. The system-as-cause skill is giving the simplest explanation for the system. It should be devoid of any identification of extrinsic forces on the system and only identify causes in the *real world.* The filtering skills help to *filter* out non-essential components of reality when constructing the systems model (Richmond, 2010).

   An example used by Meadows (2008) involved a *slinky* doing its thing. Imagine you are holding a slinky from the top end with one hand. The other hand is supporting the slinky on the bottom end, preventing it from expanding and oscillating to the floor. Now, imagine you release your hand from the bottom end of the slinky. What happens? The slinky expands, oscillating down to the floor. The question is, what caused the oscillation of the slinky? In other words, what components would you include in your systems model of analysis and how do you illustrate the relationships between the components? The two most common identified components are gravity and removal of your hand (See Figure 1 for Slinky feedback loop diagram). However, how are the components related to each other? The removal of your hand is related to gravity in only one direction (i.e., hand removal → gravity). In other words, without the hand removal, gravity would not have influenced the slinky to drop and oscillate. However, was there a relationship in the other direction (i.e., gravity → hand removal)? Did gravity influence the hand removal? The answer, of course, is no. The relationship only went in one direction—removal of the hand caused the influence of gravity on the slinky in a non-linear manner. Therefore, both, gravity and the removal of your hand caused the slinky to fall and oscillate (Richmond, 2010). However, what about other possible contributing factors, such as temperature, wind, the material composition of the slinky, and what did the hand owner eat for breakfast? Certainly, it could be argued on some level that some or even all these factors contributed to the fall of the slinky—right? Not so fast,

recall the system-as-cause skill. We must stick with real-world components when analyzing the system, or our analysis will be too complicated and useless for analysis. Recall what Box (1980) wrote, "Essentially, all models are wrong, but some are useful" (p.383). So, let's keep our models useful.
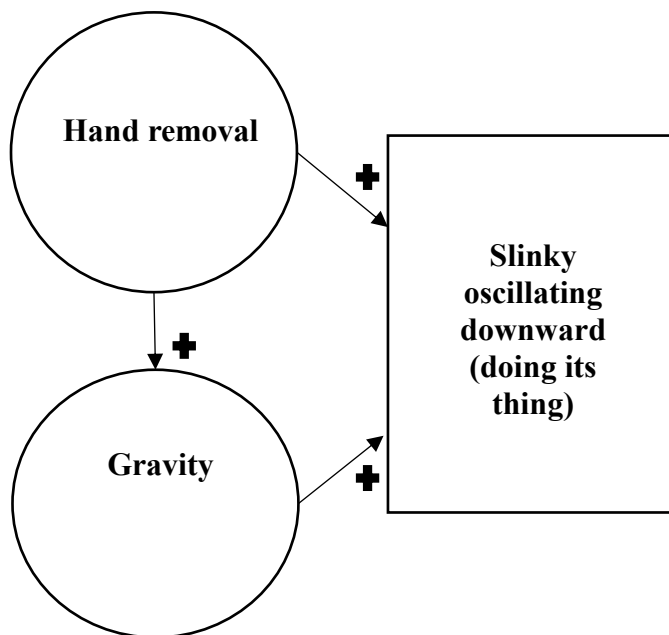
Figure 1. Slinky feedback loop diagram

When we apply systems thinking to a slinky, the idea is easy to comprehend. However, when we apply it to people, their behavior, or to companies, eco-systems, or crime, the analysis concept can be complicated (Meadows, 2008). For instance, recidivism is not the failing of the individual offender and no one individual can prevent it from occurring—not even the offender. It is only through understanding the multiple and varied causes (i.e., components) of recidivism, as a larger part of a complex system of society, that we can obtain an understanding. Thus, keeping with the example of recidivism and its causes, we can see numerous components, even in its simplest form. The components could include the economy, education, jobs, family, peer

influence, access to physical and mental health treatment, addiction to drugs and alcohol, culture, public opinion, and racism (Meadows, 2008). The list could easily go on.

The complexities of answering our questions can be overwhelming, even disconcerting. However, researcher have solved complex public health problems with this approach, such as the use of systems thinking to strengthen health care systems (Adam & de Savigny, 2012); the study of health and human rights (Mann, 2006); and the pandemic of physical inactivity (Kohl, Craig, Lambert, Inoue, Alkandari, Leetongin, & Kahlmeier, 2012). Complex systems thinking can help researchers in the understanding of the complexities of many public health issues. Its use can break down a complex system into identifiable (and measurable) factors that can then be used to understand its behavior (Atun, 2012).

Ecological model on health promotion programs: An example of system thinking analysis

An example theoretical model of the use of systems thinking analysis for public health researchers, specifically for those who study health promotion programs, can be seen in the late 1980s. McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, and Glanz (1988) criticized proponents who used *life-style interventions* for health promotion, as it promoted a *victim-blaming ideology* by ignoring the effects of *social influences on matters of health*. The authors promoted an *ecological model* for health promotion that concentrates on both the *individual* and *social environmental factors*. They argued their ecological model addresses the importance of interventions by *focusing on multiple tiers of individual and social factors, such as interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy*. McLeroy argued that these factors maintain unhealthy behaviors. Thus, the ecological model assumes that changes in the social environment will result in health improvements for individuals, and that the support of individuals in the community is necessary for implementing environmental changes (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, & Glanz, 1988).

The conceptual framework of McLeroy (1988) ecological model was inspired by the ecological perspective presented by Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979). In Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework, behavior is affected by, and effects various levels of influence. Brofenbrenner separates environmental influences into the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem levels of influence. The microsystem is the face-to-face influences in certain environments, such as family, informal social networks, or work relationships. The mesosystem includes the interrelationships among various environments where individuals are involved, such as home with family, schools, and church (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979). In other words, the mesosystem is the system of individuals within the microsystems (McLeroy et al., 1988). The exosystem consists of the forces that exist within the larger microsystems (i.e., populations) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979). Examples include crime rates which could influence the social stability of communities. Macro systems refer to the cultural beliefs and values that affect both the micro- and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979). Examples include the influences the code of conduct for prisoner inmates has on individual inmates who *snitch* on others (i.e., *snitches get stitches*). The subsystems not only affect behavior, but they could change as membership changes. Therefore, an ecological framework implies reciprocity between individuals and their environment (See Figure 2 for nested ecological model) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979).

Macrosystem

Cultural beliefs

Exosystem

Mesosystem

Social stability

Microsystem

Individual

Relationships

Interrelationship with environment
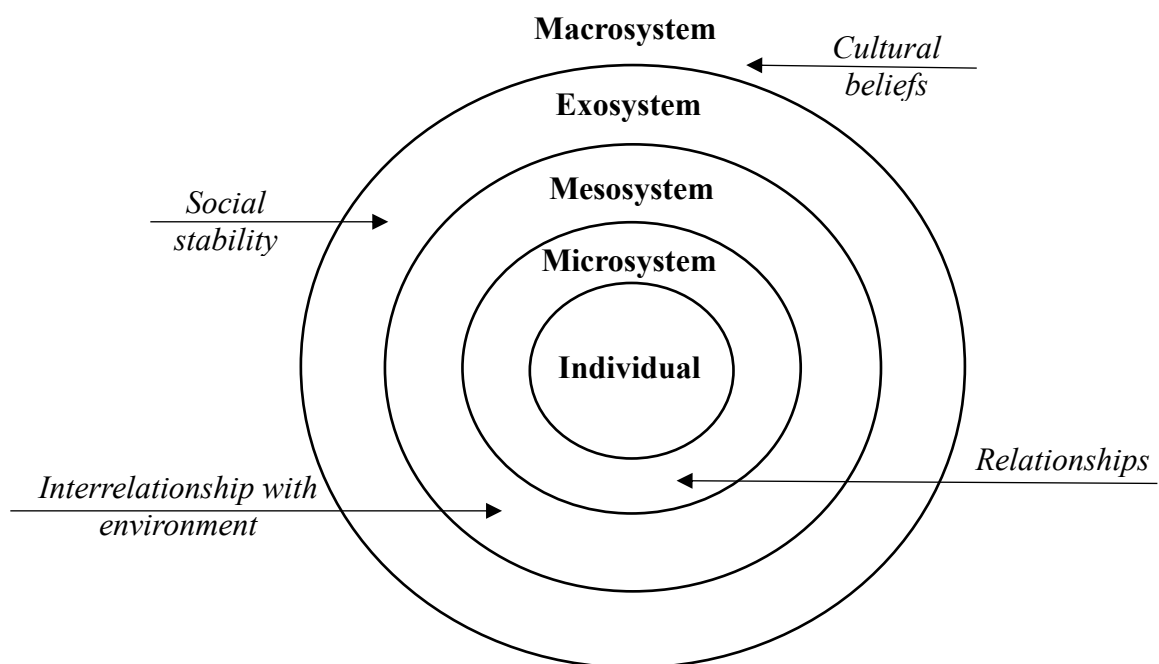
Figure 2. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

Whether it is Bronfenbrenner's (1977) or McLeroy's (1988) ecological model, the value of an ecological approach in public health is that it views human behavior being influenced and influencing the social environment. Thus, "ecological models are systems models, but they differ from traditional systems models by viewing patterned behavior—of individuals or aggregates—as outcomes of interest" (McLeroy et al., 1988, p. 355).

McLeroy's (1988) version of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model includes the following factors: (1) intrapersonal factor—characteristics of the individual (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, behavior, skills); (2) social networks factors (i.e., interpersonal networks) (e.g., family, friends, work group); (3) institutional factors—social institutions with organizational characteristics and formal and informal rules (e.g., church, social clubs); (4) community factors—relationships

among organizations and institutions; and (5) public policy—local, state, and federal laws (See Figure 2 for ecological model). For McLeroy:

> [The] assumption of these levels of analysis is that health promotion interventions are based on our belief, understandings, and theories of the *determinants of behavior*, and that these five levels of analysis *reflect the range of strategies* currently available for health promotion programming. (p. 355).

Lack of systems modeling in criminal justice research

Complex systems thinking, through its non-linear analyses, has proved valuable in public health. Leischow, Best, Trochim, Clark, Gallagher, Marcus, and Mathews (2008) argued that for improvements in population health to occur, researchers must understand the changing social structures and functions of society. Thus, reflecting the adaptive complexities in public health systems through complex systems thinking should be used. Despite the promise and evidence that complex systems thinking has accomplished for the improved understanding of the complex factors that contribute to health, criminal justice researchers have failed to use this form of analysis. According to Walker (2007):

> For almost a century, criminal justice/criminology research has been able to explain a consistently small amount of the variation in crime and an even smaller amount of the variation in most actions of the criminal justice system…Much of the reason for this may be because of the insistence on stodgily following the models of physical science in examining human behavior when we know human behavior is much too complex and variable to neatly conform to the parameters of linear models. Parallel to the inability of science to accurately predict the weather, research in human behavior has fallen far short of the elegant precision of Newtonian mechanics and Leibnizian calculus. (p. 556)

Walker called on criminology and criminal justice researchers to "implement the concepts, methods, and analyses of complex systems science with criminology theory" (p. 578) to achieve a better understanding of the changes in systems that effect change (e.g., the dramatic crime declines in the US since the 1990s; the causes of white-collar crime; understanding of public policies that affect sex offenders). Walker argued that complex systems thinking could move the field of criminology forward to understand "the way people, neighborhoods, and cities change over time" (p. 578).

Symbolic interactionism and constructivism

Structural functionalism focuses on social structures and the relationships among them. However, this tells us little about the relationship between individuals and social structures (Brinkerhoff et al., 2014). *Symbolic interactionist* examines the subjective meaning of human behaviors and the processes through which they develop and share the meanings (Stryker, 2008).

Constructivism is an extension of symbolic interactionism that proposes that what is considered *reality* is what people construct it to be (consciously or unconsciously) based upon their perception of experiences (Jonassen, 1994). Jonassen (1994) proposed eight characteristics that make the constructivist learning environment. (1) Constructivist learning environment consist of several representations of reality; (2) the multiple representations avoid simplification and represent the complexities of the real world; (3) it emphasizes knowledge construction of knowledge reproduction; (4) it emphasizes authentic tasks as meaningful context; (5) it provides real-world learning environments instead of deductive (predetermined) learning environments; (6) it encourages thoughtful reflection of experiences; (7) it combines context with content for the development of knowledge; and (8) it supports collaborative construction of knowledge through social interactions and not through competition.

Constructivism is often used as a method to understand how groups define deviance (Thio, Taylor, & Schwartz, 2013). For example, among inmates in prison, it is generally recognized by all inmates that *snitching* is a cardinal rule violation as *snitches get stitches* (Sykes, 1958, 2007). For structural functionalists, they view this rule and its meaning as a component to keep the system running cohesively (Sykes, 1958, 2007). However, for symbolic interactionist, their question is not based on a system of organizations. Instead it is based on the relationship people have with those organizations; thus, their question is what social interactions in the context of prison leads to the cardinal rule of *snitching*? According to Goffman, in the context of prison that controls nearly every aspect of inmates' behavior, the institution's relationship with the inmates is based on deprivation. In other words, the image of inmates is predetermined by the institution and not by the inmates. Thus, inmates struggle to maintain their sense of self-identity and social-identity among other inmates. Goffman argues that to regain at least some of what has been taken away, inmates might perform behaviors that break the prison's rules (e.g., extortion of other inmates, gambling, making *prison hooch*). The rule breaking behavior of inmates require that no other inmates snitch on them to the prison staff. If this rule is violated, it could have severe consequences for the *snitcher* as *snitches* get *stitches* (Goffman, 1962) Thus, for the constructivist, it is not a means of maintenance for a cohesive environment. Instead, it is the product of an institution that holds all power over others (Goffman, 1962)

Assumptions and criticism of symbolic interactionism

The assumptions of symbolic interactionism include, (1) *meanings are important*, behaviors, words, gestures can and often do have multiple definitions and symbolize various things. To understand behavior; therefore, we must learn what it means to the people we study. (2) *Meanings grow out of relationships*, when relationships change, as they often do, so do meanings, and (3) *meanings are negotiated*, people do not automatically accept meanings that

other people provided. Each person plays a role in negotiating the meaning that things have for them and others (Charon, 1979, 2007).

Research done using symbolic interactionism (and by extension constructivism) is often criticized because of the difficulty of remaining *objective* (Goffman, 1962). However*, objectivity* is not the goal for those who use symbolic interactionism, as they realize the world is *subjective*. In other words, the composition of society includes different individuals and groups interacting. As a result, they give meaning to the social structures that relate to their *subjective* experiences. The latter part, in the subjective experiences, is where symbolic interactionist and constructivist work to find answers for their questions (Brinkerhoff et al., 2014).

Using symbolic interactionism in research

Goffman's *Asylums* (1962) is an analysis of life in *total institutions* (e.g., prisons, mental hospitals, military barracks) where the everyday activities of inmates are regimented. Goffman used symbolic interactionism to learn the staff's perceptions of inmates in these total institutions, and what the inmates can make of the staff and of life in total institutions. In other words, the meanings the occupants of total institutions give to the social structures that relate to their subjective experiences. Goffman's thesis is that the total institution is the most important factor in forming (or reforming) the inmate, not his mental illness nor his status as a criminal, and the inmates' behaviors reflect those of their institution as well as in other types of total institutions.

Constructivist structuralism: Combining two "opposing" methods

Bourdieu is often considered to have been one of the most influential French scholars of the twentieth century. His interdisciplinary approach in research linked together the assumptions under anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. Many scholars consider his methods for achieving an understanding of the pluralistic dimensions of human behavior as innovative and profound (Laberge & Kay, 2002). Bourdieu has researched a broad range of topics that include an

ethnography of the Kabyle Berber of Algeria (Bourdieu, 1962), the study of museum attendance (Bourdieu, Darbel, & Schnapper, 1990), the uses of photography (Bourdieu, Boltanski, Castel, & Chamboredom, 1990), and current economic discourse (Bourdieu, 1999).

Bourdieu's social theory draws from what many scholars consider to be opposing forces of *structural functionalism* of Durkheim and *symbolic interactionism* of Weber (Brubaker, 1985; Laberge & Kay, 2002). As Laberge and Kay wrote (2002),

> Rather than being characterized as merely eclectic, however, Bourdieu is seen to have insightfully and creatively woven core ideas of Western thought into a synthesis of his own, keeping what he sees to be their respective strengths, and discarding weaknesses. (p. 240)

Bourdieu draws on Weber with his concept of *social class*, which are groups of people who have common life chance (i.e., those who were born into the group); and therefore, they are not real social groups. Bourdieu also draws on Weber's notions of *charisma* and *legitimacy* to construct his concept of *symbolic capital* (Bourdieu, 1991). Like Weber, Bourdieu defined symbolic capital as a form of power that is not perceived as power by others, but instead as a legitimate demand for obedience (Laberge & Kay, 2002).

As for the influences of Durkheim's structural functionalism, Bourdieu adopted his principle that science must disconnect from common sense and adopt an objective approach. However, Bourdieu separated from Durkheim's objectivism by integrating *subjectivist* concepts into his social theory. Bourdieu builds upon Durkheim's thoughts of the social origins of schemes of behavior and the relationship between symbolic meaning and social stratification (Bourdieu, 1991). Although Durkheim argued that integrative forces in a system produce a desired cohesive social order, Bourdieu argued it produces differentiation and domination in society (Laberge & Kay, 2002).

In his social theory of practice, Bourdieu builds upon what many social scientists believe to be the antagonist insights of objectivist and subjectivist. He transcends their alleged oppositions that have characterized the sociological traditions, such as structure and agency, determinism and free will, and macro analysis and micro analysis. Bourdieu forged together his conceptual apparatus which he termed *habitus* and *field* (Bourdieu, 1991) These concepts have the purpose of researchers achieving an understanding of the relationships between *social agents* and their *social structure* (Laberge & Kay, 2002).

Field

For Bourdieu, to exist is to determine where one socially exists compared to others. A field is a conceptual setting in which agents and their social positions are together, and the power structure in and between social agents in the field form human behavior. As Bourdieu (1995) wrote,

> A field is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that drastically determine the positions they will take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field. (p. 39)

Bourdieu's definition may not be as simple as he suggests; thus, let us break it down into its inherent qualities. *Field of forces*, is an abstract setting where power operates within its boundaries; *agents occupy positions* that are dependent upon the investment of agents (individuals or institutions); *position-takings*, agents select their position from which they play; and *aimed at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces,* each agent attempts to shape (or reshape) the field that suits their own interest (Webb, 2012).

Habitus

Why agents chose to participate in specific fields and to compete for what is effectively valueless capital or "misrecognized as capital" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 118), can be explained by *habitus*. Habitus refers to the way a person's cultural history disposes them to certain behaviors, values, and tastes that are idiosyncratic to themselves (Bourdieu, 1990). As Bourdieu (1977) wrote, habitus is "history turned into nature" (p. 78). In other words, as Webb (2012) wrote, "That is to say, what seems to me to be a normal and necessary way of being is neither normal nor necessary, but simply the result of the learning I have done in my life so far; learning that has become incorporated within me, become part of my being" (p. 7).

Constructivist Structuralism

For Bourdieu, the focus of his research was not on either the structures or the individuals. Instead, it was on the processes and the means of their construction. When Bourdieu was asked to label his approach, he selected the term "constructivist structuralism" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 14) to indicate his focus on the social construction of individuals and social groups, and how the structures came to be.

To apply constructivist structuralism to a study of a prison's therapeutic climate

All agents in the field of a prison setting will possess their own field and habitus. For inmates, they might share a belief that they want to eventually live a life of freedom in the outside world. For staff members in charge of rehabilitative programs, they might share the belief that rehabilitation of inmates may prevent the likelihood of their return to prison. Custody staff members might share the notion that only methods of security and order maintenance are useful for the management of inmates. Regardless, the positions of the various agents in prison and their own habitus (values, tastes, perceptions) can be effectively used in an exploration of a therapeutic climate. Consider the *therapeutic climate* as Bourdieu's *field*, and the preferences, values,

perceptions of the inmates and staff members as *habitus*. Bourdieu's framework can point us to not only the components of the complex system a therapeutic climate makes, but also illuminate knowledge on the relationships that occur in its sphere (i.e., field) and how they came to be. When agents operate with the field where their habitus was born, they are like "fish in water" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). However, as they are just living in their home environment, they are not conscious of the water or the reasons for their behavior (Webb, 2012). Johnston (2016) argued that by using Bourdieu's framework for the study of the complex relationship between structure and agency, as they pertain to offenders' motivation can "help criminological researchers overcome current theoretical limitations by introducing an integrated framework that is testable and that allows for a deeper understanding" (p. 11). Veenstra and Burnett (2014) posited the use of Bourdieu's framework in public health research, could provide us with valuable "insights into how and why people 'chose' to engage in health-related behaviors. Pierre Bourdieu's [framework], predicated upon the notions of field, capital, and habitus, is exemplary in this regard" (p. 209).

Study participants

This study occurred in a state correctional youth facility that was designed to house male inmates who were adjudicated by state courts for serious felonies. The offenses the inmates committed, include murder, assault, rape, robbery, burglary, and serious drug related offenses. The age range of the inmates housed in the correctional youth facility were 15 to 21 years (and ten months). Once inmates reach the age of 21 years (and ten months) they were either released or transferred to a traditional adult prison. This study only included inmates who were 19 years or older, which resulted in a sample of 28 inmate participants.

The other participants for this study were the correctional youth facility's staff members. The staff members were segregated into two defining categories. The first was the custody staff

members, who could be compared to the traditional prison guard or corrections officer. The other group was the program staff members who were responsible for the delivery and evaluation of all rehabilitative programs. The sample size of the custody staff members was 20 participants. There were 3 program staff member participants.

Conclusion

All correctional facilities face the dilemma of determining and utilizing the best practices to maintain social order while also reducing the likelihood of recidivism. Prison wardens often differ in their opinions of deciding which strategy to use. These differences lead to unavoidable questions. Should they concentrate their efforts on security, do they focus on rehabilitation, or do they attempt a balance between the two?

Prison researchers face a similar dilemma, as they try to decide which research method can best help resolve the many issues that prisons face. For instance, how do researchers explore the issues of rehabilitation and security of inmates? As left unresolved, these issues could continue to leave correctional institutions dealing with the same cyclical problem of recidivism.

This study attempts to address the dilemmas. It did so through an ethnographic exploration of a therapeutic climate of a state correctional youth facility. This youth facility housed both juveniles and adults. This study examined the social relationships among and between correctional staff members and inmates and explored how these components affected the facility's *therapeutic climate* over space (conceptual and physical) and time. The purpose of this research was to extend our limited knowledge of the rehabilitative processes of juveniles imprisoned in an adult facility. Through an examination of a therapeutic climate in a correctional youth facility, we could be better prepared to deal with problems like recidivism, which affect us all. In other words, the significance of this study has the potential to reach far beyond the concrete walls that protect society from what many consider the most dangerous children offenders.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Therapeutic climate

The multiple and varied relationships that exist within a prison, as well as the complexities of the setting make the therapeutic climate. Many factors influence the outcome of programs that are designed to rehabilitate offenders, such as commitment and support of leadership, peer and mentor support, training of program staff, and the physical architecture of the space where the therapies exist (Beech & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005). Beech and Fordham (1997) suggested these factors make up the therapeutic climate, as they have "an important influence on the quality and impact" for offenders and their rehabilitative outcomes (p.235). MacKenzie and Livesley (1986) argued there are additional factors that comprise a therapeutic climate, such as group cohesion, leadership support, rules, enforcement of rules, anger and aggression, instillation of hope, and innovation of programs. They argue these factors should be examined not individually, but rather together as a complex system.

Definition

The therapeutic climate is a subjective concept, not a theory, which is the reason for its applicability in prison settings or otherwise. It has an abstract imagery that promotes analysis of current and changing patterns of social behavioral outcomes as they relate to various environments, at different scales of time and space, with various occupants (Beckett, Beech, Fisher, & Fordham, 1994). In the late 1950s, Wilmer (1958) wrote an article to define therapeutic community, which is akin to a therapeutic climate. Wilmer wrote:

The immediate task facing those of us who believe in its efficacy is, as I see it one of

making the intangible atmosphere tangible—descriptively, statistically, and graphically—

so that the failures and successes with the therapeutic community approach can be analyzed and the procedures perfected. We need to work toward a clearer understanding of what this method is, psychologically, psychoanalytically, and psychiatrically; to identify, define, and study significant elements of the therapeutic milieu as objectively and critically as possible. (p. 824)

The therapeutic community, as provided by Wilmer represents efforts to understand patient management. The role of the participants is to be sick. However, in the setting of rehabilitation, the role becomes the display of acceptable behavior. In the setting of punishment only, custody staff members view participants as dangerous that they need to control. They accomplish control with methods of fear with chains, handcuffs, shackles, and segregation. With the sharing of responsibilities between program and custody staff members in a therapeutic community, the competencies and capacities of participants are based on combinations of numerous actual events and not the perspective fears. It uses an interdisciplinary approach that combines psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Wilmer argued it "strives to get away from the use of locks, mechanical restraints, punishment, and suppression of ideas and feelings in the belief that these practices do not serve therapeutic ends" (p. 825). Instead, the therapeutic community fosters cohesion (i.e., without fear and distrust) in which communication is open between the two groups. It continually wants improvements in not only the outcomes but in the processes as well. The therapeutic community solves the best as it can the problems of the participants through interpersonal relationships. It does this by helping the participants identify themselves through social groups and through research-based methods of behavioral change to alter their social attitudes; thus, their roles in relationships with others. Wilmer realized:

This type of management opens the possibilities of therapy through social interaction with the staff-patient involvement affording potentialities for social development and identification with the group. It also focuses attention on treatment at the beginning of

hospitalization (in an admission ward) which is a necessary parallel to studies of therapy

and patient management, resocialization and rehabilitation of the long-term patient. It is

also, in a sense, part of the same problem and could ameliorate the magnitude of the

enduring hospital problems in patient management. (p. 824)

Using Wilmer's definition for the therapeutic community, which he also referred to as the

therapeutic milieu, consider the therapeutic climate as a complex system of social processes

within an institution (e.g., prison) where the purpose is to provide rehabilitative services that meet

the needs of its participants. The therapeutic climate includes the social interrelationships

between and within various groups that make a community (i.e., staff members and participants).

However, it also comprises the formal and informal rules everyone lives by, enforcement of the

rules, peer and mentor support, leadership styles at all levels, training of staff, physical

architecture of the space, group cohesion, and whether the basis of the programs offered derives

from research-based evidence or otherwise. Although the therapeutic climate does not include

involuntary confinement with the use of punishment, security, and control (i.e., punishment

climate), this opposing climate absolutely could affect it. In prison, the two different climates

(i.e., therapy and punishment) probably occur together, at the same time, with the same people

(program participant and inmates), and in the same physical setting. Thus, to ignore one climate

while only observing the other, could result in incomplete research of the complex system.

Past therapeutic climate research

The number of studies that have attempted to examine the therapeutic climate in criminal

justice institutions is sparse. The few completed have concentrated on the rehabilitation of sex

offenders. Despite its rarity, these studies have produced insightful results that reflect how

participants embodied the relationships, authority, and physical space of the therapeutic climate.

For instance, the Sex Offender Treatment Evaluation Project report by Becket, Beech, Fisher, and

Fordham (1994) had the following objectives: (1) describe the developmental characteristics of

sex offenders who underwent therapy in several programs; and (2) evaluate the extent to which these programs successfully reduced the likelihood of recidivism. The study concluded that for rehabilitative programs to be successful, the delivery or rehabilitative efforts must be through cognitive and behavioral group therapy sessions that are based in science. The cognitive component targeted the participants, distorted pattern of reasoning, while the behavioral component focused on teaching them to control or modify the behaviors that led the participants to commit sexual acts of violence.

Moreover, much of the positive behavioral change of the participants was accomplished through them challenging each other to succeed. In this therapeutic climate, the staff members and participants collaborated in the therapeutic process (Becket et al., 1994). Behroozi (1992) argued a similar point, as he noted that peer influence among the participants was far more effective in reducing the likelihood of reoffending than the efforts of staff members alone. Beech and associates (1994) argued for a therapeutic climate to be successful in the reduction of recidivism, the treatment programs must have highly cohesive relationships between and within the participants and program staff. The rehabilitative programs must also be well organized, led, have socially agreeable codes of conduct, and instill a sense of hope in the participants' future. In other words, a successful therapeutic climate included many interrelated factors operating as a complex system, which is vital for successful outcomes. Beech and Hamilton-Giachritsis, (2005) concluded there is a clear relationship between group cohesion, attitudes among program leaders, training of program leaders, and the effectiveness of the rehabilitative programs. However, all the authors also stipulated that further therapeutic climate research for offenders is needed, as this specific field of research is understudied.

As the definition of therapeutic climate is conceptual and abstract, the rest of this literature review will take a structural constructivist approach and highlight the various components the therapeutic climate makes and the meaning the components have for people. Do

not construe the following text of containing the only components (and meanings) of the complex system of the therapeutic climate. It simply is a starting point for us to achieve an understanding of its complexities. I will begin by revealing the literature of the classic prison research done by Goffman (1961) and Sykes (1958, 2007). Each taking a different approach in their research (constructivist and structural functionalist). I will follow this with a review of research completed on prison architecture, rehabilitative prison programs and the use of incentives to achieve participation. Next, I present into the literature of prison staff with the roles they provide, the conflicts they experience, and the typologies others have made for them. Last, I will present the topic of leadership of not only the warden but for others who have leadership roles in prison.

Society of captives

The structural-functional approach to prison research

Sykes (1958, 2008) described his work in The Society of Captives as "the structural-functional perspective on the prison" (p. 143) for two reasons: (1) focuses on the structure of the prison as research of an entire system; and (2) the ways in which the cultural influences of the prison, such as the beliefs, norms, and behaviors of both the inmates and staff "functioned to maintain the prison as a system" (p. 143). Sykes was astonished that somehow, as a social system that involved several complex interactions, the system kept moving forward. In other words, the climate of the prison was an "understandable response to the rigors of confinement, specifically addressed to the problems of prison life" P. 143)

The function of prison

Sykes (1958, 2007) described prison through the lens of structural functionalism. He went into great detail in his descriptions of the architecture, the roles of custodians (i.e., staff members) and inmates, and the function of the institution. Sykes reflected on the density of the numerous spaces in prison, each having its purpose. As Sykes wrote, "Within the prison wall lie

13 ½ acres of buildings, yards, and passageways. Cellblock offices, barbershops, laundry, industrial shops, chapel, exercise yards, dining halls, kitchens, and the death house are all jammed together" (p. 3). However, Sykes explained that the physical space was not the only thing that was compressed, as he wrote:

> The society of prisoners, however, is not only physically compressed; it is psychologically compressed as well, since prisoners live in an enforced intimacy where each man's behaviour is subject both to the constant scrutiny of his fellow captives and the surveillance of the custodians. It is not solitude that plagues the prisoner but life en masse. (p. 4)

Sykes argued that prisons impose social order on their inmates through "the massive body of regulations which erected as a blueprint for behavior within the prison and to which the inmate must respond" (Sykes, 1958, 2007, p. 13). For Sykes, social order is not yet a reality in prison but instead "it is a statement of what should be" (p. 13). Thus, social order represents a means or a method of obtaining specific goals or tasks. Sykes listed four goals (i.e., tasks) of prison: (1) the task of custody (i.e. security); (2) the task of internal order (i.e., order maintenance); (3) the task of self-maintenance (i.e., inmate labor); and (4) the task of punishment.

Pains of imprisonment

Although Sykes never personally approved of the existing function of prison, he did observe it operate as a cohesive complex system. With the function prisons had, it operated as expected. However, the obtainment of the function of prison was at the personal expense of the inmates. As Sykes noted "The inmates are agreed that life in the maximum security prison is depriving or frustrating in the extreme" (p. 63). Sykes referred to the deprivations as the pains of imprisonment and were negotiated "by society as humane alternatives to the physical brutality" (p. 64) that society used in the past. Sykes considered the pains of imprisonment as typologies of

control used by prison staff that occur at various fields and argued that not being able to consume and participate in the normal round of activities of the outside world affected inmates at the "deepest levels of personality" (p. 69). For Sykes, deprivation of liberty occurred as the inmates are isolated from the outside world and this isolation acted as a constant reminder of their negative status in society. The deprivation of goods and services affected inmates' self-identities. As in daily life outside of prison, individuals draw a significant amount of their identity from the material goods and activities they consume. In prison, however, this is not possible. Inmates also experience deprivation of autonomy as they are subjected to significant levels of control. Even the most mundane and trivial aspects of life are controlled by staff and this deprivation of liberty can lead to immense frustration among them. Inmates live in close proximity to each other, some of whom may be dangerous and pose a continuous threat. For Sykes, inmates are not likely to depend on staff for protection, as this may result in making them vulnerable to violence, as at some point staff will not be around for their protection. Thus, inmates must provide their own measures of security. Sykes referred to this as the deprivation of security (p. 76). Consequently, inmates to determine if their peers can protect themselves or are a good mark for extortion test each other. As Sykes wrote:

> If he should fail [the test], he will thereafter be an object of contempt, constantly in danger of being attacked by other inmates who view him as an obvious victim, as a man who cannot or will not defend his rights. (pp. 77-78)

However, if inmates succeed in earning a reputation of toughness, others who want to elevate their status in prison might challenge them. Thus, whether inmates succeed or fail in defending their status, they are still vulnerable to attack by others, "and no man stands assured of the future" (Sykes, 2007, p. 78).

Perception of authority

Sykes (1958, 2007) posited that prison is fraught with struggles over power and authority. As without recognition of authority, the climate of prison can go from calm and cooperative to chaotic and stressful, both having its consequences. Prison administrators (i.e., wardens) appear to be able to exercise virtually all power, as the laws and norms that apply to how prisons are managed only limit this power. Furthermore, prison administrators exercise their power almost completely out of the view of inmates. When administrators make changes in prison, it is not usually they who implement them at the ground level. Instead, they order those of lower rank to follow their instructions (Sykes, 1958, 2007). Thus, it is staff members of the lowest rank that implement changes, and it is they who inmates see and are in direct contact with; therefore, it is the staff members of the lowest rank who receive feedback from the inmates. However, the perceived authority of these staff members by inmates is restricted. Inmates are less likely to recognize their authority and may display this with behaviors of disrespect towards them, such as not following staff members orders. This misconduct might leave the prison vulnerable to a lack of security, order, and labor, which staff members of any rank cannot tolerate as this environment jeopardizes their safety as well as the function of the prison. Thus, low ranking staff members may use the means of punishments to achieve wanted inmate behaviors (Sykes, 1958, 2007).

Staff members' methods of the stick instead of the carrot could include the restrictions of yard time, room restrictions, or even worse, total segregation (i.e., the hole). Indeed, staff members have the authority to forcefully coerce the inmates to counter their lack of respect for them; however, as many staff members quickly learn, this is often an inefficient strategy for obedience and could result with an escalation in violence. Put differently, staff member trying to counter negative inmate behavior with negative punishments is like trying to light up a dark room with darkness. Inmates who experience an imbalance of strategies of punishment than incentives might be under greater levels of personal distress than they would under a more cooperative

setting. The stressful climate could lead to tension not just between staff and inmates, but also between inmates. As with the behavior of staff members, inmates also use negative strategies, such as violence, or the threat of violence, to obtain respect among themselves, which could lead to inmates fearing for their safety (Sykes, 1958, 2007). Inmates who are fearful are more likely to fashion weapons (e.g., stabbing instruments made from toothbrushes, urine and feces to splash staff members). Staff members realize the dangers of a stressful climate; therefore, some staff use forms of social reciprocity in their relationships with certain inmates. They show favoritism among inmates for whom their peer inmates respect as leaders. Staff, in trade for order and security from inmates, might overlook minor rule violations from inmate leaders who help them obtain their goals (Sykes, 1958, 2007). For instance, staff members might ignore nuisance violations of inmate leaders possessing extra blankets or not having their shirts properly tucked into their trousers. However, this strategy goes against the grain of pains of imprisonment with its many deprivations; thus, it can come with unintended consequences. It could expose some staff to the vulnerabilities of corruption or being controlled by inmates who hold authority over them (Sykes, 1958, 2007). Inmates realize staff members are violating formal prison rules to achieve cooperation; thus, unless the staff provides additional incentives, such as drugs, alcohol, or extra canteen (i.e., prison store merchandise), inmates could threaten staff members with snitching or ratting them out.

Inmate code

Inmates have their own set of rules, albeit informal, they live by that Sykes termed the *inmate code*. For Sykes, the inmate code was not an exact description of how inmates should behave. Instead, it was an ideal pattern of approved conduct for inmates to live by. By far, the most known and valued code among the inmates was the restriction of sharing information between inmates and staff members. As Sykes wrote:

Since the most trivial piece of information may, all unwittingly, lead to another inmate's downfall, the ban on communication is extended to cover all but the most routine matters. The bureaucracy of custodians and the population of prisoners are supposed to struggle in silence. (p. 87)

The word rat or squealer are the argot labels inmates used for inmates "who betrays his fellows by violating the ban on communication" (p. 87). The violation of the inmate code, such as being a rat, should not be viewed as a violation only on another individual. If this was so, the consequences of the violation would be completed by only the individual who was violated. Instead, as Sykes pointed out, it is a violation upon the entire inmate community.

Regarding a rat, it is the most serious violation an inmate can do to the entire inmate community, as Sykes wrote:

The rat [emphasis in original text] is a man who has betrayed not just one inmate or several; he has betrayed inmates in general by denying the cohesion of prisoners as a dominant value when confronting the world of officialdom. (p. 87)

Aside from being a rat, there are other serious code violations. For instance, inmates are not allowed to be too cooperative with the staff. As Sykes wrote, an inmate who takes "on the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of the custodians" …"is labeled a center man [emphasis in original text]" (p.89). They are inmates who others view as sharing the viewpoints of the staff. As one inmate said in Sykes study, "He'll [center man] bend over backwards to do it [cooperate with staff]. He will go out of his way. I have one word that seems to fit all of them—servile" (p. 90). Sykes expressed the profound differences between rat and center man with:

If the rat is a man who pretends to be on the outside of the inmates and yet betrays them, the center man is a man who makes no secret of where his sympathies lie. His disloyalty is open. And if the rat [emphases in original text] is hated for his deception and his

hypocrisy, the center man [emphases in original text] is despised for his slavish

submission. (p. 90)

Whether the inmate is a rat or a center man he has "destroyed the unity of inmates" (Sykes, 1958,

2007, p. 90). The inmate population is the only place inmates can go for prestige, approval, or

acceptance; thus, inmates who violate the inmate code have condemned themselves always

during their length of confinement in prison (Sykes, 1958, 2007). As violations of the inmate

code are negotiated as serious defilements against the inmate community, the penalty is often

severe as well.

Riots: The most dramatic prison crisis

To allow inmates to gather freely from the confinements of their cells is viewed by many

as a potential disaster waiting to inevitably occur (Sykes, 1958, 2007). For Sykes, this critical

mass of inmates leads many to believe that what concerns them the most about prisons may be

realized. Prison riots are the most feared of all unexpected events as they are an indicator of the

state's inability to control inmates. Thus, the fear of the state failing to meet its most fundamental

premise on which prisons are founded upon could end with changes in the organizational

structure of the prison itself and the manner it prevents riots from ever occurring (Sykes, 1958,

2007).

Sykes argued that the conditions under which a prison exists are not a system of self-

correcting mechanisms. Prisons do not automatically change when there are challenges to its

equilibrium of security and order. Disturbances, such as small fights, do occur in prison as prison

staff members expect them to. However, it is also known that when the disturbances reach a level

that it becomes common in the everyday life of prison, then they can result "in a progressive

departure from equilibrium" (p.111) that increase the likelihood of the outbreak of more serious

acts of violence, such as riots (Sykes, 1958, 2011).

Sykes recognized the difficulty of determining when a riot has occurred. Some violent behaviors could be considered as a minor melee by prison administrators; however, it could be viewed as a full-blown riot by others. Thus, an examination of riot indicators is often completed by officials after the event, such as the number of inmates involved, the amount of planning of the participants, and their intent for the violence (e.g., escape, protest, retaliation).

To prevent riots from occurring (again), Sykes observed the formation of inmate councils that had the function to increase the communication and cooperation between inmates and prison officials. The following are examples of rules that govern the relationships between the prison and the inmate council. (1) Inmate councils are recognized as elected representatives of the inmate population; (2) the members of the council will include one member of each housing wing and one representative from other recognized groups; (3) it is the duty of the inmate council to learn the opinions and recommendations of the inmate population; and (4) the inmate council shall be allowed to interview members of the inmate population without the surveillance of prison staff. Initially, Sykes observed the staff members sincerely listened and attempted to answer the grievances and requests the council had. However, Sykes observed the relationship quickly deteriorated when the inmate council requested an increase in representation on the council and visitation of inmates in segregation.

Who is to blame when riots occur?

For Sykes, "A riot is not one criminal tried in court, unknown, unnoticed, and then quietly placed behind a wall" (p. 120). A riot is a reminder of "society's decision to punish some to protect the many" (p. 120). It is a call that the "imprisoned criminal, unreformed, has gained the upper hand" (p. 120). Thus, riots, or the fear of them, holds much power, as they are a political issue that can be embarrassing to the warden in charge. Prison wardens and staff members place the blame of riots on not themselves, but instead, on the inmates. As Sykes wrote of one staff member's description of the inmates blamed for starting a riot:

[T]he prisoners in 5 Wing simply needed some chance event to explode into violence. As one guard has said, "To keep those men in there was like trying to hold lions in cages designed for rabbits." And explaining why inmates do not riot is more difficult than explaining why they do. (p. 121)

Sykes pointed out that the committee which investigated the riot was more sophisticated in their analysis. They identified prison conditions might have played a role in starting the riot, such as:

Overcrowding, idleness, heavy turnover in the custodial force, archaic disciplinary practices, inadequacies of the physical plant, heterogeneity of the inmate population, indifferent rehabilitation program, careless work assignments, inadequate salaries for guards, shortage of necessities—all were listed as "basic" causes creating a "feeling of bitterness"…that was widespread among the prisoners. Any spark might have set it off…by the slow process of spontaneous combustion, or through deliberate lighting of the fuse by the inmate agitators who were determined to set off an explosive demonstration. (Sykes, 1958, 2007, p. 121)

Thus, Sykes surmised that prison riots are not the result of any single causal component. Riots are themselves a complex system that is part of a larger system, that is the prison. However, despite the explanation being devoid of blaming a single scapegoat or recognizing that violence in the complex system of prison have their roots in the "regime imposed by the custodians on their captives as well as the characteristics of the inmates themselves", …"this explanation is unsatisfactory because it fails to give an account of how prison reaches the point of explosion" [emphasis in original text] (p. 122).

Sykes discussed the effect of the "effort of the custodians to "tighten up" the prison" (p. 124) could have played a causal role in riots. Sykes highlighted the historical changes of prison management of the 1930s and 1940s that led to the riot he observed in 1952:

By the late 'Thirties and late 'Forties, the prisoners regulated much of their own affairs. Job assignments and cell assignments, recreational activities and the granting of special "privileges", all had gradually slipped into the hands of the inmate population. (Sykes, 1958, 2007, p. 123)

Many within the prison system viewed the changes as passing the control of prisons to the inmates and efforts were made by prison officials to reverse the transition to regain the control of inmates. As Sykes wrote, "And it is this turning point in the administration of the prison which apparently marks the beginning of the tension and unrest that finally flowered in the insurrections of 1952" [emphases in original text] (p. 123). Thus, the efforts made to regain control resulted in the temporary loss of it through a riot (Sykes, 1958, 2007).

Prison reform

Sykes (1958, 2007) wrote of a potential problem prison could have that serve only the functions of security- and order-maintenance of inmates:

If extensive regulations, constant surveillance, and swift reprisals are used, prison officials are likely to run headlong into the supporters of reform who argue that such procedures are basically inimical to the doctor-patient relationship which should serve as the model for therapy (p. 17).

Thus, to accommodate the conflicting roles of security, order, and rehabilitation, wardens must somehow develop policies to simultaneously fulfill all the objectives. As Sykes (1958, 2007) wrote:

Somehow, he must resolve the claims that the prison should exact vengeance, erect a specter to terrify the actual or potential deviant, isolate the known offender from the free community and effect a change in the personality of his captives so that they gladly

follow the dictates of the law—and in addition maintain order within his society of

prisoners… (p. 18)

Sykes argued, as the means to achieve the conflicting goals of security, order, and rehabilitation

remain unknown, "we might do well to look at the inconsistency of the philosophical setting in

which the prison rests" (p. 18).

Sykes made four other comments that concern prison reform. First, Sykes realized that as

a society, we will always have prisons:

We will not "break down the walls" as some have urged: we will not eliminate these

"useless relics of barbarianism": we will not get rid of the prison whether we think of it

as the beautiful gate of the Temple or as that black flower of civilization, as it was

described by Hawthorn—at least, not in the short-run future. (p. 132)

Thus, if we are not to eradicate its presence, "we may try to change the nature of the prison" (p.

132). Second, Sykes realized that prison is an authoritarian community and it will always be.

However, order maintenance "does not necessarily require that excess of caution which seeks to

eliminate the very possibility of any "incident" without regard for the inmate's fearful loss of

self-determination" (p. 133). Others outside of confinement need to accept the fact that problems

inside of prison do not necessarily equate a total loss of order or "outrageous neglect" on the part

of prison officials (p. 133). In other words, the prison environment does not need to be a harshly

repressive climate for the achievement of security and order to be had. Third, Sykes pointed out

that it is unrealistic to expect the prison to successfully rehabilitate 100 percent of its inmates. As

Sykes wrote, "Plans to increase the therapeutic effectiveness of the custodial institution must be

evaluated in terms of the difference between what is done now and what might be done—and the

differences may be dishearteningly small" (p. 133). Because improvements have been "so

painfully slow and uncertain in the past" (p. 134), people have become wary and cynical of the

future. Thus, "by expecting less and demanding less we may achieve more, for a chronically disillusioned public is apt to drift into indifference" (p. 134). Forth, Sykes recognized that the social interactions in prison "are part of a complex social system" (p. 134) that has its own culture (i.e., norms, values, and climate). Thus, any effort to reform the prison—thus to reform and rehabilitate the inmates—that ignores the social complexities of the prison "is as futile as the labors of Sisyphus" (p. 134). The efforts to change the behaviors of inmates with deterioration rather than rehabilitation should be recognized, at best, as ineffective, and at worse, as a violation that affects all of society (Sykes, 1958, 2007).

Asylums

A symbolic interactionist approach to prison research

Goffman never elaborated or contributed to the methodological how-to-do-it literature (Shalin & Fine, 2009). Taking a positivistic approach in evaluating his research would likely result in unpublished papers (Shalin & Fine, 2009). However, this was not the intention of Goffman or for that matter many who use symbolic interactionism in their approach. In other words, they are not concerned with revealing what is occurring; instead, they want to answer why it is occurring. Goffman points to the importance of "fine-grained studies of the in situ" (Samra-Fredericks & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2008, p. 665). As Sandstrom (2014) noted, "The ordinary is anything but boring and has the potential to generate important knowledge about social interaction" (p. 135). The fast research article has become the default to slow research (Sandstrom, 2014). Goffman raised his concern of the restriction institutions have placed on completing slow research like his:

> [T]his freedom and opportunity to engage in pure research was afforded me in regard to a government agency, through the financial support of another government agency, both of which were required to operate in the presumably delicate atmosphere of Washington,

and this was done at a time when some universities in this country, the traditional

bastions of free inquiry, would have put more restrictions on my efforts. (p. xi)

Total institution

Through the lens of symbolic-interactionism and by extension, constructivism, Goffman

(1961) argued there are several types of total institutions in society (e.g., homes for the sick,

mental hospitals, prisons, and military barracks). However, every institution "captures something

of the time and interest of its members and provides something of a world for them" (p. 4). For

prisons, which is the only total institution we will discuss, they have the function to be "organized

to protect the community against what are felt to be intentional dangers to it, with the welfare of

the persons thus sequestered not the immediate issue" (p. 5).

Within the outside world, a basic social arrangement is that individuals "sleep, play, and

work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an

over-all rational plan." (Goffman, 1961, p. 6). For total institutions, however, they operate outside

this arrangement by breaking down the segregated barriers. First, all aspects of life occur in the

same sphere under one authority. Second, everyone is bound together and made to do everything

as a group. Third, all activities are on a rigorous schedule. Finally, all these undertakings are part

of a plan to meet the official goals of the institution (Goffman, 1961).

Inmates and staff

For Goffman (1961), there are two groups of individuals in a total institution: the inmates

and supervisory staff. Inmates live in the institution and have restricted access to the outside

world. Staff often work in the institution for eight hours a day and are socially integrated with the

outside world. The perceptions between the two groups tend to be of hostile stereotypes. As

Goffman wrote, "staff often seeing inmates as bitter, secretive, and untrustworthy, while inmates

often see staff as condescending, highhanded, and mean" (p. 7). Staff often feel superior to

inmates and inmates "feel inferior, weak, blameworthy, and guilty" (p. 7). As a result, personal relationships between the two groups is restricted, and this restriction is often formally prescribed (Goffman, 1961).

Presenting culture of inmates

Goffman (1961) argued that inmates come into the institution with a presenting culture that was derived from their home world. The inmates' presenting culture was a portion of a broader framework embedded in their civil environment. As Goffman defined civil environment as, "a round of experience that confirmed a tolerable conception of self and allowed for a set of defensive maneuvers, exercised at his discretion, for coping with conflicts, discreditings, and failures" (Goffman, 1961, p. 13). Goffman surmised that total institutions do not substitute their own unique culture for the inmates' presenting culture (i.e., assimilation). Instead, total institutions "create and sustain a particular kind of tension between the home world and the institutional world" (p. 13). The total institution uses this tension as leverage in the management of inmates to obtain the institutional function, and they accomplish much of the wanted behaviors of inmates using incentives and punishments (Goffman, 1961).

Lingo and concepts and their meaning

Goffman (1961) provided many concepts or institutional lingo in his writing. For instance, trimming, messing up, looping, underlife, primary and secondary adjustment, make do's, working the system, free places, stash and so on. Goffman argued the lingo "represents events that are crucial in their world" (p. 53). Staff members will learn the lingo of inmates, especially staff who have most of the contact with the inmates, which tend to be those of the lowest rank. Staff use this lingo to effectively converse with the inmates; however, they revert to formalized speech when speaking to their superiors (Goffman, 1961).

Along with the lingo, inmates obtain "knowledge of the various ranks and officials, an accumulation of lore about the establishment, and some comparative information about life in other similar total institutions" (Goffman, 1961, p. 53). In keeping with symbolic interactionism, the concepts Goffman reveals are concepts with the meaning the groups in total institutions negotiate. For example, Goffman described certain behaviors of inmates that do not directly challenge staff but are nonetheless forbidden. These behaviors are variously called by the inmates as the angles, knowing the ropes, or ins. Goffman (1961) referred to them as secondary adjustments, as he wrote:

> Secondary adjustments provide the inmate with important evidence that he is still his own man, with some control of his environment, sometimes a secondary adjustment becomes almost a kind of lodgment for self, a churinga [emphasis in original text] in which the soul is felt to reside. (p. 55)

Concepts, such as secondary adjustment are not positivistic; however, they do paint a picture of the relationships people have with total institutions, as well as the reasons behind their practices. As Goffman wrote:

> Every total institution seems to develop a set of institutional practices –whether spontaneously or by imitation—through which staff and inmates come close enough together to get a somewhat favorable image of the other and to identify sympathetically with the other's situation. The practices express unity, solidarity, and joint commitment to the institution rather than differences between the two level. (p. 94)

Practices and ceremonies of total institutions

Goffman (1961) offered examples of practices (or ceremonies) in total institutions: weekly newspaper, open house, Christmas celebration, and intramural sports. The question changed from identifying the ceremonies to determining if they worked. As Goffman wrote, "In

many cases it is a nice question whether these role releases create any staff-inmate solidarity at all" (p. 110). If they are not effective, "perhaps because it is something less than a community" (p. 110).

Instrumental formal organization

For Goffman (1961), the total institution is an instrumental formal organization, "a system of purposely co-ordinated activities to produce some over-all explicit ends" (p. 175). The ends may be "artifacts, services, decisions, or information, and may be distributed among the participants in a variety of ways" (p. 176). For Goffman, total institutions are the examples of instrumental formal organizations he was interested in.

An instrumental formal organization, such as total institutions, survives by being able to call forth and rely on the contributions from its members (e.g., inmates and staff members). However, the organization must recognize their members' limits to contribute. Thus, the "particular way in which these limitations to the use of participants are formulated in a given culture would seem to be a very important characteristic of it" (Goffman, 1961, p. 177).

Incentives and punishments

Goffman (1961) recognized that incentives and punishments might be needed to obtain wanted contributions from the organization's members. Rewards or incentives that appeal to the individual do not necessarily have the same interests of the organization. Some incentives are externally relevant to the organization, which means the recipient can carry the incentives off the organization's premises and use it at his discretion. However, for the individual inmate confined to a total institution, this is not likely. Thus, the incentives must be things the inmate wants and can use, although not off premises. Incentives can also be internally relevant to the recipient, such as a promotion in status or offering roles of his preference. At times, the incentives can carry both types of relevance for the recipient (Goffman, 1961).

Goffman (1961) also recognized that organizational members might be induced to contribute to the organization through the fear of punishment. The thought that punishment can be used as an effective manner to motivate wanted behaviors requires an assumption that those who do not respond to incentives are different; thus, they require a system of negative incentives. Goffman notes:

> Fear of penalization seems adequate to prevent the individual from performing certain acts, or from failing to perform them; but positive rewards seem necessary if long-range, sustained, personal effort is to be obtained. (p. 179)

Thus, in our society, organizations delineate what is acceptable behavior of its members. It also determines the means acceptable to obtain the contributions of its members (Goffman, 1961). As Goffman wrote:

> These conceptions expand a mere participation contract into a definition of the participant's nature or social being. These implicit images form an important element of the values which every organization sustains, regardless of the degree of its efficiency or impersonality. Built right into the social arrangements of an organization, then, is a thoroughly embracing conception of the member—and not merely a conception of him qua member, but behind this is a conception of qua human being. (pp. 179—180)

Leaders versus persons at the bottom

Staff members who work at the lowest level of the total institution often work in the same setting the inmates live in. They do not view their employment as a career. As such, they are not committed to perform their duties only through the organization's prescribed strategies (Goffman, 1961). As Goffman wrote:

> Persons at the bottom of large organizations typically operate in drab backgrounds, against which higher-placed members realize their internal incentives, enjoying the

satisfaction of receiving visible indulgences that others do not. Low-placed members tend

to have less commitment and emotional attachment to the organization than higher-

placed members. They have jobs, not careers. In consequence they seem more likely to

make us of secondary adjustments. (p. 201)

In organizations where recruitment to work is involuntary, it can be expected the member will not

be "in harmony with the self-definitions officially available for persons like himself and will

therefore orient himself to unlegitimized activities" (p. 203).

Goffman (1961) provided us with a constructivist analysis of a total institution. He

described not just the various structures of the institution, but more importantly for him, the

relationships that exist between structures and inmates. It is the relationship that contains the

meaning. It is here where negotiations occur. It is here where an exploration of a therapeutic

climate within a total institution could happen.

The following sections will take us into the architecture of prisons and the original

intentions of the juvenile justice system (i.e., *parens patriae*), which will be followed with a

review of the effectiveness of prison rehabilitation and the use of incentives. We will then discuss

prison staff members, their perceptions, typologies, and the conflicts of their roles. We end the

literature review with a brief discussion on the roles of leaders in prison.

Prison architecture and its influences on inmate health

Although, researchers have not made much effort to study the architecture of prisons,

prison design is vital to the connection between the prison and the opinions of the public, in that it

is the method which determines how the criminal justice goals of society are manifested (Moran,

2015). As Wener (2012) wrote,

[P]risons represent more than just warehouses of bed space for arrested or convicted men

and women. They are more complicated environments than just good or bad, comfortable

or not. The design of the jail or prison is critically related to the philosophy of the

institution, or maybe even the entire criminal justice system. It is the physical

manifestation of a society's goals and approached for dealing with arrested and/or

convicted men and women, and it is a stage for acting out plans and programs for their

addressing their future. (p. 7)

Turner, Jewkes, and Moran (2016) pointed out that in nearly every developed nation,

except in the United Kingdom and the United States, the architecture of prison buildings are

designed for the possibilities of rehabilitating inmates. Among the design features of new prisons

include soft furnishings, using colors to reinforce calm behaviors, using natural light instead of

artificial, and increasing access to the outdoors. These influences have increased personal and

intellectual creativity among the inmates, as well as kept them calm and orderly during their time

in imprisonment (Turner et al., 2016). Although the past designs of using darkness, drab colors,

and bars were part of the inmates' pains of imprisonment experience (Wacquant, 2002), Hancock

and Jewkes (2011) discovered that prison staff thought the new panopticon design was a novel

form of controlling the behavior of inmates through physical space and its architecture.

Parens Patriae: The original intent of juvenile justice

The juvenile justice system of corrections has a poor history of neglect and abuse (Feld,

1977; Miller, 1991; Platt, 1977; Inderbitzin, 2006). Despite its problems, the juvenile justice

system has largely used more methods of rehabilitation than the adult correctional systems

(Inderbitzin, 2007). However, since the 1970s, rehabilitation programs were largely classified as

nothing works through the publication of Lipton, Martinson, and Wilk's (1975) review of prison

rehabilitation programs. The *nothing works* slogan, along with the highly publicized riot of the

New York State maximum-security prison in Attica, led both sides of the political aisle to

mistrust the criminal justice system (Cullen & Gilbert, 1982). As a result, the focus on juvenile

justice has shifted away from rehabilitation to include more methods of security and punishment (Benard, 1992; Inderbitzin, 2005; Nurse, 2001).

Nearly all the jurisdictions in the U.S. can adjudicate juveniles as adults (Scott & Steinberg, 2008). Almost every state in the US classifies juveniles as less than 18 years (Scott & Steinberg, 2008). Nebraska is one of the exceptions with the age of less than 19 years (Nebraska Revised Statute 43-2101). The adjudication of juveniles as adults has resulted in many juveniles not only serving sentences that take years to complete but because states consider them as adults, they house juveniles in adult correctional facilities (Scott & Steinberg, 2008). However, the original intention of the juvenile justice system was not to punish troubled youth in this manner, but rather, the intent was for practitioners to mold them into law-abiding members of society, so they could return home to live with their families (i.e., *parens patriae*) (Rendleman, 1971). Many wardens currently struggle with this original intent versus society's get-tough approach (Feld, 1977), as they realize their decision may not only conflict with their peers, but also can affect the safety of the communities where nearly all inmates will eventually return to live (Inderbitzin, 2005; Scott & Steinberg, 2008; Feld & Singer, 1996).

The politics that surround imprisonment have created a serious debate of the best practices for the incarceration of youth offenders. Most people do not deny that high-risk offenders exist, and they need a highly secured facility to live (Moore, Roberts, Gray, Taylor, & Merrington, 2013). Nonetheless, it is equally clear that since the 1970s, too many lawmakers have displayed their preference for binge imprisonment of youth offenders without weighing the unintended consequences of the high cost to not only to state governments, but also to the communities that experience the highest rates of incarceration (Nagin, Piquero, Scott, & Steinberg, 2006).

Definition of rehabilitation

Thus, the rehabilitation of offenders as an effective strategy is a contentious issue. In fact, the definition of rehabilitation is often debated (Gibbons, 1999). Cullen and Gendreau (2000) posit that rehabilitation revolves around three issues: (1) the intervention is planned; (2) the intervention targets behavioral change of the offender that is thought to cause criminality and misconduct (e.g. attitude, cognitive processes, mental health, education, job training): and (3) the intervention's goal is to make the offender less likely to offend in the future—that is, it reduces recidivism. The authors note that rehabilitation does not include interventions that "seek to repress criminal involvement through specific deterrence—that is, the use of punishment to make offenders fearful of sanctions" (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000, p. 112). Interventions like this could include but are not limited to segregation, humiliation, or any shaming that is completed for the sake of shaming.

Do rehabilitative programs work?

The question is, do correctional rehabilitative interventions work? For Martinson (1974), he presented what amounted to a narrative review of the rehabilitative programs in prisons for his *nothing works* conclusion. He concluded that prison programs had no appreciable impact on reoffending. However, Palmer (1975) re-approached Martinson's work and concluded that 48% of the program Martinson assessed had a positive or partially positive effect on recidivism. Thus, the nothing works slogan was fallacious. Andrews (1990) revealed similar findings, as he discovered 40% of the program evaluations with better controls had at least positive effects (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, & Cullen, 1990).

Despite the evidence of rehabilitative success, correctional rehabilitative programs do indeed fail. Cullen and Gendreau (2000) argued that "Many programs fail to work because they either are ill-conceived and/or have no therapeutic integrity" (p. 129). That is, rehabilitative

programs are often based on personal intuition and not evidence, "would we be surprised…if young children turned out to be illiterate if their teachers were untrained, had no standardized curriculum, and met the children once a week for half an hour" (Cullen & Gendeau, 2000, p. 129). Quay (1977) found that many rehabilitative programs lacked therapeutic integrity. The programs' concepts were weak, high turnover of staff members, staff members lacked training, and the programs were deficient of staff buy-in. In short, as Sherman (1998) argued for strategies in law enforcement, like those in medicine, should be evidence-based in their rehabilitative programs. Sherman's approach stressed accountability and the desire to always seek improvements; however, it also strongly implied that corrections accept research conclusions, as in medicine, as foundational to effective rehabilitative practice (Sherman, Gottfredson, MacKenzie, Eck, Reuter, & Bushway, 1998).

Despite the problems with many correctional rehabilitative programs, there are numerous examples of rehabilitative interventions that were not only evidence-based in its approach but also successful in reducing misconduct and recidivism. Gendreau and Ross (1983) argued that behaviorally oriented efforts, such as those based on incentive programs and behavioral contracts, displayed evidence of being effective. The programs the authors examined also targeted the behavioral determinants of misconduct such as anger control and antisocial behaviors. Redondo, Sanchez-Meca, and Garrido (1999) determined that programs that targeted the behaviors of criminality for high-risk offenders can also be effective for low-risk offenders. Thus, there were no reasons to not include members from both risk groups. Lipsey and Wilson (1998) concluded in their evaluation of 200 correctional rehabilitative programs that the reduction in recidivism was "an accomplishment of considerable practical value in terms of the expense and social damage associated with the delinquent behavior of these juveniles" (p. 338).

Research about the use of incentives for motivation

The incentives inmates receive for appropriate behavior in prison may affect recidivism by reducing the criminogenic climate in prison. Both Chen and Shapiro (2007) and Drago, Galbiati, and Vertova (2011) discovered that maximum-security prisons with relatively harsh systems of in-house punishments (and little incentives) lead to increases in recidivism. A potential cause for this effect may have been the increase in misconduct prisoners experienced in prisons with the higher security levels of the environment. Further evidence suggested that the criminogenic climate of prisons lead to significant increases in recidivism of inmates compared to offenders who were never in prison (Di Tella & Schargrodsky, 2013; Nieuwbeerta, Nagin, & Blokland, 2009). Cullen, Jonson, and Nagin (2011) reported evidence to suggest that the criminogenic climate in prisons increased recidivism and the use of strict rules of punishment can have the unintended consequence of making society less safe. Hansen, Lee, and Waddell (2010) concluded that in prisons where incentive programs were used, misconduct among inmates temporarily lowered because of inmate myopia. That is, inmates were most likely to behave appropriately only during the times immediately before or after their assessments for the incentives. In other words, incentives, at best, had a temporary effect of lowering misconduct.

Prison staff members: The custodians

In the following prison staff section, I use the broad term of prison staff members as a descriptive of what others call correctional officer, guards, or custody staff members. I use the term prison staff members to maintain a sense of continuity for the observation chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) that follow. Prison staff members, particularly those who operate in the security and order maintenance of inmates (i.e., custody staff members, correctional officer, guards), must operate 24 hours per day in a para-military setting. Prison staff members are predominantly white males, with a mean age of 32 years, and usually have only a high school

diploma (Farkas, 2000). Because of their low job satisfaction, prison staff members often view their employment in corrections as temporary and not a career (Wicks, 1981). Most prison staff members work in corrections because they wanted a job with steady pay, benefits and job security, which they were unable to find elsewhere (Britton, 2003; Lombardo, 1989, 2016). Across the US, prisons experience about a 20 percent turnover rate of prison staff members (Lambert, Altheimer, & Hogan, 2010), with low pay, long hours, stress, and burnout being the top reasons why prison staff members resign (Pollock, 2013).

The salaries of prison staff members (i.e. custody staff members) vary across the US. In 2008, the median annual salary of prison staff members was just under $34,000. The middle 50 percent earned between $29,000 and $51,000; however, the bottom 10 percent earned less than $23,500 annually (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2011). Prison staff members often work significant amounts of overtime, at times the overtime earned can double their salaries (Pollock, 2013).

Qualifications to work as prison staff members usually involve them being in somewhat good physical health and possess a high school diploma or GED (Pollock, 2013). Approximately a quarter of the states in the US require applicants to take a psychological exam to screen out inappropriate job applicants (Josi & Sechrest, 1998). About 40 states use a written civil-service exam to hire prison staff members. Training of prison staff members varies substantially by state, from as low as 17 days to a high of 16 weeks (Michigan). The average hours prison staff are trained in the US is approximately 221 hours. During their training, newly hired prison staff members receive training that is like police training academies, which is a combination of practical how-to courses, and some sociological and psychological courses. Few states mandate training new prison staff members in topics that concern mental health or the treatment of inmates with mental health problems (e.g., counseling) (Pollcack, 2013).

Perceptions of staff members

As prison staff members guard those whom society have deemed too dangerous to live on the outside, prison staff members view their work as dangerous (Crawley & Crawley, 2008; Sykes, 1958, 2007). Prison staff members often fear for their safety, as they realize they are always outnumbered by the inmates (Sykes, 1958, 2007). The perception of danger among prison staff members occur despite the infrequency of being victims of severe assaults. Sorenson, Cunningham, Vigen, and Woods (2011) examined serious assaults on prison staff members across the US and concluded that only .5 inmates per 100,000 seriously assaulted prison staff members annually.

The relationships prison staff members have with inmates, according to Jacobs and Kraft (1978), is one of structured conflict. This term refers to the inherent tension between prison staff members and inmates that arises from their conflicting roles (Pollack, 2013). This climate can permeate an entire prison and affect the views and relationships prison staff members have with the inmates. Prison staff members often view inmates as dangerous and hostile towards them; thus, they believe they can never be trusted (Carroll, 1974). To decrease the likelihood of becoming victims of assault, some prison staff members use unorthodox strategies. Hunt, Riegel, Morales, and Waldorf (1993), discovered that prison staff members encouraged racial violence to keep inmates from focusing in on them. The authors found that prison staff members even organized gladiator-type fights against rival gangs.

The perceptions prison staff members have of inmates can vary by prison and the group of inmates they manage. Lin (2002) described several different types of prisons and determined the general climate (e.g., inmate-prison staff member relationships, values of the prison) dramatically differed. Prisons that function as a rehabilitative treatment facilities had climates in which both inmates and prison staff members felt relaxed and trusted each other. Lin argued the

relaxed-trusting climate stemmed from the warden and the culture of the facility. Weekes, Pelletier, and Beaudette (1995) evaluated how prison staff viewed sex offenders. They concluded that compared to other inmates, sex offenders, in general, were thought of as more dangerous, harmful, violent, tense, bad, and afraid. The authors discovered that prison staff members opinion of child sex offenders was much more severe than other sex offenders. They considered this type of inmate as highly immoral and mentally ill.

Prison staff members often believe inmates are people of low moral character and are lazy (Conover, 2010). Because their perception is based upon the intrinsic qualities of individuals, prison staff members believe inmates cannot be rehabilitated to change (Crawley & Sparks, 2006). The cynical attitude toward rehabilitation could affect rehabilitative efforts. As Liebling (2004) found, the way prison staff members perceive and treat inmates, can have an overall impact on the inmates' experience in prison (e.g., safety, order, distress, and suicide). Furthermore, through their use of discretional authority, prison staff members can make demands and enforce the rules as they see fit. This discretion can undermine the legitimacy of the rehabilitation programs in prison (Liebling, 2011). However, negative attitudes toward rehabilitation are not universal among all prison staff members. Teske & Williamson (1979), discovered that prison staff members with positive feelings towards the rehabilitative treatment of inmates were correlated with a lower rank, higher education levels, retired from the military, attended church regularly, and grew up in urban environments. On the other hand, prison staff members who held negative views of rehabilitation had higher levels of service in corrections (versus the other group), believed in punishment only of inmates, grew up in rural areas, and thought hard work alone would do more for the inmates than rehabilitation programs could.

Role conflict: Custody versus rehabilitation

At times, people fail to fulfill their role obligations despite their best intentions. It is hard to be good at your job (i.e., status) when you have incompatible responsibilities with multiple complex roles (i.e., role strain). On the other hand, it is hard to fulfill your role obligations when you have multiple statuses with conflicting roles (i.e., role conflict) (Brinkerhoff et al., 2014). Grusky (1968) wrote that role conflict occurs when there is a "lack of consensus concerning the approved behavior in situations that are morally conflicting" (p. 461). Inderbitzin (2006) argued that youth prison staff members have "become the surrogate parents, corrections officers, counselors, and guardians of the state's most serious 'problem children'" (p. 432). As such, prison staff members have multiple crucial roles in the state's efforts to not only guard inmates but also "resocialize young offenders into more conforming, less dangerous adults" (p. 432). The multiple conflicting roles prison staff members assume, creates role conflict, as Johnson and Price (1981) argued, "Officers [prison staff members] who play human service roles seek to advise, support, console, refer, or otherwise assist inmates with the problems and crises of adjustment produced by imprisonment" (p. 344). The role conflicts of prison staff members are troubling, as "staff members set the tone and help define the institutional experience for their juvenile inmates" (Inderbitzin, 2006, p. 432). O'Neil (1988) wrote, "[t]one bespeaks whether an institution is humane or degenerate, constructive or vengeful, growing or stagnant" (p. 194). Tone grows from the prison staff members' attitudes, their goals, the degree to which they understand the institution's purposes, and their commitment (O'Neil, 1988).

To include rehabilitation in the roles of prison staff members who are also expected to control their own emotions, as well as the inmates during stressful times (Crawley, 2004), might be difficult when the youth inmates have violent histories(Inderbitzin, 2006). Prison staff members are expected to build relationships with youth inmates. Thus, the lives of both groups are entwined with each other, which can lead to other problems, such as job stress, low job

satisfaction, and lack of organizational commitment (Butler, Tasca, Zhang, & Carpenter, 2019). Role conflict could create hostilities between prison staff members and their superiors (e.g., warden), which may result in poor job performances (Crouch, 1980, 1995; Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980). Keinan and Malach-Pines (2007), surmised that job stress often leads prison staff members to high burnout rates that lead to high turnover rates. For prison staff members, they must either choose one status, with a clearly defined set of roles, or they must learn to perform their conflicting roles simultaneously to maintain a safe setting while providing the needed therapies the inmates require for wanted behavioral change (Inderbitzin, 2007).

Typologies of prison staff members

Prison staff members have been typed about their approach to their jobs and attitudes and behaviors with inmates. The predominant typologies that have developed in the literature include: Johnson (1996) referred to custodial oriented prison staff members as the public agenda of staff and the rehabilitative focused prison staff member as private agenda; strict custodial prison staff members for Carter (1994) were black and whiters and Owen (1988) referred to them as by the book. Kauffman (1988) held similar views of this type of prison staff member; however, with one distinct difference. He categorized prison staff members who held a physical dominance over inmates and treated inmates more callously as hard asses.

Prison staff members who provide rehabilitative support for the inmates were categorized as the supported majority (Klofas & Toch, 1982), human service officers (Johnson, 1996), white hats or pollyannas (Kauffman, 1988). These prison staff members were generally more relaxed around the inmates, had higher job satisfaction, and developed personal relationships with the inmates; however, their desire to rehabilitate inmates was often inhibited by their concern of rejection from those staff members on the custody side (Carter, 1994).

Farkas (2000) examined types of prison staff members in a systematic fashion across four dimensions: (1) oriented toward rule enforcement; (2) oriented toward negotiation with inmates; (3) extent of norms of mutual obligation towards coworkers; and (4) interest in human service delivery. She interviewed 79 prison staff members (i.e., correctional officers, custody staff members, guards) at two medium-security state prisons. She developed distinct and varied typologies of staff. Rule enforcer, hard liners, and loners reproduced the official goals, values, and modes of conduct of the prison. People workers and synthetic officers, modified the formal definitions and developed their informal norms, values, and way of doing the job. Whereas, lax officers, officer friendly, and wishy-washy types rejected or ignored the official institutional goals. Farkas concluded that reasons for individuals becoming a prison staff member was a salient factor in determining their typology. Custodial staff found extrinsic motivations, such as job security and benefits, reasons for working, while staff who worked in rehabilitation were attracted to the intrinsic aspect of helping others (Farkas, 2000).

Leadership: Warden and the inmates in command

Inmate leaders

Schrag (1954) studied the influences of inmate leaders and wrote, "[i]neffectiveness of our penal institution as therapeutic agencies is usually explained in terms of inadequate treatment facilities, inferior qualifications of the prison and the interpersonal relations among the inmates have received less attention" (pp. 37—38). In his analysis, Schrag concluded inmate leaders played a role in controlling the climate of prison, as he wrote the socialization "in prison means, for many inmates, the acquisition of the skills and attitudes of the habitual criminal" (p. 41). Akers (1977) concluded that the effects of inmate leaders depended on the type of prison they were housed in. For example, in rehabilitative institutions that provide a less punitive environment, are likely to have inmate leaders who lead democratically and benignly; however,

in custodial prisons, "with its harsher climate [emphasis added], produces inmate leaders identified by other inmates as tough, autocratic, and harmful" (p. 383).

Wardens and their roles of leadership

As far as wardens and the results of their leadership roles, Pollack (2013) wrote, "One thing is clear: prisons, even at the same custody level, can be very different institutions because of the "social climate" [emphasis added] that is created and nurtured by a clear vision, strong leadership, and competent management" (p. 179). Lin (2000) observed inmates of prisons that were led by wardens who encouraged their prison staff members to socially interact with the inmates as places where inmates did not have to express a tough, hard persona. As one inmate said in Lin's study, "[at other prisons] you always had to have a mask on—you show no emotions, you be a hard convict… [This prison is] the first place I've laughed or smiled…" (p. 100). Wright (1994) expressed a similar view as he described how wardens and other prison leaders could affect the management strategies of a prison. For Wright, effective leaders are those who promote a climate of change and trust their staff to take responsibility, listen to the inmates, and share their management tasks. However, Wright also noted that if leaders lack integrity and do not provide a moral example to those they lead, they will fail in other areas as well. Staff members who do not have a clear sense of the prison's mission, how they were going to achieve its goals, and what they were doing have low morale. Wright promoted the four "c's" of prison management—candor, caring, commitment, and confidence.

Philliber (1987) noted that despite the few research studies on wardens and their roles of leadership, the few that have been done had deepened the understandings of the complexities of corrections work. Bennet (2016) argued that despite the valuable role prison wardens play, no individual warden or organization "sits in isolation and any consideration of prison managers has to be situated in a broader social context" (p. 131) of society and with other wardens. Past research often emphasized the cohesiveness among prison wardens, as they tend to be like-

minded individuals; however, recent research has suggested otherwise (Bennett, 2016). There are

prison practitioners, many of whom hold leadership roles, that disagree about the strategies that

should be used to manage inmates, as some believe in more methods of security and order

maintenance, while other wardens thought rehabilitation was the best strategy (Crawley, 2004).

Conclusion

In this literature review, I defined and provided past research for a therapeutic climate. I

reviewed the classic studies of Sykes (1958, 2007) and Goffman (1961), which was followed with

a description of the health influences of prison architecture, original intent of the juvenile justice

system (i.e., parens patriae). I then offered a review of recent studies that examined the

effectiveness of rehabilitation and incentive programs. Next, I highlighted the role of prison staff

members and the role conflicts they experience, as well as the typologies others had made for

them. The last item I discussed was the role leaders play in prison and the effects they had on

their followers. The next chapter will discuss the methods I used in my exploration of the

therapeutic climate of a youth correctional facility.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In the previous chapters, given was an introduction along with an extensive review of the literature, as it relates to the proposed topic of interest. In this chapter, offered are a description and justification of the methodology that will complement the previous two. Specifically, this methodology chapter begins with a detailed description and justification of the research design that will provide answers for the research question. Additionally, this chapter contains an environmental sketch of the correctional youth facility where this study occurred, along with a general description of the inmate and staff-member participants. This chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

A brief review of the study purpose

The purpose of this study was to go inside a maximum-security male correctional youth facility in a Midwestern city and explore through methods of participatory observation and collected qualitative interview data on the social processes of a *therapeutic climate*. This study completed a 3-month focused ethnography within a correctional youth facility that housed what the state believed to be the most violent youth-male (< 21 years and ten months) offenders. This study ethnographically explored the social processes that make a *therapeutic climate*. Previously, I defined the therapeutic climate as a social environment where the purpose is to provide rehabilitative services that meet the inmates' needs. For youth inmates, the rehabilitation occurs at a time during their lives when they were often forming their self-identities and cognitive abilities. The therapeutic climate included the social interrelationships between and within the staff members and inmates, but it also included the administering of formal policies, group cohesion, staff buy-in, as well as many other social components. The working hypothesis was that staff

members, as well as the inmates and the interrelationships among and between the two groups, affected the therapeutic climate of the correctional youth facility.

The researcher's philosophical assumptions

Madden (2017) wrote that a "methodology is simply a justification for the use of a particular set of methods (i.e., toolkit). Methods are what tools you use" (Madden, 2017, p. 4.1.4). Put simply; a methodology is why you chose those tools (Madden, 2017). The definition leads to the question, why do researchers select the methods they use? Creswell (2017) argued that whether researchers realize it, they always bring their philosophical assumptions to their methods. These assumptions represent their deeply held beliefs about the problems they wish to study, what questions they are to ask, and what are the best methods to gather their data. The researchers acquire these beliefs through their education, research, and personal experiences, as well as through others. Consequently, these philosophical assumptions inform their approach that will guide them through their research (Creswell & Poth 2017).

As there exists a close relationship between researchers' philosophical assumptions and their research, it is crucial for them to not only understand their assumptions but also write about it (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In the following sections, I offer a description of how my philosophical assumptions fit into this research. This self-assessment as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) is split into four phases, Phase 1: The researcher as a multicultural subject; Phase 2: Theoretical paradigms and perspectives; Phase 3: Research strategies; and Phase 4: Methods of collection and analysis.

Phase 1: The researcher as a multicultural subject

Phase 1 begins with a description of what I brought to the inquiry. It includes my personal history and an assessment of how I view myself and others. Researchers often overlook

this phase (Creswell & Poth, 2017), probably because criticism here are critiques of themselves and not the deliverables, which might make them feel vulnerable. However, this is only speculation on my part, as I am expressing my anxiousness for what I am about to share. My concerns; however, do not lessen its value and for that reason, I am placing it first.

To begin with, I am a former police officer. I worked for two separate municipal agencies for most of twenty years. I held various positions, as many cops do; however, nearly all the jobs I had as a police officer were about the *street.* In other words, I was most happy *being in the community* where I patrolled, which meant coming into daily contact with people, hearing about their life events, discussing and solving the world's problems, or just saying "hi." Along with street patrol, I was a trainer of new officers, worked in crime-scene investigations, and had a reputation of being a good *interviewer.* I share the latter skill as I believe this trait along with my *street* experience influenced my future decision to pursue qualitative research over quantitative. Near the end of my career as a police officer, I earned a bachelor's degree in legal studies.

The first year away from law enforcement, I attended the University of Chicago (UC) where I earned a Master of Arts in liberal arts. I focused my energy on the social sciences, but my classes included coursework in literature, visual arts, philosophy, and physical and biological sciences. The mentors that guided me through this degree were scholars in anthropology and literature. I believe their combined influence played a significant role in my gravitation toward the personal stories of people from cultures that were different from my own.

Upon graduation from UC, I attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and earned a Master of Arts in criminology and criminal justice. At UNO, my advisor was a professor respected for her qualitative research on sex offenders. She guided me through the program and encouraged me to pursue the qualitative angle of my research ambitions. Through her guidance, I completed a thesis that was a qualitative study (i.e., content analysis) on legislation that affected

sex offenders in Nebraska and Iowa. It was during my time at UNO; I realized I had a strong passion for applying research to helping vulnerable populations.

My newly realized passion led me to apply for the doctoral program and attend the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), College of Public Health, in their Department of Health Promotion and Social and Behavioral Health. It was at UNMC that I completed coursework in qualitative research methods and advanced theories of behavioral change. As with the other universities, I gravitated towards faculty who shared my passions for applied research, which included some who favored qualitative methods over quantitative. I assisted and completed a few qualitative research projects that involved many in-depth interviews with past and present offenders, all of whom had spent much of their lives in prison. I earned a Certificate in public health and was a Ph.D. candidate during this project, as this study was my doctoral dissertation.

I am as much an artist as I am a researcher. Photography is my preferred medium for expression, but I also do a bit of creative writing and have completed three play scripts for theatrical performances. I believe this is vital to share as my research tends to be my creative outlet. This creativity is not to say that I conjure up the results of my study from my creative mind. It merely means that I use the personal narratives that people share with me to tell their stories.

I argue that my life experiences have led me to this ethnographic study. My passion for expression, listening to and telling the stories of others, as well as the guidance that was provided to me by my past and current mentors are who I am and makes my situated knowledge unique for an ethnography.

Phase 2: Theoretical paradigms and perspectives

Therapeutic Climate

There have been several studies that examined the rehabilitative treatment of sex offenders. They argue that a *therapeutic climate* should be thought of as the underlying spirit of therapy for the people who are using it, which sets the tone for the participants' rehabilitative experience (Beckett et al., 1994; Beech & Fordham, 1997; Day, Casey, Vess, & Huisy, 2012). Thus, a therapeutic climate is a conceptual concept. Consider it a complex system of social and physical structures that are used to provide needed therapies for the participants it serves. For this study, the therapeutic climate laid in a correctional youth facility that housed males who were adjudicated by the courts as adults; therefore, sentenced to live with other adults for as little as a year or even the rest of their lives. The therapeutic climate included the rules, interrelationships, leadership, incentives, and the programs that are designed to transform these troubled youth into law-abiding adults. Although the therapeutic climate did not include the *climate of punishment*, with its means of control and isolation, they indeed occurred at the same time; thus, they needed exploration together.

Although I explored a therapeutic climate at a correctional youth facility, the therapeutic climate platform and the assumptions that form it are broadly based and its use only pointed me in the right direction. In other words, a therapeutic climate is an abstract concept, not a theory. A therapeutic climate's imagery promoted analysis of current and changing patterns of social behavioral outcomes as they related to various environments, at different scales of time and space (Krieger, 2001). Despite its guidance, it was up to me to obtain the data inductively in an organized manner. Grounded theory helped me maintain focus, organize my data, so I was able to answer my research question (Charmaz, 2006).

Grounded Theory

A common dilemma for ethnographers is that they take in too much information. They become overwhelmed with the world they study, try to record everything they observe, and could become tempted to digress from their original research questions. Ironically, despite the magnitude of data they collect, they could end up with little information of use. Grounded theory assisted me to avoid this problem. Grounded theory with its way of thinking about data and how to collect, organize, and analyze it inductively helped me answer the questions I first set out to pursue (Charmaz, 2006).

The development of a theory is directly related to the methods of data collection and analysis. Grounded theory is a method that required me to be in constant movement between collecting, managing, and analyzing my data. Although it sounds linear, it is anything but linear. As a grounded theory researcher, I entered the fieldwork, jotted notes, wrote field notes that became the data for the analysis of the social processes that surfaced. Once I identified these processes, I reentered the field to focus my data collection (Charmaz, 2006). This process was repeated until I reached *conceptual saturation* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory calls for researchers to enter the field work as a *blank slate* (Kelle, 2007). Within grounded theory purist, there is usually a recommendation that researchers avoid extensively reviewing the literature on the topic of interest, so they can lessen the likelihood of bias interfering with their research. This method allows for the theory to organically develop from the ground up (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, I concluded that I could not enter the research as a blank slate. Even if I avoided the literature, which was unlikely as I read about it before developing my research question, I still had my existing foundation of knowledge that would unavoidably influence my data collection and analysis, which made *true* grounded theory development unlikely at best (Holton, 2007). For Creswell and Poth (2017), he suggested instead of the unrealistic approach of complete avoidance of related knowledge; researchers should

suspend their understandings and "decide how and in what way his or her understandings will be introduced into the study" (Creswell & Poth, p. 83). Thus, for this study, I made it a point to bracket my past experiences as much as possible.

Bracketing

Bracketing, or *epoché,* is a strategy used by ethnographers to go beyond their own biases about the world as it relates to a phenomenon (Howell, 2012). It is used to maintain objectivity by separating the researchers' perceptions of their research. Bracketing is a process that involves a series of moments, or *reductions,* during fieldwork. Researchers use this strategy, so they can better understand the subjective perceptions of those they are studying (Husserl, 2012). Bracketing begins with the *eidetic reduction,* which involves the identification of key phrases (e.g., *argot*, *lingo*) that speak directly to the topic of interest. For instance, inmates could use a slang term for their sentences they received from the courts. The might call sentences that last year as "big numbers". This expression could be interpreted as meaningful to the inmates as it provides insight that some sentences are larger than others (e.g., 18-month sentence versus 18 years). The researcher then interprets the phrases to determine how they fit in the environment of the participants (Madden, 2017). Next, is the *transcendental reduction,* which Denzin and Lincoln (2002) argued has the goal of focusing on the participants' experiences, culling it down to the essentials, and then placing it in the broader context. The final reductional phase involves the integration of the differences in participants' experiences by reconstructing them in an order that relates to each other (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). For example, some of the personal property inmates own in prison carry a heavier weight than they do on the outside. A theft of a cookie from an inmate by another inmate could result in a severe violent altercation; whereas, on the outside this theft could go unnoticed.

Ethnography in a total institution

I completed this focused ethnography in a maximum-security prison, also known as a *total institution*. In the opening paragraph of Goffman's (1961) ethnography, he defined a total institution as:

> [A] place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. (Goffman, 1961, p. xiii)

How best to study a total institution, in this case, a prison, and the experiences that exist within it is a vital decision for researchers to make. Goffman echoed this, as he wrote, "A chief concern is to develop a sociological version of the structure of the self." (Goffman, 1961, p. xiii). Often, researchers describe what an institution looks like, its physical composition, the color of its walls, or any other details that help them paint an aesthetic picture for their audience. Although important, ethnographers need more, as Goffman's questions were unanswerable with only this sort of narrative. Goffman also required details of the people who shared an experience of living in a place that was isolated from the rest of society. In other words, he wanted to learn and describe the symbolism and its meaning within a total institution. He didn't just want a physical description of the institution, he needed to know what the institution meant to the people who lived in it (i.e., symbolic interactionism). Goffman, like many other ethnographers, realized early on that the best method to answer phenomenological questions like this was through ethnographies (Drake, Earle, & Sloan, 2015; Pollock, 2013; Oliver, 1994; Hammersley, 1992; Sykes, 1958). However, what is an ethnography and why is this method appropriate for prison studies?

Phase 3: Research strategy

Ethnographic research

Ethnography is the qualitative recording of the daily life of a group of individuals that includes participation and observation by the ethnographer (overtly or covertly) in the group's environment and social world for an extended period (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It involves the researcher:

> watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through
>
> informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering
>
> whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of
>
> inquiry. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3)

As ethnographers work in the *field*, they become open to the group's environment, their behaviors, values, and mores (i.e., *habitus*). As Wolcott (2008) argued, ethnographies are an examination of a group's social behavior. Thus, to compile information that represents the group's behaviors, ethnographers will often gather their data inductively—from the bottom up—to pursue whatever they believe will answer their research questions (Charmaz, 2006).

Ethnographers observe their participants most often through *participant observation,* in which the ethnographer is immersed in the daily lives of the group they study. They do this "to discover the details of their [group's] behavior and the innards of their experience" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998, p. 199). Wacquant (2002) wrote about the importance of ethnography and siad, "Field researchers need to worry…more about getting inside and around penal facilities to carry out intensive, close-up observations of the myriad relationships they contain and support" (p.371). Thus, the best method to study the life, culture, and social patterns of a group was not through researchers observing them from the outside in, but rather from the inside looking around. As Becker (1970) explained:

The participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the group or

organization he studies. He watches the people he is studying to see what situations they

ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He enters into conversation with some or

all of the participants in these situations and discovers their interpretations of the events

he has observed. (p. 25)

This type of embedded research requires a balanced approach between the ethnographers'

philosophical assumptions and their curiosity (Rock, 2001). Ethnographers must have previous

knowledge of the environment, or they will not be able to form their research questions

(Hamersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, if they have too much information they risk

overlooking aspects in the settings (Rock, 2001). For instance, prison ethnographers realize the

informal rules of conduct inmates live by but they could overlook how this influence affects

program participation. To help obtain and maintain a balance, Creswell and Poth (2017)

suggested that researchers not ignore their assumptions, but rather write and discuss how their

influences can affect their research.

Ethnographies are *not a linear method of data collection or analysis*. This method is in a

constant state of fluidity that requires ethnographers to be flexible in their approach. They enter

the setting with a general understanding that points their interest in the right direction, but they

must remain open to changing their strategy (Rock, 2001). To increase validity, ethnographers

often triangulate their data. They might complete comparison between observations and

interviews; it could include a comparison of the results with pre-existing data that was collected

by the group under study; or they might compare the results with existing research (Hamersley &

Atkinson, 2007; Rock 2001).

Prison ethnography

In general, researchers who undertake ethnographies give significant amounts of practical and emotional commitments to those they study, this is true for prison ethnographers (Sloan & Drake, 2013). Some researchers might consider prison ethnographers as privileged, as they have access to settings that are off-limits to most. They observe a world that few see, listen to unique narratives, and answer questions that many want to know. However, few realize the level of commitment prison ethnographers make (Sloan & Drake, 2013). Ethnographies are time-consuming, often lasting months if not years, and are labor intensive. The hardships could explain why fewer Ph.D. students today are completing prison ethnographies (Jewkes, 2012) than they did in the 1970s (Inderbitzin, 2007). Crewe (2014) believed the lack of interest in prison ethnographies are missed opportunities by researchers for the advancement in the field of prison research. Waldram (2009), asked why few researchers are willing to venture inside of prison at a time of mass incarceration rates and prison overcrowding in the US. He discovered the following three reasons: (1) researchers assume that inmates are not embraceable participants, compared to those who are innocent, disempowered, or disenfranchised; (2) they believe that inmates are uncooperative and too difficult to study, and (3) prisons are not accessible to researchers. Waldram concluded that despite the challenges of prison ethnographies, researchers often overstate the barriers, and the barriers can easily be overcome.

There are some indicators that the trend may be changing, albeit slowly. For instance, as an effort to increase interest for prison ethnographies, *Palgrave Studies in Prisons and Penology* are encouraging Ph.D. candidates to submit proposals for prison ethnographies (Drake, Earle, & Sloan, 2015). The increase in interest could have stemmed from a realization by researchers and practitioners alike of the limitations quantitative only research provides (Jewkes, 2013). Wacquant (2002) argued the best way to learn the distinctions between prison tactics and philosophies is not through studies based on quantitative data, but instead through ethnographies.

As he wrote, "close-up studies at ground level of the everyday world of the confined played a decisive role in advancing the science and critique of penal establishments" (Wacquant, 2002, p. 384). Wacquant further writes, "The paramount priority of the ethnography of the prison today is without contest *just do it*" [Italics in the original text] (Wacquant, 2002, p. 386). Interest, however, in correctional facilities has diminished to the point that researchers are completing a few ethnographies today (Chensey-Lind & Shelden, 2013; Inderbitzin, 2007).

Despite its rarity, there have been valuable insights gained in recent prison ethnographies. Wacquant (2002) expressed, after his ethnography at the Los Angeles Jail, amazement and horror of how the largest detention facility in the US operated as an entry portal for many groups to a life of disenfranchisement and poverty, as he coined the term, "punishing the poor" (Waquant, 2009). In the age of mass incarceration, Wacquant laments the rarity of prison ethnographies in the US, as this method of research is disappearing under the pressure of more conventional, more accessible, and profitable methods of prison research (Wacquant, 2002).

Despite its rarity in the US, researchers across Europe are using prison ethnographies to obtain valuable knowledge. Liebling and Arnold (2012), observed the relationships prisoners had with one another as cautious and limited. The bonds were either tense and strained, or they were convenient and instrumental. When alliances occurred between inmates, they were generally for safety reasons. When tensions were high, the threat of violence was used by the inmates as a form of capital to trade for peace. The authors also discovered that much of the violence in prison was based on the inmates' faith and religion. This was especially true for the Muslim inmates, as the inmates of non-Islam faith distrusted Muslims. Libeling and Arnold also discovered that if trust declined, problems occurred. Trust had a significant impact on relationships and daily activities in prison. The inmates generally distrusted the criminal justice system. The distrust led the inmates to disengagement, frustration, and bitterness of prison staff members. As one prisoner said in their study, "You've got to trust the system to work with it" (Libeling and Arnold, 2012, p. 422).

Another inmate said, "I feel alienated, I feel strange. The mental effect is there. You don't engage, you don't trust, and it makes you very lonely and anti-social in a way" (p. 422). Thus, trust, or the lack of it, affected the delivery of activities in the daily life of inmates.

The rarity of ethnographic research in youth corrections is even more so than adult prisons. However, the few that have been completed have resulted invaluable information. Inderbitzin (2007), through her ethnography of a cottage for violent juvenile offenders, concluded that the institution's staff members were the front line in holding the inmates accountable for their crimes and were also attempting to rehabilitate them into law-abiding adults. As such, the staff members had difficulties in juggling their often-contradicting roles as corrections officers and surrogate parents. Scott (2015) completed an ethnography in the North East of England where he shadowed several prison chaplains in six different prisons. During one of his observations, he noted his experience of a juvenile inmate confined in segregation:

> As we walked through the door of the cell, I was hit by the bareness of the room. The walls were cream, and the window seemed quite high up in the wall of the room. It appeared clean, and there was a small blue mat on the floor but apart from that all it contained was the prisoner. He looked sad. He was maybe seventeen and was physically very small. I wondered what he could have done to end up in such a dreadful cell for 23 hours a day…It was not somewhere I would want to spend very much time. (pp. 45–46)

Although Scott's vivid description was dark and even upsetting, the details paint a picture that one cannot describe through numbers on a Likert scale. His words are necessary to know and share so we can learn what life is like on the inside of segregation.

Ethnography in public health

For many ethnographers, they regard the qualitative information they gather, which explores the concepts, values, and meanings of socio-cultural life, as the essence and foundation

of anthropological knowledge (Hahn & Inhorn, 2009). The primary mode of data collection in ethnographies is through participant observation, which refers to research conducted in the field by ethnographers who participate, observe, or interview the people under study in their daily lives (Brinkerhoff et al., 2013). As such, several medical anthropologists argue that quantitative examinations of public health topics should begin with ethnographies, as this method is useful for exploring the patterns of interactions among people and the meaning those patterns hold for their health (Hahn & Inhorn, 2009). Unlike survey researchers, who usually *ask* people about what they do, ethnographers *see* what they do (Brinkerhoff et al., 2014). This method is useful for public health researchers who aim to understand the social relationships and processes of those they study that will lead them to an understanding of the public health issues that are affecting them (Hahn & Inhorn, 2009).

A significant disadvantage to ethnographies in public health is the arduous nature of the method. The method is time-consuming, sometimes lasting years. Ethnographies require researchers to entirely devote themselves to the group under study. This requires not just time, but also a substantial emotional and intellectual investment that many researchers or their institutions cannot afford (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, as with many other methods of research, ethnographies have evolved. Ethnographers have adapted appropriate novel methods to accommodate the restrictions that many public health researchers face (Pelto & Pelto, 1997).

Focused ethnography

Traditionally, particularly in the discipline of anthropology, ethnography has been shaped by the image of long-term studies that often last years. It seems that only long-term studies epitomize what may rightly be referred to by many as an ethnography (Knoblauch, 2005). However, traditional long-term ethnographies are not always suitable nor possible. There are instances when ethnographies through short-term fieldwork were not only be an appropriate method of data collection, but also the most suitable. Examples of this approach have been

successfully completed by ethnographers in applied areas of research, such as nursing (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013) as well as other health-related fields of study that examined a specific disease or public health program (Roper & Shapira, 2000).

Indeed, despite not using the descriptive of *focused ethnography*, its use has been completed as early as the 1950s. For his research, Goffman (1952) focused on a small group of people utilizing short field observations. The term *focused ethnography*; however, did not appear in the literature until it was introduced by Otterbein (1977) in an ethnography that focused on a specific cultural trait. Since the 1990s, focused ethnographies have been primarily used by medical anthropologists who seek an understanding of specific disease conditions and the programs used for prevention (Pelto & Pelto, 1997). The rapid results obtained from focused ethnographies have been found to meet the sometimes-urgent needs of public health programs and their personnel (Hahn & Inhorn, 2009). Thus, the use of focused ethnographies has been determined to be an appropriate method of data collection in applied settings (e.g., institutions, organizations, establishments), under limited time constraints, and with research questions that pertain to a group of specific individuals with rich themes of behavior, activities, relationships, and ideas, which reveal their cultural foundation (Wall, 2014).

Ethnography: Participatory observation and informal conversation

For ethnographers to develop an understanding of the participants' world, interviews are invaluable (Bourdieu, 1999). Thus, it becomes equally important to provide the term with a working definition. Although this may seem simple, it can be problematic. Berg (2007) defines an interview as "a conversation with a purpose" (Berg, 2007, p. 89). However, some are more precise. Lofland and associates (2006) say an interview is "both ordinary conversation and listening as it occurs during the course of social interaction" (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 17). The definition of ethnographic interviews goes even further with, interviews are "in which researchers have established a respectful, on-going relationships with

their interviewees" (Heyl, 2001, p. 369) that have enough *rapport* for there to be *genuine*

exchange of thoughts for the participants to share their views of the meanings they place on

events that occur in their environment (Heyl, 2001). There may be apprehension among the

participants to share information with researchers. However, as researchers build rapport with the

participants, they are developing a relationship with them. Although this relationship is bounded

by the ethics of research, it is still social in nature and must be maintained, nurtured (Bourdieu,

1999), and rest upon a *reflex reflexivity* (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 608), which makes this method of

data collection crucial for researchers to develop a knowledge of the participants position within

their social space and setting (Bourdieu, 1999).

Phase 4: Setting, participants, and methods of data collection and analysis

Setting and participants

At the time this study occurred, the correctional youth facility was the only maximum-

security youth male prison in this Midwestern state. The facility had a maximum occupancy of

approximately 116 inmates, encompassed about 56,000 square feet, and sat on 15 acres of land

(NCYF, 2017). There were three main buildings on the campus of the correctional youth facility.

Each building had its purpose. Building "A" was the administrative building that housed the

general offices, cafeteria, and an area called *intake*. Building "E" was the educational building

that housed a community meeting room, classrooms, and gymnasium. The last building contained

the housing units for the inmates. It was here the inmates lived and slept with each inmate having

his cell. The population counts at the correctional youth facility were in a state of flux, as inmates

were continually arriving, released, or transferred. However, during this study, the correctional

youth facility had approximately 60 male inmates living within the facility and remained

relatively stable during the time of the research. The youth inmates were all male, with nearly half

of the population being White, 30 percent Black, and the remainder were Latino, and they were

between the ages of 15 years and 21 years (and ten months). If inmates did not complete their

sentence by the age of 21 years and ten months, they received a transfer to traditional adult prison

(NCYF, 2017).

A Warden and Assistant Warden were responsible for the safe and secure operation of the

correctional youth facility. There were 42 correctional staff members assigned to the custody

department (i.e., custody staff members). They operated security posts 24-hours a day and

provided care, control, and supervision to all the inmates. Upon arrival, each inmate received an

assignment from the program manager who assisted in the development of personalized plans,

which incorporated the needs, capabilities, and limitations of inmates into an individual plan of

action. Unit caseworkers monitored and coordinated the daily activities for inmates and had

similar roles as the custody staff members. Other staff members at the correctional youth facility

included psychologists, high-school teachers, religious coordinator, and other

support/administrative staff (NCYF, 2017).

For this study, I generally classified custody staff members at the rank of corporal and

caseworkers together and referred to them as *custody staff members*, as they had similar roles and

responsibilities. Further, as there were numerous positions that could be classified as program

staff members (e.g., teachers, religious coordinator, recreation manager), my observations were of

three specific program staff members, which was the program manager, psychologist, and

warden. Thus, unless I state otherwise when I speak about *program staff members*, I am only

talking about these three individuals.

Twenty-eight of the 30 inmates over 19 years agreed to participate in the study.

Approximately half of the inmate participants were White, 40 percent were Black, and the

remaining were Latino. The offenses they were convicted of included first-degree murder, first-

degree sexual assault, robbery, assault, and burglary. The specific distribution of the offenses was

not learned as it would require a conversation with the inmates that they might have found offensive. However, some voluntarily offered the crimes they committed, which was how I came to learn of them. Twenty staff members agreed to participate in this study. There were over 40 staff members in the correctional youth facility; however, I was not exposed to staff members on third shift (approximately 11:00 pm to 07:00 am). Further, every staff member I asked to voluntarily participate in this study, accepted the invitation. In other words, not one staff member refused to participate in this study. Fourteen of the staff member participants were male, 2 of the females were Black, four females were White. All the male staff members were White. All the staff members were over the age of 19 years.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria for the inmate participants consisted of the following:

- Must be a current inmate of the state's correctional youth facility.

- Between the ages of 19 and 21 years (and ten months).

- The inmate participants must use English and their primary spoken language.

The inclusion criteria of the staff member participants included:

- They must be a current employee of the state's correctional youth facility

- Must be 19 years of age or older.

Initially, this study was going to include all inmates between the ages of 15 and 21 years with obtaining parental consent for those inmates under 19 years of age. However, during the consent process, I quickly learned most inmates under 19 years of age, had little if any knowledge where their parents were. The correctional youth facility considered these inmates as adults; thus, they did not collect parent information from them. They did record emergency contact information; however, this information was unreliable. The phone numbers I called were either

the wrong numbers or were no longer in service. Many of the inmates said their parents were in prison, they never knew their parent(s), or they had not seen them for a period and did not know how to contact them.

Furthermore, the request I made to contact the inmates' parents seemed to emotionally upset many of them. The inmates became irritated or angry with my questions. Thus, I decided to exclude all inmates who were under the age of 19 years. These inmates were housed together separated from the others and most spent their day hours in the classrooms working toward their GED. Thus, their elimination as participants posed little obstacles for me during my observations. I believe this was the best decision, as I did not want to cause potential participants any emotional distress by asking them about their parents' whereabouts. There were 60 inmates in the correctional youth facility and half were under the age of 19 years, which left me with a sample of 28 inmate participants (2 inmates refused to participate) over the age of 19 years. I was able to learn all the inmates' names, so it was not obvious which inmates were participants and which were not.

Consenting process

Before the beginning of this study, I obtained consent from the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Institutional Review Board, the director of the state's department of correctional services, and the warden of the correctional youth facility. This was then followed by obtaining verbal consent from all the participants. For each of the inmate participants, I read the informed consent form in a private area, usually their cell. This was followed by a discussion between the inmates and me. They were asked if they had questions, which I answered.

Furthermore, I asked each inmate participant to explain to me in their own words what the informed consent was about and how it pertained to them. Only after I was comfortable that they understood the meaning of informed consent did I include them in the study. I also left a

copy of the informed consent with each inmate. I did not memorialize their names or signatures as it was determined the anonymity of the participants must be maintained.

The staff members consented to participate in a similar manner to the inmates. However, most of the staff members did not want me to read the informed consent form to them. Many said they were aware of my presence as they were given information about my research purpose by the warden before the beginning of the study. A copy of the informed consent form was given to each staff member participant and a copy was posted on the employee bulletin board in the breakroom.

Methods of data collection: Focused ethnography

For this *focused ethnography*, I spent approximately three months inside the correctional youth facility and used two methods of data collection: (1) direct *participatory observations* of inmate and staff member participants, and (2) informal, casual *conversation* with the inmates and staff member participants.

During the study, I made direct observations and had casual conversations with all inmates and staff members within the facility; however, only the observations of and casual conversations with the study's participants were used for data collection. The purpose of observing and conversing with all inmates and staff was to reduce the attention to others of precisely who was participating in this study. During my observations, I attempted to become part of the everyday scenery at the correctional youth facility and spread my attention to all who lived and worked there. However, I only memorialized in my field noted the data collected from the study participants. Furthermore, to avoid suspicion among the participants and non-participants, I refrained from jotting notes during my observations and conversations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

The collection of data for this study included topics of the social interactions that occurred within my presence. For instance, I noted the levels and types of cohesiveness that occurred between and among the staff members as well as the inmates. Cohesion included the inmates socializing with each other, as well as with the staff members. As this study was inductive in its approach, I did not determine precisely what I was going to observe until I spent some time in the facility. This inductive strategy is typical for qualitative ethnographic research (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Throughout my time in the youth facility, I shadowed various staff members. The shifts I was in the facility was usually first (about 8 am to 4 pm) or second shift (about 2 pm to 10 pm). I varied my observations by shadowing several different staff members, who worked at various places within the correctional youth facility. This allowed me to observe nearly every part of the youth facility and have conversations with numerous staff and inmate participants. Many of the inmates were curious about my presence; thus, it was often they who initiated conversations with me. The inmates often bantered with me in a friendly manner and even gave me a nickname of "OG Meyer." Initially, the custody staff members were not as social with me as the inmates were. However, after the second week, many of the staff members learned I was a former police officer. After this news spread (only among the staff members), they were noticeably more relaxed in my presence and started talking to me. My former affiliation with law enforcement seemed to communicate a *brotherhood* with the custody staff members as they often inquired about my police experiences.

I memorialized all the observations and conversations with the participants after I left the correctional youth facility. Because of the human limitations to recall details as time passes from the event in question, I prepared my field notes as soon as possible after I exited and rarely spent more than 4 hours at a time in the facility. Furthermore, I usually spent 3-4 days per week in the correctional youth facility, alternating the days in the youth facility with days that I prepared my

field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Furthermore, when participants made a comment that I felt was valuable for my study, I excused myself and retreated to my vehicle where I jotted the participants' quotes. This strategy did not arouse suspicion among the participants at the facility, in general, the facility had constant foot traffic.

Methods of analysis using grounded theory

During the days I wrote my field notes, I attempted to describe my observations as a-theoretical accounts. My fieldnotes were descriptive but included my emotions. Because I did not jot notes while in the correctional youth facility, I prepared my field notes in two stages. The first was to write everything I remembered as quickly as I thought of it. Thus, the first stage of notes was random and not well-organized scripts, as the intent was to write as much as quickly as possible so to reduce the possibility of forgetting details. The second stage involved a thoughtfully organized memorialization of my observations. It was during this time, using grounded theory, that I made my initial line-by-line codes. The codes I identified led to the development of initial memos that raised the codes to temporary categories. My field observations then became more focused (focus coding), which permitted me to separate, sort, and integrate the vast amounts of data I accumulated. I prepared memos throughout my fieldwork, which allowed me to compare the data I collected and to explore strategies for further data collection. Advanced memos were then used to refine the conceptual categories that lead to my final theory. After the memos were sorted, which included reexamining earlier data, the memos were combined to map out the concepts and show how they were related, and the first draft of the theory was then written (Charmaz, 2006).

I used NVivo software in the collection, organization, and analysis of the field notes. Although there is criticism for the use of data management software in grounded theory studies (Holton, 2007), I argue that NVivo helped the research stay organized, which assisted me to stay on task. NVivo did not complete the analysis of the data in the same way statistical software does

(e.g., SPSS, SAS, STATA). It provided me with a means of managing the qualitative data I collected by helping me divide the data into concepts. It was still up to me to identify the concepts, NVivo just helped me organize it.

Preface for Chapters 4, 5, & 6

The next three chapters are the observations I made during my focused ethnography. I divided the chapters in *the beginning, the architecture, and the people who occupy its space* (i.e., Chapter 3), *the inmate incentive program with its meaningful incentives and evidence-based programs* (i.e., Chapter 5); and *the "gang war" and its meaning* (i.e., Chapter 6). The following observation chapters mirror a quasi-experimental design. Specifically, although it was unintentional, the chapters follow a pre- post-test experiment. As it turned out, during the middle of my focused ethnography, a fight among the inmates occurred that was described as a *gang war* by many within the correctional youth facility. The *gang war* caused a reaction by the staff members and the state prison system where the correctional youth facility was located. The reaction included a transfer of the warden and a reduction in program staff with a resignation of one its members. The changes significantly altered the therapeutic climate.

Chapter 4

Observations: The beginning, the architecture, and the people who occupy its space

The beginning

"Eric, I cannot thank you enough for doing this study. I want you to know that I want to be as transparent as possible while you are here. What we do is valuable. The fencing and razor wire you see that keeps the inmates safe. The programming inside, that's what keeps the community safe". The words the warden said on my first day of this ethnography continuously repeat in my head. What he said surprised me. I had been often greeted with skepticism by other criminal justice practitioners. They did not give me their trust. I thought the warden must truly believe in what he was doing. He must have known the therapeutic programming he offered his youth inmates was worth the financial investment the state spent. However, I assumed that he also must have felt pressure from others that he was spending too much. Although the warden was a practitioner in corrections, an employee of the state, his position, and his roles were political as well. He said as much, and I could feel the stress it caused him, "I'm the only warden in the state that takes a therapeutic approach. It's a heavy investment, but it just makes sense". One of the first thoughts that came to my mind was what would happen if a transfer of the warden occurred? Would the therapeutic climate change? My guess the answer was yes; however, I had no clue at the beginning of my study that my thought would manifest itself during my fieldwork.

Although I never planned for my observations for this ethnography to develop in the manner it did, the following description of my ethnography loosely mirrors a pre-post-test experimental design. The sections of Chapter 4, which include *The architecture of a state correctional youth facility, Inmate status, Custody staff members' status, Custody staff members' relationship with inmates, Program staff members' status, Program staff members' relationship*

with inmates, and *The warden's relationship with the "guys",* along with the sections in Chapter 5, which include *Inmate Incentive Program, Incentives and their meaning, The Tao of inmate change, and Programs and their meaning* are the observations I made during the first 2 months of the study. The next sections in Chapter 6, which include *Shaky Ground: Is their passion enough? "Gang war"?* and *Correctional youth facility's reaction to the "gang war"* contain the details of a large group fight among many of the inmates. This section is followed with details of the state's reactions to the fight, which includes the warden's transfer out of the correctional youth facility, information of who replaced him, program manager resigned, and details of how the therapeutic climate of the youth correctional facility drastically changed.

The architecture of a state correctional youth facility

The buildings at the state correctional youth facility where my ethnography occurred had various purposes. Despite its small physical size compared to other more traditional prison facilities, the structures were complex in the roles they provided. There was a total of three buildings on 15 acres of land; each assigned its name and purpose. Building "A" (*administrative building*), "E" (*education building*), and the housing unit (*inmates' residences*).

The primary purpose of building "A" was administrative. For instance, the warden and assistant warden's offices were in this building, as well as most of the support staff (i.e., administrative assistants). However, building "A" was also the building where all who entered the facility came through. Thus, there was a lobby area where guests and employees signed in and coin-operated lockers where visitors stored all personal items that were not allowed in the facility (e.g., cell phones, purses, keys). Just outside the lobby area was a multi-purpose room (10 feet by 25 feet) that was also a *visitation room*. This room was where the inmates' families could visit them. Building "A" also housed the only *cafeteria* where the inmates ate their meals, as well as an area called *intake*. Intake contained 4 small cells (6 feet by 8 feet) and was where all new

inmates entered and stayed (approximately 2-4 hours) until their statuses were determined and they were administratively processed into the facility.

Next to building "A" was building "E", which was also referred to as the *education building*. Building "E" was where most of the inmate programming occurred. Within this building were a community meeting room, conference room, several classrooms, offices for program staff members and teachers, health clinic, and gymnasium. Except for being surrounded by fencing and razor wire, building "E" resembled most public high schools in an urban community. Educational and motivational posters adorned the walls in building "E", as well as graduation portraits of inmates who successfully completed their programs. During the day time hours, building "E" was easily the busiest building within the facility. Activities, such as inmates attending high school or college classes, watching movies or playing video games, participating in meditation sessions, or playing basketball in the gym could often be observed.

The building that contained the inmates residential or housing units was the largest and it was located across a vast 5-acre green space (*the yard*) from buildings "A" and "E". Located within this building were three separate inmate housing units. On each end of the building were the units that housed inmates on the status of *general population* (GP) and in the middle portion of the building was the *Segregation Management Unit* (SMU) that was reserved for inmates on the status of *long-term segregation*. All the cells throughout the housing units were similar in layout and size. They were approximately 8 feet by 10 feet, contained two separate beds (aka *bunks*), one steel toilet and sink. There were two windows within each cell. Located on the thick steel door was one window, the other was along the wall opposite the door, next to the ceiling, and covered with an opaque material that made it impossible to see through. Each cell was illuminated with a fluorescent light fixture that casted a stark, greenish but uniform light upon the drably colored walls. I smelled a strong odor of disinfectant, body odor, and food throughout all the housing units. Sounds, such as yelling and steel doors slamming echoed throughout the entire

residential building. Within each of the general population housing units were a microwave oven, soda vending machine, hot water faucet, and a personal computer, caged in steel and plexiglass. A 15-foot long counter was present within each of the three housing units as well. Explicitly reserved for staff members was the counter. The counter contained an electronic control panel where staff members monitored numerous surveillance cameras, spoke to others throughout the facility through intercoms, and remotely locked and unlocked doors.

The yard had its landscape features. On one end were a couple of picnic tables, a small open shelter (8 feet by 8 feet), weightlifting equipment, and in the center of the yard was a basketball court. Adjacent to the yard was another outdoor space known as *the big yard*. The big yard had a softball field as well as a few bleachers. The big yard was fenced off from the other yard, and inmates could only access the big yard during specific days/times. Otherwise, the inmates used the yard for most of the time they spent outside.

Surrounding the entire facility was chain-linked fencing, razor wire, and surveillance cameras. Just outside the fencing was a gravel access road that surrounded the facility. Custody staff members used this road to patrol by vehicle. The correctional youth facility was in a secluded industrial part of the city. There were two other adult correctional facilities in the area. One was a community work-release center; the other was a medium security prison that housed over 500 male inmates. Other buildings in the area included several warehouses and a homeless shelter. Despite the location of this entire area adjacent to a busy arterial road that led to the city's only airport, all the prison facilities were not in plain view. For the public to see any of the correctional facilities, they would need to drive directly into the area.

Inmate statuses

The correctional youth facility housed up to 116 male inmates. However, the facility had not experienced this population size for nearly a decade and normally housed approximately 50 to

60 inmates at any given time. Only offenders who were male, under 19 years of age (age of the majority in this particular state) and adjudicated as adults in criminal court for violent felonies could serve their sentences at this correctional youth facility. Once inmates reached the age of 21 years and 10 months, they must either be released back into the community or serve the remainder of their sentences in a traditional adult prison facility. Upon entry, inmates are evaluated and assigned specific statuses by staff members. The statuses of the inmates determined the inmates' daily roles (i.e. day-to-day activities), which included the housing unit where they lived, and who they associated with. There were generally three different statuses (with sub-statuses) for the inmates: (1) *general population*, (2) *protective custody*, and (3) *long-term segregation*.

General population (GP) was the status of most of the inmates. The staff members segregated GP inmates into two groups. One group consisted of inmates who were under 19 years of age and the second group comprised of inmates who were between 19 and 21 years (and ten months) of age. The age segregation only determined where the inmates lived and slept. Otherwise, all inmates could attend programs, eat, and socialize together. For inmate misconduct, some of those in GP were on a sub-status of *restrictive housing*. Those on restrictive housing had some, but not all their privileges suspended (e.g., limited outdoor time, no movie, restricted canteen purchases). They were still allowed to attend most (if not all) of their programming, but they had to return straight to their assigned housing unit when they finished their programming day. Inmates on GP status usually did not share a cell. Although rarely done, they could request to have a roommate.

Assigned to some of the inmates was the status of *protective custody* (PC). There were two manners to achieve this status. Inmates could request *voluntary* PC status or staff members assigned inmates to *involuntary* PC status. The purpose of either PC status was to segregate; thus protect, these inmates from all other inmates. Through prison policy, inmates on PC status were

only allowed to be in close physical proximity to other inmates on PC status. Most of the inmates

on PC status volunteered to have this status assigned to them. Most of them (if not all) were sex

offenders and they were concerned their criminal histories would put their safety at risk with

other inmates. As far as the inmates who were on involuntary PC status, staff members forced this

status on them as they feared for the inmates' safety. For instance, one of the inmates had

attempted to murder a rival gang member's mother while living on the outside. This behavior was

considered deviant and offended many of the inmates within the facility, and as a result, they

vowed to kill him. Thus, after several assaults with injuries, staff members forced the status of PC

on this inmate for his personal protection. Inmates on PC status lived together in the same

housing unit as GP inmates under 19 years of age. Although, PC inmates were never allowed to

be out of their cells with any of the GP inmates.

Other than total segregation from all other inmates, the roles of inmates with PC status

were like the roles of inmates on GP status. The PC inmates attended programming in building

"E," ate their meals in the cafeteria, and had outdoor yard time for recreation. The difference

being is that when the inmates on PC status-completed these activities, they were done with a

physical barrier between them and all other inmates. The barrier was often a logistical challenge

for staff members, as they had to make sure all other inmates were either locked down in their

cells or were locked in another room away from the PC inmates.

Several inmates were on the status of *long-term segregation*. Most of the staff and

inmates referred to them as *seg*. Those on seg were housed together into one residential living

area called the *segregation management unit* (SMU). This housing unit was often called the *hole*

by both inmates and staff. The inmates on seg had almost no exposure to any part of the

correctional facility other than their cells. They were required to live in total isolation for 23

hours per day and could live in the hole for up to one year. The seg inmates did get to select

between two areas for their one hour of outside time per day. They could choose between a

specific outdoor space known as *seg yard*, or they could opt to exercise in a cell converted into a weight lifting area. The vast majority selected the seg yard, which reminded me of an outdoor kennel for dogs. The seg yard consisted of two outdoor cages. Each cage was approximately 10 feet by 25 feet, surrounded by 15-foot tall chain link fencing, and adorned with razor wire. Each cage had a roof of chain-linked fencing that prevented a clear, unobstructed view of the sky. The floor surface was of concrete, and there was little to do other than stand or sit on the hard ground or pace. Other than this one-hour time in the seg yard or lifting weights in a converted cell (or for other rare occasions), the seg inmates were forbidden to participate in all programming and stayed in their cells where they watched television, read, ate, used a computer tablet, or slept.

There were a few other rare occasions the inmates on seg could leave their cells (e.g., medical appointment, attorney visit, counseling); however, they did so under the intense escort of two custody staff members. To prepare the inmates for these occasions, the custody staff members shackled the inmates' ankles with steel chains that limited their gate to a short shuffle; they wore two sets of handcuffs around their wrists, secured to a thick leather belt, strapped around the inmates' waist. The staff members led the inmates with 4-feet of iron chain, which resembled a leash for large breed dogs. The leash was secured to the inmates' wrists and staff members jerked it tight whenever they needed to obtain a response from the inmates to their instructions. Again, in the same way one might see a dog owner obtain compliance from their misbehaving pet. Their (inmates and dogs) reactions to the jerking of the leash were similar as well. The inmates at the very least would grimace, and at the most, they would yell an obscenity, such as "fuck you!" to the staff. Both were indicators to me that they were in pain. The shackling and leashing process occurred even if the inmates were escorted 20 feet from their cells to the seg yard. The time and effort it took to shackle, handcuff, and lead the inmates was time-consuming (approximately 10-15 minutes), arduous, and posed a logistical challenge for the staff members. Especially, when there were over a dozen inmates housed in the hole.

Custody staff members' status

Generally, staff members at the correctional youth facility included two statuses—*custody-* and *program staff.* Each status had their specific purpose with roles. There were 42 staff members assigned to the custody status. Their sole purposes were to maintain order and security among the inmates. In other words, in more traditional terms, they were the correctional officers. Custody staff was segregated by rank, like that of the military. Within this correctional facility, the lowest rank of custody staff was *corporal*, followed by *the ranks of sergeant*, *lieutenant, captain, assistant warden*, and *warden*.

Although their official title was a *case worker*, their purpose was like that of custody staff members. Thus, for this study, we will consider them to have the same general status and roles as custody staff members with some minor differences. Caseworkers worked only in the housing units, whereas custody staff worked everywhere else. As caseworkers worked where the inmates lived, they were responsible for their personal living needs. These responsibilities included coordinating shower times, laundry, and serving meals to the inmates on long term segregation status. Because the caseworkers had a few more responsibilities than the custody staff members, their employment hiring standards were different. Caseworkers had to either possess a bachelor's degree or had previous work experience as a custody staff member to be eligible for hire. An additional difference between caseworkers and custody staff members was their monetary income earned. Caseworkers earned approximately one dollar more per hour of labor compared to custody staff members (caseworkers = $19.00 per hour, custody staff member = $18.00 per hour (approximately)).

Both the custody and caseworker staff members were paid hourly. Generally, they were paid well less than 20-dollars per hour. This wage, of course, does not include their overtime wage, which was 1 ½ time their hourly wage. Historically, raises among all staff members were

infrequent, may be occurring at the rate of once every 2 or 3 years and then the increase was usually less than one dollar per hour. One of the few manners to earn more money for custody staff members and caseworkers was through rank promotions (e.g., sergeant, lieutenant, captain), as seniority among those of the same rank did not affect their pay. Custody staff members who had worked for the department of corrections for twenty years at the rank of corporal made the same hourly wage as newly hired corporals.

Both the custody staff members and caseworkers wore similar uniforms, which included polo style shirts, battle dress uniform pants (aka cargo pants), black military-style combat boots, and nylon utility belts. However, the color of the shirts they wore differed between the two positions. Custody staff members wore gray shirts, whereas case workers wore navy-blue shirts. The gear that was attached to their utility belts was the same and usually included handcuffs, plastic flex cuffs (i.e., extra disposable handcuffs), a 10-inch bottle of pepper spray, two-way radio holder, and extra pouches. As much of the work performed by custody staff members occurred outdoors, many of them wore while working outside dark sunglasses, black baseball caps, and carried black gloves that were like those used by baseball or football players.

For the custody staff members who were of the rank of sergeant, lieutenant, captain or above, much of their roles occurred within the space of a private office and were often out of the view of the inmates. Generally, there was only one sergeant and one lieutenant on duty per shift (three 8-hour shifts per 24-hour period). There was only one captain, assistant warden, and warden assigned to the entire correctional youth facility, and they performed almost all of their duties out view of the inmates during regular business hours (approximately 8 am to 5 pm). Therefore, the corporals and caseworkers had most of the contact with the inmates. The few times a staff member of higher rank contacted inmates was for critical incidents or inmate disciplinary action. Otherwise, except for the warden, it was rare to see the captain or lieutenants walking around the facility.

Staff members maintained communication with each other through their two-way radios. Through their radios, staff members informed each other of their physical locations and when inmates were going to cross the yard. Custody staff members, usually corporals, performed pat-down searches of all inmates before they entered or exited any of the buildings. Thus, pat-down searches of inmates were conducted several times per day with multiple searches completed of every inmate. When misconduct among the inmates occurred, corporals and caseworkers were the first to respond. For instance, when the misconduct occurred in the classrooms, corporals were called to the scene to deescalate the situation. This would often involve physically controlling the inmate with physical force, handcuffing, and escorting the inmate to *intake* where he would be housed for a period for him to calm down. In other words, intake was as a space for a *timeout*.

The amount of physical force the staff members used depended on the context of the situation. If the inmate was just verbally non-compliant, the physical force applied was normally handcuffing and escorting. However, if the inmates were physically non-compliant, then custody staff members and caseworkers could use only enough force to regain control of the situation. This amount of force may include the use of pepper spray, pressure point control tactics on the inmate, or take-down techniques that resembled martial art strategies. Despite their being written directives on what level of force should be used during specific contexts, it was at the staff member's discretions to interpret the context and decide what level of force was appropriate. For the most part, physical force, other than handcuffing, was not used to gain control of a disruptive situation.

All of the staff members had the authority to write *misconduct reports* (MR) to the inmates. These reports were written to those who violated the rules of the facility, and there were consequences or punishments to the inmates when they received MRs. Generally, the punishments included the restrictions of privileges. For instance, inmates may not be allowed yard time or view a movie with the other inmates. A more severe punishment could include

inmates being placed on the status of *restrictive housing* or even *long-term segregation.* Although the specific punishment stemming from the MRs was left to those of higher rank, the discretion as to write inmates MRs was made by the initiating staff member, no matter their rank. Staff members were only required to justify to their supervisors their decision in writing the MRs, and there was little questioning by supervisors as to the appropriateness of these decisions. As most contacts of the inmates were by corporals or caseworkers, it was they who wrote most MRs to the inmates. Even when those of higher ranks decided to write inmates MRs, the actual administering of the MR to the inmates was typically completed by corporals or caseworkers. In other words, those at the lowest rank took the heat even if they had little decision in writing inmates' MRs.

Both the custody staff members and caseworkers worked 8-hour shifts. Because the correctional facility operated 24-hours per day, every day, there were three different shifts. The shifts included a day shift or *first shift* (e.g., 6:30 am – 2:30 pm), *second shift* (2:30 pm – 10:30 pm), and *third shift* (10:30 pm – 6:30 pm). The specific day's staff members were assigned to work depended on the level of seniority the staff members held. Seniority was established by the amount of time one had worked for the department of corrections. Thus, the longer the staff members worked, the more seniority they had earned. Seniority determined not only what days and shifts staff worked, but also, and more importantly to them, which days they had off. For instance, newer custody staff members usually worked second shift with Monday and Tuesdays off, as this shift with these days off were the most unpopular, and senior staff members preferred to work first shift with weekends off. Staff seniority levels started over when staff was promoted. For instance, if the promotion of corporals to lieutenant occurred, their seniority was lowest among the existing lieutenants. Thus, newer lieutenants often worked second shift with days off in the middle of the work week.

Among all the correctional facilities in the state, there was a high turnover rate among custody and caseworker staff. This meant many of the facilities operated with a shortage of filled

positions and the correctional youth facility was no exception. Because of the shortages, many of

the custody and caseworker staff members were required to work overtime. It was not unusual to

observe staff members work double shifts (16 hours) or work over their days off. Many staff

members volunteered for overtime, as it was a way for them to increase their income. However,

others were forced to work overtime. The high turnover also affected seniority. For instance,

there were custody staff members who had only been employed by the department of corrections

for one or two years, and they had rapidly moved up to a level of seniority that gave them

favorable shifts and days off. Their seniority also gave them opportunities that were previously

reserved for staff with years of experience. For example, custody staff members with only one or

two years of experience could hold the position of *field training officer* (FTO). This position had

the responsibility of training new custody staff members and evaluating their efforts. Although

FTOs were not formally recognized with the status of supervisors, their roles indeed included

training, evaluating, and supervising newly hired custody staff members. Put differently, FTOs

set the tone for the future work environment of the correctional youth facility.

Relationships between custody staff members and inmates

The manner that custody staff and caseworkers supervised and related with the inmates

varied. As with issuing MRs or deciding the level of physical force to use on unruly inmates,

custody staff members and caseworkers were allowed discretion in their inmate supervisory

strategies and these strategies usually mirrored their personalities. For instance, some corporals

preferred to use informal tactics that were based on what they often called "mutual respect." This

interaction was dependent on the reciprocity of social interaction between the inmates and staff.

Commonly, it was agreed upon by most that if the inmates respected the corporals, the corporals

returned the respect to the inmates. In other words, if the inmates were cooperative and cordial to

the corporals, they returned similar behaviors to the inmates. However, even within this informal

relationship of reciprocity of respect, variances existed. Some of the corporals used more of

authoritarian parental approach, while others appeared to use one that resembled friendship. For example, many custody staff monitored every move the inmates made around them. They constantly scowled the inmates, particularly those that gathered in crowds. If the inmates broke any of the rules, no manner how minor the violation, these staff members immediately reprimanded the inmates with scolds that resembled angry parents. At best, this was often followed with brief lectures to the inmates, that usually ended with holding the inmates personally responsible for their misconducts and humiliating them in front of other inmates. At worst, the custody staff members handcuffed the inmates, patted them down with an obvious increase in physical intensity, and reprimanded the inmates to intake or their cells. There were moments, however, when the physical force used on the inmates was excessive. For instance, inmates were often verbally belligerent towards the custody staff members while being reprimanded in front of other inmates. The level of their verbal attacks on the staff members appeared to depend upon the audience of who was watching and what their reactions were. Thus, if the reprimanded inmates were scolded and handcuffed in front of other inmates that were friends, the intensity of their verbal attack on the staff members increased, as though the inmates were feeding off the reactions of their audience. This usually resulted in elevations of frustration among the staff members. Most staff members took the verbal assaults in stride, not reacting much to the foul language launched at them; however, there were few, usually newer staff members, that physically retaliated. For example, as a handcuffed inmate was escorted across the yard, he was yelling "fuck you!" repeatedly to the two corporals who were escorting him. The inmate was walking at a slower pace than the corporals preferred, and at times the inmate jerked his arms out of the grasp of the corporals. The behavior of the inmate was "getting under his [corporal's] skin," to the point that one of the corporals, the newer one, grabbed the inmate by the back of his neck and attempted to throw him to the ground. Despite being handcuffed, the inmate was able to prevent himself from hitting the ground. The new corporal was reprimanded for his excessive use of physical force. The reactions to this incident among his fellow corporals ranged

from "He [corporal] lost his shit and should have known better" to "That'll teach him [inmate] for being a shit head. If he [inmate] wants to play, he will know he has to pay". In other words, some disapproved of the excessive force, while others not only approved but thought of it as a teachable moment for the targeted inmate as well as other inmates. The variance in the inmates' reactions was not as wide. Most respected the inmate for his verbal and physical non-compliance towards the corporals, while others were just thankful that he avoided injury. Nearly all realized the overreaction of the corporal, which validated their distrust and hatred for them.

Incidents like this were indeed rare; however, the incident and its reactions were the topics of discussions among the inmates and staff members for weeks that showed an underlying problem. The warden expressed concern and disappointment of his corporal's use of excessive force and the reactions of others, but the warden was not surprised. He blamed the incident and reactions on lack of maturity among newer staff members that were an outcome of the high turnover rates among custody staff members, "If I could just get these new guys [custody staff members] to realize there is a better way of doing this job. What if that inmate got seriously hurt? That corporal could be charged [arrested] for assault!" The warden believed that because most custody staff members had little experience working at the correctional youth facility, they had little to compare the problems of misconduct among the inmates. They did not realize the dangerous problems the facility had eight years ago; thus, the relatively minor misconducts they experienced now with the inmates seemed dangerous, which mirrored the staff members' overreactions. The overreactions had the potential to not only physically hurt the inmates, but also negatively affect the therapeutic efforts for the inmates. As an incident like the one just described, could result in a lack of commitment of the inmates to participate in the therapeutic programming or at the very least hurt the levels of trust the inmates had towards the programming staff. The program staff expressed such a concern.

The warden also realized the use of excessive force, no matter how rare the occurrence, remained on the minds of the inmates for long periods. Excessive force increased the tension between custody staff members and inmates. The inmates were already resistant in trusting custody staff members; thus, an incident that was excessive validated their suspicions. Further, the tension often resulted in an increase in misconduct among the inmates, which meant an increase in punishment. Misconduct among the inmates not only made their own lives tough, but it also made the daily roles for the custody staff more difficult. The warden was able to recall what it was like to work in the facility when the norm among the inmates was misbehavior and how stressful it was for his staff. He realized that managing inmates who were compliant was a lot easier than supervising unruly inmates. Thus, the tension between his custody staff members and the inmates was discerning, as he realized this could escalate a correctional youth facility into a stressful environment like it was when he first arrived eight years ago, which included more fights, assaults, and injuries to everyone.

Custody staff member leaders and their relationship with inmates

With few exceptions, the higher the rank of the custody staff member (i.e., sergeant, lieutenant, captain, assistant warden, warden) the less direct contact they had with inmates. With an increase in rank, generally meant an increase in administrative and supervisory roles outside of the inmates' view. Thus, these roles prevented them from being in direct contact with the inmates. Therefore, the relationships they had with the inmates were shallow. However, higher ranking staff members did affect the daily lives of inmates, they just did so from behind their desks, in their offices, and out of view from the inmates. This meant that many of the experiences the inmates had were decided by those that were not in their line of sight. Thus, if the experiences were negative, they may not realize the decision was made by a lieutenant they rarely, if ever, saw. So, they vented their frustration on the staff who administrated the experience, which nearly always meant the corporals or caseworkers. The corporals and caseworkers had no discretion in

following orders from those of higher rank. They did so without question or complaint. There were moments they realized their orders were less than ethical. Nonetheless, they followed the orders realizing the adverse outcomes, as if they didn't, it could result in disciplinary action by their superiors.

Inmate Jones and his terrible day

Although it was not a daily occurrence, fights between inmates did happen. The fights were not premeditated; thus, they did not involve the use of weaponry, other than fists, and usually lasted under a minute before custody staff members broke the fight up. The typical response was for one or both parties to spend a few hours in the *intake* to cool off. After one such fight, I followed two corporals as they escorted the handcuffed inmate to a small cell in the intake. He was angry but not uncooperative. The inmate named Jones[1] believed he got the short end of the deal, as he thought the other fighting inmate should be placed in intake as well. As the corporals opened the cell door, they told Jones to strip naked. This was a standard procedure for all inmates who entered the intake room. They were to strip naked so that staff members could thoroughly search them, and then they gave the inmate new prison uniforms to wear. The purpose of this policy was to reduce the likelihood of incoming inmates successfully smuggling contraband into the facility, such as weapons or drugs. However, inmates who were placed into intake as a *timeout* for fighting were already in the facility, so the likelihood of them concealing contraband was minute. Still, the corporals were just following written directives and despite the inmates not wanting to be naked in front of the staff members, they generally did so without complaining. After Jones stripped bare, the corporal instructed him to perform several physical maneuvers with parts of his naked body. The corporal told Jones to turn away, bend over at the waist, and spread his buttock cheeks apart with his hands. The purpose was to look for any hidden contraband in or near the inmate's rectum. The corporal then told Jones to squat down to the floor and cough. If Jones had concealed a sharp object in his rectum this maneuver would have caused

him great pain and discomfort; thus, any grimaces or other signs of pain were an indicator to the corporal that Jones had hidden such objects in his body. Without surprise, however, nothing was found. As the corporal was holding the uniform in his hands, he proceeded to lecture Jones about his misconduct. Jones stood naked in front of the corporal covering his genitals with his hands. The lecture resembled one of an authoritarian parent. The corporal demeaned Jones calling him an "idiot" and "stupid" and explained to Jones that if he insisted on this sort of behavior, this was the consequence he would have to pay. Jones uncomfortably stood on the cold concrete floor barefoot and never said a word in response to the corporal's lecture. I found myself becoming emotionally upset to the point that I stepped away, so I could no longer see Jones. It made me angry to hear the corporal verbally degrading Jones as he was standing vulnerably naked in front of us. After approximately two minutes of critically preaching Jones, the corporal threw him his clean uniform and shut the door. As the door slammed closed, Jones yelled: "Fuck you!". I could only assume he was projecting his words to the corporals; however, he certainly could have just been venting the humiliating experience he just went through.

A couple of hours later, the corporals returned to their usual roles in the facility. One of their duties for the day included a thorough search of a randomly selected cell. Specific quotas were assigned to the custody staff to search cells every month. The cells were randomly selected to verify that staff members did not target certain inmates. By coincidence, the cell to be searched on this day belonged to Jones. One of the corporals felt uncomfortable about searching Jones's cell, as he believed Jones was already angry and would only become more upset when he discovered his cell was searched. The searching of cells was displeasing to all inmates. They had few personal possessions or spaces they could call their own. The searches were very thorough and usually involved rearranging all contents in the cell. Although the staff members were generally careful to replace everything they searched, it was always apparent to the inmates their cells were searched, as their belongings were in disarray. Thus, a search of their cells frustrated

the inmates, and they considered it to be a sign of disrespect by the staff members. The corporal realizing that Jones had already gone through an emotionally upsetting day believed a search might cause him to mentally lose it. This could result in Jones fighting other inmates or at the very least, being uncooperative with staff members. Thus, the corporal discussed the potential problem with his lieutenant.

As the corporal reviewed his concerns with the lieutenant, the lieutenant listened intently. The corporal explained the possible consequences of searching Jones's cell. The lieutenant said he was angry at Jones for the original fight, as the other inmate involved in the fight had to be transported to the emergency department at a local hospital to receive medical treatments for the wounds he suffered from the punches Jones landed on his face. Because of the logistical nightmare, this caused the lieutenant, he responded with "Fuck him. If he wants to fight, this is what he gets." The discussion abruptly ended, and the corporal proceeded to search Jones's cell. During the search, the corporal said to me, "This is not going to end well."

Two corporals searched Jones's cell, and they did discover what they called *nuisance contraband*. This contraband consisted of a few computer printouts of cartoon characters that Jones's had printed off in the classroom without permission. The corporals also discovered a spray bottle of cleaner that Jones had failed to return to the cleaning cart. Some of the inmates preferred to keep a bottle of cleaner in their cells in case they wanted to camouflage the foul odors that emanated from their toilets after being used. However, holding a bottle of cleaner in the cells was strictly prohibited. Although, the contraband found was minor, even by the standards of the corporals, they were required to write a report of their findings and issue Jones a misconduct report (MR), which would be the second MR he received for this day.

Hours later Jones returned to his cell. As predicted, when he discovered that staff members had searched his cell he was indeed upset. He voiced his frustrations aloud by screaming and yelling. He requested to meet with the corporals who searched his room. The

corporal that initially expressed his concern for the search obliged Jones's request. Jones complained that he thought that staff members searching his cell was "bullshit". The corporal explained that his cell was selected randomly, but Jones refused to believe him. Jones said as a form of retaliation for the earlier fight staff members searched his cell. As I stood and observed the corporal attempt to calm Jones's down with another parental lecture, I found myself becoming emotionally angry again. I wanted to defend Jones to the corporal and reveal to the corporal that Jones's suspicion of retaliation was indeed correct. However, I realized the corporal already knew Jones's accusation was accurate. The corporal prophesized the outcome before the search. Any attempts now to conceal what was obvious to everyone involved was just a theatrical performance and Jones was not buying it. The conversation ended with no one satisfied with the results, not even the corporal, as he said to me "Didn't I say this would happen?" The question, of course, was rhetorical.

Program staff members' status

Program staff differed in various manners from custody staff. Their dress was different, they worked different days and hours, and of course, their purpose was different. The purpose of program staff was not officially listed, at least that I could find, anywhere in the standard operating procedures at the department of corrections. However, this is not to say their purpose was not defined, as it indeed was. According to the warden, the goal of the program staff was to provide needed therapeutic services to increase the likelihood of inmate success when they returned to live in the community, as well as to reduce the risk of inmate misconduct within the facility. Thus, according to the warden, these therapeutic services not only kept communities safe but also increased the safety of staff members and inmates. This purpose was intentionally designed by the warden to be broad in scope. The youth correctional facility operated with limited resources. Thus, the warden encouraged the program staff to develop and implement innovative programs on a minimal budget with little administrative oversight. This creative freedom allowed

the program staff to work under great autonomy, which exposed the inmates to unique programs they would not otherwise have received in other prisons. Programs such as a formal incentive structure to motivate inmate participation in programs, mentoring partnerships from older inmates from traditional prison facilities and removal of tattoos were some of the innovative programs not traditionally seen at the other correctional facilities.

Program staff was not a formal position itself but instead consisted of a variety of specific areas within the correctional youth facility. These positions included psychologists, program manager, religion and volunteer coordinator, reentry specialist, and teachers among others. Because program staff members had various statuses with their specific roles, they worked in as well as outside the facility. For example, they attended meetings and training classes in the community and transported inmates directly to services (e.g., tattoo removal) that located outside the facility. Furthermore, program staff wore their civilian clothing (i.e., business casual), generally worked during the weekdays, during business hours with weekends off, and paid at a higher rate than the custody staff members or caseworkers. Although, there were many different programs offered to the inmates, the therapeutic programming centered around the *Inmate Incentive Program* (IIP). Furthermore, despite there being numerous (approximately 20) program staff positions (e.g., teachers, recreation manager, religious coordinator, etc.), the IIP rested mostly on the shoulders of only three program staff members. Those members were the *program manager* who managed the incentive program the inmates participated in; the *chief psychologist* who designed many of the therapeutic programs that complimented the incentive program, and the *warden* who led and supported their efforts.

Relationship between program staff members and inmates

There was a similarity to the relationships the custody staff members had with the inmates and the links the program staff members had with the inmates, in that both involved the

reciprocity of respect. However, there were fundamental differences. Unlike many of the custody staff members, the program staff members based their respect upon the foundation of dignity. As the psychologist repeatedly said to me, "As with everyone, they [inmates] just want to be treated with dignity." Thus, the program staff members built their mutual respect with the inmates in the same manner they did with people on the outside. In return, the inmates usually treated the program staff members the same. It was common to hear the inmates address the program staff members with their first name and the program staff members always made it a point to learn and use the inmates first name as well. For the most part, custody staff members referred to the inmates by their last names. Through calling the inmates by their first name, the inmates were treated the same way as they were on the outside. The program staff members also had casual conversations and greetings with the inmates. Numerous times per day the program staff members made comments like, "Hi John, how are you doing today?" or "Good morning John, it's nice to see you." The inmates responded to these greetings in similar manners, such as "I'm fine, how are you?" or "What's up?" The climate from these common greetings and conversations was relaxed and friendly, as it often is on the outside.

Furthermore, if an inmate seemed tense, program staff members asked the inmates if there was anything they could do to help or inquired to determine what was wrong. Although, the inmates' response was often "nothing," the program staff members' concern seemed to lessen the stress the inmates were experiencing. The program manager believed that if there was something small he could do to help the inmates emotionally feel better, then why not do it? By addressing an issue when it was just starting to surface, the program manager said he could prevent it from "festering" and growing into a serious incident, such as a fight or other misconduct. Again, for the program staff members, this was just part of the reciprocity of the relationships they had with the inmates. Some of the custody staff members expressed resentment toward the program staff members for what they thought was "catering" or "spoiling" the inmates. As one corporal said

"He [program manager] isn't respected by the inmates, they [inmates] are just using him to get what they want. If you want to see respect, watch the inmates jump when I tell them to." Through doing what seemed like a favor for the inmates was not an indication of weakness but were an act of prevention of severe incidents. The inmates responded positively to dignity. They often shared their emotional stresses with program staff members, as they realized the program staff members were willing to help them feel better.

What five minutes can do

It was common for inmates to approach program staff members and request a five-minute private meeting with them. During these meeting, the inmates expressed their emotional stresses to the program staff member and the program staff members did what they could to help the inmates. For instance, before the Segregation Management Unit (SMU) was at full capacity, the only two inmates in SMU asked the psychologist if they could spend their one-hour of outside time in the gym so they could play basketball. Because only two inmates were residing in SMU, there was a little logistical challenge for this request to occur. Although the facility had never obliged a request like this for inmates housed in the *hole*, the psychologist realized that by allowing these two inmates to play basketball in the gym, their stress from being housed in isolation could be slightly relieved. Thus, the psychologist sought and received permission from the warden to let the inmates spend their one hour in the gym. The inmates responded positively and looked forward to this time, which made their time in the *hole* more tolerable. Unfortunately, when SMU is at full capacity, like it was during most of this study, the logistical challenge to accommodate a request like this was not something the custody staff members could or wanted to do, as it was not only added labor and responsibility, but it would also require additional staff members that the correctional facility could not afford. However, it was an example of a positive outcome that stemmed from obliging a simple request from the inmates. Such a request may seem insignificant as it did to me upon first blush but realizing that within a prison or any other total

institution, many simplicities hold much more value inside than they do outside. Because of the value they own, they can be used as incentives for wanted behaviors; thus, they are a tool for the maintenance of a temperate emotional climate.

The warden's relationship with the "guys"

It took a few meetings with the warden to learn who he was referring to when he said "guys." First, I assumed he was speaking about his staff members, as when he used the term "guys," he said it with a smile; thus, it was a term of endearment. It was not until later that I realized that "guys" meant the inmates. Therefore, when the warden said to me "The guys are going to love talking to you," as he said on many occasions, he was referring to the inmates. I mentioned his use of the term "guys" to the warden, and he told me that he thought of the inmates as just "normal guys." He said they might have been raised differently, came from a different area than he did, but in the end, the "guys" were just people who made mistakes, but who wanted to do better. Thus, for the warden, he said he stopped judging the inmates long ago. He said if he had experienced similar conditions, he probably would have made the same mistakes as the inmates did. For the warden, instead of judgment, he found a better approach was treating the inmates with dignity like he would of anyone on the outside. In other words, he was treating the inmates like "guys."

On different occasions, I followed the warden as he walked through the facility. It seemed that whenever inmates saw the warden, they smiled and greeted him with a "hi" or "hello." The warden always returned the greeting and often asked inmates how they were doing. The warden called the inmates by name and often patted them on their backs, as a sign of fellowship or comradery. The inmates smiled with the warden's casual touch. When the warden encountered an inmate he did not know, he stopped and introduced himself. Inmates were often surprised to learn the warden's status and role. As one inmate said, "I just thought you were just

some cool dude!" Comments like this made the warden smile. The relationship the inmates had with the warden was not one based on an extensive amount of time, as the warden's roles were primarily administrative and out of sight of the inmates. However, despite the short periods the warden spent with the inmates, they liked and respected him, and by watching his response with them, I can safely assume the warden liked and respected the "guys" as well. The warden often told me that when you treat people with respect and dignity, they tend to give you their trust in return. With trust, the warden said you could accomplish much more than without it. The inmates will trust the therapy you provide them, and they will trust they are living in a safe environment. For the warden, when inmates feel safe, they are less likely to make weapons and use them on other inmates or staff. Thus, trust results in an environment that is safe for everyone.

Chapter 5

**Observations: The Inmate Incentive Program with its meaningful incentives
and evidence-based programs**

Inmate Incentive Program (IIP)

The assignment of the warden to the youth correctional facility was for one purpose, which was
to improve the safety of those who lived and worked in the facility. Prior to his arrival, the
correctional youth facility was considered by the department of correctional services to be the
most violent among all prisons in the state. They had more fights, injuries, and deaths per capita
than those that housed inmates on death row or had they had received convictions for some of the
most violent crimes the state had ever experienced. Before the warden's arrival, inmates at the
correctional youth facility had been issued not only more misconduct reports (MR) but the level
of severity of those MRs were high as well. For instance, inmates regularly fashioned their own
weapons out of items they found in the facility. Toothbrushes and other pieces of plastic (and
metal) were sharpened into knives and other instruments that were designed to hurt and kill
others. Inmates often threw their own urine and feces at staff members (i.e. *splashing*), as they
considered this to be the greatest insult. Even more disturbing were the frequencies of suicides
and attempted suicides. Before the warden's leadership, multiple times per year staff members
had to deal with inmates who were so emotionally distraught that they determined the only way to
escape their mental traumas was through the taking of their own lives. After only a year of
working at the correctional youth facility, the warden saw dramatic decreases in all violent
behaviors. At the time of this study (8 years after the warden's arrival), the correctional youth
facility went from being the most violent to the safest in the state. The inmates it seems, no longer
felt so angry or threatened that they had to make their weapons to assault each other or staff

members. Weapons were now rarely found in possession of the inmates, and staff members were unable to recall the last time an inmate used his feces or urine as tools of aggression.

Furthermore, it had been over two years since an inmate successfully committed suicide and the attempts were rare as well. The MRs written by staff members (mainly custody staff members) were chiefly for *nuisance violations*, such as possessing extra blankets, covering fluorescent lighting fixtures at night, attempting to spend time outside in the yard when on the status of room restriction, or for sharpening their inmate identification badges to cut food items (e.g. sausages) purchased from the canteen. Although the inmates still fought and injured each other, the frequency dramatically decreased. How did the warden accomplish this? Not alone— the warden enlisted the assistance of critical individuals for his new program staff that included a program manager and a psychologist. It was they who designed, implemented, managed, and supported the warden's new therapeutic climate at the facility and it all began with a formally organized incentive structure that concentrated on positive reinforcement and not just the methods of punishment and control.

As the warden believed it was his responsibility to improve public safety, as well as the safety in the correctional youth facility, he also recognized, through evidence-based therapeutic programs, many of the barriers that many of the inmates faced could be overcome. Barriers, such as anger management, drug and alcohol addictions and abuse, education and job training, as well as many other areas not only needed to be formally addressed but addressed with limited resources. Thus, as an effort to increase the success of his new therapeutic climate for inmates, the warden authorized the development and implementation of the *Inmate Incentive Program* (IIP). The purpose of the IIP was to motivate the inmates to address their identified individual needs and for them to develop the skills necessary to living a prosocial healthy lifestyle through rehabilitative programs. The IIP allowed the inmates to build upon their successes and progress through the therapeutic programs they participated in to achieve the desired behavioral change. In

other words, the IIP was mainly based on positive reinforcement. Programs were developed and implemented to assist the inmates in strengthening their capacities in personal hygiene, work, education, mental health, sanitation, and other pro-social behaviors and activities. Every month, the program manager reviewed with each inmate the programs they successfully participated in or completed to determine the level of incentives that reflected their performance. There were four tier levels in the IIP: bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. Each incentive level had specific privileges the inmates could use. For instance, for those inmates who were at the tier levels of silver, gold, or platinum they could view a new-release movie every other Friday afternoon or they were given extra yard time as a reward for their accomplishments. The program manager alone was responsible for the overall administration, management, and evaluation of the IIP and communicating the inmates' performance scores to all sections of the correctional facility. For the IIP to be most effective, the program manager believed he needed to verify that all staff members were not only aware of the IIP but also knew which incentive level the inmates belonged to, as if the incentives were not correctly assigned and identified, the IIP could be perceived as meaningless to the inmates. In other words, inmate and staff buy-in were essential for the IIP to work.

There were five general rules in the Inmate Incentive Program. Rule (1), the privileges earned through the IIP were specific and defined to each incentive tier level. The incentives ranged from extra yard time, playing video games on an "X-Box," to eating donated fast-food. Rule (2), the inmates were responsible for submitting their Monthly Activity List (MAL) to the program manager. Failure to do so could result in nonrecognition of their efforts. The MAL that listed the inmates' accomplishments were in the form of a *pink sheet*, which was the name everyone referred to them as. It was common for inmates to carry their pink sheets with them throughout their day. When inmates successfully participated in or completed programs, they sought signatures from the program staff that sponsored the specific program. These pink sheets

symbolized inmate successes; thus, the inmates closely guarded their pink sheets and would become upset if they misplaced or lost them. Rule (3), privileges were immediately suspended if the inmates were placed on room restrictions. Once the sanctions were completed, the privileges were reinstated. Rule (4), privileges were also suspended if the inmates' status decreased from general population to long term segregation and placed in the segregation management unit (SMU). Once the inmates returned to the status of the general population, they were put at the bronze tier level of the IIP. Rule (5), inmates could have one minor misconduct report (MR) disregarded for the month by attending four *Mindfulness and Meditation* session during the month the MR was given. If inmates elected not to participate in the Mindfulness and Meditation sessions or they received more than one minor MR in a month, they could drop in their IIP tier levels. Thus, at the discretion of staff members, the tiers the inmates worked so hard to obtain could quickly be erased.

For the Inmate Incentive Program to work in a positive manner, the incentives must be composed of items or activities the inmates wanted. For the program manager, this was a barrier, as he quickly learned that what he believed would be popular incentives, often held little meaning for the inmates. Thus, the program manager interviewed several of the inmates to learn the things that would motivate their participation in the IIP. It was only after doing this that the program manager discovered that the activities and items that many people on the outside considered minor were valuable to the inmates on the inside. Because the inmates lived in a total institution that controlled their every movement, the inmates longed for activities and items that represented everyday life on the outside. For instance, watching movies or eating fast food are activities that many take for granted. However, because the inmates could no longer participate in these activities, they yearned to do them. The program manager developed specific programs to learn the inmates' desires, as he also realized these activities and items changed over time. As a result, programs such as the formation of the Inmate Council. The council brought knowledge to the

program manager as to what the inmates desired. In turn, the program manager used this knowledge to support the success of the IIP.

Inmate Council

Once per month, the inmate council met with the program manager to discuss a list of privileges the inmates requested. The inmate council was composed of six inmates who were elected to serve on the council by their peers. These inmates performed well on the Inmate Incentive Program, as they were either gold or platinum level, earners. There was a representative of every race, ethnicity, and age group (minors and adults) on the council.

The day I observed the inmate council meet with the program manager they discussed several items. First, the program manager updated the progress of the previous month's request. Apparently, the inmate council asked for the placement of a fish aquarium in the library. They believed it would be a positive addition to the library and inmates could use the aquarium as a place for peacefulness or escape. The inmates said watching fish was relaxing and many of the inmates longed to take care of a pet. The program manager said that despite believing an aquarium would be good for the inmates, he was unable to obtain approval from the state's department of correctional services. The primary reason for the denial was the initial cost for the aquarium and fish as well as the maintenance that would be necessary. However, the program manager did say he received approval for a soft-serve ice cream machine. Plans were in motion to install the ice cream machine in the cafeteria, and the inmates on silver, gold, and platinum levels on the IIP would be allowed to eat ice cream once per week. Members of the inmate council were pleased with this news.

The inmate council then discussed several requests that were brought to their attention by other inmates. Most of the requests involved personal hygiene supplies. Many of the Black inmates wanted a different haircare product to use, as the current product was ineffective. Other

personal hygiene products included bath soap, deodorant, and over the counter sleep aids, such as

melatonin. The council said many of the inmates had problems sleeping in the bright ambient

light conditions and asked for over-the-counter medicine. The program manager said he could

most likely obtain approval for all the personal hygiene requests except for the sleep aid.

However, he said he would research the options that may be available to them. The last requests

the inmates made was for hot water in the shower. The inmates said the hot water at best was

inconsistent. They told the program manager that on most occasions they had to take cold

showers. The program manager said he was unaware of this problem and told the inmates he

would investigate getting this issue resolved.

The decorum during the meeting was friendly, respectful, and professional. The members

of the inmate council were serious when they presented their requests, and the program manager

made sincere efforts to listen and accommodate the requests. However, they were friendly with

each other as well. They discussed items that were off-topic, such as football and their favorite

foods. The program manager called each inmate by his first name and the inmates called the

program manager by his first name as well. The program manager used this time to listen to the

inmates' other concerns, such as complaints about the excessive force that was used by the

corporals. The program manager offered explanations when he could, but when he could not, he

just let the inmates vent their frustrations and told them he understood their problems. This

strategy brought a sense of calmness to the inmates. After the meeting as the inmates walked

away, I heard one inmate say to another, "He's [program manager] cool man. He's one of the few

that gives a shit about us".

After the meeting, the program manager said he was pleased with the outcomes of this

day's Inmate Council meeting. He said he used these meetings to learn what the incentives should

be for the IIP. The program manager said when the inmates selected the incentives the incentives

become powerful. The inmates responded well to choosing the incentives, as they liked having a

voice in the facility. The program manager said that the facility controls almost every aspect of the inmates' life and by giving some of the control back to the inmates, it increased communication and trust among them and the staff members. The program manager said a small ice cream machine could carry a strong symbolic meaning of trust, as well as being an effective incentive in the IIP. The program manager said, "It just makes sense."

Incentives and their meaning

Movie day

Every other week, throughout the week, I often heard inmates ask the program manager what the movie for Friday was going to be. As the days passed, the questions with a sense of excitement increased. Even the enthusiasm of the program manager grew. It seemed that this incentive was popular among many. Because of this, the program manager felt it appropriate to open it to most of the inmate population, as they only had to be on the incentive tier of silver or above to see the theatrical release. The movies were generally newer released titles, rated PG or PG13, and the rights for public viewing were donated to the correctional facility; thus, other than a few snacks, there was no real financial cost for this incentive.

The movies were projected on a large 4-feet by 8-feet screen in the community room located within building "E." On movie day, the plastic chairs were organized into rows by the program manager to give it more of a theatre-like feel to space. On this movie day, while prepping the room, the program manager said, "what kid doesn't like going to the movies?" The question, of course, was rhetorical, as he asked it with a smile and a giggle. Often, the program manager provided popcorn for the inmates; however, on this movie day he was able to score some donated ice-cream sandwiches and popsicles, "They are going to love this" he exclaimed. Apparently, the program manager was looking forward to the movie as much as the inmates were. I found my level of enthusiasm for the movie was growing as well.

On this day, the movie the inmates (and I) were going to watch was *Ready Player One* (2017). Ironically, the premise of the movie was about a young adolescent male playing a video game to escape the realities of living in impoverishment. I could not help but associate the main character of this movie with the inmates, and I was excited to see how the inmates reacted to the film's premise. Before the start of the movie, the inmates gathered outside building "E" waiting anxiously to be frisked by the custody staff, so they could enter the converted community room, now movie theatre. Each inmate was holding a 12 ounce can of soda that they had purchased earlier from the vending machines in their housing units. They had saved their sodas for this day, which was a time they could drink a "pop," eat a snack, while watching a movie. I was amazed at how many of the inmates were aware of the details of the movie, as I assumed they could not have known much about it by being cut off from the outside world. However, I later learned that a few of the inmates had sought descriptions of the movie from their visitors and shared the details with others, which was an indicator to me that they were excited to see it.

All the inmates sat in their seats, and for the most part, they were well behaved. They were laughing, jokingly bantering with one another, and had trouble containing their enthusiasm. They even socialized with inmates that were outside their own race or ethnicity. This was one of the few times I observe this as for the most part, inmates socialized only with inmates within their own race or ethnicity. However, on this occasion, they did not feel this pressure. The White inmates were talking with the Black inmates, and everyone was laughing with each other. As the program manager lowered the lights, the inmates settled down and became silent. The projector began, and as the opening scene was displayed, I could hear some of the inmates make comments like "This is going to be awesome!" and "All week I've been waiting for this!". The program manager handed out the ice-cream sandwiches and popsicles. All but a few accepted the treats and devoured them entirely after only a few minutes. Surprisingly, the inmates then voluntarily passed a trash can around for all to throw away their wrappers. I then heard popping sounds as the

inmates opened their sugary carbonated drinks. The program manager then proceeded to pass apples out to the inmates. The apples were not as well received as the ice cream sandwiches and popsicles, but some of the inmates thankfully accepted the program manager's offer.

During the movie I found myself forgetting that I was in a prison facility. I even forgot that I was sitting next to offenders who had received convictions for serious crimes, such as murder, rape, robbery, among other violent offenses. I felt utterly at ease like I would at a movie theatre on the outside. Apparently, the inmates forgot their statuses as well. They no longer felt the need to display harsh and tough personas. Instead, they laughed, giggled, and smiled like teenage boys do when seeing a movie at the theatre. The event reminded me of my own childhood experiences of going to the movies on Saturday afternoons with my friends. In other words, the inmates were having a good time and apparently escaped from their reality—for two hours anyway. The program manager laughed and smiled as much as the inmates did. The only people in the room who did not seem to approve of the event were the two corporals standing guard. They stood in the rear, with their arms folded, never cracking a smile.

After the 2-hour movie, the inmates cheered and applauded. They then lined up waiting to be frisked so they could return to their housing units. However, there was a difference. Typically, the inmates hated being frisked. They often showed their disapproval through a scowl or by trying to sneak out without being frisked. On this day; however, the inmates were orderly and smiling through their pat-down searches. I noticed that as the inmates were making their way back to the housing units, they started to play *tag* with each other. They chased each other while laughing and smiling. I had not seen them play like children before. I found myself smiling and laughing as I watched them play and could not wait until the next movie day, which I am sure they were looking forward to as well. The program manager said to me as he was cleaning and stacking the chairs in the now former movie theatre, "Did you see the way they [inmates] behaved? This is how I know the incentive program is working."

Extra yard time

Without a doubt, during my time at the correctional youth facility, *yard time* was the most popular of all the activities. Apparently, the inmates enjoyed being outdoors. The inmates either gathered under a small shelter and played cards on a picnic table, exercised on the weightlifting equipment, played basketball, or just basked in the sunlight. Although my time was only during the warm summer months, the temperature didn't seem to stop the inmates from wanting to go outdoors. They requested to go outside whether the temperature was 75 degrees or 100. They just wanted out of their housing unit, away from the sounds of yelling, doors slamming, and the odors of food, disinfectant, and urine. Yard time included none of these negative sensations. The only sounds that could be heard were from the occasional cars that drove past the facility or the passenger airplanes that flew overhead. The only smells that could be sensed were one of fresh air and nothing else. It was common to see inmates looking up at the sky, seemingly at nothing, but nonetheless enjoying every moment of it. Therefore, as it should come to no surprise, the incentive of *extra yard time* meant the world to the inmates. The inmates yearned for this time above anything else.

Darrel just wanted to go outside with his friends

An inmate named Darrel[2] often initiated conversations with me. He was curious of my presence, so we often talked. The discussions usually started with him asking me about my study and what I was going to do with the things I learned. Darrel quickly learned that in this relationship, it was he that had the role of teacher. I was, in turn, the student. This role pleased Darrel; I could tell he was happy to see me as he voluntarily shared with me many of his experiences of life in prison. Darrel even gave me a nickname of "OG Meyer," which eventually many of the inmates called me. Darrel held the status of *involuntary protective custody.* Staff had forced him on PC status as many of the inmates wanted to hurt or even kill him. Apparently, Darrel had tried to murder a gang member's mother, and this offense crossed a line with some of

the other inmates. Thus, Darrel's time in the correctional youth facility largely consisted of spending his days with only eight other inmates, who were also on PC status. Most, if not all these inmates were on *voluntary protective custody* and most of them were convicted sex offenders. Darrel did not like being housed with inmates that he referred to as "chi-mos." However, Darrel didn't have a decision on his status and considering his disdain for it; he was generally agreeable and a likable person. Darrel, because of his status was segregated from the general population (GP) inmates and often expressed his dislike from being separated from them. He was especially disagreeable with not getting to spend yard time outside with the GP inmates.

One morning, I saw Darrel staring out a window into the main yard. He was watching some of the GP inmates play cards while others were playing basketball. Darrel acknowledged my presence but didn't have the same level of enthusiasm as he usually had when he saw me. I asked Darrel, "What's up?" Darrel said, "This is bull shit, why can't I go outside?" Darrel knew the answer to his question, but clearly, he was frustrated that he could not join the GP inmates during their yard time. Darrel said, "I don't care man. I just want to go outside. I hate it in here with these chi-mos." Darrel understood that staff members forced him into PC for safety reasons. He also realized his life would be jeopardy if he rejoined the GP inmates. However, Darrel thought it was worth the risk to his safety to be able to be with the GP inmates, many of whom were his friends in the yard. Darrel missed his friends, but more importantly, he lost the social kinship he experienced while being in the yard with his friends. He longed to be outside with them and watching the GP inmates have fun without him frustrated and angered Darrel. For Darrel, one of the few times in the correctional facility he looked forward to was yard time with his friends.

The incentive of extra yard time

The program manager realized the popularity among the inmates of *extra yard time*. He recognized the value of this incentive to the incentive program. Extra yard time for the inmates

was an incentive that did not financially cost the facility anything. Before the development of the IIP, it was something from time to time the facility gave the inmates. However, now through the IIP it was distributed in trade for the inmates participating in therapeutic programming. The program manager based much of the successes of the IIP on extra yard time and other incentives that held powerful meaning to the inmates. The program manager believed that the most effective inmate incentives (e.g., extra yard time, movies, and fast food) represented life outside of the correctional youth facility. For instance, for an inmate to be outdoors was a short time the inmate could escape from being in prison, not literally, but figuratively. An inmate could stare at the sky and not see the cinder-block walls and fencing and not think about his current prison status. When an inmate shared an outdoor moment with his inmate friends, it seemed to be even more enjoyable for him. Yard time reminded me of my childhood memories of playing in the park with my friends, which were positive moments of my life. For Darrel, he was willing to even risk his safety for these moments outdoors. Indeed, extra yard time was a powerful incentive. However, it was not space itself that gave it its meaning. Instead, the purpose was from the relationship the inmates had with being outdoors.

Fast food

From time to time, every couple of weeks or so, a local fast-food franchise donated food to the youth correctional facility. The distribution of the food depended on the incentive tier the inmates had earned, as only those inmates on the upper tiers could eat the donated meals. The food consisted of fried chicken sandwiches, French fries, and maybe a desert. Although the food was freshly prepared for the inmates, by the time it made its way to the correctional youth facility, it was lukewarm and soggy in appearance. I imagined my reaction if I had been served the same quality of food while dining at the restaurant. I concluded I would have certainly sent the food back and demand a refund. However, this was not the reaction of the inmates—they loved it.

The inmates finished their fast-food meals after 10-minutes. However, it seemed it was not the food itself that pleased them. As they were eating, they socialized with each other. Smiles covered their faces and laughter, banter, and giggles filled the room. I heard inmates reminisce of times outside of prison. They shared stories of eating at their favorite restaurants, most of which included fast-food franchises, such as McDonald's or Taco Bell. Several of the inmates shared with me that their first meal after release would be McDonald's. As I heard their anticipation of wanting McDonald's hamburgers and French fries, I found myself feeling irritated.

Why McDonald's, I wondered? Some of the inmates said their first meals were going include, "My mom's enchiladas" or "I can't wait to eat my mother's Salisbury steak". I understood and accepted these answers, but not McDonald's. After several times of hearing the inmates' eagerness of eating McDonalds (or something similar like Taco Bell), I could not help myself but ask a couple of the inmates, why McDonalds? Why not want something your mom prepared. One of the inmates said, "McDonalds reminds me of my mom. She came home with bags of cheeseburgers. We ate them up and she went back to work." The other inmate who was also present shook his head in agreement and said, "I love me some of Big Macs." Apparently, it wasn't the food itself that held the meaning for the inmates — the power derived from the relationship they had with the fast-food. The infrequent occasions the inmates earned the incentive of eating cold fried chicken sandwiches and soggy French fries symbolized life outside the cinder-block walls and fencing; it symbolized eating an enjoyable meal with their mother.

The program manager recognized the power of this incentive. Again, he proudly exclaimed that this incentive was free to the facility, "We do this anyway. Why not make it a part of the incentive program?". Without meaningful incentives, like fast food, the incentives would not have the same impact on therapeutic programming. The correctional youth facility's psychologist said, "We know they [inmates] are not going [to the programs] for the right reasons. We don't care. Just get them to come, and their chances of success greatly improve".

The Tao of inmate change

Although the development of the Inmate Incentive Program was by the program manager at the youth correctional facility, the IIP was only a strategy to motivate inmates to participate in the therapeutic programming the facility provided. This begs the question as to the origins and philosophies of the programs the facility offered to its inmates.

The derivations of the information expressed in this section were from two sources. The first was through many conversations I had with the correctional youth facility's psychologist who designed and implemented many of the programs for the inmates. Although there were other mental health counselors, it was the psychologist who determined the underlying philosophical foundations for many of the programs. According to the psychologist, it was the spirit of Taoism that guided him in the development of therapeutic programming. However, the psychologist himself was not a Taoist. He was in fact a Christian and a former Jesuit Priest, who by way of intellectual curiosity, discovered in Taoism a concentration of many of the fundamentals of psychology, philosophy, and spirituality that had been used to promote behavioral change. The second source was an internal document from the department of corrections. This paper was written with the purpose of using the principles of Taoism in a correctional setting to promote the transformational change in inmates (Luebbert, 2018). By combining these to sources, one being an informant and the other an artifact, I was able to learn how Taoism profoundly influenced the programming at the correctional youth facility.

For the psychologist, he considered Taoism as a guide for behavioral change, which promoted self-awareness that led inmates to living pro-social lives. For this goal to occur, Taoism required inmates to respect themselves before they could respect others. This type of self-awareness required balance inside and outside the person (Luebbert, 2018). The fundamental principles of Taoism included an emphasis on compassion, acceptance, and trust "that if we as

damaged human beings stop trying to control events, protect ourselves, or find scapegoats for our personal–or the world's—ills, we can start to heal and grow into our human potential" (Luebbert, 2018, p. 2). These principles, in this correctional setting, were thought to be the catalyst for behavioral change for inmates (Luebbert, 2018). The psychologist often used an analogy of a mobile hung over a baby's crib to visualize Taoism. The baby he said, can profoundly move the entire mobile by just touching the part of the mobile that is within his reach.

The psychologist argued that misconduct inside or outside the correctional facility was born from a socially disorganized environment. Places where lack of respect, domination, and personal entitlement overrode the needs of others. Abuse and neglect combined with generations of hopelessness resulted in youths living a life of crime and deviance that often resulted in imprisonment. These inmates, lacking in the fulfillment of love, affirmation, and nurturance, become the embodiment of fear, hatred, resentment, and emotional callousness (Luebbert, 2018). Thus, the psychologist, using the principles of Taoism, believed there needs to be a team of caring and guided staff members to promote the desired change in inmates. However, the psychologist believed that many of the staff were misguided and attempted to use strategies that were like an authoritative parent, as they often thought it was their job to judge and punish, which led inmates to more of the same behavior and not behavioral change. Thus, for real change to occur, staff members, like the inmates, must bring about change in themselves before they can effectively change the behaviors of others (Luebbert, 2018). Although, the psychologist firmly believed the staff members at the correctional youth facility needed therapy, almost as much as the inmates did, he was dubious it would ever occur, as he realized that most, if not all staff members did not buy into the methods of therapy and rehabilitation for the inmates, nevertheless for themselves.

Programs and their meaning

Meditation and Mindfulness

Every Monday and Wednesday morning at 7:15 am, several inmates shuffled into a conference room located within building "E." They sat in a semi-circle arrangement of chairs. The psychologist greeted every inmate by his first name and asked each how he was doing. Most replied with an "okay," others just shook their head in acknowledgment. As the inmates settled into their chairs for the day's *Meditation and Mindfulness* session, most slouched and shut their eyes. The psychologist, unaffected by the inmates' posture, spoke in a calm, soothing voice and reviewed the simple rules for the session. He compared the session to attending church; he asked the inmates to remain silent, for not themselves than for those who were present to meditate. The psychologist then discussed the theme of the meditation session. The psychologist had previously prepared over 80 different topics for these sessions. They ranged from self-strategies for anger management to the acceptance of things we cannot change. The theme for this session was empathy.

To prepare the inmates for the meditation session, the psychologist rang a Buddhist brass bell. The shape of the bell was like a bowl with ornate religious symbols scribed and painted on its sides. The psychologist sounded the bell with a small wooden pestle. He then asked the inmates to clear their minds and concentrate on the words he said. The psychologist asked the inmates, "have you ever been in a room full of babies?" Some nodded yes while others whispered their response. He then asked, "If so, what happens if one baby starts to cry?" One of the inmates said, "They all cry." The psychologist softly responded, "yes, do you know why?". The inmates remained silent but were beginning to wake up from their slumber as they started to open their eyes, waiting with a sense of anticipation for the psychologist to answer his question. The psychologist explained how everyone's brain had millions of neurons that mirror the reactions of

others. Thus, if one baby cries others will follow, as they can sense the emotions of the crying baby. "This is empathy," he said. The psychologist then shared with the inmates that people, as they grow, learn to control their empathy of others. However, if a baby cries and no one comforts him, the baby learns that he is alone with his emotions and fails to react to other crying babies as well. In other words, the baby learns "apathy." The psychologist asked the inmates to recall a traumatic moment in their lives when someone did not have empathy for them. He continued to tell the inmates to imagine sitting next to themselves as they were reliving their traumatic past. The psychologist asked the inmates to comfort the boy they sat next to, telling him that everything was going to be okay. As he ended the session, the psychologist asked the inmates to try and sense what others were feeling and practice on the socially acceptable response they should have.

As the psychologist softly spoke, most of the inmates closed their eyes and remained silent. Several of the inmates may have been meditating. Some, of course, may have been just sleeping. I assumed most were sleeping. However, later I learned I was mistaken. The session lasted for 15-minutes. Afterward, the inmates lined up to get the psychologist to sign their "pink sheets." The psychologist often told the inmates they had earned the maximum total of points allowed for their month's participation in the Meditation and Mindfulness sessions. The inmates understood but said they would attend the next session anyway. I was cynical of their response. However, to my surprise, many of the inmates attended the week's next session, even though there was no formal incentive to do so. After the next session, I asked some of them why they returned. Some shrugged their shoulders and said, "don't know," others commented, "feels good." The psychologist suspected the effectiveness of the Mindfulness and Meditation sessions. He said that many of his regular participants came back every week even though there was no formal incentive to do so. He said this program alone could not cure the emotional problems that many of the inmates had, but in combination with the other therapeutic programs, it could make a

positive impact on the inmates' mental health. Reasonably, the psychologist said it was a positive way for the inmates to begin their day, and he assumed that when the inmates started their day positively and calmly, they were less likely to involve themselves with conflict for the rest of their day. He suspected the reason the inmates returned was that it felt good.

Although I had reached a level of saturation after attending only a few of the Mindfulness and Meditation sessions, I found myself still going every Monday and Wednesday morning during my entire study. I, like the inmates, thought the sessions felt good. I discovered the days of the sessions began with less stress and tension compared to the other days. I was not alone. One of the custody staff members voluntarily attended many of the sessions. She was not required to go, so I asked her why she did. She said she just like starting her day meditating as it "feels good."

Tattoo removal

It was 6:30 on a Tuesday morning. The program manager arrived early to prepare the facility's van to transport an inmate named John[3] to the plastic surgeon's office for another round of laser treatment to remove his tattoos. This treatment was John's tenth visit, and the teardrop beneath his left eye was barely visible; however, the three dots in the web between John's thumb and index finger were still apparent. As the program manager shackled and handcuffed John, he asked him how he was doing. John responded and asked the program manager, who he called by his first name, how his day was. This informal conversation seemed to lift the tension of the entire shackling process. As we drove across town, I noticed John was staring out of the passenger window. He wore a smile, and his eyes were wide open. He stared at the other vehicles and the joggers in the park. I expected him to comment about the female joggers, but he never did. John just seemed to be happy in the moment of everything he observed. The program manager continued his conversation with John. They conversed about their hobbies and how they both enjoyed spending time outdoors. John also bragged about his educational accomplishments

while at the correctional youth facility. John had earned his general education diploma (GED) and enrolled in college courses. John was proud of his achievements but expressed a strong desire to obtain hands-on experience in a trade. John wanted to be a carpenter. Although the correctional facility provided courses on construction, the material taught was through lectures and videos. In other words, there was no use of experiential learning. The program manager agreed with John but said there was little if anything he could do about it, as he was just able to work with the resources the state provided the facility.

As we arrived at the plastic surgeon's office, we entered through the back entrance. We were escorted to the laser room where a physician assistant (PA) was waiting for us. She spoke to John while examining the progress of his tattoo removal. The PA was disappointed in what she considered to be a lack of progress. She said that "homemade tattoos" often had darker ink and went deeper into the layers of skin. Thus, they were difficult to remove. The PA recommended an increase in laser intensity but was concerned for John, as this meant an increase in pain. John said he wanted the tattoos removed and wasn't concerned about the pain. The PA administered the treatment and John flinched with every dose of a laser. As wisps of white smoke rose above John's skin, his tattoos on his hand and face immediately turned white as the dead skin surfaced. The treatment was painful for John, but he didn't complain.

During the van ride back to the facility John shared with me why he was willing to do this painful procedure. He said by having his tattoos removed he would have more confidence when applying and interviewing for jobs. John knew that future employers would have concerns about his felony status and thought his tattoos would only increase their worries about him. Thus, by eliminating John's tattoos, he believed this would lessen the tension between potential employers and himself of getting sustainable employment. John received his tattoos when he was in a gang. John said he was no longer a gang member, but the tattoos kept him from completely divorcing himself from gang affiliation. John believed that if you look like a gang member,

people will treat you like one. John had other motivations for the tattoo removal as well. John said he enjoyed riding in a car and going outside the correctional facility. John said the ride also motivated him to complete his college courses. John missed being outdoors in public. He longed for working in the construction trade where his work would occur outside. By riding in a car, John was encouraged to complete his college courses so that he could work outdoors for a living.

A few days after the tattoo removal treatment, John said to me that he liked talking with the program manager because he didn't treat him with judgment. John said there were very few staff members that spoke to him with respect and dignity. Thus, the dignity and respect the program manager gave John were not only noticed but also appreciated by John. John said he returned the program manager's mannerisms toward him by being cooperative and compliant during the laser treatment. Otherwise, John said, he may have made rude comments about the joggers or the "fine" PA at the doctor's office. John said he noticed these females but realized the program manager does not like it when inmates make sexual comments about others. Thus, because the program manager "showed me respect, I will show him respect too."

The program manager explained to me that the laser treatments for tattoo removal were donated to the correctional facility by the plastic surgeon's practice. Thus, like many other programs and incentives, the program cost the state very little. The only expenses they incurred were for gas and the labor of the program manager and corporal. However, the program manager donated his time by coming to work early. Thus, the cost to the state was even less than what the program manager said. The surgeon donated the treatment for six inmates per year. The program manager said that because each inmate needed several laser treatments, six was as much as he could handle. There were contractual agreements made between the inmates and the state to participate in this program. The inmates must agree not to retattoo themselves and stay out of trouble while at the correctional youth facility. If they failed either of these obligations, the inmate must pay the facility the cost of the tattoo removal, which was about $400.00. The

program manager said that after two years of managing this program, none of the inmates have failed to uphold the agreements they made.

The program manager said after removal of the tattoos are successful, he often observed an emotional transformation in the inmates. They no longer seemed self-conscious about their facial or hand tattoos. According to the program manager, they seemed less hostile as well. The psychologist confirmed the program manager's observations. He observed this difference, and argued the symbolism of tattoos for the inmates, especially tattoos that were as visible as those on inmates' faces and hands, had the power to keep inmates from participating in pro-social behaviors. The inmates realized that their tattoos symbolized gang membership and the deviance associated with gangs to themselves as well as others. Thus, for as long as they had the tattoos, they behaved like gang members. Through the removal of tattoos that represented gang affiliation and membership, these inmates realized the likelihood they would be labeled as gang members by others, such as by future employers, would be less. Therefore, once removal of the tattoos, they no longer felt this pressure.

Mentoring: Inner Circle Winner Circle

A group of four older inmates were sitting in the lobby area when I arrived for my day's observations. They wore prison uniforms, but there was no one watching them. They were apparently over the age of 21 years, so I was curious about their presence. They told me they were inmates living in the work release center that was only two blocks away. They had walked to the correctional youth facility to participate in a mentoring program they called *Inner Circle Winner Circle.*

The Inner Circle Winner Circle mentoring program involved older inmates, many of whom were former inmates of the correctional youth facility, talking with the youth inmates. All the inmates volunteered their time to be mentors for this program. Many of the mentors said they

had fond memories of this program when they were living at the correctional youth facility. They said they admired their mentors and were eager to set up similar relationships now, but with them being the mentors and not the mentees.

During the Inner Circle Winner Circle session, much of the discussion between the mentors and the youth inmates involved advice as to how to complete the therapeutic programming at the youth correctional facility. The mentors encouraged the youth inmates to take full advantage of the programming, as much of the programs did not exist in the other prison facilities. The mentors said the tools they learned from the programs at the correctional youth facility would be useful to them in the future. For instance, if they are released, the inmates will need a general education degree to gain sustainable employment. If they are transferred to another prison, the youth inmates can continue their education that will help them positively pass their sentence time. Either way, the mentors reinforced the importance of education, as they said it was a way to avoid coming back to prison. Some of the mentors shared with the youth inmates that they had been in and out of prison multiple times during their life and how much they regretted missing life events, such as their children's birthday and holidays. The mentors did not want the youth inmates to follow a similar path as them.

The other discussions the mentors had with the youth inmates involved a message of hope. Many of the youth inmates had long sentences, which they referred to as *a big number.* For the youth inmates, their big numbers ranged from 10 to 60 years. This meant that some of the youth inmates would not be released until they were in their 70s. The long sentences dimmed the future for many of the youth inmates. Some of the mentors had served big numbers and were now at the work-release center, which meant they would soon be released. The mentors gave the youth inmates "light at the end of the tunnel". They offered the youth inmates advice as how to best serve the next several years in prison. They told them to "exercise your mind, body and spirit". In other words, they advised the youth inmates to keep themselves healthy, as the healthier they

were, the faster the time past. The mentors encouraged the youth inmates to use the techniques they learned in the programs, such as the Mindfulness and Meditation sessions, as these self-help strategies can help them better cope during stressful times. The mentors explained the importance to the youth inmates to learn to control their anger and impulses. They said by learning self-control, they will avoid being involved in a conflict in prison as well as on the street.

I could tell the youth inmates intently listened to the advice given by the mentors, as they never lost eye contact with them. Apparently, the youth inmates yearned to hear this sort of information. They seemed to hold on to every word the mentors spoke. The mentors spoke in a vernacular the youth inmates comprehended and identified with. The meeting only lasted an hour, but clearly uplifted the spirit of many of the youth inmates. Afterwards, the youth inmates shook the mentors' hand with the sort of grasp that expressed gratefulness and gratitude. It seemed that the youth inmates wanted to hug their mentors but stopped themselves just short of doing so, as this type of physical contact was strictly prohibited and enforced by the corporals standing guard over them. The mentors themselves seemed to be as positively affected as well. They left with their heads held up high realizing their efforts were recognized. They made comments, such as "That was great!" and "When's the next meeting?".

The program manager arranged the Inner Circle Winner Circle sessions. After this session, he said to me, "I told you it was special!". Indeed, it was. The program manager knew the mentorship he provided could only go so far with the inmates. He realized, in his words, "I'm just some middle-class White guy." In other words, he was someone the inmates could not identify with, as he was of a different race and social class. Thus, he realized the need and value of giving the inmates mentors that had similar backgrounds and that had successfully overcome the same obstacles the inmates were encountering. These mentors gave many of the inmates something to look forward to and the tools on how to best serve their time in prison. There has never been a shortage of inmates who wanted to participate in the Inner Circle Winner Circle program.

Although the inmates received incentive points for their participation, their reactions to engaging the mentors showed they probably would have been there even without the incentives.

The days that followed the Inner Circle Winner Circle session, I saw behaviors I had not previously observed with some of the inmates that were serving big numbers. I found practices, such as ironing their clothes, grooming their hair, and maintaining a clean cell. The spirits seemed lifted for some of the inmates. Although, I cannot say for how long, I can reasonably conclude the impact of the Inner Circle Winner Circle session did have at least a positive short-term impact. Approximately a week later, I saw a few of the mentors at the work release center and I shared with them the reactions of the youth inmates in the days that followed the mentoring session. They said they remembered having the same opinions when they were youth inmates and explained how the effects lasted for years, which was why they loved participating as mentors in the program. The mentors informed me that in the correctional youth facility, inmates rarely, if ever, encouraged each other to succeed. Youth inmates even went as far as to conceal their rehabilitative success from their peers, as they feared if other inmates saw their successes they would label them as being "overly cooperative with the system." This type of label was not far from being considered a "snitch"; thus, youth inmates often downplayed the positive effects of the rehabilitative programming they received. However, the mentors no longer felt negative stigma from other inmates. The youth inmates' informal social rules allowed the mentors to encourage them, as the mentors had lived the life of youth inmates. The mentors said, the stigma that surrounded them at the correctional youth facility dissipated when they were transferred to the traditional adult prisons. It was then, they became conscious of the value of the advice their mentors provided them. Thus, they were anxious to pass mentorship to the next generation of youth inmates. The mentors said this was one thing they knew made a difference in the lives of others. This reciprocity of positive feedback from the youth inmates was the only incentive the

mentors received for participating in the Inner Circle Winner Circle mentoring program at the correctional youth facility.

The parole board

Upon arrival at the community corrections center, I observed several people standing outside the front entrance. They appeared to be family members of the inmates who were to appear in front of the parole board today. There were families, couples, and individuals all mingling together, nervously waiting for someone to say it was okay for them to enter the correctional center.

The community correctional center was a *final step* correctional facility that housed adult males who were completing the last months of their sentence. Most had employment in the community; others attended job training programs around the city. All the male inmates could leave the facility during the day hours to go to their places of employment (or job training program). During the evening hours, they came back to the community correctional center to sleep. The facility resembled more of a community meeting center that one may find in a residential neighborhood than it did a correctional facility. There were a few subtle reminders that it was a place where inmates resided, such as surveillance cameras, few uniformed custody staff members, and the uniforms the inmates wore. However, for the most part, the facility had a sense of casualness about it. The inmates were relaxed, as were the staff members. From their demeanor with each other, it was difficult to discern that the relationship between the two groups was one of custody staff and inmates. The inmates spoke to the staff members politely, and the same mannerisms were returned.

Although there were several hearings on this date, I was only interested in one inmate. The inmate's name was Kirk, and he arrived after I did. Kirk was shackled, handcuffed, and escorted by the program manager and custody staff member from the correctional youth facility.

They led Kirk into the community center where his family was waiting for him. Kirk's mother was present as well as his two younger sisters. All were smiling and waving hello to Kirk as he walked past them. He was thrilled to see them as well. Kirk seemed nervous as he was continually fidgeting his hands and pacing in place. The program manager spoke to Kirk in a calm voice and reminded him what he should say to the parole board. The program manager had met with Kirk during the last few weeks before this day's parole hearing. Together, they had reviewed Kirk's accomplishments in the Inmate Incentive Program (IIP). Kirk had achieved the *gold tier* level in the IIP. He would have made the *platinum tier,* however, Kirk failed to complete the anger management class with the psychologist. Despite Kirk's shortcomings, the program manager believed Kirk was ready for release. Kirk told me that the coaching the program manager provided gave him confidence not only the parole hearing but for freedom. Kirk said the coaching made him realize what he had accomplished at the correctional youth facility. Kirk had earned his GED, attended a few college classes, Mindfulness and Meditation sessions, and most of the anger management courses. Kirk said that with the help of the program manager, they developed a plan for his future. Kirk was able to find employment at an auto mechanic garage, and his mother agreed to let Kirk live with her provided he worked and helped pay some of the household bills. Kirk said he had something to look forward to and was anxious to get started. Kirk said to me, "I just want this to happen so bad".

A few minutes before the parole hearing, the program manager informally met with the parole board. The program manager and board members discussed Kirk's progress in the IIP and the original charge Kirk had received, which was robbery. All seemed pleased with Kirk's accomplishments while residing at the youth correctional facility. One of the parole members said aloud, "He's [Kirk] lucky he qualified for the youth facility and not the others." Members of the parole board were curious about my presence, so I explained to them of my research purpose at the correctional youth facility. Instantly, their faces lit up with enthusiasm. They proudly

explained what the IIP meant to them. They said they had little to judge the youth inmates upon before the implementation of the IIP. The parole board said they just reviewed how many misconducts reports the inmates received, what the violations were, and tried to determine their future. However, now the parole board could accurately measure the inmates' performance at the correctional youth facility. The parole board members were fluent in the IIP's vocabulary. They not only realized the various tiers in the program, but they also knew what it took to reach each tier. They knew that inmates who were in the facility for a year or longer had the opportunity to enter the platinum level and if they did not, they knew to ask why. For one of the parole board members, the meaning of the IIP was so great that he volunteered to coach the youth inmates during his time. He spent 8 hours every month meeting with youth inmates who were six months away from their parole hearing. He gave them advice, reviewed their progress, and tried to be a parental mentor for them. He told me, "I just love what they [the program manager and warden] are doing over there with the incentive program. I wish the others [correctional facilities] would do it too. I see the difference it makes."

Kirk walked into the room where the parole board was waiting. He sat in a chair in front of them with a straight posture, eyes forward, and hands on his lap. The parole board asked Kirk to tell them what programs he had accomplished. Kirk spoke about his academics and Mindfulness and Meditation sessions. They asked Kirk why he had not met the requirements to be on the platinum level. Kirk, without excuses, explained that he failed to finish the anger management courses because he was lazy and wanted to sleep in instead of going to class. After the parole board heard Kirk's employment plans, they praised him for obtaining his GED and attending college classes. They encouraged Kirk to keep going to school for auto mechanics. Kirk enthusiastically said he would. Kirk's mother spoke to the board, and together they discussed the living arrangements for Kirk. After 20 minutes, the parole board agreed to parole Kirk. Kirk, his family, and the program manager cheered aloud, and all congratulated Kirk for his soon release.

Kirk's eyes swelled with tears as he looked up to the ceiling and softly said to himself, "God, I hope this part of my life is over." As the program manager escorted Kirk out of the community correctional facility, he said to me, "This is what I mean when I say that release begins at intake."

A "quick" meeting between an inmate and the reentry specialist

My observations included many programs that were evidence-based in its foundation and implementation. Many of these programs appeared to hold significant amount of meaning not just for the inmates but also the program implementors (i.e., psychologist and program manager); thus, I suspect they were effective in their outcomes. However, not all programs appeared to hold such meaning; thus, they probably were less effective. An example of a program that seemed to be very shallow and quick in its approach were the services offered by the reentry specialist. From the observations with the reentry specialist, I surmised the inmates who benefited the most were those who were eligible for parole. Inmates on parole were required to maintain contact with parole officers after their release. These inmates had to keep their parole officers updated on their progress of reentry, while maintaining certain standards, such as drug treatment, job training, and staying away from other felons. The parole officers provide parolees with personal motivation to succeed (i.e. threat of prison if they fail). Furthermore, the parole officer gave parolees access to programs to help in their transition to freedom. However, Inmates who *jammed out* their sentences were *even with the house*. In other words, these inmates met the time requirements for their release; thus, they had no one in the criminal justice system to update on their progress of reentry. Often, inmates chose to jam out their sentence instead of parole. They believed they would fail the requirements of parole; thus, spend more time in prison then they would have if they had just jammed out their sentence. These inmates did not have to answer to anyone. They could associate with other felons, not go to drug or alcohol treatment, or job training. Even if they wanted to attend programs to lead socially acceptable lives, the inmates who jammed out their sentences did not have the resources to draw from as the inmates on parole did. Although, I

cannot definitively say that inmates who left the prison as completely free individuals were more vulnerable to reoffending compared to the inmates on parole, it certainly appeared so.

The meetings with the reentry specialist reminded me of a concern the warden had. He often expressed worry for inmates who were in his care for only a few months. He believed this was not enough time to rehabilitate them into law abiding people. Instead, he wanted inmates to stay in the correctional youth facility for at least a year, so he had time to accomplish the rehabilitative goals of positive behavioral change. The warden realized that many inmates, when they left the youth facility, did not have access to rehabilitative treatment. Thus, the only access to formally organized rehabilitation programs was when inmates were living at the correctional youth facility. Although I had heard the warden say this on several occasions, the point he made never surfaced for me until I observed the meetings between the reentry specialist and inmates about to experience release from the youth facility.

I was often invited by the reentry specialist to observe the meetings he had with inmates who were soon up for release. Thus, I did just that, I observed four meetings that occurred in a one-hour span. The reentry specialist worked at many different correctional facilities. He informed me that he provided services for more inmates than he could count, but it was likely in the hundreds. Thus, he spent most of his day, every day, meeting with as many soon-to-be released inmates as he could. On this day, he had to meet with four inmates at the youth facility, and he only had an hour. While I was anticipating a variety of reactions from the inmates, they all responded similarly during the meetings. All inmates appeared to be overwhelmed and confused with the rapid offer of information the reentry specialist gave them. None of the inmates asked the reentry specialist questions for an event they had eagerly anticipated since arriving, which was their release. The reentry specialist himself behaved in a predetermined overly-rehearsed manner for every inmate. Thus, the following description well represents all the meetings I observed.

We sat in the visitation room in Building "A" as an inmate named David[4] entered. David was a 20-year-old African American male, had a young son, and a girlfriend waiting for his release. David's face, arms, and hands were covered in gang-related tattoos. His demeanor was polite and upbeat, as I assumed he was looking forward to his soon release from prison. David sat across from the reentry specialist. The reentry specialist rapidly asked David a list of questions that included whether he was going to be paroled or if he had "jammed out his sentence", which is what David did. He asked where he was going to live and with whom, if he had a job, and if he knew of services that could be available to him. The reentry specialist rattled off the questions so quickly that David just shook his head up and down in a yes fashion, even though I was sure David did not realize the specifics of the questions that the reentry specialist had asked. Nonetheless, David was excited about the discussion of release, so he was happy to talk with the reentry specialist. Apparently, all inmates looked forward to the meetings with the reentry specialist as this meeting symbolized the inmates' release was just around the corner.

The reentry specialist offered David a lot of personal advice, such as go to school, work for a union sponsored job, and stay away from other felons. Although I sensed the reentry specialist was sincere, I could also feel a sense of urgency for him to move quickly though the interview, assumedly so he could go to another facility to interview several more inmates. The reentry specialist gave David several forms, brochures, and booklets that David could use to look up government agencies and charitable organizations that could help with David's housing, job obtainment, and health care among other needs. David glanced at the printed information and thanked the reentry specialist for his time. They both shook hands and said good luck and goodbye.

The reentry specialist said he loved his job but doubted whether his efforts were effective by my standard, which was decreasing the likelihood of recidivism. He realized his workload was too much for him to spend much time helping any one or two inmates; thus, for him effectiveness

meant spending as much time as he could with as many inmates as possible. This was the standard set by his supervisor; thus, this is how the reentry specialist defined success. The reentry specialist was a cook at a prison before becoming a reentry specialist. He was very proud of this accomplishment, as he considered it to be a promotion. He believed that with hard work comes reward; thus, this was the major theme of the advice he gave to the inmates. The reentry specialist did not follow up with the inmates after their release from prison. However, he did give his phone number to each inmate. After several years of performing his prescribed function, the reentry specialist said he had only received one phone call from an inmate and that was a couple of years ago. However, the reentry specialist said that if he offers to help the inmates, it was up to the inmates to reach out to him if they needed assistance. Thus, again, the reentry specialist justified the outcomes of his efforts as successful. The reentry specialist acknowledged to the inmates who were eligible for parole that their parole officers were going to help them make a successful transition back into their home communities. He encouraged these inmates to access the resources their parole officer had for them. However, for the inmates that jammed out their sentences, he said they had to work hard to succeed and, in the end, they had only themselves to count on for success.

Chapter 6

Observations: The "gang war" and its meaning

Shaky ground: Are passion and leadership enough?

As there were only three *fully invested program staff members* (i.e., psychologist, program manager, and warden), the therapeutic climate rested on shaky ground. The vulnerability of the climate was one of my first main findings of this study. The three program staff members realized it too, as I often heard their concerns. The warden often expressed his frustration of not being able to obtain buy-in for the therapeutic programs they offered from the custody staff members, as well as other wardens in the department of correctional services. The warden had encouraged the previous captain at his facility to recruit custody staff members to participate in the implementation of the therapeutic programs. For a short period, he believed they were starting to make progress. However, that captain resigned from her position and was replaced by another. The new captain was very professional in his demeanor; however, the warden sensed he was not yet convinced the correctional youth facility should spend so much of their resources on therapy. The warden heard this criticism often from other wardens as well.

The warden realized that compared to the other more traditional prison facilities in the state, he spent as much as three times more money per inmate annually ($32,000 v. $96,000). According to the warden, it was a common opinion among many within the department of correctional services that prisons should just provide the inmates with "three hots and a cot" and nothing more. I, myself, heard this sentiment often from various staff members at the youth facility. However, the warden, program manager, and psychologist realized that although the investment was heavy on the front end, the payoff, in the end, made it worthwhile. Compared to eight years ago, the correctional youth facility was safer for not just the inmates but the staff as well. The program staff members attributed the safe climate to the programs they offered the

inmates. They also realized that communities might also benefit from their therapeutic efforts. The three program staff members realized that inmates were learning strategies that reduced tension and conflict within the facility and the inmates could use these strategies when they are released back into their home communities. For the program staff members, the therapeutic climate worked and made complete sense. Nonetheless, the three program staff members realized the fragility of their therapeutic climate. They expressed their concern often of what the fate of the therapeutic climate might be if any one of them transferred away from the correctional youth facility. They understood that it could be very unlikely that their replacement would have the same professional understanding of the benefits of a strong therapeutic climate.

All three program staff members realized that the therapeutic climate could drastically change if any of them left the facility. The program manager himself was eligible to retire at any time, as he had worked for the department of corrections for over 30 years. The warden himself was also near retirement, and the psychologist could easily qualify to work in a much less stressful setting. However, all three were very passionate about their roles and the positive effects they had on the lives of many inmates. They believed that if just one of them left their position, the consequences of the inmates' future might be in jeopardy, as they may not receive the therapy they needed to lead healthy, pro-social lives. Thus, the warden, program manager, and psychologist were willing to stay at the correctional youth facility for as long as they were allowed by the state's department of correctional services. Although there is no denial of their commitment to the therapeutic climate at the correctional youth facility, the foundation it rested on was shaky at best.

"Gang war"?

Upon this day's arrival at the correctional youth facility, I felt a sense of excitement among the staff. As part of my everyday routine, I waited in the lobby area for a staff member to

escort me inside the facility. During my waits, I often observed other staff members arrive for the beginning of their shifts, while others left. Thus, the lobby became an area where the incoming staff members conversed with the outgoing. On this day, however, the tension in the conversations they had was more than usual. I overheard a custody staff member talking about an "incident," while others called it a "fight." I heard corporals making statements, such as "That was awesome!" or "It's what I've been waiting for!" Whatever the *incident* was they were referring to; it was apparent the corporals were delighted it occurred.

After waiting and making my observations in the lobby, the program manager arrived to begin his work day. His facial expression was the opposite of the corporals I had just observed. The program manager hesitated to make eye contact with me, which was unusual. He seemed emotionally upset, and that something was bothering him. He asked if I had heard about the *incident* that occurred the previous day. The program manager told me that he had received news that there was a "large gang fight" that occurred between the *Crips* and the *Bloods*. Although I realized there were indeed gang members in the facility, to hear, they segregated as Crips and Bloods struck me as unusual. One could indeed trace the origins of the gangs to either the Crips or Bloods; however, the gangs had become so fractured over time that any loyalty to either of the original sects was minimal, at least as I observed in the correctional youth facility. The loyalty instead belonged to the smaller sects, such as *18th Street* or *Surenos*. Thus, it sounded odd to me that there was a *large gang fight* that involved a fight between the Crips and Bloods.

Nonetheless, the program manager was displeased of the news. He knew that several inmates were placed in the *hole* because of the fight and he suspected that he worked closely with many of these inmates. Inmates placed on the status of segregation would not only be a regression of the program manager's efforts for rehabilitation but more importantly to him, this could delay the ongoing therapies these inmates needed to make a successful transition back in their communities. The program manager was also embarrassed. He had previously spoken so highly

of the inmates' rehabilitative progress to me that he feared this news would cause me to view his efforts negatively. When I told the program manager that nothing could be further from the truth, the program manager was surprised and relieved. He said he realized that many custody staff members had been waiting for a large fight to happen, so they could tell him that they knew his incentive program was a failure and a waste of time.

As we walked into the facility, a lieutenant asked the program manager if he knew about the *gang war*. The lieutenant described the fight as a large *gang war* between the Crips and Bloods. He said the fight was initially a retaliation for *snitching* and *stealing* and the rival gangs (i.e., Crips and Bloods) had waited for yard time to confront each other. The lieutenant said the fight began with two or three inmates and then snowballed into a pile of 15 fighting inmates. From the lieutenant's description, the fight did not meet the initial description of a *gang war*, where there are preorganized efforts of fighting that occur at one time and not in a snowball fashion. Wars, as they are predetermined to happen, usually involve weapons. The fight as described by the lieutenant involved no weapons, other than bare knuckles. Instead of a *gang war*, this incident sounded like a small fight that escalated into a large fight, which did not surprise me.

Nonetheless, the fight resulted in 15 inmates placed into the Segregation Management Unit on the status of segregation. Upon learning which inmates were in the SMU, the program manager became upset as many of these inmates had earned the platinum level on the IIP. The other consequence of the fight was a total lockdown of the facility for approximately a week. Lockdown meant the cancellation of all programs in the facility, that included movie day, yard time, Mindfulness and Mediation sessions, among many other activities.

Throughout this day and the immediate days that followed, I heard many various accounts of the fight. Most were told to me by corporals, but I also heard from a few of the inmates. No matter who told me about the fight, most of the stories were similar. Essentially, the fight started among two inmates, one of whom owed money to the other. When payment of the

money owed was overdue, the owed inmate entered the other's cell and stole several canteen items as a form of payment. When that inmate discovered his canteen items were stolen, he informed the custody staff members. Video surveillance captured the theft, and an investigation of the crime ensued. The owed inmate became upset at the other inmate for *snitching*. Thus, retaliation became inevitable. Some of the corporals said the custody staff members working on the day of the fight realized the two inmates were likely to become violent with each other. However, instead of proactively intervening and preventing the fight, they said the staff members on duty decided to let the inmates work it out among themselves. The corporals said this informal strategy was often used in the facility, as one corporal told me, "sometimes, you have to let them [inmates] work out their differences." During yard time, the two inmates went to a portion of the yard where they realized the surveillance cameras could not cover their activity. A fight between the two inmates started and quickly escalated into a fight of three then four and eventually fifteen inmates. As a result, all available staff members were called to the yard to break up the fight. I repeatedly asked the staff members how this fight was a *gang war*. Some of the corporals said it was not a *gang war* but rather a fight that got out of hand. Others said it was a *gang war* because all the inmates that participated in the fight had gang affiliations, which was indeed true of nearly all inmates in the youth facility, not just the inmates who fought.

Most of the inmates said the fight was never about gang affiliation, but instead, it was about the two inmates breaking the most cardinal rules. The first rule is that inmates never snitch, as many inmates said, "snitches get stitches". The second rule is that inmates never steal from each other. When the violation of these two rules occurred, the inmates said the fight was inevitable. Some of the corporals agreed with the inmates' analysis of the fight. They said the staff members who were working during the initial turmoil realized a fight was likely to occur. However, as staff members often do, particularly among the custody staff members who work day shift, they let the inmates work out their problems among themselves. Many staff members

said this informal strategy is common and most of the time it works out with only a minor fight between two inmates. However, on this occasion, "the fight got away from them and bit them in the ass." Some of the corporals said that instead of describing what happened, the custody staff members decided to describe the fight as a *gang fight* that quickly escalated to the term *gang war*.

By describing the fight as a *gang fight* or *gang war*, it accomplished two things. First, it removed the heat from the custody staff members working the day of the fight. By blaming the fight on the inmates and not the negligence of the staff, none of the custody staff members were reprimanded. Second, the terms used fit many of the custody staff members narrative that the incentive program was not going to prevent inmate misconduct; therefore, the IIP was a waste of time and resources. However, some of the more experienced corporals criticized calling the fight a *gang war*. They said that regardless of the climate, fights were going to happen from time to time. They said they realized that fights had decreased tremendously over the past several years; however, many of the newer staff members were not able to recognize the progress. The newer staff members only observed the current issues among the inmates, and for them, the current problems were severe, as they had little experience for comparison. Indeed, a fight does eventually happen, as this is not a difficult prediction to make. However, the newer custody staff members are not able to realize that the fights are not only less frequent now (compared to eight years prior), but they were also much less intense, with fewer serious injuries than the facility had experienced in the past.

Despite the fight not meeting the description of a *gang war,* it was officially investigated as such. Many of the staff members informed me that the gang climate in the facility often mirrored tensions in the community. Thus, the local municipal police department's gang unit was called to the correctional youth facility to investigate the *gang war*. The gang unit officers informed me that they had not noticed an elevation in tension among the gang members in the community; however, they said there seems to be tension in the correctional youth facility. Thus,

they said they were concerned that retaliation might occur in the community and it was worth their effort to examine the circumstances of this incident.

Correctional youth facility's reaction to the "gang war"

The immediate reaction to the *gang war* was complete and total lockdown of the facility. The confinement of all inmates to their cells with all programs and activities canceled. Gradually, the lockdown was lifted, and inmates were once again allowed to attend their classes, rehabilitative programs, and some of their leisure-time activities. The suspension of yard time and movie day were the major exceptions. As these two incentives were considered by many of the inmates as the most valuable, their reaction to the restrictions was negative and vocal. Many of the inmates asked questions to the staff members as to why the youth facility was revoking their incentives. The inmates realized that those who participated in the fight were in the hole; thus, they were confused as to why the youth facility was punishing them. Most of the staff just shrugged their shoulders or said, "I don't know." The staff members' non-answer provided absolutely no comfort to the inmates. However, the psychologist and program manager took a different approach. They realized the importance of yard time and movie day to the inmates, and by extension, the value the incentives had to the incentive program. Although they were unable to answer the inmates that led them to understand the restrictions, the program manager and psychologist let the inmates vent their frustration. They even agreed with their anger by showing the inmates empathy and sympathy. By allowing the inmates to vent their frustrations and providing them with validation, the program manager and psychologist believed they were lessening the tension in the climate of the youth facility. The inmates confirmed the program staff members' suspicion as some said they felt a little better after speaking with them.

Custody staff ready for another "gang war"

As with the inmates, the climate among the custody staff was different as well. Many of the corporals and caseworkers appeared to be at an increased *state of readiness*, which was not apparent before the *gang war*. They seemed to be preparing for another similar incident, as many of the corporals were adorning their black leather gloves at all time and they wore their sunglasses indoors. Some of the custody staff members treated the inmates differently. They shouted orders at them for not crossing the yard at a quicker pace; they threatened to write inmates misconduct reports for minor nuisance violations (e.g., untucked shirt) that they had previously ignored; and a few seemed to increase the physical intensity of their touch with the pat-down searches of the inmates. The increased intensity of the climate was a means for some of the staff members to prepare or avoid another *gang war*. The inmates picked up on the differences in climate, which was a concern to some as they said that a few of the custody staff members (and casework) might go too far and write them more misconduct reports then they previously had experienced.

Warden is gone

As I did every Monday, I met with the warden to discuss the week's plans and review my prior week's observations. This was always a pleasurable time for the warden and me. The warden was eager to learn about the progress I was making and wanted to assist me in every way he could for the benefits of my research. I sensed the warden's enthusiasm, which made me share as much as I could with him. During this morning's meeting, however, the warden's spirit seemed down. He was less than his usual enthusiastic self and seemed distracted. After a brief exchange of informal small talk, the warden informed me that after today he was no longer the warden of the correctional youth facility. He said he was just going to manage the community correctional center, which was an adult male work release facility. Before this day, the warden had been the lead administrator of both facilities. When I inquired for the reasons of the move, the warden said

he did not know. The warden did say this transfer went against his wishes as he wanted to end his career at the youth facility in approximately five years. The warden said that he had much more work to accomplish at the youth facility, as he realized if he left now, the therapeutic climate could be vulnerable to negative change. The warden said there were too few dedicated program staff members working (i.e., program manager and psychologist); thus, he said he needed to stay at the youth facility to improve the foundation of the therapeutic climate. The warden said he was confident he was going to accomplish this goal before he retired. He said that despite it being unusual for wardens to stay at one facility for as long as he did, he felt the likelihood of him staying at the youth facility was high, as there were no other wardens within the entire correctional system that had his experience of working with youth inmates. The warden was correct, as his replacement was the warden of a medium security adult facility with no experience managing youth inmates. The department of correctional services gave the warden a one-day notice, and this was his last day. After our meeting, the warden and I went to the staff meeting to meet the new warden and for him to say goodbye to his staff members.

New warden

The new warden was a female and was approximately 50 years of age. She was soft spoken, made little eye contact, which made her seem impersonal. She, without hesitation, gave the impression she was bothered that she had been assigned to lead another correctional facility. The new warden introduced herself to everyone at the staff meeting. She started by describing her extensive experience working in corrections but admitting she had no experience working with youth inmates or their rehabilitative needs. Thus, the new warden said she would depend on the current staff members to help her lead the youth correctional facility.

Along with her leadership role at the youth correctional facility, the new warden also maintained her assignment of being the warden at a medium security adult male prison facility. She said her responsibilities there were more than enough to fill her work week; thus, she was not

pleased that she not only had an additional facility to manage but a facility of youth male inmates that required a different set of managing skills. The new warden admitted to being confused about the reasons for the personnel adjustments, as she said that throughout the department of correctional services it was well known that her predecessor owned specific skills in managing a youth facility that no other warden in the state possessed. Nonetheless, the new warden said she would do her best, but her experience was more with security and control and not the rehabilitation of youth males. Some of the staff members were familiar with the new warden as they worked for her at the medium security prison. After the meeting, a few of them told me that the new warden had a reputation of being a "hardliner".

Program Manager retired, and the psychologist is worried

The custody staff members were mostly pleased with the new warden. Some said out loud, "Finally, I will feel like I work in a real prison and not a kiddie jail" or "She [new warden] gets it." Some of the custody staff members believed the new warden arrived just in time, as they said, "Shits worse than ever." Other custody staff members were indifferent or confused about the leadership change. However, the program manager was troubled and anxious about working for the new warden. He vocally criticized her arrival, as he said, "This will change everything." The program manager said he had previously worked for the new warden at a different correctional facility and had previously filed a complaint about the mistreatment of inmates under her watch. The program manager said the new warden was only concerned about the security of inmates and not their rehabilitation. He said he suspects she will do the same at the correctional youth facility, which was why he was upset. A few days after the new warden arrived at the youth facility, the program manager retired from his position, as he said his predictions were coming into fruition and he could not bear to watch his years of work of rehabilitating youth inmates end like this.

The psychologist also contemplated leaving the youth facility by transferring to another facility or even resigning from his position. However, he decided to stay at the correctional youth

facility. He reasoned that if he left, there would be little if any organized efforts to manage the IIP and rehabilitate the youth inmates. Thus, for the benefit of the inmates, he believed he needed to stay. However, the psychologist did experience some immediate effects of the new warden's arrival. He said he often asked the previous warden for permission to help inmates with mental health issues with specific un-orthodox treatments, which the previous warden always approved. For instance, if a new inmate was suffering from extreme emotional distress from missing his family, the psychologist requested permission to let this inmate have extra visitation time with his parents. The psychologist made a similar type of request with the new warden that was immediately denied by her. The denial of his reasonable request frustrated the psychologist. He said that some of the new programs he wished to start, such as parenting classes, were also in jeopardy.

The new warden had not lifted the restriction of some of the incentives, which was starting to negatively affect attendance and inmate demeanor for the Mindfulness and Mediation sessions. The psychologist said that for the first time he had to end meditation sessions early because inmates were misbehaving. He said some of the inmates were disruptive and refused to listen to his requests to remain calm and orderly. The psychologist said he had to ban specific inmates from participating in the program altogether, which was also a first for him. Apparently, inmates were confused why their incentives were not being reinstated, which for the psychologist explained their misbehaviors. Some of the inmates were asking why they should participate in programs at all if there were no reciprocity for their participation. The psychologist said that over time, his explanations were providing less comfort for the inmates, as they interpreted the lack of reciprocity as a sign of disrespect and many blamed the new warden for their stresses. The inmates openly called the new warden derogatory names, such as a "cold, heartless bitch," which I had never heard them previously say about any of the staff members.

There was one group of inmates who seemed isolated from the tension from the arrival of the new warden. Apparently, some of the inmates in protective custody were unaware that the youth facility had changed wardens. They were isolated from all other inmates and had few conversations with the staff members. Thus, I believe they were just living their days as they always did. That is until they inquired as to why they were not receiving some of the incentives they had earned. When the PC inmates were informed of the changes the youth facility had undergone, many expressed worries that they were not going to receive their rehabilitative treatments. There were some attempts to assure the PC inmates this would not happen; however, many of the PC inmates remained stressed.

My observations suddenly ceased

Before the change in wardens, I regularly attended the weekly staff meeting to learn the schedule for the week. Usually, for programs I was interested in attending, I contacted the appropriate staff member to request permission. The previous warden always approved this method. He often suggested activities and programs he thought I should observe and made sure the appropriate staff member honored my requests. However, a couple of weeks after the new warden's arrival, my observations drastically decreased. I only observed the Mindfulness and Meditation sessions and the short times before and after the sessions for the remainder of my study.

I felt saddened for the abrupt change in not only the data collection for my research but more importantly, for the change in the therapeutic climate at the youth correctional facility. I realized the therapeutic climate I observed when I first arrived rested on shaky ground. However, I was comforted by the dedication and professional efforts made by the warden, program manager, and psychologist and I believed that if they were around, the inmates were in good hands. After the change in wardens, I was unsure the foundation of the therapeutic climate existed at all. Although I cannot predict the long-term outcomes, I believe I can safely say that things in

the short-term are different and probably for the worse. The departure of the previous warden and the program manager with the skills they possessed will take a long time to replace if replacement is even possible. Because of their departure, the quality of programs the inmates receive mostly rests on the shoulders of one person—the psychologist. Although the psychologist is passionate, knowledgeable, and hardworking, I am dubious that he alone will accomplish what was occurring with the efforts of three when I first arrived. The psychologist himself expressed his concerns during our final meetings. He feared the mental health of the inmates were in jeopardy and predicted that if they didn't receive the therapy they needed, they would likely return to prison shortly after their eventual release.

During my final moments at the facility, I observed the release of an inmate from the correctional youth facility. He walked out of the facility, squinted his eyes at the unobstructed blue sky with his hands behind his head, and sat on the curb next to the street. I knew him to be about 17 years of age and wondered where his guardians were to pick him up. Eventually, I asked a staff member if she knew when the newly freed inmate's guardians were going to pick him up. As that arrangement was not made, she did not know when or if the guardians were coming. She said the correctional youth facility considered the former inmate to be an adult and as an adult, the facility does not call his parents. Shortly after my conversation with her, the free teenage boy stood up, threw his plastic bag of belongings over his shoulder, and walked away. Where he went, I have no idea, but I wish him well and hope he never returns.

Chapter 7

Discussion

The chapter that follows offers a discussion of the observation chapters (i.e., chapters 4, 5, and 6) that lead toward an argument for an ecological model for a therapeutic climate using the information that was provided in the literature review. This discussion chapter will also provide thoughtful insights into the limitations of this research, as well as recommendations for future research. The final section provided in this chapter is the conclusion.

Prison and Public Health

The purpose of this research project was to explore a *therapeutic climate* in an all-male correctional youth facility that housed inmates who received sentences as juveniles but were adjudicated by the courts as adults. Thus, they were sentenced to live in an adult prison facility (15 years to 21 years and ten months of age). I defined a therapeutic climate as an abstract conceptual space that is like Bourdieu's *field* that is a "field of forces within which agents occupy positions" (Bourdieu, 1995, p. 39) that are aimed at "either conserving or transforming" (p. 39) relationships between the agents (individuals) and structures (Bourdieu, 1995). Further, I used Wilmer's (1958) definition of *therapeutic community* or *milieu* as inspiration to define a therapeutic climate as a conceptual atmosphere that focuses on rehabilitative treatment through interpersonal relationships and evidence-based strategies founded in psychology, sociology, and anthropology. As such, a therapeutic climate helps participants identify themselves through social groups to alter their social attitudes, thus, their relationships with others. A therapeutic climate is a system of conceptual and physical structures that hold varied relationships and meanings of those that occupy its conceptual space. As such, a therapeutic climate could include the perceptions, roles, and functions of leaders, staff member, and participants, staff and participant buy-in, cohesion, and the physical architecture of the setting. Although it does not include a

climate of punishment with its strategies of chains, segregation, and shaming, both a therapeutic climate and a climate of punishment can occur simultaneously, as it did for this study; therefore, both climates needed exploration together, as one climate affected the other.

The study was founded on a marriage between the fields of *public health* and *criminal justice*, as argued by Woodall (2016), neither public health nor criminal justice alone can obtain positive social health outcomes. These fields must learn to work together to achieve their goals "because these are our communities and their stories are our stories" (Moore & Elkavich, 2008, p. S179). However, unlike criminal justice that usually focuses on events after they occur (i.e., downstream), this study used a public health approach and focused on a climate that had the goal of prevention (i.e., upstream) (Turnock, 2012).

To accomplish this task, this study used ethnographic methods (e.g., participatory observation) that combined structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism (e.g., constructivism). I observed the relationships between the structures inside a therapeutic climate in prison using the methods of structural functionalism, and I observed the meaning those structures had with individuals using the methods of symbolic interactionism (e.g., constructivism). Thus, this research used the method of *participatory observation* in a *focused ethnography* with a *constructivist structuralist* approach (Bourdieu, 1990), to explore a therapeutic climate as a *complex system* that produced its own meaningful behavior (Meadows, 2008). By using this interdisciplinary approach, this study was able to successfully obtain the insights that Veenstra and Burnett (2014) concluded of how and why individuals in prison (inmates and staff members) choose to engage in health-related behaviors. Furthermore, this study concluded that focused ethnography is an appropriate method to obtain a profound understanding of public health programs (i.e., rehabilitation) in a criminal justice environment (i.e., prison)

Furthermore, through these methods, results, and the inspiration of McLeroy (1988) and Brofenbrenner (1977, 1979), and their conceptual ecological frameworks that concentrate on both

the individual and social environmental factors, I developed an *ecological model for a therapeutic climate* (or at least an argument for one). The ecological model for a therapeutic climate focuses on Bronfenbrenner's segregated environmental influences, of micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem levels of influence for inmate participation in rehabilitative programs (Brofenbrenner, 1977, 1979) (See Figure 3 for a nested diagram of the ecological model for a therapeutic climate). Therefore, most of this chapter will include the discussion of each level of influence using the observations that were collected during this ethnography.
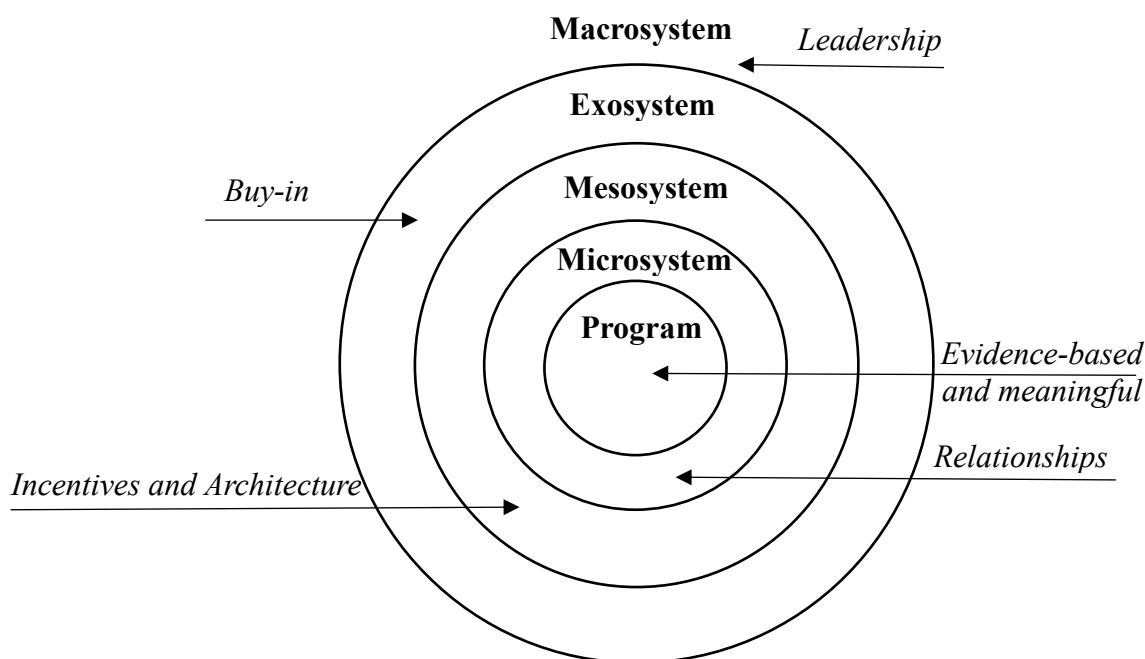
Macrosystem *Leadership*
Exosystem
Buy-in **Mesosystem**
Microsystem
Program
Evidence-based and meaningful
Relationships
Incentives and Architecture

Figure 3. Ecological Model for a therapeutic climate

The microsystem of influence of a therapeutic climate

For Brofenbrenner (1977, 1979), he considered influences of the microsystem of influence as the face-to-face interactions in a specific environment. Thus, within a therapeutic climate at the correctional youth facility, the interactions at the microsystem level include the quality of relationships staff members (i.e., custody staff members and program staff members)

had with their peers, as well as with the inmates. The interactions at this level also involve the quality of relationships the inmates had with each other. In other words, microlevel influences include within and between group levels of cohesion. Past research, as this study did, have found that group cohesion plays a major role in a successful therapeutic climate (e.g., Beech & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Becket et al., 1994; Behroozi, 1992). However, this study also discovered some nuances that the literature did not well discuss, at least that I could find.

Unlike past research that examined role conflict for staff members of the same status and the effects it has on the climate of the prison (Inderbitzin, 2006; Johnson & Price, 1981), this study observed what occurs to the climate when a prison combines the conflicting roles of two types of staff members (i.e., program staff members and custody staff members) with different statuses and roles. Lin (2000) described the climate of prison (e.g., inmate-prison staff relationships, values of the prison) depended on the prison's purpose. For example, if the prison's function was rehabilitative, the prison had a relaxed climate where the inmates and staff trusted each other. If the prison's function was more custody oriented, the climate was tenser. Akers (1977) discovered that rehabilitative institutions are likely to have inmate leaders who lead beingly, whereas institutions with *harsher climates* produce inmate leaders that are tough and harmful. However, what type of climate might we expect if one prison served dual functions—rehabilitative and custody—with two different types of staff members—rehabilitative and custody—each with roles that conflict with each other—rehabilitative and custody?

As other studies observed varied climates that were related to the prisons' purpose, this study observed varied climates under the same roof that were dependent on the status and roles of the staff members. For instance, the quality of relationships the staff members held with the inmates (as well as with each other) were dependent if they were custody or program staff members.

The relationship between program staff members and inmates

The program staff members that had a vested interest in the therapeutic climate at the correctional youth facility only included the warden, the program manager, and psychologist. Their purpose was to provide needed therapeutic services to increase the likelihood of inmate success to living pro-social lives. As such, the program staff members realized the value of obtaining inmate participation in the programs that they offered, as this was one manner they could achieve their goal. To accomplish participation, the program staff members knew they had to build *personal relationships* with the inmates, much like the relationships the inmates had when they lived in the world outside of prison. Thus, the program staff members based their relationship with the inmates on *dignity*. Dignity for the staff members and the inmates was synonymous with *respect.* In other words, program staff members treated the inmates in a manner that they would want to be treated. As the psychologist often said, "everyone wants to be treated with dignity." Thus, dignity meant the program staff members calling the inmates by their first name and allowing the same in return, as calling people by their first name is the social norm in the outside world. In the eyes of inmates, only in prison is a person referred to by his last name. Dignity was also observed when the program staff members took the time to let the inmates verbally vent their frustrations and provided the inmates with sincere feedback. Again, in the world outside of prison, a counselor, teacher, or physician not only allows their client, student, or patient to vent their problems, it is often expected. Furthermore, the response from the person venting is expected to be sincere; otherwise, why would anyone see them? Something as simple as asking an inmate "how are you doing?" resulted in a climate that was friendly, cooperative, and inviting for program participation. The inmates responded to the personal relationship they had with program staff members with comments such as, "He's one of the few that gives a shit about us." Comments like this were likely sincere as they surfaced without prompting, directed only at other inmates, and usually went unnoticed by the program staff members.

The warden who was considered one of the program staff members made it a point to meet the inmates. Although much of his roles occurred out of the view of the inmates, he often walked through the youth facility. He greeted everyone (inmate and staff member) he saw. He asked how they were doing? If he did not know an inmate's name, he stopped and introduced himself. Many of the inmates perceived the warden as a "cool dude." Although the physical touching beyond a brief handshake was prohibited, the warden often patted inmates on their back as a sign of comradery. This simple gesture was one of the very few instances of positive physical touch inmates' experienced, as most, if not all physical touching involved frisking, handcuffing, escorting, and the occasional use of physical force by staff members or another inmate (i.e., fight). The warden referred to the inmates as "guys." I never heard him call inmates "inmates". By the warden calling them "guys" he made his relationship with them less authoritative. Although he realized the hierarchy in prison, he knew if the inmates were to participate in the programs, he must have a relationship that is more like a student-teacher, or physician-patient, and less like an authoritarian-prisoner. As Pollack (2013) argued the social climate in prison is determined by leadership, the correctional youth facility's climate on the program side was led by the warden's vision, leadership, and his competencies. If the warden led only one type of staff member—program—I believe the climate might be friendly and trusting (Lin, 2000). However, as the purpose of the youth facility was twofold, the climate was as well.

The relationship between program and custody staff members

The relationship between the program staff members was very cohesive. They supported each other's efforts, often providing each other with constructive feedback and encouragement. The cohesion among the program staff members helped the therapeutic climate run smoothly. However, the cohesion the program staff members had with the custody staff members was barely visible. The custody staff members often criticized not just the efforts of the program staff members, but the individual program staff member as well. The custody staff members believed

the program staff members were just *spoiling* or *catering* to the wants of the inmates and not their needs. Thus, the custody staff members believed the relationship the program staff members had with the inmates was not based on mutual *respect*, but instead, it was just the inmates using the program staff members to get what they wanted (i.e., *disrespect*). As one custody staff member said, "He [program manager] isn't respected by the inmates, they [inmates] are just using him to get what they want. If you want to see respect, watch the inmates jump when I tell them to." This comment is an example of a belief system among the custody staff members that for behavioral change to occur, the relationship must be one of authoritarianism not personal relationships. Anything else, particularly rehabilitation, was viewed as an ineffective waste of time and resources, as there was a *presumption of incompetence* for the inmates (Crawley, 2006). Thus, the relationship between custody staff members and program staff members was indifferent at best.

The relationship in the opposite direction was different than the one just described. Although it was common to hear the custody staff vent their frustrations to me about the program staff, I never heard it from the program staff. The program staff members seemed to have realized the custody staff was against them and that they were alone in their efforts to rehabilitate the inmates; however, they never spoke badly about the custody staff. I believe this is because the program manager and warden began their careers as custody staff members. It was only after years of experience, training, and education did they change their approach from security and order maintenance to rehabilitation. Like Teske and Williamson (1979), it appears that education led the program staff to believe in rehabilitation. However, unlike Teske and Williamson, the several years of service did not result in negative views of rehabilitation. This might be because the program staff members received several promotions during their careers and did not remain in one stagnant status with the same roles.

The warden realized he had his critics among the custody staff members. However, he never spoke poorly about any of the custody staff members, at least in front of me. He often

expressed pride when speaking about their performances and realized the difficulties they

experienced when conducting their roles. He greeted every staff member he saw in the facility

and asked them how they were doing. His smile and enthusiasm were indicators that he sincerely

liked them. Because he cared about all his staff members, the warden constantly stayed informed

about their morale. He realized the general morale among the custody staff members was

negative. Thus, to get them to feel better about their job at the youth facility, he attempted to get

custody staff members to participate in the implementation of the rehabilitative programs.

However, despite his insistence, this rarely if ever occurred. The warden's inability to motivate

his custody staff members to be part of the therapeutic climate frustrated him, as he often said if I

could just get them to see that our rehabilitative approach "just makes sense." However, the failed

marriage between program and custody staff members resulted in outcomes that other researchers

found for staff members of a single status experiencing role conflict, except in this study, they

were conflicts between two different type of staff members with conflicting statuses (Crouch,

1980, 1991; Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980).

The relationship between custody staff members and inmates

As Goffman (1961) observed, relationships between prison staff members and inmates

are often formally restricted. Carroll (1974) noted that prison staff members believe that inmates

can never be trusted because they are dangerous people. Thus, to have a personal relationship

with an inmate could result in physical harm to the staff member. The relationships between the

custody staff members and the youth inmates at the correctional youth facility were like

Goffman's and Carroll's observations. There was a formally written concern from the department

of correctional services that if custody staff members developed personal relationships with the

inmates they could become vulnerable to being taken advantage of by the inmates, which could

jeopardize their safety. The fear is the inmates will coerce the custody staff members, consciously

or unconsciously, into doing favors for them, such as giving inmates forbidden contraband (e.g.,

mobile phones, narcotics, or weapons), allowing them access to prohibited areas in the youth facility that could be used to gain escape, or access to sex. The department of correctional services believed the inmates might sexually rape or have consensual sexual contact with custody staff members if they had personal relationships with them. Thus, the policy of no touching was strictly enforced. In other words, to touch an inmate might leave one vulnerable to various sorts of harms. A touch, such as a pat on the back, or a hug after an inmate earned an "A" in class, could lead to unwanted behaviors of not only the inmates but also of custody staff members. The fears of the department of correctional services officially affected the relationships, as it ordered the relationships at a level that was impersonal.

Consequently, for most of the custody staff's relationship with the inmates was indifferent at best and authoritarian at worse. There were a few custody staff members that could be labeled *officer friendly* (Farkas, 2000) who held casual conversations with the inmates, but this was rarely the case. Most of custody staff members held an indifferent quality of relationship with the inmates. They rarely smiled, said hello, or even acknowledged their presence. In return, the inmates treated these custody staff members the same. There were other times, however, where the quality of relationship resembled an authoritarian parent and a child or as Farkas (2000) labeled them, *rule enforcer* or *hard liners*. Unfortunately, some custody staff members even qualified as *hard asses* as they held a physical sense of dominance over the youth inmate to obtain wanted behaviors (Kauffman, 1988). This resulted in the custody staff members yelling orders, giving belittling lectures, or using excessive physical force against the inmates. This type of behavior communicated an overall sense of arrogance to the inmates that said *I'm better than you*. This, of course, was just my interpretation. However, I based my interpretation on the conversations and observations I had with the custody staff members and the inmates.

The relationships between inmates

Sykes (1958, 2007) wrote about how inmates screen the conduct of other inmates to determine whether they are good *marks* or can protect themselves. He also described the *inmate code* they live by. Particularly, he highlighted the meaning behind snitching (i.e., *rat*, *squeal*) or being a *center man* (i.e., too cooperative with staff members). Although many of these qualities existed in my study at the correctional youth facility, they did not surface as I expected. Indeed, there was a consequence among the inmates for *snitching*; however, this had not surprised me. Instead, it was the complacency of the custody staff members that led to an alleged *gang war* that caught me by surprise. Had the custody staff proactively intervened, the outcome might have been different. Furthermore, there was a negative stigma for program participation that pressured the inmates to appear that they were unaffected by the rehabilitation programs. Again, this did not surprise me. Instead, it was how ineffective this stigma was for program participation. In other words, despite the negative stigma that surrounded program participation, most of the inmates did it anyway.

The inmates that participated in the rehabilitation programs, which was most of them, did not let the pressure from the negative stigma stop them from receiving rehabilitation. Why? There were two activities in this therapeutic climate that seemed to increase the level of solidarity and cohesion among the inmates. First, the therapeutic climate included activities that reinforced positive relationships among the inmates. Despite that I rarely observed inmates socialize with other inmates that were outside their race, at times it did occur (e.g., *movie day* and *fast food incentive*). For instance, during *movie day* I noted this was one of the few occasions I observed the inmates participating in friendly banter, laughing, and conversing with others that were outside their race. I also described that this was the first time I observe the inmates play with each other like children and how this moment reminded me of my childhood. Although I cannot definitively say the positive effects (e.g., incentive for program participation) of incentives like

movie day were long term. I do not believe that long-term positive outcomes are necessary as programs like this occur frequently. Thus, positive, short-term outcomes are all that is required. For instance, I can definitively conclude that one of the positive short-term outcomes of movie day was solidarity and cohesion among most, if not all inmates. In other words, children playing are children who are socializing, they are not fighting or being antagonistic with each other. They are showing their solidarity through their wanting to play with each other.

Second, the *Inner Circle Winner Circle* mentoring program held meaning for the inmates. The mentors, many of whom were former inmates of the youth facility, recalled how much they loved the mentoring program while living at the youth facility. They shared the benefits of program participation with the current youth inmates (e.g., helps the time go by, helps inmates avoid conflict, the skills they learn are useful in life outside of prison). The mentors were men the youth inmates could identify with; thus, they listened to their every word. Even the mentors who were speaking with youth inmates outside their race were well received. The mentors gave the inmates "light at the end of the tunnel," which is to say they motivated the inmates to participate in the programs. The inmates as they listened to the mentors seemed like one group of similar individuals, instead of several groups of varied individuals.

The influence of incentives and programs, such as *movie day* and *Inner Circle Winner Circle*, encouraged program participation partly through inmate solidarity and cohesion. Although there were visible moments when the inmates were antagonistic with each other, according to the warden's descriptions of how it was when he first arrived, I can say the levels of cohesiveness are much higher than it used to be. However, the platform that solidarity rests on is fragile. As observed from the alleged *gang war*, one incident of failing to stop a small problem from festering into a larger problem, intentional or unintentional, can result in changes to the therapeutic climate. As the lives of staff members and inmates are entwined with each other, their behaviors can affect everybody (Butler et al., 2019).

The complex system of relationships and program participation

       Despite being described separately, the between group and within group relationships affect inmate program participation. As program participation is the goal, positive relationships between inmates and staff members are likely to result in positive program participation. However, negative relationships could negatively affect participation as well. Thus, the structures that represent relationships for program participation are a complex system that exists within the overarching complex system of the therapeutic climate (See Figure 4 for feedback loop relationship model).
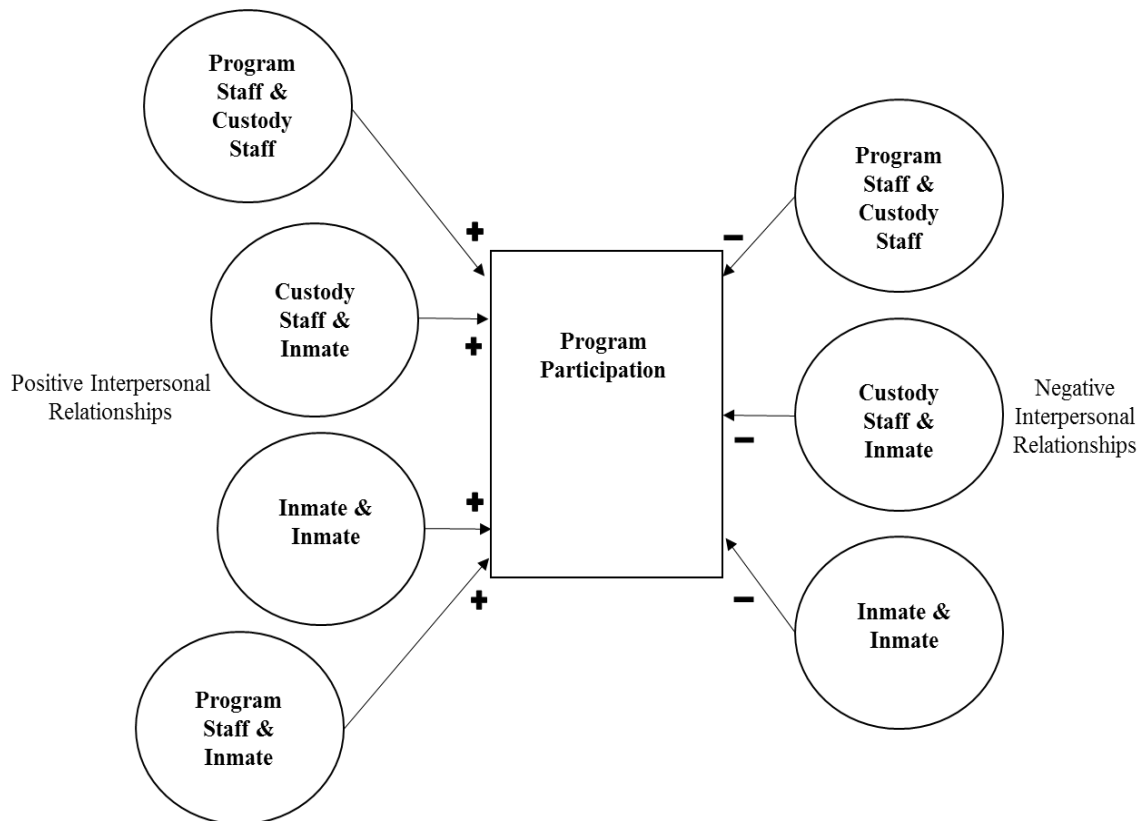

Figure 4. Feedback loop of relationship model for program participation

The mesosystem of influence of a therapeutic climate

Brofenbrenner (1977, 1979) described the *mesosystem* as the environment where interrelationships occur, such as at work or school. Despite the examples being physical locations, I am including conceptual spaces in this ecological level that brings the mesosystem closer to Bourdieu's *field* (Bourdieu, 1991). Bourdieu's *field* offers us an understanding of the relationship between individuals and their social structures in a conceptual environment where power operates, where the space individuals occupy depend on their investment, and their efforts are aimed at shaping the field that suits their interest (Webb, 2012). However, by including conceptual spaces, I am not neglecting the physical space. I argue that architecture influences the relationships between individuals and social structures much like the conceptual field does; furthermore, the two are related but with some differences. People can see architecture through their eyes, whereas a field can only be seen in their mind's eye. Despite the temptation to distinguish the physical eye and mind's eye as contradictions, I argue they are complimentary. By bringing the concepts together, as a *constructivist structuralist* should do, they offer a better understanding of the relationship's individuals have with social structures then the concepts could do alone.

The conceptual field of the Inmate Incentive Program

Goffman (1961) argued that *total institutions* (e.g., prisons) are *instrumental formal organizations* that depend on the contributions of its members (e.g., staff members and inmates). However, total institutions might need to rely on *incentives* and *punishments* to obtain those contributions. The correctional youth facility implemented an Inmate Incentive Program (IIP) to obtain program participation from their inmates. Although the IIP was largely based on the use of the carrot instead of the stick, both strategies were utilized in the youth facility; thus, one affected the other.

The warden credited the IIP for transforming the climate in the youth facility from hostile to cooperative; thus, making it safer for everybody. Prior to the IIP, the youth facility's primary means to obtain inmate control was through a climate of strict security and punishment (e.g., threats of long-term segregation and restrictions of privileges). However, after the IIP's implementation, the climate in the youth facility changed to one of voluntary cooperativeness. In this climate, the inmates did not live in a constant state of fear; thus, they were less likely to misbehave (e.g., make weapons, fight, ignore orders). Cullen and colleagues (2011) made a similar conclusion with a positive relationship between the criminogenic climate in prisons and inmate misconduct. Although Hansen et al. (2015) discovered the positive effects of incentive programs were short-term and were at its highest levels during inmate evaluations, my observations discovered the timing of evaluations and the term of the effects were inconsequential. The correctional youth facility's IIP was constantly in motion; thus, inmate incentive evaluations were completed daily. The inmates who participated in the IIP, which was nearly all inmates in the youth facility, were usually well behaved all the time. Furthermore, the success of the IIP was not dependent on the timing of the evaluation, but instead of the incentives themselves. If the incentives were meaningful, the motivation to participate in the programs were high.

Sykes (1958, 2007) argued that the *pains of deprivation* were motivations for inmate behavior. Thus, the inmates were rewarded with *things* and *activities* they missed. The system of pains of deprivation; therefore, led to the prison system running cohesively. However, for Goffman (1961), he argued the successes of incentives was a result of the inmates attempting to reform their sense of self-identity in a total institution, as they did in their *presenting culture*. Indeed, the correctional youth facility used the IIP to keep the therapeutic climate running cohesively. However, the program manager realized that the incentives in the IIP must hold meaning to the inmates for the program to be successful. Thus, the program manager formed an

Inmate Council, much for the same reasons that Sykes observed (e.g., prevent misconduct). The program manager used the information offered from the inmate council to learn their grievances and which incentives were meaningful for the inmates. The incentives that held the most meaning were those activities that allowed the inmates to relive their experiences from the outside world, such as *movie day*, *fast food*, and *extra yard time*. In other words, without meaningful incentives that reduced the tension caused by the *pains of deprivation*, why would inmates participate in the IIP?

The physical architecture of the correctional youth facility

At the correctional youth facility, there were clear dichotomies of architecture. For example, the housing units where the inmates lived conspicuously resembled what many might consider the structures of a prison. Inside these units were cramp quarters (i.e., inmate cells) with steel bunk beds, toilets, and sinks. The entrance to each cell had a heavy steel door, with a single window, painted with a drab, gloomy color (e.g., gray). Furthermore, the sounds, smells, and stark lighting conditions throughout the housing units made no one doubt they were indeed in prison. However, the education building (i.e., building "E") could be described as having the opposite architecture. At times, I had forgotten I was in prison when I was in building "E," and I suspect many of the inmates did as well. The education building reminded me of a public high school, which matched its function. It was here that classes were held, meditation sessions were offered, kids played basketball, while others learned to play the piano. Thus, the dichotomous architecture at the correctional youth facility resembled Werner's (2012) description that the architecture of a prison, "is the physical manifestation of a society's goals and approached for dealing with arrested and/or convicted men and women, and it is a stage for acting out plans and programs for their addressing their future" (p. 7). The purpose of the correctional youth facility was two-fold: house youth inmates in a maximum-security prison facility and rehabilitate them into law-abiding adults.

After viewing the dichotomous architecture, the question turns to, did the architecture influence inmate behaviors for program participation? Moran (2016) observed inmate behaviors were influenced by colors and furnishings. If they were in a room with calm colors, the inmates reacted similarly. The inmates at the correctional youth facility were often anxious to leave the stark and drab conditions of their housing units. They preferred to be outdoors in the yard; however, an acceptable alternative was the education building. They seemed to be calmer and quieter when they were outside the echo chambers of the housing units. This is not to say they did not act like rowdy adolescent youths when they were in the other areas of the youth facility. However, their rambunctious behavior seemed to be more playful and friendlier. Inside the housing units, the climate was more security oriented and it was here the inmates acted like, well, inmates. In the education building, the inmates behaved as teenage students do in the outside world. Teenage students do not always display the most appropriate behavior for program participation; however, I assumed for the most part that inmates who behave like students do in the outside world achieve more during a program, class, or session than inmates who do not (See Figure 5 for feedback loop diagram of incentives and architecture for program participation).
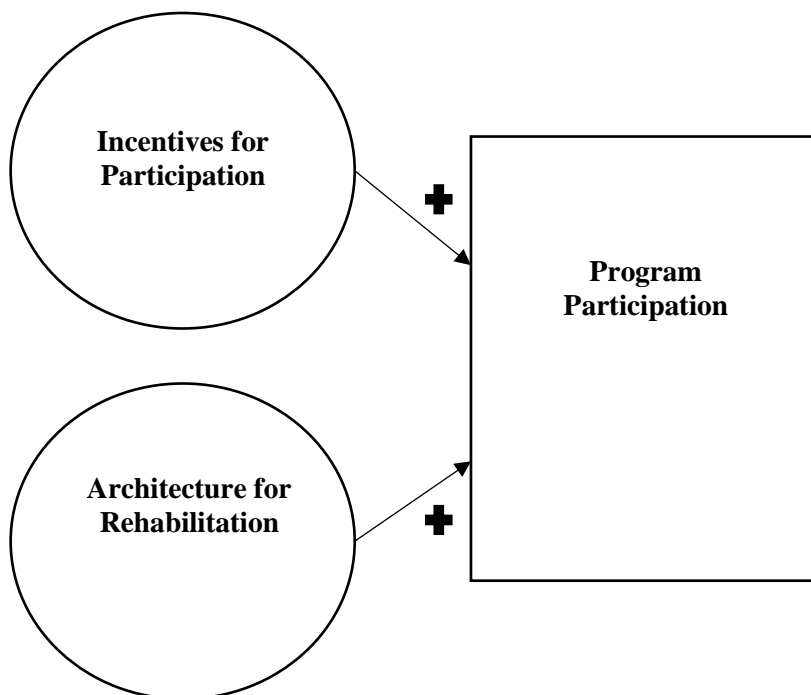
Figure 5. Feedback loop of incentives and architecture for program participation

The exosystem of influence of a therapeutic climate

Brofenbrenner (1977, 1979) described the *exosystem* level of his ecological model as the forces that affect the stability of the microsystems. For the ecological model for a therapeutic climate, there are three structures that affected its stability: staff members and inmate buy-in, as well as the disbursement of punishment, such as solitary confinement (i.e., *long-term segregation*, *the hole*). In other words, the exosystem level contains the levels of support for each group, how punishment is handed out, and how these structures affect program participation (See Figure 6 for feedback loop of buy-in and punishment for program participation).

Staff-member buy-in

From the beginning of this study, in fact, from the first moment I met the warden of the correctional youth facility, I did not doubt that he believed in the therapeutic approach for the

inmates he managed. He realized "it just makes sense". His passion and drive for developing a strong therapeutic climate led him to the hiring of the program manager and psychologist who shared his professionalism and drive (i.e., *pollyannas* (Kauffman, 1988)). Together, as the only committed members of the program staff, they were able to maintain a strong therapeutic climate despite being heavily outnumbered by distractors, such as the *hardliners*, *rule enforcers*, and *loners* (Farkas, 2000). I was impressed with the resilience of the program staff members for being able to achieve such high levels of program participation in a setting that was often antagonistic. However, it was during the last third of my study that I saw how the lack of custody staff member buy-in negatively affected the therapeutic climate.

As with many other studies, several of the custody staff members at the correctional youth facility viewed the inmates as impervious to rehabilitation (Crawley, 2006), never to be trusted (Carroll, 1974), and were dangerous (Crawley & Crawley, 2007) people of low moral character (Conover, 2001). In other words, inmates owned the stigma of a *presumption of incompetence*. These perceptions were related to the custody staff members disdain for the therapeutic climate at the youth facility, the program staff members, and the inmates (Liebling, 2011). The custody staff members who were vocal with their frustrations with the IIP and the programs were also those who were often at a constant state of readiness for a *gang war* or used methods of an authoritarian parent to supervise and discipline the inmates. The behaviors of these custody staff members led many of the inmates to distrust and hated all custody staff members, which made for a tense climate to perform rehabilitative programs.

Inmate buy-in

Overall, the inmates who participated in the IIP trusted and personally liked the program staff members. They seemed to realize the sincerity of the program staff members' approach and concern. The program staff members were cognizant that the trust they earned from the inmates could easily be lost. Thus, they took advantage of moments to build their relationships with them.

For instance, program staff members giving inmates five-minutes of their time to voice a grievance or by calling inmates by their first name. The relationships the inmates had with the program staff led to their buy-in levels for the programs that were offered. The inmates' positive feelings for the program staff members were even validated by the mentors in the Inner Circle Winner Circle program. The levels of buy-in the inmates experienced was a complex system itself that was made of several components. Unfortunately, the negative feelings the inmates had with the custody staff members also affected the levels of inmate buy-in as much as their positive feelings did. A lapse in judgment on the part of a few custody staff members could and did result in a profound change of not only the therapeutic climate but also to the overall climate of the entire youth facility. As Libeling (2004) observed, the way the custody staff members treat the inmates can affect everyone's prison experience. Thus, as with many experiences in prison, the levels of buy-in that took so much effort to obtain could easily be lost in a moment.

Long-term segregation: Total isolation in a total institution

I am not sure exactly what I expected, but when I first arrived at the correctional youth facility and observed only a few inmates housed in the SMU on long-term segregation, I was surprised. Furthermore, I was also pleasantly surprised by the activities they could participate in to reduce their frustrations of living in total isolation. For instance, as there were only a few inmates in *the hole* at the beginning of this study, the psychologist obtained permission from the warden to let them spend their one-hour of outside time in the gym playing basketball. Although these inmates were not allowed to participate in the IIP or the programs, they could do something to help reduce their stress as Shalev (2014) noted, youth inmates in segregation experience "symptoms of paranoia, anxiety, and depression even after very short periods of isolation" (p. 30). Thus, efforts to reduce the negative effects could prove valuable in the long term. However, my observations quickly changed after the *gang war*. There were over fifteen inmates housed in the SMU, and none of these inmates could continue their rehabilitative programs. Thus, the

higher the population in the SMU, the less positive influence the therapeutic climate has on these

individuals. Furthermore, as there were so many inmates in the SMU, the logistical challenge for

the custody staff members made it nearly impossible to let these inmates go to the gym or do

anything else that was atypical. Not only did the number of inmates in the SMU influence the

therapeutic climate, but also did the length of time they lived in *the hole*. Many of the inmates

could be housed in segregation for up to a year. Thus, the progress inmates made in therapy are at

best vulnerable while they are in total isolation and at worst all progress is not only completely

erased, but the inmates could easily regress in their mental health, which could increase their

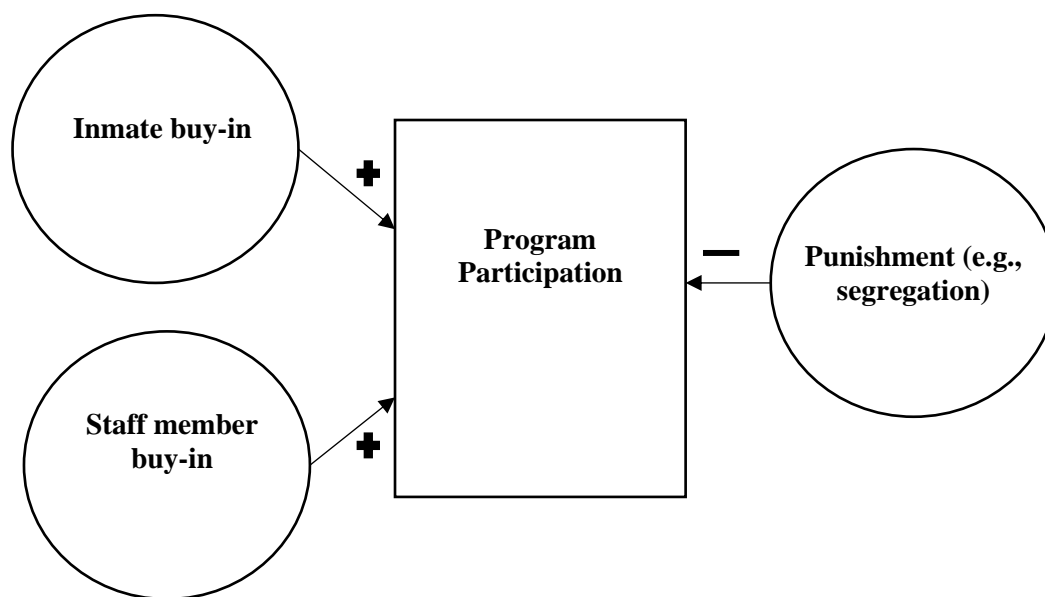vulnerability to negative outcomes, such as suicide (Shalev, 2014).

Figure 6. Feedback loop of buy-in and punishment for program participation

The macrosystem of influence of a therapeutic climate

Brofenbrenner (1977, 1979) considered the macrosystem of influence to contain the

values that affect both the micro- and mesosystems. In other words, the macrosystem contains the

standards that control behavior. Regarding the ecological model for therapeutic climate, the

macrosystem contains the values (or standards) given by not just the leaders who are formally recognized, such as the warden, but also the informal leaders of the staff and inmates. Together, these leaders set the standards that affect the therapeutic climate (See Figure 7 for leadership feedback loop).

Leadership among inmates

Although inmate leaders can have a negative effect on rehabilitation (Schrag, 1954), much of the consequences depend on the type of prison they are housed (Akers, 1977). Regarding the correctional youth facility, the inmate leaders and their effects on program participation were less than conspicuous. There were some indicators of stigma among the inmates to not reveal positive progress they made in the IIP or the programs; however, this negative stigma was overcome by the mentors of the *Inner Circle Winner Circle* program. As the mentors were mostly former inmates of the youth facility, the current youth inmates viewed them as leaders. As such, the mentors validated and encouraged the youth inmates to take full advantage of the programs at the youth facility. The mentors improved the therapeutic climate through their social interactions with the inmates. Furthermore, the program staff members recognized the contributions the mentors made with the inmates and used their influence as much as they could.

Custody staff leaders

The warden was the legitimate leader of the correctional youth facility. He set the tone for everyone else to follow. As Pollack (2013) wrote, "social climate that is created and nurtured by a clear vision, strong leadership, and competent management" (p. 179) guide the entire prison. However, unless the values of the warden are shared and disbursed among all leaders, at every level of the organization, breakdowns are likely to occur. As the staff members of the youth facility were segregated into the opposing sides of program and custody, so did their loyalty to the warden. The program staff members were loyal to the warden and followed his every

direction. However, the same cannot be said for the custody staff member leaders (formal and informal). As revealed in the results, a rogue lieutenant going against the better judgment of a corporal and ordering a search of an inmate's cell who is already vulnerable to mental outrage is an event that the warden would not have likely approved. Although I can only speculate this lieutenant consciously realized his behavior went against the warden's values, I can say this incident, as it occurred, was never realized by the warden. Furthermore, the lieutenant's cad behavior was not only presented in front of the other staff members, but it was also mirrored by them, as corporals often used their authoritarian styles of supervision to control and address the inmates' behaviors. As leaders who lack integrity and fail to provide a moral example to those they lead, they will fail in obtaining the prison's mission (Write, 1994).

The new warden

The new warden of the correctional youth facility had a different set of values and goals than the previous warden. I suspect she will acquire her goals for the correctional youth facility as I believed her to be a strong leader. However, her immediate goals were mostly concerned with the warehousing of inmates, not providing them with rehabilitation. Although I cannot predict that she will continue this course in the long term, I can say she started her course in that direction. The program staff members realized this as well, as the program manager retired early, and the psychologist contemplated resigning from the youth facility. Even the inmates sensed the goals of the new warden, as they expressed concern for their rehabilitative future. Furthermore, many of the custody staff members realized a difference in leadership as well. Many of them looked forward to the novel standards the new warden presented, as some said about her, "she gets it." Thus, without leaders who support a therapeutic climate, it fails to exist. As for a therapeutic climate to exist, it requires a warden to promote the standards for rehabilitative change (Wright, 1994).

The warden

The warden believed in his approach. He was passionate about rehabilitation, and his standards were known by everyone inside and out of the youth facility. The warden' leadership style had Write's four "c's" of prison management—candor, caring, commitment, and confidence. Some staff members, such as the program manager and psychologist were on board with the warden's vision. However, others were not. Many of the other wardens who managed facilities outside of the youth facility were vocal in their criticism, and many of the custody staff members disapproved as well (Bennett, 2016; Crawley, 2004). However, the negative feedback the warden received did not make him waiver in his approach. I suspect it even increased his determination. For over eight years the warden was successful in changing the climate of the youth facility, which I assume was the reason why he stayed at the youth facility for as long as he did. However, the tension in the political climate that surrounded the entire department of correctional services increased over time. With the recent events of prison riots, overcrowding, and budget shortfalls, the warden's critics became heard. The youth facility was the only one that was below maximum population occupancy and the warden was spending more money per inmate than any other facility. I suspect that many of the current prison administrators had either forgotten or were ignorant what the climate was like before the warden arrived. Thus, the current time was their only measure. As inferred by Bennett (2016), no individual warden "sits in isolation and any consideration of prison managers has to be situated in a broader social context" (p. 131). Although, the exact reasons for the warden's departure is beyond the scope of this study, in the end, the exact reasons are inconsequential. The outcomes are the same regardless of the reasons. The warden is gone, a new warden took his place, and for at least the near future, the therapeutic climate that took eight years to build has changed.
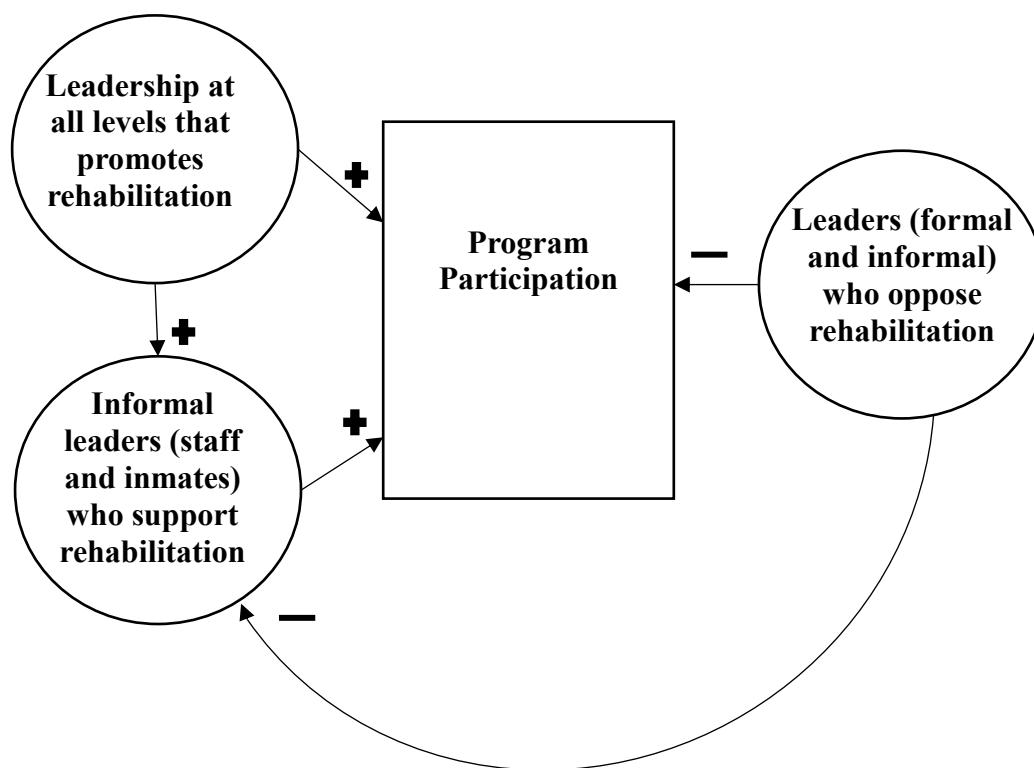
Figure 7. Feedback loop of leadership.

A word about the meaning programs hold

This study did not conduct evaluations of any one program, as this was not part of its

original purpose. However, I did observe inmates voluntarily participate in some programs more

than others. The common threads that I observed were *program integrity* and reciprocity.

Programs that were based in science, implemented by trained staff members, and were well

managed had *program integrity* (Cullen, Gendreau, 2000; Quay, 1977; Sherman, 1998). These

programs also met the definition of rehabilitation as they were a planned intervention that

targeted behavioral change, which was for the benefit of the inmates' future (Cullen & Gendreau,

2000). For instance, the anger management courses the psychologist taught were held regularly,

based in science, and constantly evaluated. Information learned from this program, led the

psychologist to the planning of a parenting class for the inmates. Furthermore, the programs that had the highest inmate participation were also those programs that inmates could feel the benefits. For instance, the Mindfulness and Mediation sessions had numerous inmates return every week even after they earned the maximum levels of incentives. Why did they return? Many said, "it just feels good." In other words, the programs that resulted in obvious benefits for the inmates resulted in their voluntary return. At times, the benefits had to be validated by other sources, such as the mentors from the *Inner Circle Winner Circle* program. The mentors reinforced the value of other programs. As the youth inmates identified with the mentors, they respected and followed their advice. Thus, there were programs that helped others, which makes program participation a complex system (See Figure 8 for feedback loop of meaningful incentives).
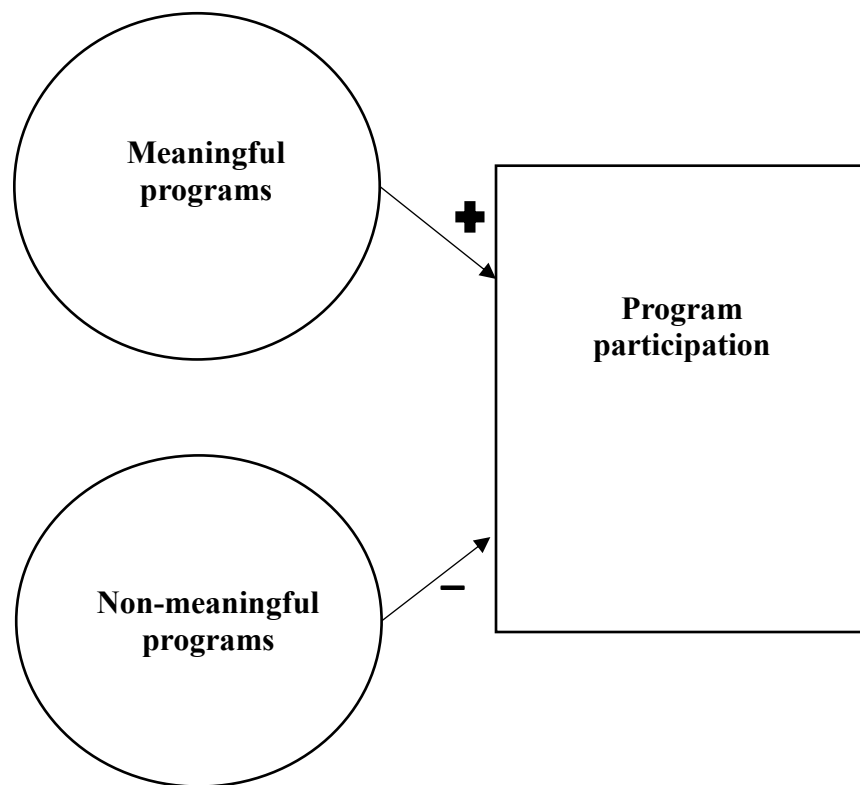

Figure 8. Feedback loop of meaningful programs.

Putting the system together: Ecological model for a therapeutic climate

As said by Brofenbrenner (1977), "The ecological environment *is conceived topologically as a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next* [emphasis in original text] (p. 514). The influences of each system (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem) in the text not only reveals the complexities of each system, it also displays how each layer of the nest influences others. For example, if there is little or no inmate buy-in at the exosystem, then the relationships at the microsystem will also be affected. Furthermore, if there is a breakdown in leadership, then the entire therapeutic climate could dissolve. Thus, the following diagram combines it not in a nested form as previously offered, but rather as a *feedback loop* model (Meadows, 2008) (See Figure 9 for feedback loop of therapeutic climate).
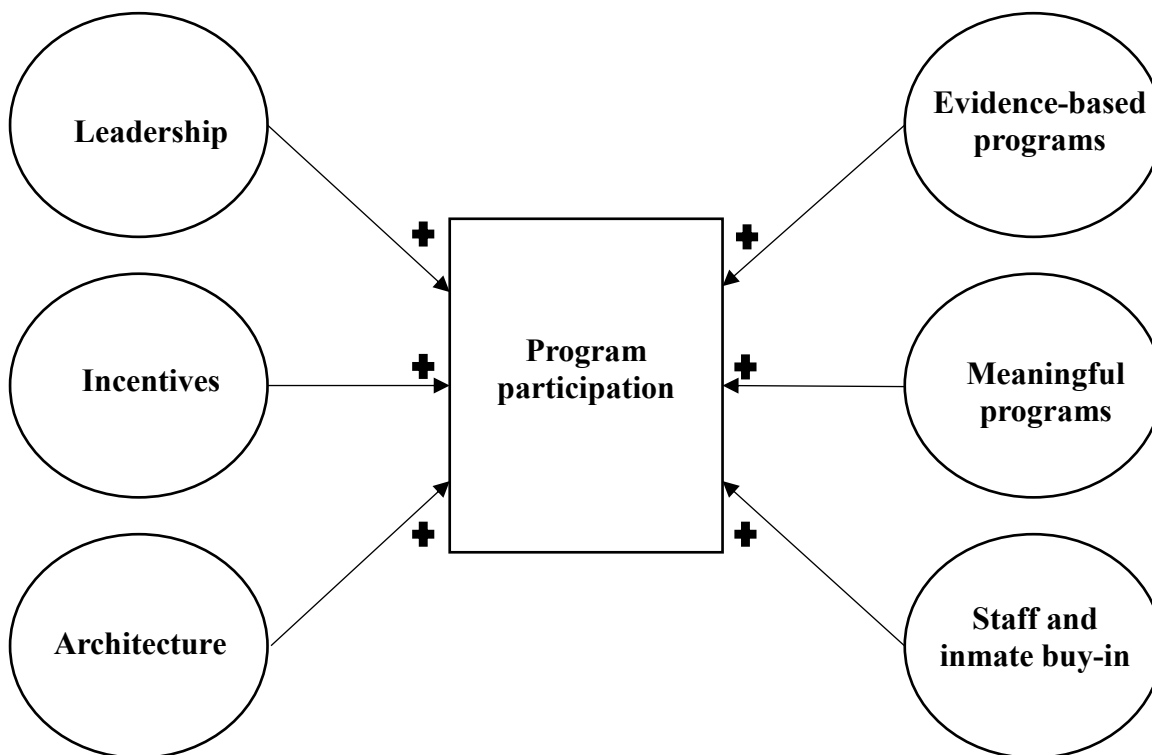

Figure 9. Feedback loop of therapeutic climate.

It is important to note that while I did not diagram the negative influences of the use of punishment, such as segregation, on program participation, the climate of punishment did negatively affect the therapeutic climate. There were moments where the climate of punishment stopped all rehabilitative efforts. An inmate housed in segregation with total isolation for 23-hours per day had no opportunity for rehabilitation. Thus, when punishment is implemented at the same time as rehabilitation, it can completely cancel out the therapeutic climate and its positive outcomes.

Recommendations for future research

The original, albeit informal intention of this ethnography, was to rid itself of the title *focused ethnography* and turn it into a traditional ethnography that could last up to a year or more. This was the discussion the warden, and I had before the start of this study. We thought it best to start with only three months and if everything worked out between us, we would discuss continuing the study at the end of the initial 90 days. I suspect had the warden stayed in his position at the youth facility, this would have indeed occurred. However, reality being what it was, the study ceased at the original expiration date.

Although I had received levels of saturation for the areas I observed, there were plenty of others I was not exposed. For instance, I had not an opportunity to follow a group of inmates from their arrival to their eventual release or transfer. This type of observation might reveal many of the stress's inmates enter and leave with, which may reveal opportunities for rehabilitation. Furthermore, some of the inmates marry their girlfriends while being incarcerated. From what I understand, the inmates marry as it increases their privileges and opportunities to see the ones they love. I also am very interested in exploring the inmates that *jam out* their sentences. The inmates that serve their entire sentences and leave with no other legal obligations to the state seem to be more vulnerable to reoffend as they have less access to services than the inmates who

are released on parole. Although this is only an untested hypothesis at this point, it certainly is worthy of exploration. The new warden's efforts, strategies, and goals should be explored. I am only sure of what she did when she first arrived. Where the new warden takes the correctional youth facility in the long-term, I have no idea. Last, there were a couple of inmates I never saw. They maintained a life of seclusion from all programs in the facility. They seem to be those who needed therapy the most, but I am only speculating. They voluntarily stayed in their cells for the most part and had no interest in doing anything but serving their time. This area *needs* research as these inmates will eventually be released back into their home communities. Programs of any type tend to focus on individuals who are likely to succeed. Programs offer scholarships and access to institutions for those who are the best of their groups. However, what about those who are not near that level and as a result they receive little if any positive attention? Programs unconsciously consider them to be the forgotten population that is destined for life long failures. I fear the inmates I never saw could be people that society has completely given up on and forgotten. Of all my recommendations, this area bothers me the most on both a professional and personal level.

Limitations

A common criticism of ethnographies is the generalizability of their findings. The basis of the arguments usually rests on quantitative generalizations and theoretical implications (Hammersley, 1992). Although the quantitative generalization argument does stand on firm ground with their *claim of description*, as ethnographies are not required to consume large randomly selected samples of participants. It fails to recognize that ethnographers make sound rational decisions about the population they study and provide evidence that might *explain the descriptions* (Hammersley, 1992). Ethnographers, unlike positivists, observe the populations from the inside. Thus, they produce knowledge that positivist could use for their descriptive studies.

As far as theoretical implications, many *positivists* argue that theories must contain deterministic assumptions to explain human behavior (Hammersley, 2002). However, ethnographers as *humanists* reject the claim that human behavior can be reduced to such absolutes. Humans are creative, formative, feeling beings and their behaviors are so complex and varied that ethnographers believe that theories that try to determine or predict behavior is unrealistic (Hammersley, 2012). However, what many believe to be the limitations of ethnographies are complimentary. There are possibilities for collaboration between ethnographers and other types of research (Hammersley, 2002). I recognize the quantitative generalizability and theoretical limitations of my study and realize that I should not try to produce an exact map with precise boundaries of my observations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, I also realize the opportunities that could occur if we collaborated on future efforts.

Focused ethnographies have its critics, many of whom are ethnographers (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013). The main criticism is the length of time in the field. Indeed, more time in the field can produce valid results. However, there are circumstances where a focused approach is not only the lone option available but also is the most appropriate. For instance, ethnographies that occur within institutions on specific groups of people have resulted in valuable knowledge (e.g., Ensign & Bell, 2004; Garcia, Duckett, Saewyc, & Bearinger, 2007; Higginbottom, 2011). This focused ethnography resulted in knowledge that led to the beginning of an ecological model for therapeutic climate. Indeed, this is only the beginning; however, without using a focused ethnographic approach, the information learned might have remained latent.

Conclusion

The purpose of this ethnography was to explore the therapeutic climate in an adult maximum-security correctional facility that housed youth males (16—21 years and 10 months) who were adjudicated as adults for violent crimes. Some of the inmates in this study were eligible

for release within a year; others might never see the outside world again. All are vulnerable to health consequences that could indirectly affect the health of their home communities. As their health issues are public health issues, it was worthy to explore the therapeutic climate in the correctional facility where the inmates lived and received treatment.

What is a therapeutic climate? A therapeutic climate is a subjective concept. It has abstract imagery that promotes analysis of current and changing patterns of social, behavioral outcomes as they relate to various environments, at different scales of time and space, with various occupants (Becket, Beech, Fisher, & Fordham, 1994). A therapeutic climate represents the efforts to rehabilitate. Consider it a complex system of social processes that is like Bourdieu's' field (Bourdieu, 1990). It lies within an institution (e.g., prison) where the purpose is to provide rehabilitative services that meet the needs of its participants. The therapeutic climate includes the social interrelationships between and within various groups that make a *community* (i.e., staff members and participants). However, it also comprises the formal and informal rules everyone lives by, enforcement of the rules, peer and mentor support, leadership styles at all levels, physical architecture of the space, group cohesion, and whether the basis of the programs offered derives from research-based evidence or otherwise. Although the therapeutic climate does not include involuntary confinement with the use of punishment, security, and control (i.e., punishment climate), this opposing climate affected it. In the correctional youth facility where this study occurred, the two different climates (i.e., therapy and punishment) occurred together, at the same time, with the same people (program participant and inmates), and in the same physical setting.

The method used to explore the therapeutic climate in the correctional youth facility was a focused ethnography where the primary means of data collection was through participant observation. This method, along with grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), resulted in a collection of several themes that were analyzed as a complex system (Meadows, 2008). The result was an

ecological model of therapeutic climate that was inspired by Brofenbrenner (1977, 1979) and

McLeroy et al. (1988). This model is the beginning; however, its use can lead to a map of what an

ideal therapeutic climate resembles, which has the potential of providing behavioral change to a

group of troubled imprisoned youth.

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Footnotes

1. Jones was not this inmate's real name. Jones was a Black male, 19 years of age, and was serving a sentence for armed robbery.

2. Darrel was not this inmate's real name. Darrel was a Black male, 20 years of age, and was serving a sentence for attempted murder.

3. John was not this inmate's real name. John was a Latino male, 20 years of age, it was not learned what crime he was convicted.

4. David was not this inmate's name. David was a Black male, 19 years of age, it was not learned what crime John was convicted.