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 **Sexual Offending**
Theory, Research, and Prevention

 **PsychOpen** ^{GOLD}

Research Article

 Check for updates

“Too Much, Too Little, Too Late:” Exploring the Role of the Criminal Justice System Within the Narratives of Men Convicted of Sexual Recidivism in Norway and North America

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Introduction and Background (Acknowledge Sandbukt)

Predatory publisher becomes co-authoring BFF

Participants

NORWAY (16/24) & USA (14/74)



Method

Targeted Comparative Analysis (Rimer & Holt, 2023)

Results

Too Much, Too Little, Too Late

Implications and Future Directions





INTRODUCTION

United States of America

330 million

664/100,000 incarcerated

1 million on public sex offender register

Residence restrictions, community notification, death penalty, disenfranchisement (voting, unemployment, homelessness)



Norway

5.5 million

55/100,000 incarcerated

No public register

Incarcerated = same rights (healthcare, vote, higher ed) a true 'second chance' after release



United States of America CIVIL COMMITMENT

Sexually Dangerous Predator (SDP) legislation

1959-1991; 2001-present (MASS)

Indeterminate sentence added upon (or near) completion of governing sentence, judge ordered, 2 independent psychiatrists, renewed every year (in practice, every 5-6 years)



Norway

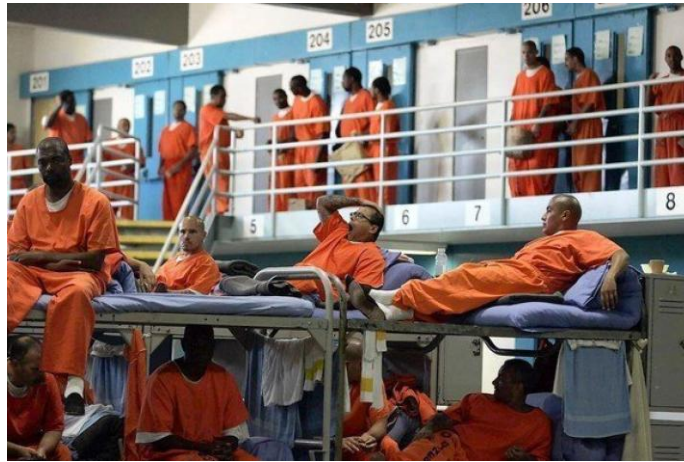
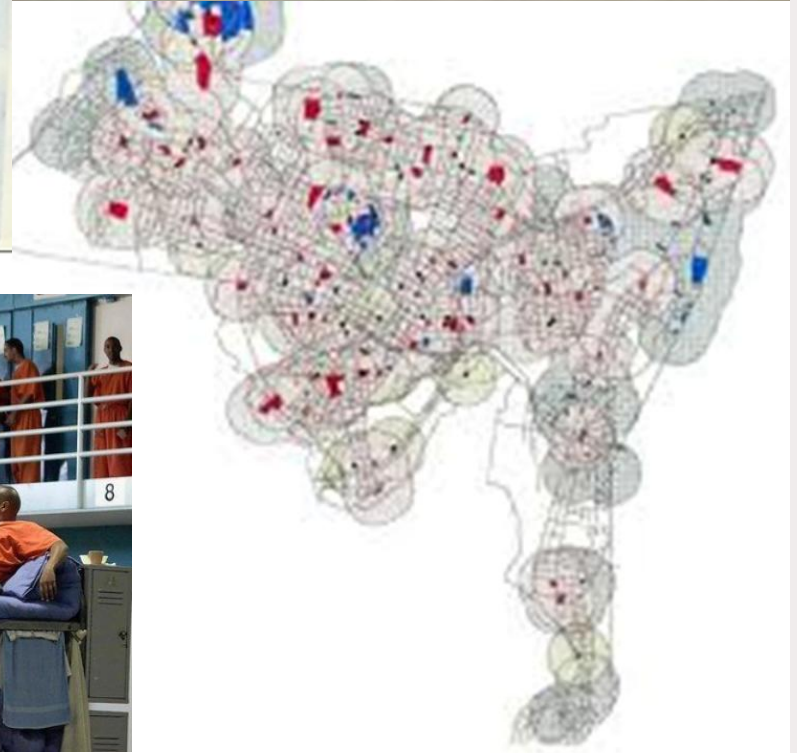
FORVARING

Indefinite preventative detention (2002) when a regular term is insufficient to protect life, health, and freedom of others; announced at sentencing

Prison is an 'opportunity for rehabilitation and growth'

Released with no conditions







METHOD

United States of America

14 men who had recidivated sexually (8 community)

Conducted 2011-2013

Drawn from 74 interviews with men who were referred for civil commitment between 1959-1984, most were released before 2000.

57 yo at interview; 37 yo at most recent release

Norway

16 men who had recidivated sexually (all in custody)

Conducted 2022

Drawn from 46 interviews (with 23 men) who had been detained indefinitely following forvaring

46 yo at interview; 35 yo at most recent release



INCLUSION CRITERIA

Reoffended sexually upon release, after incarceration for a sexual offence

Took at least some responsibility for their most recent offence

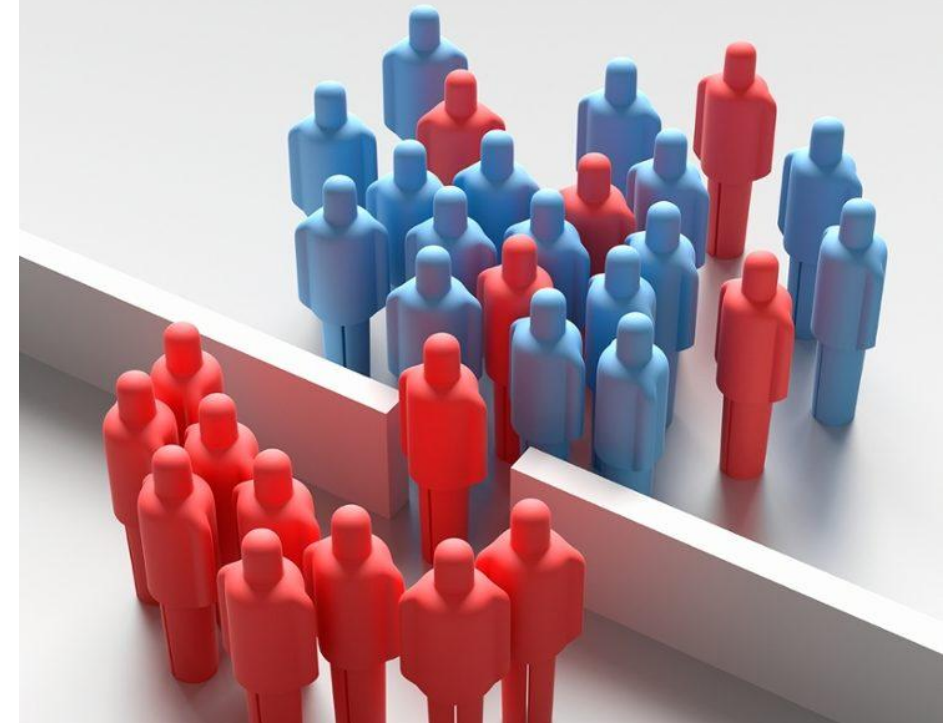
Were able to provide sufficient descriptions of offending from which we could code variables of interest

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Pseudo-recidivism (charges brought for historical incident that predated index offence)

Undetected persistence (single sentence but many offences)

Nonsexual technical violations (FTR or possess scissors)





RESULTS

United States of America

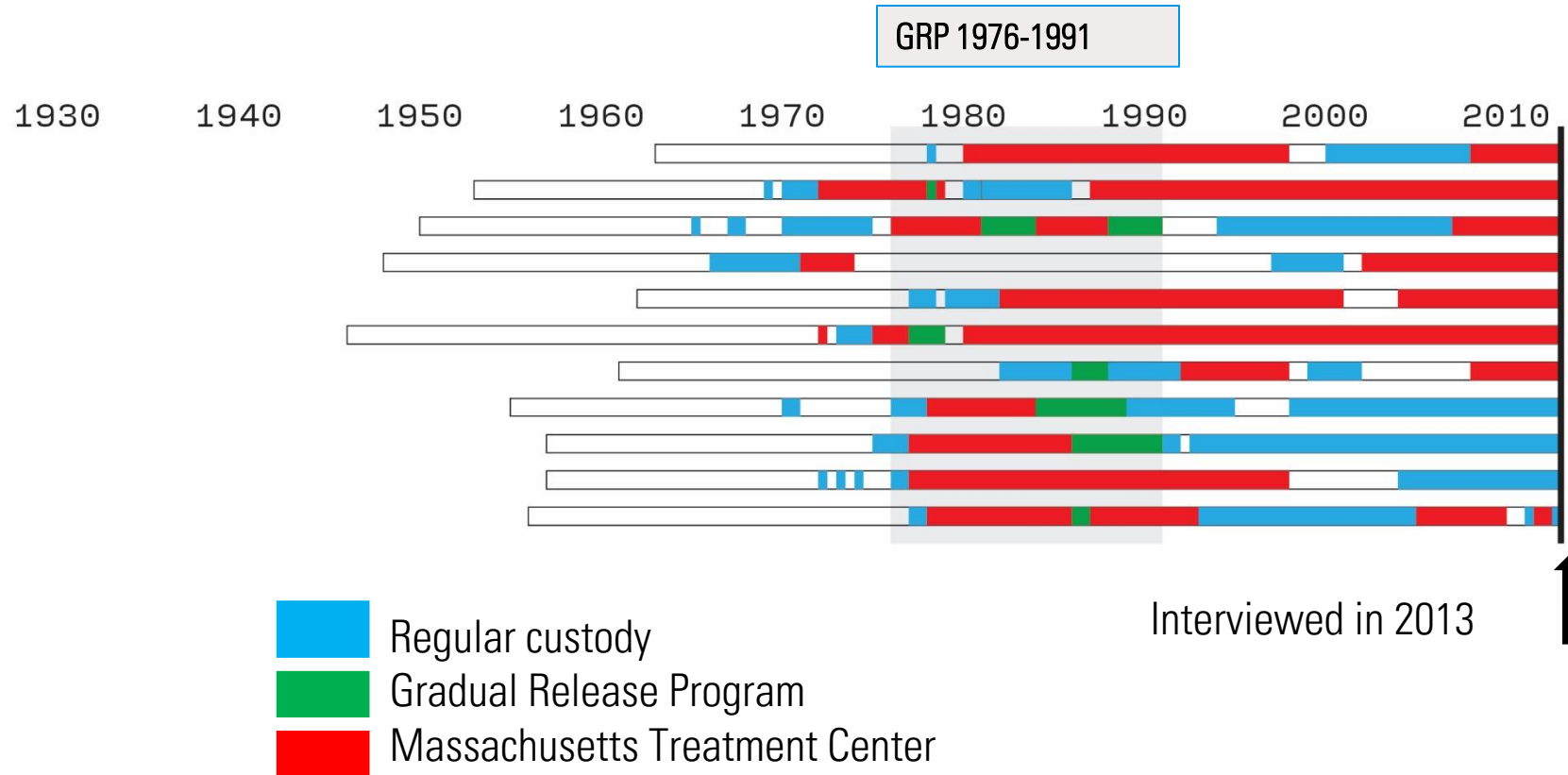
- 1) Relapse happened quickly
- 2) Resources (especially money) upon release created a false sense of security
- 3) "I wasn't ready for release, but this time is different"

Norway

- 1) Blaming the system
- 2) Blaming their (hopeless) situation
- 3) Blaming oneself



RECIDIVISTS



Themes Identified From Study 1 (North America) and Study 2 (Norway) Transcripts

Theme	North America	Norway
1	<p>The system was too harsh</p> <p>The sentence was too long, treatment was too intense, registration was for life, treatment required payment</p>	<p>The system was too soft</p> <p>The sentence was too short/too lenient, no real intervention, no one to talk to, the offence wasn't taken seriously</p>
2	<p>There's no way out of treatment</p> <p>It goes forever, you're never not at risk, you get convinced that you're a monster, there's always an assumption that you'll reoffend – you're dangerous forever, your risk is exaggerated</p>	<p>There's no way into treatment</p> <p>You don't get help unless your sentence is long enough or you have reoffended, there's an assumption that you don't need treatment – risk is downplayed, and treatment is hard to access</p>
3	<p>Set up to fail – Too many hoops</p> <p>Unrealistic restrictions on movement, employment, residence, curfew, burdensome reporting requirements, unrealistic expectations – daily check-ins, weekly appointments, it's impossible</p>	<p>Set up to fail – No safety net</p> <p>No professional support, no proper aftercare or follow-up, no check in appointments or accountability, no treatment</p>

	USA	Norge
	Too much	Too little
Theme 1 Straff/ systemet generelt	Systemet var for strengt For lange straffer, for intensivt behandlingsopplegg, pålegg om registrering i lang tid (ofte livet ut), måtte selv betale for behandling, osv	Systemet var for mildt/snilt Straffen var for kort/for mild, ingen ordentlig intervensjon, ingen å snakke, lovbruddene ble ikke tatt på alvor, osv
Theme 2 Behandling/ intervensjon	Ingen vei ut av behandling Det pågår i det uendelige, risikoen overdrives, du blir overbevist om at du er et monster, det er alltid en antakelse om at du vil fortsette å begå lovbrudd – du er farlig for alltid	Ingen vei inn i behandling Du får ikke hjelp med mindre straffen er lang nok eller du allerede har hatt tilbakefall, risikoen din bli bagatellisert og det er generelt vanskelig å få behandling
Theme 3 Løslatelse/ tilbakeføring	Satt opp til å feile – for mange hindringer Urealistiske restriksjoner mtp på hvor man kan arbeide, bo, bevege seg, belastende rapporterings- og oppmøtekrav, urealistiske forventninger	Satt opp til å feile – 'ikke noe sikkerhetsnett' Ingen profesjonell støtte, ingen oppfølging, ingen møteplikt eller ansvarliggjøring, ingen behandling

Overwhelming shame, guilt and failure

United States of America

Not to cast a pall over it, but there was nothing good about my release. Nothing. (Rudy, North America)



Norway

[The lowest point was] when I managed to fuck up for the third time and get *forvaring*. Absolutely. (Isak, Norway)

Now, I've let society down, I've let myself down, the victims, all these girls. Twice, that's enough. (Sven, Norway)



United States of America

Too harsh

When I was a juvenile, I was locked up and I was put in a cell in [State]...During that eight months I was going crazy. I had nothing to read, no one to talk to, I felt angry, I felt helpless, I felt like I was going crazy. I was really angry at my mother...They put me in this cell. I climbed the wall and escaped and raped a woman the next day. (Brent, North America)

Later in the interview (when asked about a turning point in his life) he again described his time in solitary:

The time in the cell changed me for the bad. I was a hyper 16-year-old with no books to read, no knowledge of when I'm going to get out. You just set me up to hurt and kill people or to hate people. It should have never happened. (Brent, North America)



What became the main problem for me was that my conviction didn't really have any consequences. No one really notices two months in prison and [people] kind of [think] "that's nothing," y'know? And it wasn't a big deal in the media, and it was kind of swept under the rug. (William, Norway)

For me, having two convictions, and for others as well, I think that maybe if I had gotten help right away and gotten someone to talk to right away, then maybe the other things [more recent offending] wouldn't have happened. I really think so. Because the experience I've had with the psychologist [here] ... it has woken me up, y'know? And I think it would be better to get that earlier. Um, and I think one could have managed to stop it already back then. (Richard, Norway)



United States of America

No way out (of treatment)

I don't want to stir it up anymore, you know? In group we've talked about different parts of our lives and stuff, and it's like, well, jeez doesn't anybody want to move on? I mean all this bad stuff, don't you want to put it behind ya? But [the group facilitator] doesn't think that we should, we should bring it up and keep bringing it up. I don't like doing that, but I have to. (Rupert, North America)

When I was in [prison], y'know, they beat you like a dead horse. Same bullshit over and over and over, um... It puts like a dent in your head: never, ever, ever, ever, ever again.
(Giovanni, North America)



Norway

No way in (to treatment)

It gave me nothing. It was like talking to my dad. I can't really remember us talking much about my problems. But that was probably also about me being good at hiding them. And he, the treatment provider, wasn't able to see it. And maybe he should have been tougher in terms of challenging me, y'know? (Lukas, Norway)

I sent an inquiry to see the nurse at the open prison and I got in there and I explained that I had been in therapy [prior to imprisonment] but that my psychologist had quit and I asked to be referred to [the same therapy/treatment centre] or something similar. And I was told that, first of all, [the nurse] said that it was too short a sentence, and it wasn't serious enough to qualify for that, but I also got the impression that getting help was very difficult.

(William, Norway)



United States of America

Too many hoops

I had to go to the police station and then parole the next day and register as a level 3. I went to parole first and they said, “you have to go to police first” and they said, “no, go there first.” I felt like they were just looking for a way to catch me. (Rudy, North America)

[In 1991] I have to pay \$120 a month to a parole officer. I have to pay \$240 for a therapist. So I’m paying \$360 a month upfront, just to be out! Never mind the mortgage payments, the car payments, the medical fees for [daughter] ... (Marshall, North America)

All the barriers that they put in front of you, you’re designed to fail. (Samuel, North America)

The PO’s job is to put you back in jail. (Dean, North America)



Norway

No Safety Net

I should at least have had someone, at least someone professional to talk to. Because there wasn't any. Of course, I applied to the municipality and here and there, but it wasn't considered serious enough and [they said] I wasn't ill and I wasn't this and that. Of course, it affected me...Like I've said, I have applied for treatment and not gotten any. And I guess I've been a bit annoyed and disappointed by that... Even though what I've done has been tragic it was really a cry for help, including the last time. And I didn't get any help when I was out. I got no treatment. I had no one to talk to. (Sven, Norway)



IMPLICATIONS

Is it possible to strike a balance?

Quaternary Prevention (first, do no harm)



Kvartærforebygging





Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Child Abuse & Neglect

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/chiabuneg



First, do no harm: Critically revisiting contemporary approaches to child sexual abuse prevention

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Opposite ends of the penological continuum...



“Too Much, Too Little, Too Late:” Exploring the Role of the Criminal Justice System Within the Narratives of Men Convicted of Sexual Recidivism in Norway and North America

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Dagens tema

- **(Endelig) akseptert artikkel**

“Too much, too little, too late:” Exploring the role of the criminal justice system within the narratives of men convicted of sexual recidivism in Norway and North America



Sexual Offending: Theory, Research, and Prevention

(Sandbukt, I. J. & Harris, D. A.)



- **Kvartærforebygging (quaternary prevention)**

THANK YOU

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