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Section of public health

MASTER THESIS

«Workplace social capital» - A qualitative study of social capital among prison officers

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PREFACE

Initially, I want to say thank you to those people who have helped me with this project so that it was possible for me to carry out the research process. A big thank you to my supervisor Katie V. Powell for very helpful and constructive feedback throughout the study period. I have appreciated our good conversations and the things you have thought me about conducting and writing a research-project.

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Thanks to my family and friends who have supported me with encouragement, good advice and kind words; your support have made it easier to proceed with the writing and thereby the further development of this project.

Hamar,

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ABSTRACT

Title: “Workplace Social capital” – A qualitative study of social capital among prison officers.

Background: The background for the project was a personal wish to develop a deeper understanding of the factors of inter-human relations that can provide benefits to the public health, with a specific focus on occupational health.

Aim: This project aims to explore how social capital might function to prevent stress in the work environment of prison officers. This study will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges that prison officers face in their daily work. It seeks to explore the triggering elements of stress and stressors potentially health damaging, coping –mechanisms and resources that employees possess, and strategies being used to decrease stress-levels in the workplace.

Theory: The concept of social capital has informed the study in terms of an active use of its underlying complex theories that treats the public health issue discussed, and following brought forward implications to the research question. In this study, Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam and Portes are the central theorists. Their definitions of the concept provides the basis for interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon that seeks exploration. Social capital is the amount of resources that inheres within a group or network that members can actively use, exchange and benefit from.

Method: The method is based on qualitative research, conducted as semi-structured interviews with eight prison officers currently working at an open prison. The Phenomenological hermeneutics is the overall research strategy, where the researcher has explored the participants’ experiences of stress and coping-mechanisms in a work environmental context of prison officers. The analysis follows Giorgi’s principles of Systematic Text condensation (STC), which is modified by K. Malterud.

Results/ conclusion: Social capital has a stress-preventive effect in prison officers in terms of a common set of shared values and norms, trust, and reciprocal relationships with colleagues in the prison workplace. These factors underpins the social support, which represents a significant role towards the social cohesion that is present within the daily work and work environment of prison officers. It makes them better equipped to deal with the challenging work tasks, and prevent effects from work environmental stressors. Social capital based on reciprocal relationships and support from the inmates are additional sources to prevent stress in employees at the prison facility.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE HEALTH OF CORRECTIONAL WORKERS

Correctional facility employees are potentially exposed to a large number of on the job risk factors because they house a population against their will, with the mission of contributing to public safety (Bennett, Crewe & Wahidin, 2008). The job they do is characterized by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control (Bennett et al, 2008; Finney et. al, 2013). The risk factors for development of health threatening conditions associated with this profession relate to exposures to demanding social contacts and work overload. Violence and threats from prisoners (Hammerlin & Strand, 2006; Hammerlin & Rokkan, 2010) and demanding social contacts with prisoners, co-workers and supervisors are contributors to stress and burnout (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2001; Finney et al, 2013), stemming from what might be considered individual or organizational stressors (Finney et al, 2013) in prison staff.

It has become evident that both male and female prisoners have far more frequent mental health problems than the general population (Friestad & Skog Hansen, 2004; Correctional Services, 2015). This makes the work of prison officers more demanding, in terms of having to take care of prisoners that are in need of extensive medical and psychiatric treatment. These prisoners also have a large potential to undertake violent and disruptive behavior because of their mental illness. Studies have shown that many inmates have drug problems. In the Living Study (2004) among prisoners, it emerges that among 260 inmates, at 37 of the country's prisons, as many as 60 percent of them had a substance abuse problem at the inauguration (Friestad & Skog Hansen, 2004). Very often, there is a need of acute psychiatric treatment of these prisoners, but the access to treatment facilities in psychiatric hospitals is often limited (Helmets, 2009; Correctional Services, 2015). This can have repercussions in terms of that prison officers get a greater responsibility to take care of mentally ill prisoners within the prison environment.

Through international and national research, it is a known phenomenon that prison officers experience exceptionally high levels of occupational stress (Hammerlin & Strand 2006;

Finney et al, 2013; Akbari, Akbari, Farasati & Mahaki, 2014). Psychosocial conditions in the workplace - like stress, or longtime job strain, have been repeatedly associated with a range of outcomes, most notably coronary heart diseases, musculoskeletal disorders and poor mental health (Marmot & Wilkinson, 2006; Kivimäki et al, 2006; Sapp, Kawachi, Sorensen, LaMontagne & Subramanian, 2010). Work-related stress may also indirectly influence the risk of developing cardiovascular disease by increasing unhealthy behaviors that increase the risk of developing Type II diabetes (Krajnak, 2014). This study is about locating how prison staff mobilizes personal and collective resources - in the form of social capital - to cope with stressors at work (in the prison setting).

Within the general working population, it is found that long-term stress and burnout in the workforce can result in a negative overall mood, physical ill health, job dissatisfaction and increased substance abuse (Finney et al, 2013). Burnout is viewed as a work-related chronic stress syndrome made up of exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of professional efficacy (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). These conditions do not only have a potential to cause severe health damage in individuals, but may also lead consequences at a societal level:

Occupational stress can result in a decrease in organizational commitment and avoidance behaviors at work, such as absenteeism and sick day use. In addition, burnout has proven to cause lower productivity and ineffectiveness at work among prison staff (Finney et. al, 2013).

Long-term sickness absence represents a major health and economic problem in Norway. Psychiatric disorders are the second most frequent diagnoses for sickness absence and disability pensions after musculoskeletal disorders. Return to work after a sickness absence with a psychiatric diagnosis generally takes more time than sickness absence following physical problems (The Norwegian Institute of Public health [NIPH], 2010; Foss et al, 2010).

According to The State Institute of Occupational Health [STAMI] (2014), it is documented that violence and the threat of violence has the largest impact in relation to sickness absence within the country as compared with any other factor. Health and social workers are the group of people who are reported to be most affected by these kinds of exposures, and they are estimated to have 70% higher risk for getting absent from work (STAMI, 2014; The Labor and Welfare Directory [NAV], 2014). Working shifts has also been associated with negative health effects; it impairs job performance and disrupts sleep (Waage, Pallesen & Bjorvatn, 2007). The question is if these conditions among health workers are similar to the work condition of prison staff in Norway today. If so, then how do they cope with these issues?

1.2 THE ROLE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN PREVENTING STRESS

The section above presented the issues of stress in correctional workers and how prison -work environmental conditions related to prison working, influence health. This section will provide some information about the relevance of public health in creating healthy workplace settings.

Among other tasks, public health work concerns creating safer workplaces (Worlds Health Organization [WHO], 2015). Work is an important factor influencing health, since workers represent half the world's population (Torp & Vinje, 2014), and workforce well-being is closely linked to enterprise and national productivity, and thereby consequently the whole population's well-being. The Norwegian Health and Care services Department has published the Public Health Report (2013) which contains a proposal for strategies to promote better public health. Employment in itself, and a good working environment, has the effect of being health promoting to most people; the workplace provides both challenges and create opportunities for personal development and friendship (Health – and Care Services Department, 2013). For many people, work is the main source of feedback on behavior and the development of personal identity. “The work environment and work content are important for emotion, self-confidence and identity, and contributes to a sense of community, belonging and meaning in life” (Health – and Care Services Department, 2013, p.105)

The public health work is concerned with the population's health, the total system, and not only the eradication of one particular disease. It operates with both sickness absence prevention, and promoting strategies for better workplace health (WHO, 2015). Health is defined in different ways. The most common definition reads as following:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2015).

If measures like self-esteem and work engagement exhibit high levels within a workplace, it is considered as beneficial towards employee health (Torp & Vinje, 2014). This opens up for a need to explore the qualitative aspects of the employees' job satisfaction. The principles of the Ottawa Charter support the idea of a broader focus on positive health measures, and together with the Luxembourg Declaration it reflects a holistic view on health; stating that health is a resource for everyday life and a positive concept emphasizing physical, social and personal resources (Luxembourg Declaration on workplace Health Promotion, 2005; WHO, 2015).

Salutogenesis embraces the need, stated in the Ottawa Charter, to focus on people's resources and capacity to create health (in a more therapeutic sense), alongside focusing on preventing disease and accidents, which until now has tended to be the main focus in occupational health work and research (Torp & Vinje, 2014). This project will focus on both views: The positive health promoting factors of the work environment and the prevention from stress. It seeks to explore the positive measures of health promoting factors that lie within the social relations between colleagues in a workplace, and how they can be used to prevent stress from occurring.

1.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND WORKPLACE HEALTH

Since the 1990's there has been an increase in research and theory -development of social capital in relation to areas of economy, the assistance to developing countries, research on civil society and public health (Halpern, 2005). Svendsen (2006) has applied social capital in the explanation to why the Nordic countries have a high competitiveness despite a large public sector and high taxation (referenced in Kristensen, Hasle & Pejtersen, 2008).

Only a minor amount of focus has been on the role of social capital in the work environment, and the psychological factors of the work environment in particular (Kristensen et al, 2008; Endresen & Moe, 2010; Endresen & Testad, 2012). This is further enhanced by the last years' stress debate, which has largely come to an act on stress as an individual problem (Kristensen et al, 2008).

Some studies show that resources embedded in social relationships are major sources of economic value to firms and individuals alike (Appelbaum, Batt & Leana, 2003; Kristensen et al, 2008; Kristensen, 2010). A work-culture where workers share their knowledge and contribute to collective good, human resource practices such as group goals and incentive pay have built trust, commitment and common identity among the workforce (Appelbaum et al, 2003). Kristensen (2010) found connections between work environment and productivity, where social capital e.g. lessen exclusion from the workforce, lessen sickness absence, decrease stress, sleep problems, burnout and depressive disorders, and prevents illness and costs in relation to musculoskeletal diseases.

2. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The aim of the study is to develop a deeper understanding of what employees in a work - environment experience as valuable social supporting factors regarding their own health. The aim is to identify on the factors that improve health and keeps people healthy, rather than focusing on pathogenic factors.

My focus in this research project is on social capital in the workplace, and how it can help employees be better equipped to cope with challenges and stressful situations at work. The field I have conducted research on is the correctional services, prison officers specifically, - a vulnerable group employees, handling challenging tasks in their jobs - potentially exposed to different health threatening impacts every day. I want to look more closely into exactly what makes prison officers capable of cope with their challenging tasks, mentally and physically, and the ways in which workplace social capital might contribute to this, by creating a supporting and healthy work environment.

The research question is:

How might social capital in the work environment prevent work- related stress?

2.1 THE POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

The interest for the topic stem from a Labour Inspection Authority -report about the working environment of prison staff dated back to 2006 about their occupational health, and a need for a closer look at their working conditions (Labor Inspection Authority, 2006). At the same time, I believe my own experiences from working as a nurse in the health care services has lead me to a path thinking that there are ways crossing, where the work of prison staff and the work of nurses to some extent hold some certain similarities. Both professions working towards creating better public health, when helping people recover from physical or mental illness, and become healthy citizens or law-abiding members of society.

The study is accomplished in the form of qualitative interview-study with a group of prison officers who are employed at a low-security prison, i.e. "open prison". (Prisons with a lower security level has fewer physical security-routines than high security prisons, but it usually has fence around the prison perimeter, and inmates are not allowed to leave the area). I have looked closely at how the employees themselves experience stress-filled situations as harmful to their health, and how they use their relations to colleagues to be able to solve these situations. The execution of the project is led by a sociological interpretive method. It seeks to obtain answers to the research question throughout a sociological perspective, and hence it serves as a purely theoretical analysis of the collected data. The properties of social capital are introduced and explained more thoroughly in the theory chapter of this project, following; it has the function of being the main analytical tool for interpreting and discussing the data material.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

International and national literature and research on prison staff in general appears to be limited, as most research until now tended to focus more on prisoners rather than prison staff (Bennett et al, 2008). The existing literature in the field of correctional service work environment, however, consists of some previous research articles, and some recent reports (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Hammerlin & Kristoffersen, 2001; Hammerlin & Strand 2006; Hammerlin & Rokkan, 2010). Additionally, there are some recent articles directly related to the outcome of stress both more generally in prison staff (Akbari et al, 2014) and in prison officers specifically (Finney et al, 2013). There is seemingly no existing literature addressing social capital related to this profession.

The work of prison staff is being of high risk when it comes to adverse health impacts. An apparently growing problem of violence and threats, extensive use of temporary workers, unskilled personnel, and high sickness absence, characterizes the situations, causing a negative health impact. The underlying causes are complex, among others it concerns; the lack of atonement places, limited access to resources and an increased proportion of mentally ill prisoners (The Labor Inspection Authority, 2006; Correctional Services, 2015). These are all factors that has been associated with having an influence on the health of prison officers by increasing stress levels (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Hammerlin & Strand 2006; Hammerlin & Rokkan, 2010).

Former research conducted in the field of social capital has shown that workplaces characterized by high levels of social capital correspond with good employee health (Hasle & Møller 2005; Kristensen, Hasle & Pejtersen, 2008; Kristensen, 2010). It is found that the health effects of social capital lies within features of social structure, such as levels of interpersonal trust and norms of reciprocity and mutual aid, which act as resources for individuals and facilitate collective action (Kouvonen et al, 2006; Sapp et al, 2010; Oksanen et al, 2011). New sources of social capital are likely to be found in settings where people spend most of their time, as in the workplace (Kouvonen et al, 2006). These are good reasons why social capital in workplaces is worth studying.

There are many challenging and demanding work tasks that prison officers face every day. The challenges presented here, are the ones that are found to be most relevant for this study.

The social relationships within the prison, and the relationships with the inmates, are perceived as health threatening. Prison officers who have frequent contact with inmates experience a high degree of mental workload (Kristoffersen & Hammerlin 2001). It is also found that the confrontations with inmates in the form of threats of violence are being experienced as very stressful (Hammerlin & Kristoffersen 2001; Hammerlin & Strand 2006; Hammerlin & Rokkan, 2010) and is related to burnout. The Norwegian studies reveal that many prison officers experience various forms of late effects when exposed to violence and threats, and the condition is prolonged for some. Examples of such late effects are anxiety, insecurity, discomfort, (persistent) stress and sleep deprivation. These reports also show that the colleague support is very important in addition to the “debriefing”.¹ Some prison officers additionally clarify the need of professional help and support (Hammerlin & Strand, 2006).

Prison officers have an intense and emotionally demanding relationship with inmates, within very rigid frames. This can be characterized as a structural conflict, since the role of prison officers are defined as both clearly influenced by rule enforcement and of a relational character. Since the work of prison officers seeks to create good relationships based on cooperation with the inmates, while keeping them locked up in a confined area, the relationship interest is contradictory and can create conflicts. These demands for role performance has led to an even more demanding relationship, especially since prison officers now, to a greater extent than previously, must take care of an increasing proportion of inmates with substance abuse and/or psychiatric problems (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Correctional Services, 2015).

The large drug abuse among prisoners correspond with symptoms of poor health for prison officers (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). The consequence of this leads to increasingly higher absence from work and low job satisfaction. A significant relationship between intensity of the relationship between prison officers and inmates and burnout, has also been found. It is important for prison officers’ experience of stress and satisfaction that they get something in return of the investments placed in the relationship with the prisoners. Positive experiences, in terms of positive behavior and recognition for how the officer performs their work, may help increase the well-being and reduce stress. If the officer receives very little in return for relating to prisoners, the chances of burnout can increase (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000).

¹ A conversation with management and all the prison officers involved, when an incidence of exposure to inmate violently behavior or a perceived threatening situation has taken place.

High workload has increased in recent years, due to economical cuts, and has thus resulted in a reduced number of prison jobs. A study of 15 Australian prison officers pointed out that those who experienced high job demands, reported high dissatisfaction with the job. Negative effects was associated with low control and lack of social support. High demands, little control and lack of social support, presents a special risk for prison health and wellness (Schaufeli & Peeters 2000). Sørensen (2007) found in his qualitative interview –study among prison officers that social support can reduce some types of stressors in a high security prison in Norway, in terms of affective and comradely support or co-worker solidarity.

There are individual differences in what causes stress in a person and what outcomes the acquired condition may have. It is suggested that stress and burnout stem from a combination of individual risk factors and organizational stressors (Finney et al, 2013). Together, this creates mental and physical illness in employees. The job stress can also be the result of an imbalance between the demands placed on individuals and their ability to cope, or an imbalance between employees' efforts on the job and the subsequent rewards they receive. There are Danish studies, one quantitative and one qualitative study, examining the concept of social capital in work contexts (Hasle & Møller 2005; Kristensen et al, 2008). The Danish qualitative study looks at the connection between social capital in slaughterhouses and work environment and sickness absence. They found that the development of trust between managers and workers have created the basis for a common development of both production and working- environment. This has been proven to result in fewer strikes and lower sickness related absence, and lower staff turnover (Hasle & Møller, 2005).

It is found that collegiality and group loyalty among employees is less good in prisons (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000), since the profession is characterized by low cohesion. The reason for this may be that prison officials take individual responsibility rather than group responsibility, which promotes an individualistic culture. In such a culture asking for help related to job performance it is seen as a weakness. The poor relationship between prison and management is a serious problem since feedback and support from superiors is important to perform a good job in a profession that entails role conflicts (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000, Finney et al, 2013). Inadequate management and poor communication between these groups can lead to stress for prison officers.

Empirical support is provided for looking at health problems of employees in terms of a psychosocial character generally, and stress-related disorders in a work context especially, as a relational rather than individual challenge.

Kristensen et al. (2008) studied the psychological work environment at five industrial enterprises, which used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to uncover social capital in the form of trust, justice and ability to cooperate. Social capital - levels (as a collective property) occurs in enterprises where there is stability and continuity within the management. Enterprises characterized by several replacements of leaders, staff reductions and little trust in management have a low amount of social capital. This resulted in poorer self-rated health, lower levels of mental well-being/ vitality in workers, and a higher amount of somatic and cognitive stress. Low job satisfaction, low management quality and predictability characterized two of the businesses with low social capital. Involvement in the work place and meaning in the work went in the same direction, but not as pronounced. The employees of these two companies also showed poorer self-rated health, lower mental health, vitality, and higher rates of physical and cognitive stress (no significant differences between gender and age) (Kristensen et. al, 2008).

The same three separate dimensions, ability to cooperate, trust and justice are also found in a Norwegian study of social capital, and stress-related disorders for employees of nursing home sector (Endresen & Testad, 2012). The vertical relationship (leader-employee) of this study is closely related to the occurrence of stress-related disorders among nursing staff. Accordingly, vertical justice emerges as the strongest predictor. The findings in this study stand out from others, in ways of not supporting the assumption that trust and cooperation -ability are strongly related to stress-disorders.

These studies also imply that building relations vertically within organizations can work as a buffer against stress among employees. Better cooperation, based on higher degree of vertical trust and justice, seems to reduce levels of stress in an organization by improving the working environment significantly. In turn, this could better the potential for achievement of the organization's core tasks (Endresen & Testad, 2012). Workplace social capital is found to decrease mortality risk (Oksanen et. al, 2011), and the perceptions of social capital at work does not only depend on the perceptions of an individual, but also reflects the external working conditions and shares perceptions of workplace.

The results from both earlier and recent American studies indicates that the organizational structure and climate of correctional institutions has the most consistent relationship with correctional officers' job stress and burnout. The organizational structure of corrections and, consequently, the hierarchical relationship between management and staff can cause stress and job dissatisfaction (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Finney et. al, 2013). There is talk about

unclear goals and policies, lack of decision-making ability, lack of support from the organization and lack of organizational justice working as stressors to correctional officers.

Different types of correctional employees can have varying levels of job stress and burnout. They are exposed to different organizational stressors within the correctional facility. There are found differences between correctional officers and other correctional employees on measures of role strain, perception of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Finney et al, 2013). Another earlier study have asserted organizational stressors of correctional officers' being a result from variations of type of facilities rather than type of staff (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000).

4. THEORY

This chapter will outline the theory used in this study; how it might be applicable to discuss in relation to the prison environmental context. First, the concept of social capital is introduced, its relevance for the social phenomenon being studied, followed by a presentation of the underlying concepts as considered relevant to bring out information that can inform the study and answer the research question.

All human beings are social creatures. Throughout the ages, people have been accustomed to doing things together. *“They have shared with each other, eaten, hunted, brought up their children and defended themselves together. Keeping together has been necessary for survival”* (Bø & Schiefloe, 2007, p.13). According to this, a community characterized by collective social cohesion seems to be quite elementary for human existence.

To date, the most common approach to define social capital in research on population health has been the social cohesion perspective, i.e., social capital conceptualized as an attribute of a collective (e.g., neighborhood, workplaces, schools). This represents the contextual influence on individual health. In contrast, the “network” theory of social capital defines the concept in terms of resources embedded within an individual’s social networks, regarded as a property of individuals (Murayama, Fujiwara & Kawachi, 2012).

The background for this project is the thought of unity in the workplace as depending on human resources that stems from social cohesion, through the workplace social context. It is about the security, protection and social support that employees potentially can exchange, and about resources developed and maintained by human relations in a workplace. In the presence of others, we unite physically, psychologically, socially and culturally in various forms of reciprocity (Bø og Schiefloe, 2007).

Social capital is a generic term for human social resources that lies within already existing and newly created relationships (Bø & Schiefloe, 2007). To cope with the stressors that prison workers are potentially exposed to in their daily work, as presented in the introduction, there are theories in existing literature about how employees can take use of their social resources to avoid that these stressors brings harm to their health. The theory on social capital, presented in the next sections.

4.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is the main analytical tool in this project. The research question seeks to find information on how social capital that exists among employees in the prison system improve the work environment and employee health. Social capital has continuously been redefined and interpreted in different ways, but perhaps not gained so much attention as considered valuable in a workplace setting. It has turned into a complex domain where its many diverse ways of interpretation influence understanding and reflection on the phenomenon of collective action; at the societal level, as well as individual level; the human interactions in smaller groups (Macinko & Starfield, 2001). It is not clear who developed the first explicit definition of social capital, but many theorists have occupied themselves by defining the term and some of them, and their refinements, I will present in this chapter. Here is one definition adopted by two Norwegian authors, of relatively recent date: “*Social capital is the resources that are rooted in relationships between individuals*” (Bø & Schiefloe, 2007, p.162).

Those considered standing for the initial original development of the concept are the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the American sociologist James Coleman. With some significant variations, both have focused on the benefits accruing to individuals or small groups (families) by virtue of their ties with others. Bourdieu sees the concept as instrumental, and claims that people intentionally build their relations for the benefits that they will bring later on. He dealt with the interaction between money capital, social capital and cultural capital: Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights. Cultural capital, defined as the formal educational credentials that an individual possesses, and the more intangible complex of values and knowledge of cultural forms in his or her demeanor. Social capital, which is made up of obligations (“connections”), which is convertible (in certain conditions) into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title nobility (Bourdieu, 1986).

Coleman paid particular attention to the first usage of the term, that is, a source of social control and norms. For Coleman, community ties were important for the benefits they yielded to individuals. Later on, the concept was exported into other disciplines, primarily political science, where social became an attribute to the community itself.

The American political scientist Robert D. Putnam used the term to speak of a “stock” of social capital. possessed by cities and even nations and the consequent structural effects on

their development. Bringing a new meaning to the concept from its benefits accrued to individuals in sense of “civicness” and collectivity as a whole, in the forms of reduced crime rates, lower official corruption, and better governance.

The same strong ties that bring benefits to members of a group commonly enable it to bar others from access and exclude outsiders. The levels of social control is strong and can restrict personal freedom (Portes, 1998) because of its demands for conformity.

The next section will explain how social capital is relevant to the occupational health of prison officers, and how it can be detected and recognized, in a work environment.

4.2 CAPITALIZATION

Bourdieu defines social capital as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986, p.248).

To understand the meanings of social capital and its applicability in practical procedure, it is important to look at the means to integrate common relational and structural influences on workplace outcomes, and individual behavior (Coleman, 1988a; Portes 1998). The various definitions of social capital embraces a large complexity. This complexity is expressed through some core components, described below.

The prison officers constitute a group of employees, where each individual might represent different backgrounds, education, seniority and other personal traits. From being a member of a group or network in the workplace, people can actively exchange and benefit from their mutual social relations. Investment categories may be driven either by instrumental or expressive purposes or by a combination of both (Milardo, Helms, Widmer & Marks, 2014). Sentiments (like trust), services (e.g. aid, attention, encouragement, care and help), and materials (good or money) are all investments that are the initial or ongoing inputs of the social capitalization process. The prison officers are also likely to represent a certain typology that works as mutual reinforcing in terms of shared values and relationships of reciprocity and obligations (Putnam, 2000) which can enhance health and social benefits. It is important to

mention that relationships are not always rational nor always governed by the anticipation of direct benefit, as when people who not necessarily seek together, work together.

Social interaction is the technical way of socializing with people. Portes (1998, p. 6) notes that social capital “stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures.” The investments (named above) demand social contact, and social contact with colleagues may lead an exchange of information, where the employees works as “information channels” (Coleman, 1988a) to one another. Exchange of information may transmit social support in terms of prison officers interacting on how to solve different work tasks.

I will refer back to Bourdieu’s definition of social capital, and the different other forms in which he operates on social capital; cultural and economic social capital: The capitalization of workplace social capital involves collegial investments in social relations with expected “returns”. The structural social capital refers to people’s values and perceptions (Kawachi et al, 2008). The purpose of this project is to measure individual social capital, to find out how the collectivistic factors of social capital might have shaped their sense of well-being in the workplace and influenced their health. The measurement do not involve quantifiable data, but rather seeks subjective information about the existence of social capital in the prison work environment.

The next sections will give short descriptions to each underlying concept of social capital that literature and research suggests having the ability to improve health.

4.2.1 Social support

Social support has been defined as “resources provided by other persons”. It has also been seen as; “information leading the subject to believe he is cared for and loved, is esteemed and valued and belongs to a social network of communication and mutual obligation” (Stansfeld & Marmot, 2002). The social support can work stress-preventive in both mental and physical terms, as enabling the co-workers to exchange information verbally (supportive communication) – using so-called information channels (Coleman, 1988a) - and by helping each other with practical tasks in the prison department.

Social support is believed to promote wellbeing through its ability to buffer stress – either by positively affecting the individuals’ appraisals of their ability to cope with stressful situations, or by directly supplying the resources required to deal with the stressful perturbation (Cohen, Underwood & Gottlieb, 2000; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001; Kawachi, Subramanian & Kim, 2008).

4.2.2 Honesty and trust

The trustworthiness of a group considers; one collective property possessed by the group, a resource that facilitates collective action, and hence a valid measure of social cohesion (Kawachi et al, 2008). Trustworthiness among prison officers, not simply trust, is the key ingredient, according to Putnam (2000). A group within which there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust, is able to accomplish much more than a comparable group without these factors (Coleman, 1988).

Kristensen et al (2008) acknowledges a form of vulnerability in trust relationships. If trust is mutual, and the receiver shows trustworthiness, then the trust will increase. Trust in management within the workplace acts as a buffer towards high quantitative requirements on one hand, and stress and burnout on the other (Harvey, Kelloway & Duncan-Leiper, 2003; Kristensen et al, 2008). At this matter, the social capital relies on two components within social structures: trustworthiness of social environment, which means that obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held. Individuals in social structures with high levels of obligations outstanding at any time have more social capital on which they can draw (Coleman, 1988).

Dense networks of social exchange bolster an effective norm of generalized reciprocity (Putman, 2000). If two would-be collaborators are members of a tightly knit community, they are likely to encounter one another in the future. According to this, it could be likely to predict that a high level of density can reinforce cooperation among colleagues.

4.2.3 Reciprocity and norms

The touchstone of social capital is according to Putnam (2000) the principle of generalized reciprocity. Reciprocity emphasizes that employees act out of a principles to render services to each other (Putnam, 1993; Putnam, 2000; Kawachi et al, 2008), which seems to be an important trait in a job characterized by demanding social contacts and heavy workloads. Unlike trust, it implies a two-way relationship, and can be measured by asking about norms or behaviors (Kawachi et al, 2008).

Putnam claims that the norms of generalized reciprocity is so fundamental to civilized life that all prominent moral codes contain some equivalent of the “Golden Rule”. He describes how American citizens during the early nineteenth century, resisted taking advantage of each other, and instead were looking after their neighbors. As he points out, this was not a result from people obeying some impossibly idealistic rule of selflessness, but rather because they pursued “self-interest rightly understood”. Meaning: at the point when generalized reciprocity becomes hard to distinguish from altruism and difficult to cast as self-interest. Accordingly, successful transaction stream may serve to confirm and strengthen relations between the co-workers in a prison (Bø & Schiefloe, 2007).

5. METHOD

The aim of this chapter is to guide the reader through the steps of the research process. First, there will be a presentation of the chosen research design, the epistemological position, and the relevance and position of theory in the research. Next, the ethical consideration made throughout the whole research process will be outlined, followed by reflections on the roles as a researcher. The interview process outlines how the interviews were conducted, it provides information about the recruitment and selection of informants, and finally, the steps of the analysis process is described.

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN, EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE RELEVANCE OF THEORY

A research design is a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of data (Bryman, 2012). The research strategy in this project is based on a qualitative research design, because it is interpretive in its methods of both collecting data and the processing of data, being more subjective in its research nature (based on peoples thoughts and feelings) more than objective (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). It has an epistemological orientation characterized by interpretivism. Secondly, it has the ontological orientation of constructionism; I present a specific, not a definitive, version of the social world.

I have used interpretivism because it favors more sensitiveness towards the qualities of people and their social institutions. It opposes the positivism's ontological view that there is one reality, external to the mind, and capable of being studied in parts (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The study is of an exploratory character, where I seek profound information about people's experiences from a certain type of profession and the challenges/ demands and coping factors related to them. It is has been emphasized to reach out for a good understanding of each participant's life-worlds by seeing their individual characteristic's uniqueness, together with their social environment, as closely connected to each other.

The study is about eight prison officers, currently working at an open prison facility, and their views on what factors they experience as coping factors towards reducing stress, through their social interactions and relationships with colleagues. The data are collected through interviews with the informants (prison officers). The analysis of the data follows the principles of systematic text condensation (STC), and the sociological theories of social capital are used to interpret the results. The information about the prison officers' perceptions of causes to stress, and their ways of coping with these stressors forms the basis for an interpretation of the social world, where human actions, and the understanding of human behavior, underpins the hermeneutical approach (Bryman, 2012).

This project is inspired by phenomenology and hermeneutics. The hermeneutical phenomenology is based on the researcher's own pre-understanding and interpretation of the world, which differs from the phenomenological reduction principle, where the researcher's pre-understanding of the phenomenon to be studied is set aside (Granskär & Höglund-Nielsen, 2012), and the human (informants') experiences are more crucial (Malterud, 2013).

The hermeneutical methodological approach has helped me to understand participants' social worlds based on my own experienced 'truths' about the social world and the people in it. My pre-understanding of the actual phenomenon explored, have affected the understanding and interpretations on human behavior (Bryman, 2012), and the outcome of research. By the hermeneutical approach, I have applied already acquired theoretical knowledge, and life experience as a human being in the interpretation of the social world of informants.

Phenomenology is a form of methodology typically carried out in interpretive inquiry because it includes an ideal for coming to understand the lived experiences of the researched (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). To avoid too much of the researcher's influence on the material, the phenomenological approach has been helpful in the analysis in terms of an active use of "bracketing", where I set the pre-understandings aside as processing data (Bryman, 2012; Malterud, 2013). It grants the researcher a more neutral position, making 'new' information easier captured. This method was also current as conducting the interviews. To access the participants' life-worlds; seeking to see the social world through their eyes, by emphasizing each participant's unique experiences empathically.

In research, the researcher's prior knowledge will influence the development of new knowledge, as explained through this statement: "The interpretivist epistemology seek out subjective beliefs that are co-created between the researcher and the researched, where the

knower and known are interactive, inseparable” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.37; 2013). Ferrier centers the human “ego” as the one feature present in all our knowledge. It is the common center which is at all times known, and in which our all cognitions, however diverse, are known as uniting and agreeing (Ferrier, 1856). “Along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognizance of itself” (Ferrier, 1856, p75).

The interpretivistic view entails that the (pre)understandings and interpretations is to me as the researcher, a source of influence on perceptions about what knowledge is, which will affect this study as having only one researcher conducting the research solely. The interpretations I have made alone in this project will reflect only one person’s views, instead of the views of several people or a group. A phenomenon that relates to constructionism; how people “build knowledge structures”, meaning that people develop individual psychological methods for understanding the world (Papert & Harel, 1991).

The project follows an inductive approach for theoretical development mainly, but also bears an element of a deductive approach. The already existing theories on social capital can be tested (confirmed or rejected) and/ or supplied with new knowledge (Bryman, 2012). The theories on social capital played a fundamental role in the generation and analysis of data in this study, as the interview-guide was the basis for questions of the interviews (made by the researcher), and the research question seeks knowledge hence this. The empirical data is interpreted in light of the theoretical framework alongside the researcher’s pre-understanding in qualitative methods, according to Malterud, 2013. If other theories were applied in the interpretation, it is likely to have revealed other findings.

As consistently ethical principles in my study, I have used Beauchamp and Childress’ Principles of Biomedical Ethics (2001): The autonomy for respecting participants’ choices and decisions, the beneficence to provide benefits to participants, the nonmaleficence to minimize risk of harm, and the justice principle to show moral and respect participants’ rights.

5.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are some core principles of contemporary social research ethics. “No-one should suffer harm as a result of participation in the research” (Denscombe, 2010, p.7). To minimize the

risk of harm, the participants were informed that all personal information given in relation to the project should be held confidential, and that they will remain anonymous. For the purpose of transcription, the interviews were taped by using an audio recorder.

The participants got the information that the interviews would be converted into audio files on a password -secured computer directly after the interviews were taped. According to Denscombe (2010), the researcher will have to make sure that the participants understand the nature of the research and their involvement, and this was done by out -forming a voluntarily consent (Appendix 3), which has been signed by all participants.

“Social researchers will normally need to get prior approval for their investigation from an ethics committee -especially when data are collected directly from people, and involves personal information” (Denscombe, 2010, p.329). – The project was reported to NSD (Norwegian Social Science Data Services) on 23.10.2014 and an approval for the implementation of the research was received 20.11.2014 (see appendix).

A request for the need of an approval from the Regional Ethics Committee (REC) was sent the NSD. -The answer to this request was received 03.12.2014, saying: “The Health Research Law only covers research for the purpose of obtaining information on health and disease, something I can not see is related to your project” (message per e-mail - Adviser, NSD).

All the gathered data both written in papers and of electronic material (on the computer) is going to be deleted by the end of the project period. As requested by the NSD, a confirmation reaffirming that this is accomplished will be handed over by the end of the month June.

5.3 REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE AS A RESEARCHER

The plan was at first to conduct research on Social capital in a work environmental context among health workers, but a change of direction towards the field of Correctional services took place. As the media (TV2 news, 23.11.2014) talked about an ongoing problem with the growing number of mentally ill prisoners, and a lack of personnel resources to take care of their treatment, this became of personal interest to me.

By using the hermeneutic phenomenology, I have let my own pre-understanding influence material. This, I believe, is inevitable in this type of study in which I carry with me

knowledge and experiences from being an employee in a workplace, being a colleague myself, and having a work concerning people with various assistance needs. I have gained work experience as a nurse, and have been employed in the home care nursery for five years. I have used the phenomenology approach to obtain a more neutral position in terms of giving emphasize to participants to be more responsive to participants' views, to achieve credibility and trustworthiness.

Kvale & Brinkman (2012) is warning against the researcher to identify himself too much with the participants of the project in ways that it will influences the outcome of research. This happens if the researcher interprets and emphasizes too strongly the views of the informants. – A way of “getting native”, as an anthropological expression defines this position (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012, p.92). They encourage the researcher to entail a neutral position, something which I have taken note by using the phenomenological approach to the interpretation of the data-material (Malterud, 2013). As the researcher, I was not familiar with neither the prison facility nor the people working there in advance, so the interpersonal relationships that can provoke such appearances was not present in my case.

5.4 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

This section outlines how the interviews were conducted, how the recruitment and sampling were carried out, and describes participant characteristics, before a description of the analysis-process that comes in the next section.

To acquire sufficient knowledge and comprehending the significance of work already done in the field of workplace health of correctional officers and social capital, a literature review on the topic (Hart, 1998) was carried out. This was done to secure that I had the right starting point, and the best conditions for obtaining relevant information from the informants. The designing of the interview-guide (Appendix 1) was additionally a good way of starting to get prepared, and the workshops at school, where practicing to conduct interviews with other students, helped as a good way of preparation. “Extensive training is required to become a highly qualified interviewer” (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012, p.99).

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. This form of interviewing is characterized by an aim to explore the meaning of social and cultural phenomena, the way it

is experienced by those involved in a natural context (Malterud, 2013). This was considered appropriate in relation to the topic of research because it enables the participants to describe their job-related experiences and associations to each question being asked. I used a ready-made list (interview-guide) of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered, as with structured interviews, but with more emphasis on the interviewees to elaborate points of interest, which characterizes the semi-structured interview (Denscombe, 2010).

The interviews were planned to reflect a form of everyday conversation, where the interviewer and the informant exchange knowledge and views to construct new knowledge. It is what Kvale & Brinkman (2012, p. 99) calls; “The interdependence of human interaction and knowledge production”, based on the so-called “everyday knowledge” and the verifiable knowledge. Practically, this meant that the questions outlined in the interview-guide sometimes needed modification through more follow-up questions during the conversations with each participant. This was a way of “getting hand on” more profound information about a question or topic. The issues explored in the interviews will be further discussed in subsection 5.4.3. The contents of the interview guide is described in the next section.

The so-called introductory questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012) was intended to have the effect of letting each participant speak about certain episodes that had taken place, and certain experiences they remembered (Appendix 1). The purpose of asking these questions was to open up the possibility of getting into the participant’s lifeworld, as Malterud (2013) describes as characteristic in phenomenological research. The emphasize was to ask relevant questions, without acquiring too much of the pre-understanding as the researcher.

The interview guide was developed and enhanced as a result from repeated corrections, along with advice from and discussion with the supervisor.

5.4.1 Recruitment and selection

The participants were selected based on purposive sampling and were employees at the current prison. The prison was chosen due to the criterion, not particularly emphasizing an open or closed facility, but that it needed to represent prison officers with direct contact with prisoners in their daily work. The reason for this choice was to have a starting point with reference to the goals of the research; being able to answer the research question (Bryman, 2012).

An application to the managing authority for prisons in Norway needed to be prepared to be able to conduct research in the prison, as it was required by law. The application was sent to the Correctional Services Director of the prison region², before the recruitment could start. Before the application process, both the Health-Safety and Environment supervisor (Nor: HMS-representative)³ of the actual prison and the Human Resource adviser (HR-adviser) at the Correctional Services Directory were contacted to consult how the application and recruitment procedure should be carried out. This was done because as the researcher I was not familiar with how to go forward about the application-process in the prison system, and the staff of the current prison I had contacted to ask for participation wanted me to check with the leaders first, to make sure following the right “guidelines”.

After the application was approved, I could start identifying participants, which was done in cooperation with the prison assistant manager. He contacted me by telephone, and informed that the application was confirmed, and that I could do the research at the open prison facility. We agreed that the assistant manager would gather participants according to whom were interested in participation in the project. The criteria that were set concerned a group of prison officers, both men and women, of different ages, with different seniority. I chose these criteria of participant characteristics because it seemed likely that it would bring variation width in relation to lighting of the research question.

The prison assistant manager gathered the group of participants, something that may have had influence on the final selected group in terms of risk of cohesion, but it was said that those willing to participate was permitted to do so, and of 3 guard leaders and 21 officers, 12 prison officers agreed for their participation.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability form of sampling where the researcher does not sample participants on a random basis, but in a strategic way so that the selected units have relevance to the research question (Bryman, 2012). Since participants are collected on the basis of voluntary consent, this could affect the transferability since they may have an advantage in getting to express their personal opinions, which do not necessarily correspond to the majority's beliefs. The variation breadth of participants' characteristics can contribute to a broader range of informants' views in relation to various topics.

² One of five prison regions within the country.

³ Refers to the person employed within a workplace, who is responsible for the occupational health of the employees.

5.4.2 The participants

To begin with there were 11 participants who agreed their involvement in the project. However, it turned out that three of these participants had to be excluded on the first day of interviewing, because of acute illness/injury and recent sick leave. I received this information at my arrival the first day at the prison, and then the prison inspector (whom I was welcomed by) volunteered to participate for compensation. (Participant characteristics - table 1). As a result, there were six interviews carried out the first day. The second and last day, the last two remaining interviews took place. The prison assistant manager prepared a time –schedule.

The prison assistant manager informed the group about the project and the topics that were to be involved some time before the meetings. They were told that it would be questions about the working environment and job satisfaction, and the prevention of job –related stress. There was one female participant. Of three guard leaders and 21 officers at the prison, four are women with permanent employment (besides female substitutes officials from other departments in periods), which indicates that there are less female employees at the prison as compared with male employees. The criterion for the sample was to have at least one female representative (generally underrepresented) of the group, bringing adequate variation to the group considering gender differences. There are four men at the age 50-59, but there are also four participants at the age 30-49, which represents adequate age variations.

Table 1. Participant characteristics

Age	Job title	Gender	Total
30 – 39 years	Prison Inspector	male	1
	Prison Officer	female	1
	Prison Officer	male	1
40 – 49 years	Prison Officer	male	1
50 – 59 years	Prison Officer	male	4
Total no. participants			8

Qualitative interview-critique often involves questions of transferability (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012), and eight participants is a relatively small number of participants, which can be questioned as being representative and transferable. Non-probability sampling is used with the aim to produce an exploratory sample (Denscombe, 2010) in this study, meaning that the unique experiences and subjective descriptions of participants is emphasized in order to create new knowledge of the actual phenomenon being explored. It is not a representative sample in terms of allowing the researcher to generalize to a population (Krefting, 1990; Bryman, 2012), but it seeks to obtain transferability through “speaking on behalf of others” in the same situation: prison officers at open prison facilities or other professions, like for example health workers and police officers.

5.4.3 The interviews

The interviews took place in one of the visitor rooms of the visit-department at the prison. This was a small section department right next to the prison officers’ staff room, separate from the rest of the prison so it was quiet and enabled us to talk undisturbed. Having the interviews conducted at the prison made it easier for me as the researcher to conduct several interviews consecutively, and it may have had an impact on the sharing of information, in terms of participants feeling relaxed in a familiar (work) environmental context.

Six interviews were conducted the first day. It was very easy to establish contact with each participant. This may be because the interviewer and the interviewees both have experiences through professions of interacting with different people every day, making it easier to establish relations. This made me, as the researcher feeling that the interview process proceeded effectively, not meeting any noteworthy “barriers” in terms of lack of mutual understanding, in any of the conversations. However, some participants shared more information than others did. If any questions were shortly responded, and it seemed necessary to gather more information about a topic, follow-up questions worked as good support for being able to continue the conversations.

The information-sheet (Appendix 2), with information about the content and the topics of the project, was reviewed together with each participant individually before the conversations, to make sure that all the information was properly understood. By providing an informed consent (Appendix 3), I gave participants the information necessary to understand the scope

and nature of the potential risks and benefits in order to make a decision to participate in the project. When evaluating the beneficence of the project further, the risk of harm in participating could be considered as low, as the informants were given the chance of withdrawing from the project at any time without this leading any consequences. Anonymity of both the participants and the prison were considered as ethical practicalization, in order to minimize the risk of harm (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). The thought was to avoid the risk of misuse of information from the project material, by sharing personal or identifiable characteristics in public.

Notably, none of the participants seemed to care about the audio recorder, which was set on the table that was placed between the interviewer and the informant. Each participant was informed that an audio recorder would be used to get the conversation on tape, and that it would be deleted by the end of the project-period. The audio recorder did not seem to preclude that participants spoke. Which might indicate that they felt relaxed and comfortable, as the interviews took place in familiar surroundings.

The interviewer's knowledge about how to create contact and the ability to show empathy can break through a participant's defenses, something that can bring the interviewer into areas of a person's life where he or she is not invited (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012). As a nurse, I am aware that I might be in the position to make people talk about personal matters. People being familiar with my role as a health worker, which is characterized by confidentiality. This did not affect the maintenance of respect for autonomy (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001), that is the ability to retain control over the shared information and being understood. Practically, it means that I allowed people to share information that they felt comfortable to share, to avoid personal disclosure.

To keep the participants on "the right track" I needed to ask leading questions to bring them back to talk about the relevant topics. This was not something I perceived as negative, considering there were challenges to begin with as it took longer time for some prison officers to provide answers that are more detailed. I will remind the reader at this stage that the interviews were also preferred to entail a property closely related to an every-day conversation, to gain access to more profound information (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012). It seemed to me, as the researcher, that the participants who talked the most, gladly shared their information, and the conversations were having the characteristics of mechanisms of creating the basis for a good cooperation relationship, rather than having any harmful effect.

The phenomenological approach asks how it is like to have a certain experience. The truth-value (credibility) assesses the internal validity in qualitative research and is about human experiences the way they are lived by the informants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Krefling 1990). Most participants answered questions that were asked (from the interview-guide or follow-up questions) in ways that made them reflect upon their own answers quite well. I very often got answers like; "...When you say (...), I think of it like this..." and "My understandings on this matter is...but others would have different opinions than me I think, in terms of..." Almost every interview had the tendency of starting with many questions from the researcher (and short participant answers), but then took a turning point, and the interviewed "lead" the conversation by sharing his or her flow of information. The reflexive answers brought forward both each participant's unique experiences and made the common shared experiences clearly visible, which predicts trustworthiness.

5.5 COLLECTION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

This section outlines how the analysis was carried out, following each step of the process. The empirical data is filtered systematically through the whole set of interaction- and processing stages. Transcription process also helps to reshape the material and knowledge (Kvale & Brinkman, 2012; Malterud, 2013).

5.5.1 Data processing

The collected data are based on the information that is given by the informants. This first set of data is the unprocessed material that went through a profound systematic processing. The start of the transcription took place at an early stage, right after the interviews, where the material was reviewed several times. The first set of data represented the basics for the selection of useful material, and from this material, selected text elements with a potential of being knowledge-productive was sorted out (Malterud, 2013). The transcription made it easier to get to know the material well, and to discover new text-elements, being able to see the contents from a different point of view.

5.5.2 Data analysis

The analysis in this project follows Giorgi's phenomenological principle of Systematic Text Condensation, which is modified by Malterud (2013). This is a descriptive "transverse" analysis, meaning that it summarizes information from all the informants. It has the purpose of developing descriptions and concepts from different phenomenon (Malterud, 2013).

According to Giorgi, the purpose of the phenomenological analysis is to develop knowledge about the informants' experiences and "lifeworld" within a particular field (Malterud, 2013). My pre-understandings of the topics were set aside during the analysis, which was done by only retelling the informants' stories straightforward when transcribing the material. The total of 51 pages of transcription was carefully read through several times to look for new or undiscovered material. I used color pencils to color different parts of the text that contained the same themes or codes. I kept a reflexive attitude towards the personal influence on the material during the whole analysis process. It was done to remain loyal to the retelling and reproduction of participants' experiences and statements, in a way that it precedes the researcher's own interpretations.

The Systematic Text Condensation entails four phases (Malterud, 2013). The first phase is about to get an overall impression and overlook of the material/ data. After the transcription of the interviews, all the pages were read to look for themes that could illuminate the research question. As following the phenomenological approach, the pre-understanding and theoretical framework was set aside at this point in the research process: The theories of Social capital were set aside, and the focus on work environmental stress-bringing factors and the following coping strategies was in the center of attention. This opened up for a possibility to adopt a more neutral position towards the impressions from the material, allowing that participants' voices are better heard. Some of the themes that represented the participant's experiences on stress were for example; "lack of time", "work overload", "demanding/ill prisoners", "threats", "violently behavior", "cooperation", "cohesion" "honesty", "good routines", "doing things in similar ways" and "motivation".

To make these preliminary themes visible, the analysis-process was characterized by actively seeking information that could address possible answers to the research question. The main themes from the interview guide was not emphasized at this stage, as the purpose was to set the researcher's pre-understandings aside.

At the next stage, a systematic review of the material was carried out. Throughout the written text, a systematic selection of the “meaning units” was sorted out: A selection of text that somehow carried the knowledge of one or more of the themes from the first step, reflecting the research question that is going to be answered (Malterud, 2013). When identifying the meaning units, the preliminary topics from the first stage were ongoing held in mind. The labeling of the meaning units in the text is called “coding”. The coding identifies and classifies all the meaning units in the text that somehow relates to the text elements (themes) that were kept from the previous, first stage. I labeled relevant information on printed versions of the transcripts by hand, using color pencils to distinguish between the codes. The coding brought forward new themes and revealed that one theme had several properties (more than one aspect describing the same theme). As an example, the older participants talked about stress in terms of waiting for things to happen, while the younger participants talked more about stress related to specific episodes of violence and threats. New themes emerged at this stage. To establish new codes, all the meaning units which explained a certain topic/theme were reviewed in the text. This form of flexibility is what Malterud (2013) describes as a prerequisite for being able to spot something new, and of catching it in a systematic way. The process of coding is illustrated by examples in table 2, on page 36.

The third step of analysis implies systematic abstraction of meaning units within each of the code groups established in the second step of analysis (Malterud, 2012; Malterud, 2013). At this stage, empirical data were reduced to a decontextualized selection of meaning units sorted as thematic code groups across individual participants. Data were organized and reduced to a few code groups containing meaning units with the capacity to reveal aspects of stress experiences and coping factors. The result (in form of text) from this process was interpreted on the basis of the researcher’s professional perspective and viewpoints, favoring opposing statements from participants, to create room for several interpretations and possible approaches. “Condensates” (artificial quotes) based on participant -statements was used as a tool to bring out the specific content of the individual meaning units to convert them to a more general form. Each condensate predicted the different categories in the coding process.

Table 2. Examples on coding in the analysis process after the principles of Systematic Text Condensation (STC).

Participants' experiences of causes to stress in the work environment				
Theme	Meaning unit	Code	Condensation	Abstraction/Category
Work overload	“When you feel that you never get the work completely done, and that you need to prioritize other things”	- Too much work simultaneously - Feelings of inadequacy - Time pressure	“I feel stressed when there is time pressure and knowing that I leave unfinished business behind”	- Time pressure - Too much work to overcome
Prisoners with violently behavior	“Even though we are many to handle the situation the “blood-pump” beats faster	- Physical and mental health - threatening situation - Feeling exposed, although colleagues present	“I feel stressed when threatening situations occur, and I feel a lack of control”	- Threatening situations - Lack of control
Participants' experiences of collegial support, and the coping-mechanisms to stress				
Theme	Meaning unit	Code	Condensation	Abstraction/Category
Motivation	“What motivates me at work is the colleagues. I go to work to chat with my colleagues, to laugh and have fun. Humor is important”	- Social support from colleagues - Everyday conversations - Encourage each other -Having fun with colleagues	“The relationships I have with my colleagues and the social exchange helps motivate me at work”	- Social relationships / interactions with colleagues
Cooperation	“That everybody trusts that everybody know how to deal with the work tasks they are supposed to perform. To every detail”	- Collegial trust - Relationships of reciprocity - Awareness of colleagues' competence and skills	“The collegial trust and reciprocity is fundamental for being able to perform the job”	- Collegial trust and reciprocity

The final fourth step of the analysis-process of STC represents the “re-contextualization”. It concerns a summary in the form of retellings, and must convey loyalty towards the informants' voices. The condensate texts and chosen statements/ quotes outlines the basis for creating an “analytical text”, for each code group (and sub -group) (Malterud, 2013). This analytical text provides information about selected sides of the research question. The new discoveries and concepts was in the end compared with the original starting point of the raw data material. The abstraction of condensate elements is being used as the basis for development of categories, which is the researcher's way of creating an overview over the main findings that shall be brought up for discussion. Finally, the findings were assessed, when compared to present empirical and theoretical research, in the discussion –chapter.

Giorgi's principle of Systematic text condensation is not a definitive analysis method in qualitative research. Other analysis -strategies being used in phenomenological research is for example the Grounded Theory by Glaser & Strauss (Bryman, 2012). The method implies to code the emerging data as it is collected, so that the researcher's interpretations of data shapes his or hers emergent codes. The approach is not a participant-neutral (biased) approach, so that it is more likely that researcher's findings will depend on what purposely is being looked for. It can be used as a constructionism method of analysis, but the STC is emphasized in this study, to grant more neutrality, by the use of bracketing.

6. FINDINGS

The analysis is based on the informants' experiences of stress and how they use collegial relationships at work to cope with stress-related issues. Their views and descriptions of coping-mechanisms to stress, and benefits from collegial social interactions, forms the basis for the accomplishment of this chapter.

The informants are the eight prison officers who gave their consent for participation in the project. They all represent different personal backgrounds, level of education and different seniority, as described in 5.4.2 and outlined in table 1.

The first part of this chapter presents the causes commonly seen as stress-promoting factors, and the outcomes and effects from these different factors. The second part of the chapter explains how the prison officers actively uses their collegial relationships to cope with the stressors, and tries to provide answers for which types of coping -mechanisms and strategies they possess by analyzing their information. The third, and last, part of the chapter describes the supportive relationships with the inmates, which is considered an additional factor predicting the stress-levels of prison officers in this study. Relevant theory on social capital makes the content of this chapter capable of bringing forward discussion and put meanings to the elements through a theoretical context.

6.1 CAUSES OF STRESS IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

This section will provide information about the stress provoking factors, as by the participants considered emerging as potentially harmful towards their health. Each of the sections below represent the different topics that the participants talked about in connection with how they were seeing stressors as potentially health threatening or health damaging.

The immediate response to questions about what causes stress and how the experience of stress emerges, was very varied. It was evident that some perceived their jobs as more stressful than others did, and it was interesting to hear their different opinions on the matter.

Despite the diversity in perceptions on stress, all participants shared several common values and views on what characteristics an idealistic working environment should contain.

6.1.1 Stress as an individual problem

The participants had a common view seeing stress as an individual problem, and thereby something to be solved individually. Because of this, the immediate answers given were that they experience stress at work, but that one of the challenges that belonged to the job, was just to be able to cope with the stressors individually. One male participant aged 52, who had been working in the prison-system for 23 years described his view on stress this way:

Of course, there is a lot of stress in this kind of work, but we should all be able to handle it. If one cannot handle it, one should consider find one selves another job.

The immediate impression was that the participant had more information to share about several issues of stress bringing factors, as he said there was; “a lot of stress in the work”. This turned out to be right as he later in the conversation, told more about these issues. He had some views on how things could be done differently, to reduce the health damaging effects from the issues, based on his experiences and seniority from his many year’s employment in the prison workforce. Another statement from the same participant which described his views on his health related to the job:

The work is...well...you exchange...the prison here buy something that they want from me, and I have to give them what they want. And, if I have put myself in a situation where I have a couple of physical scavengers, then I have to live with it. I must provide enough, so that I have a job to go to.

This prison officer had a bad/ hurting knee, which he described that was due to walking on “bone-hard” floors at work.

The prison inspector explained his job compared to other professions and workplaces, considering stress-levels and accordingly the importance of cooperation:

The things I have talked about are probably things that takes place in most workplaces; it is just that in this type of work it all gets even more extreme, because you are dependent on the other people that are present, the inmates. It is not package laying motionless, nor a document lying motionless; it is people in motion who needs follow-up and to be taken care of.

There was a distinction between views on stress of the younger and the views of stress of the older participants. The younger participants were more likely to be able to name specific episodes of violence and threats, and to explain the physiological and psychological outcomes of them, than the older participants did. The older participants gave an expression of feeling more relaxed in such situations because they said they knew that episodes of violence and threats would sometimes occur, and the risk was always present. The older participants who gave most information about this topic said that it was not the actual episode that was the most stress-provoking situation. The most stressing considering violently inmates was walking around and waiting for something to happen.

There was a common perception shared by prison officers that they should be able to cope with the challenging and stressful tasks at work on their own, without showing any adopted emotional or psychological consequences. One of the older participants described the lack of discussion in relation to emotions at work:

There is never talk about individual problems in the sense of feelings and emotional problems concerning the job that we do here.

He further spoke of how it was difficult to find motivation in the work, because the prison officers never got any information about the inmates when they had finished their custodial sentence, -in terms of further follow-up and their mastery in daily life. This might be an indication that the older participants found the lack of motivation and following consequences more burdensome, and thereby more psychologically health harmful, having nothing positive to focus on when performing the job. Another statement about motivation outlined:

It is just stress in this job. There is nothing that motivates me. We whom work here do not know how the inmates who have been here to atone manage on the outside, and if the treatment we gave them actually have helped. The only way we get to chat with them again is if they come back to atone because of a new offense. Then they can give compliments like; “you have actually helped me through the conversations we had the last time I was here”. This cannot be seen as something positive and completely motivating. I would rather be without that person coming in here once more to atone because of a new offense, than to get this compliment from him.

According to the two statements above, this participant seemed to be missing some time where the co-workers would be able to share information in the sense of feelings surrounding their work performances and job-related issues. This became visible through the ways in which he expressed himself; an apparent resignation towards the lack of possibilities for

expressions about the motivational problems. It seemed like the motivational problems were enhanced by the lack of possibility to talk more open and thoroughly through the problems of this character.

The younger participants talked about the importance of encouraging each other, and to see the positive side of things. The prison inspector acknowledged that this might needed improvement in some areas:

I think that we might not be so good at giving support to each other in terms of giving each other praise. We could be better at that. I have been thinking about it myself. If you give praise to anyone just as you pass him in the corridor, it will not be received in the same ways as when you take the person aside and tell the person that what you did was very good – and telling him why you think it was good.

According to this statement, there is a recognition that real supportive conversations do not take place very often. The prison inspector acknowledges that this was something that everybody could be better at performing. He pointed out the differences in the ways in which the praise could be perceived by the recipient, claiming that taking a person out of the “setting” to give compliments would have a better effect, than just saying a “good word” to the person when passing him in the corridor. As it became clear, the time pressure and the amount of work created challenges for such conversations to take place, especially during dayshifts. Many spoke of days at work where they were forced to skip their lunch-breaks because of the amount of work tasks. Having a responsibility of the paper work/ documentation, taking care of prisoners’ entrances and discharges at the prison, together with other ongoing inmate-related work, was described as particularly very stress filled.

The lack of supportive conversations do not, however, exclude the “debriefing”, as to claim that there were no form of communication between the staff about any situations at all. The debriefing takes place when one or more of the prison officers have been exposed to any type of threat full or violently situation with the inmates. Right after an incident has taken place, the parties involved gather and talk about how the adopted experiences have affected them, together with representatives of the leaders/ management. It is something that is proclaimed; there are rules saying this should be implemented immediately after the incidence because of the potentially harm it may cause.

The prison officers described having both potentially mental and physical health damaging exposures when subjected to violence and threats. The conversation afterwards has the

purpose of making the parties involved processing their experiences. They are able to talk about what they have gone through, and to have a check to assure it did not cause any severe harm. More information about the effects of these kinds of exposures will be outlined in the next section, 6.1.2, about threatening situations and demanding prisoners.

Besides the debriefing, all the participants acknowledged having good supportive “everyday-conversations with colleagues”. Talking about families, hobbies and all kinds of outside work related things. As there seemed clear that there was a lack of exchange of information addressing thoughts and feelings directly related to the performance of their work tasks, all participants pointed out conversations with colleagues about every-day life, as having a significant influence on workplace well-being.

The cooperation was characterized by strong collegial cohesion, something that will be further examined in 6.2, where the social support is being reflected upon.

6.1.2 Threatening situations and demanding social contacts

As mentioned in the section above, the most stressful about demanding prisoners as experienced by the participants, was the thoughts they occupied themselves with when waiting for situations of violence to take place. If there were one or several “trouble-makers” among the inmates (with violently behavior), it was likely that these prisoners could come to cause problems anytime, in the near future. The awareness of the potential danger was explained as creating a psychological effect: a sense of unrest and a concerning feeling that unexpected things could happen. These feelings and thoughts could create a mental effect leading to stress. One participant, aged 52 with 23 years of work-experience, described this:

When I feel most stressed is when I expect that something is going to happen. In other words, before it has happened. However, when it has happened, it triggers an automatic mechanism within us. It depends on the work experience you possess, and how many times you have been entering a room to bring out a person, by force.

Both the younger and the older participants shared the views on stress towards expecting things to happen. The three youngest participants named specific experiences of violence and threats where they felt stressed, but the older participants had some difficulties of remembering one specific episode. Some said that they had experienced so many episodes,

which made it difficult to remember one specific incident, and some needed more time to come up with one example. The older participants explained their calmness towards these situations as having to do with experience and seniority, as becomes evident from the quote example above.

Violent prisoners are usually transferred to prisons with a higher security. Three of the younger participants spoke of incidents of “cell-crushing”. They told that occasionally a prisoner could get physically disruptive and smash his room or cell inventory, causing a potential danger of him injuring himself. When such situations took place, the prison officers would have to enter the prisoner’s cell to physically bring him out and move him to another “safety-cell”, which is a locked cell, with more frequent supervision and surveillance by the prison officers.

The younger participants saw these situations as particularly stressful. One participant made a statement about the outcome of the stress he felt in a particular situation:

If you have to go into a cell to bring out a person, which you know do not behave well, the person is likely to have crushed a lot of things and has taken on a violently behavior, and even though we are many to handle the situation, the “blood pump” beats faster, and of course that is a stressing situation.

One of the other younger participants, aged 33, spoke about a prisoner whom were acting violently, that spit on his face and said some bad things to him. It was a situation that made him feel particularly anxious as having to have further contact with this prisoner during his stay at the prison. The rest of the (older) participants acknowledge such incidents of violently inmates as bringing out stress as well, but not to the extent that the younger participants did.

One of the older participants stating it like this:

It is about the established procedures, which you are well familiar with if such things happens, and it is about work experience as well. We, whom have worked in the prison work force for many years, know that these kinds of situations occasionally will happen, but we know that we will get immediate help from colleagues, and we have good routines for solving the problem.

The participants talked about specific situations where they felt threatened. One participant talked about threats directed towards his own family, and it made him feel uncomfortable and stressed. In those cases, according to the prison officer, it became important to think of who were saying it and in which context he said it. He told that if the prisoners absolutely wanted something from the prison officer, in terms of favors or other things bringing benefits, it was

easy to say something to offend the prison officer, with the purpose of getting him frightened so that he could get what he wanted. If the person coming with the threats apologized after his statements, it would make the prison officer feeling calmer. He said that it was never a good thing being exposed to threats, because it contributed to a development of many thoughts and wonderings about if the threat was just a joke, or if there was a deeper meaning behind.

The thoughts and feelings immediately occurring when exposed to threats, was a source of bringing stress into the job, as explained by most of the participants. They reflected and thought about the situation in the aftermath of the incidents. These thoughts and the uncertainty about the severity of the threats, could take some time to process. Having someone to talk to after the incident, was crucial concerning the health of the person(s) involved. Even though most participants never spoke clearly about any psychological late-effects they had experienced, the person being subjected to threats' mental health could be threatened, - as the statement in the section below apparently indicates.

Episodes concerning violence and violently prisoners were not spoken of as much as the episodes of threats. The reason for that might be that they were all currently workers at the actual prison, (an open prison facility) meaning a prison with lower security and fewer safety barriers for the inmates to break. Additionally, four of the participants reported that they had been working at a higher security prison in former jobs, and had no specific episodes of violence in memory from their current job. They acknowledged that there had been some episodes, but the good routines on how to deal with those kinds of situations, made it difficult to speak of one concrete situation that had made them feel exceptionally stressed. A statement of one of the participants pointed out why there could be less episodes of violence at open prisons:

The thing about an open prison is just that the prisoner do not need to take a hostage to run away. He can just climb the fence and run off. That is a bit of the thought, that the prisoner can see it as easy to escape the prison, but he is supposed to refrain doing so, because then he "proves" that he deserves to be at an open prison.

He continued saying that this represented some of the safety and security for prison staff at an open prison. The prison officers would not get the feeling of unsafety that much, because the low security opened up for the possibility for the prisoner just to escape whenever he wanted, without having to go as far as doing prison officers any harm (for example taking a hostage) to achieve a chance to escape.

Many of the mentally ill prisoners have drug-related disorders, and drug addicts form a large group of the prison population. Additionally, there have been an increase in the proportion of foreigners, coming to atone at the prison. This makes the prison environment multi-cultural: representing many different individuals with different backgrounds and languages. The prison environment could sometimes be a complex and challenging work arena.

The female participant spoke of how the job had disrupted her sleep pattern. She explained that the reasons were due to both in-turn work, heavy workloads, and some demanding prisoners. One episode she found particularly stressful, described the challenges that could occur as being a female prison officer:

...And I went upstairs, and he came after me, began to follow after me, passing me in the corridors all the time. And then I met two floor boys who were cleaning, and I leaned towards the wall as talking with them. And as soon as they had left, this person came jumping in on me, very angry. And he had me up against the wall. Then those two floor boys came back, stood there on each side of him, and had him backing away from me.

She experienced that the prisoner was angry with her because he was not willing to obey a woman (as she had been asking why he was not at work the present day, as he was supposed to), and that it was some kind of a protest thing. She explained the effects from this exposure as “the heart was beating faster”, and were glad that the boys who were cleaning came to help her.

She also spoke of a prisoner currently atoning at the prison, whom she did not have a good relationship with: The person had a tendency of being rude in terms of deliberately saying something to offend her each time they met. The solution to this problem was that the other prison officers would take care of his treatment (e.g. giving him medicines), so that she did not have to have so much contact with the prisoner. She said that she knew that colleagues would back her up in such situations. This was a mutual obligation shared between colleagues. If a prisoner was behaving bad and offending towards one of the prison officers, the other colleagues would support the prison officer by taking over the “responsibility” and treatment of this prisoner.

6.1.3 Time pressure and work overload

Considering the issue of stress in the work- environment, it also became clear that much of what the participants regarded as harmful to health and well-being occurred as having a too heavy workload. This had a tendency of bringing too much work than they were to overcome in one day, and for some this had the effect of being exhausting. At times when the workload exceeded, it became a necessity to let others take over the work that there was no time getting finished. One participant stated:

You do not want to leave a lot of unfinished work behind when colleagues enter the job for evening shifts. You want as much of this work done as possible, before they enter at work. Then you are stretching out pretty far to manage to get it done, and then you might have to skip lunch, for example.

There were differing opinions on giving up work, and let others takeover tasks. Some spoke of feelings of bad consciousness and not bringing the right work ethics doing so. That the workday was not finished before the entire job was done. Others explaining that it was a necessity to let others take over the unfinished work, supported with the argument that it would be too stressful to overcome the workload on their own the current day, and that they wanted to avoid working overtime.

Many participants considered having many challenging work tasks as positive. It brought a feeling of excitement and personal mastery in the job. The participants made however, a clear distinction between the positive and negative sides of having many tasks. Too many work tasks simultaneously brought time pressure, and this made them feel stressed. Heavy workloads followed by not being able to organize the work seemed was related to stress. One (older) participant stated:

It is quite much to do at times...I try to organize the work so that I manage to get through with everything. Planning does not work. There are large varieties in work tasks, and you do not have any break between the tasks. We have to stay here all the time. They are 96, we are 6.

The participant described many tasks simultaneously and many prisoners to take care of, as together bringing out stress.

The focus of staffing issues concerned the lack of competent personnel to be able to give the right treatment to the drug- addicted -and mentally ill prisoners. Their clinical pictures, often very complex, represented a problem in terms of being able to give them the correct treatment

within the prison at all time. There were a lack of competent personnel to take care of their need for medical and otherwise therapeutically treatment. Some of the prison officers claimed that having nurses at the prison only at daytime was not enough to be able to provide proper and necessary care.

Many of these prisoners were in a position of being sent back and forth between the psychiatric care hospital and the prison, which was talked about as not being therapeutically treatment of the prisoner in itself. This was regarded as challenging and stressful situations for both the actual prisoner and the prison officers. The prison officers sometimes felt that they were not in possession of the necessary skills acquired to deal with the prisoners' medical treatment, and if something happened at evening-shifts (acute illness of prisoners), they could often feel stressed not knowing how to take care of the situations.

6.2 DEALING WITH STRESS AT WORK/ COPING-MECHANISMS

6.2.1 Support from colleagues in the work environment

The trust between colleagues were seen as a strong factor predicting the ability to cooperate, and cooperation were spoken of by many as being completely fundamental to be able to perform the kind of work belonging to a prison officer.

The trust and confidence in management were said to be good by some prison officers, and by others less good. Some prison officers questioned whether prison staff and management shared the same work-related goals. This was perceived, by the participants, as a diversity in the views on what role the prison should have. The prison staff (working directly with the inmates) shared a common goal that was to give the inmates a good treatment so that they could be able to be released from prison and manage their every -day life in best possible ways without any relapse. The management (from the perspective of the officers) would also emphasize this, but additionally they were also concerned with having as many prisoners to atone each year as possible, described by one participant; like an "atonement machine". Most participants said that they had confidence in their own management, but they had more mistrust with the leading management - "higher up in the system". The participants described

their relationship to their own management by saying that they knew where they could turn if they needed help, because “the door was always open”.

It became clear that the question of trust was perceived in different ways. Some participants were talking about the organizational trust-relationship to the management, and some emphasized the working-environmental conditions. The prison officers did not have a close working relationship with the management, the way it was described to be before organizational changes. They acknowledged that the management had responsibility for several prisons, and as for them, they probably had a lot of work to do related to the supervision of all the prisons. There were little following-up on occupational health procedures or security routines, which was another thing missing. Some self-defense courses occasionally took place. Two of the participants gave up that they had musculoskeletal complaints. One of these participants were using strong pain suppressants, and he expressed a certain displeasure of not being even asked about his condition, which seemed to affected the trusting relationship with management to some extent.

Multidisciplinary meetings with other professions such as nurses, doctors and social workers seemed to be motivational factors for the prison officers. The cooperation tasks with other professions was explained to contain something “a little bit different than just the regular routine work”. Most participants found this motivating. A participant pointed out that it was important to focus on the work that actually succeeds – that it was all about “seeing the positive in things”. He then proceeded talking about the importance of communication between staff. As mentioned in section 6.1.1, the lack motivation could be a predictor to stress. Having a good cooperation and communication with other representatives of the prison staff and colleagues, would therefore seem motivating and supportive.

Many of the prisoners had so-called “relapses”. The relapse rate varied from year to year, but were often high. (Meaning that they came back to the prison to serve because of new offenses). The participants talked about this issue as something they were aware of, and that it was not a factor that they could let in on themselves, in terms of thinking, they had done a bad job. Then it was about thinking positive thoughts and rather be thinking about those few they actually had helped. Some examples that were mentioned concerned; helping prisoners who got ill, that calling them an ambulance might have been enough to save their lives, and some drug-addicts stopped abusing drugs for some time. These factors were also seen as motivating factors.

There are different ways of interpreting the collegial support. Two things that the participants repeatedly talked about as valuable for cooperation and friendship was trust and reciprocity. All participants stated that trust among colleagues was very important. Most of the participants pointed out this as quite fundamental to be able to get their work done. When talking about relationships with colleagues, they were strongly emphasizing the social cohesion and honesty among co-workers.

If the good collaborating relationships with colleagues were not present in the prison officers' daily work, then the inmates would be able to sense this and take advantage of it by trying to deceive one or more of the prison officers. On the other hand, lack of trust and reciprocity could cause problems with cooperation, as one of the participants said;

If we were not able to rely on each other, it would all stop. We would not be able to organize our work.

The citation above indicates what all participants found to be fundamental for cooperation. An awareness among prison officers that they are all dependent on having collegial relationships based on honesty and trust, claiming that there is an absolutely need to rely on colleagues. If not being able to have total confidence in each other, the participants described that such cases would create conditions of "chaos" at work. It would cause a lack of overview of what work tasks that should be done at what times, something that would cause a lot of stress in all the officers present the current day of such an appearance. The trust in that colleagues "do things in similar ways" and "follows the same routines" were named as a good practical procedure to the maintenance of reciprocal relationships of trust, which accordingly formed a good basis to be able to structure the work tasks.

The importance of doing things in similar ways and shared experiences following such performances, seemed to create norms of standards to conduct and subsequently trust, which are predictors for the reciprocity between colleagues. These three factors seem dependent on each other, as they all influence on the ability to cooperate. Therefore, it can seem like a necessity that these three factors are present at all time in the work environment of the correctional officers in this study.

6.2.2 Collegial friendships as a coping-mechanism

The social support in terms of friendship among colleagues was described as both motivating and fundamental basis for good cooperation. One of the participants stating that;

The only thing that actually motivates me in this job is the colleagues. What makes me want to go to work each day is the benefits I get from the social contact with my colleagues. We are laughing and having fun. Humor is important.

Participants stated that cooperation was quite fundamental in terms of being able to perform their work. All participants saw the ability to cooperate as good among their co-workers as well. They acknowledged their high levels of social support from colleagues and good friendships as contributors to good cooperation. If the good cooperation were not present, it could cause some serious negative effects, as the inmates sensed something was not right. Having good communication were seen as close connected to the cooperation:

Cooperation? In here that is very important. Communication – because without these things present, you will get deceived from everything and everybody in a place like this. Because the inmates are often manipulative, and tries to achieve those benefits, they know they can achieve. And of course, if getting the answer “no” from one prison officer, they move on to the next one, and then you are dependent on a good cooperation.

Like this participant was telling about, the prison officers are dependent on a good cooperation, because if this is not present, the prisoners, who would take advantage of it, could deceive them. The cooperation not only among the prison officers, but also between the prison officers and the other professions like the priest, the health workers and the employees who process applications, needed to be good. Or else, it all would “unravel”, - an expression used by one participant.

Concerning the amount of work tasks as a predictor causing stress, most of the participants agreed that if there were many things to do simultaneously, it was important to do the tasks seen as manageable at the moment, and then let others take the rest of the current work tasks. For example, if those who worked daytime had too much to do one day, then the ones working late-shift could continue when they entered at work. This depend on the trust and reciprocity between colleagues, which most participants regarded as very good. It seemed like participants experienced the challenges of heavy workloads as easier to deal with, when they were having friendships with colleagues, -in which had an effect of strengthening the

reciprocal relations as people were always emphasizing that “helping each other out” was always important.

6.2.3 The relationships with the inmates

This section will reflect some experiences on the relationships that prison officers shared with the inmates. This type of relationship were considered as crucial towards an explanation to additional supportive factors to the collegial support, which contributed to the prevention of stress.

Participants as having a significant impact on the ability to perform the work in the prison, and to thrive, spoke of the relationships with the inmates. Establishing good relationships made the job of prison officers easier in terms of being able to cooperate better. During each prisoner’s entrance at the prison, the prison officers would try to get to know the prisoners in the best possible ways, by conversation, and by methods employed characterized by treating everybody equally and with respect.

The general opinion that prison officers shared was that they had an interesting and challenging job in a positive way. The work with the inmates in terms of giving them necessary help, were mainly seen as valued, interesting and motivating. The challenges they named concerned work among a variety of people, representing different personalities and backgrounds, foreigners speaking different languages, having different clinical pictures, different medical treatments, different behaviors etc. As explained by one of the participants:

Here there are 800 prisoners during one year, and that is for certain 800 completely different personalities, -and it is clear that one working day will never occur as similar to the previous one, regardless of whom you meet. That is why this is an exciting profession, and it makes you thrive and feel well.

To the question of job satisfaction, the common view among participants was that they were having challenging and exciting work that made them thrive, and that could bring health benefits in terms of positive feelings; energy and a feeling of pleasure.

The prison officers constituted a group of 6-8 depending on the day shift or evening shift, and they were always two at night. Among a group of approximately 100 prisoners at the prison at any given time, this could seem like small staffing. It became clear that the prison officers had

a special type of relationship with the inmates. The female participant described this by using an example: She said that if she were going to take some prisoners for a walk all by herself, she would rather take five or six prisoners with her rather than one or two. The reason for that was that if one or two of the prisoners would try to attack her, she would get help from the others standing by her side to back her up.

This concept also was applied within the prison. The thought centered that if one or two prisoners or a smaller group of prisoners tried to make trouble somehow, the prison officers could get help from the rest of the prisoners to deal with these issues. The prison officers could sometimes feel vulnerable if they sensed something coming up, but they never felt unsecure in the sense that they would stand alone without getting help from anybody; not only would they get help from colleagues, but also by one or more of the remaining prisoners.

The type of support talked about above can be seen as a different type of social capital. It is not about the collegial support, but it is about the support from another group of people whom the prison officers have daily contact with. It is about benefits accruing from membership of a group of people, which represents a non-collegial group. Based on a special type of trusting relationship that is based on norms that stem from principles of mercy and compassion as human beings, or it could be the case that it represents some little element of reciprocity as well. -The prisoner helps the prison officer, because he knows that the prison officer would do the same thing for him if he were having trouble.

7. DISCUSSION

Previous chapter (findings) identified causes of stress issues in the demanding jobs of prison officers and coping –mechanisms that prison officers. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these issues and supportive factors, put them in a theoretical context, and compare the findings to relevant literature and previous research.

7.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE WORKPLACE

The literature review have presented demanding social contacts with inmates and co-workers, exposure to violence and threats at the prison facility, and role conflicts among prison staff as predictors to stress in the prison workplace. Stress and burnout can cause severe harm towards employee health, and lead to absenteeism from work, and thereby creating both individual and societal consequences.

The sub-sections in this chapter discusses the elements of social capital; trust, norms, reciprocity, and social support and how they have been explained as relevant by prison officers to be used as resources for coping with stressors in their daily work.

7.1.1 The importance of trust in preventing stress

The collegial trust emerged as good, but the trust between prison officers and the management varied, according to the participants. It was the diversity in opinions about how the prison should be managed and which ideologies that should lie behind the purposes of daily operation, which gave rise to mistrust of management. The mistrust concerned primarily management at a “higher level” than the prison's own management, and informants referred to the issues as being dependent on political objectives and ideologies.

The participants explained that a good cooperation was especially dependent on relationships of trust between the co-workers, but also between the co-workers and the management. The trust in colleagues were seen as fundamental to be able to perform the daily work, or else it

would be problems with the organization and structure of work tasks. Unstructured working days were seen as a main cause to stress, especially as there were days characterized by heavy workloads and a high “working- tempo”. The literature on social capital often refers to the terms bonding, bridging and linking social capital.⁴ It is suggested that if these three types of relations are present, not only well developed, but also with well balance, it represents a workplace with a high level of social capital (Appelbaum et al, 2005; Kristensen et al, 2008). Meaning that the trust between colleagues and trust in management should preferably stay as much equal as possible.

A possible reason for the existence of higher levels of trust among colleagues, than between prison officers and management, could be rooted in the organizational changes that had taken place some few years back in time. Different sections had been merged, so that the management (now representing several prison departments) were placed separate from the prison section. Earlier, the prison manager had his office right next the staff room, and they could “knock on the door and walk right in”, as participants described. Now the leaders had their offices in a separate building, and it was having an effect of creating a distance between them and the staff. The participants expressed understandings for why the reorganization demanded such subdivisions, but some acknowledged at the same time that they missed having a closer relationship and contact with their leaders.

It is likely to predict that the trust in management would have improved if the social contacts with employees were more emphasized. An issue that was talked about by participants was the lack of conversations and daily contact with their leaders. The prison officers wondered what the management occupied themselves with as they were “very little visible” out in the department. They expressed an awareness that it was much work attached to having the responsibility of several prison departments, but they missed having the possibility of being “seen and heard”. Something that could have led to an improvement of the trusting relationships with management.

Trust as an important source to social capital has been vindicated through several studies (Hasle & Møller, 2005; Kristensen et al, 2008; Endresen & Testad, 2012). An investigation of conditions at work places characterized by trust between managers and workers have created the basis for a common development of both production and an improvement of the work

⁴ The bonding social capital indicates the relations within in a group or section, bridging social capital relations between groups or sections, and linking social capital relations between the management and the employees (Putnam 2000; Appelbaum, 2005).

environments. This has resulted in health improvement of employees: fewer strikes together with lower absenteeism and employee turnover (Hasle & Møller, 2005). In enterprises, it is suggested that trust is one of the main elements for the construction of social capital.

In one study it was found that companies that are characterized by close relationships with management in terms of proper knowledge of managers led to greater extent of confidence than in businesses characterized by little familiarity with leaders, whom also pushes employees for further efficiency (Kristensen et al, 2008). This resulted in reduction of both trust and justice among employees. The findings of this project does not reveal any issues of justice in treatment or role conflicts in the workplace of prison officers, as research have suggested playing a significant role in preventing stress in workplaces (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Kristensen et al, 2008). The prison officers experienced being treated equally and they mentioned no role problems of any kind, not with colleagues or management.

Findings from research among employees in the Norwegian healthcare sector implies that relationship -building vertically⁵ in organizations can act as a buffer against stress related disorders (Endresen & Testad, 2012). Vertical relationships in general and vertical justice treatment especially, were found to be strong predictors of stress in the organization.

International research on organizational stressors among prison staff underpins that emphasis on improving communications between management and correctional officers are required for preventing job stress and burnout (Finney et al, 2013). The findings from this study reveals missing communication between management and prison officers. An improvement of communication could increase the trust and prevent stress.

The lack of daily contact with management was, by the participants, described as not having a significant impact on stress-levels. Yet it may be important to recall that most participants had a tendency of seeing individual problems as something to be solved individually. An improvement of the communication and discussions surrounding individual mental or physical stresses may eventually have a preventive effect on further development of distrust conditions. Accordingly, a broader focus on collectivistic resources, by increase trust levels with management and actively using collegial support in terms of conversations, can be a way of improving occupational health. Arranging occasionally group meetings or staff meetings to discuss individual problems or to give each other praise (described by one participant as missing) seems like a good starting point.

⁵ Vertical relations means relationships between management and staff.

Some authors have described procedural justice as; “The extent to which employees are treated with justice at their workplace and indicates whether decision-making procedures include input from affected parties, are consistently applied, suppress bias, and are accurate, correctable, and ethical” (Kouvonen et al, 2006, p.4). Hasle & Møller (2005) talks about a “control-dimension” as improvements through greater employee influence on the work by actively being drawn into decision-making about changes and participation in section meetings. The predictability has given employees a better and more effective information about the development of the workplace through section -meetings and “workshops” (Hasle & Møller, 2005). Group meetings could become a channel of exchange of social capital in terms of shared information, which according to Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988a; 1988b) is a good source of making social benefits; through the membership of a group.

Cooperation, trust and justice have appeared through research as cornerstone contributors for development of workplace social capital (Hasle & Møller, 2005; Kristensen et al, 2008; Endresen & Testad, 2012). A good climate of cooperation correlates positively with trust and justice (Endresen & Testad, 2012) among employees in a nursing home. This is highly recognizable as contributing factors for a good working environment among prison officers as well, as the participants describes their dependency on social relations based on trust and honesty as fundamental to achieve a good cooperation and job control. The vertical trust (management-employee) - relationships are overall seen as good, but the missing visualization of appreciation through communication and reward (Hasle & Møller, 2005) seems to influence the prison officers’ job satisfaction to some extent. Reward as the managements responsiveness for each employees’ opinions, and to be “seen and heard” through more frequent meetings and conversations. In this study, it is the horizontal relationships (social relations between employees) represents a good basis for development of workplace social capital among prison officers.

As it emerges from the discussion above, the participants defined their trust -relationships with colleagues as very good. The co-workers felt that the strong reciprocity relationship existing between colleagues favored common shared values of trust, ethical views and norms; creating the basis for good communication and cooperation. The social support between colleagues was good. From a point of view, it would appear that the lack of daily support from management to some extend is compensated by a more tightly relationship between the employees. As found by Kristensen et al. (2008), the basis for effective cooperation between groups and individuals in a business, lies within concepts like trust and justice. The ability to

cooperate develops through the daily practice, where each part learns to understand the opposite parts reaction patterns in different situations (Kristensen et al, 2008).

In Danish slaughterhouses that had high levels of trust, there were developed a new management style where all the personal relations were increasingly emphasized in terms of both management leader and the safety representative men being more responsive to each employees' problems at work. The increased 'reward' talked about in this research, consisted of more interest (from management) towards both private and work-related issues of the employees, emphasizing that a quick effort should be made to solve these problems. An increased awareness of the causes to absenteeism, responsiveness towards employee individual views and a stronger selection of equilibrium between management and employees got emphasized (Hasle & Møller, 2005).

Above there are some suggestions from the authors on how social support can be improved in workplaces to increase the communication and cooperation between management and employees, which seemed to be a missing factor at the workplace of the participants/prison officers. They suggest that a good psychological work environment is achieved through emphasizing four dimensions; social support, reward, control and predictability (Hasle & Møller, 2005).

Control has been named as an important factor leading to increased social capital in workplaces. Kouvonen et al. (2006) found that measures of social capital was significantly positively associated with theoretically related constructs of procedural justice and job control. Akbari et al. (2014) found that stress and burnout in prison staff generally, was outcome of low job control and low support from colleagues. This agrees well with the participants' experience of job control in their everyday work. They describe the job control as something fundamental to be able to perform their work tasks among the inmates, as referred to by several participants: "It is about to keep calm and that everybody perform their tasks in similar ways, to every detail". An awareness of, and trust in that everybody performed the work in similar ways was explained as contributing to a sense of control. This seems like a coping-factor in terms of making the officers feeling more relaxed. The good cooperation led to a sense of control among colleagues and something highly emphasized by all participants.

7.1.2 The importance of norms and reciprocity between colleagues in preventing stress

Trust is so far described as important between colleagues to be able to cooperate. However, social trust arise from norms of reciprocity together with networks of engagement (Putnam, 1993; Putnam 2000), where trustworthiness is a key ingredient (Putnam, 2000). According to Coleman (1988a), the function of social norms is to transfer the right to control an action from one actor in a network to the others, which leads to consequences for others (externalities). Norms arises when an action has similar externalities for a set of others (Putnam, 1993).

The trust depended on the co-workers following the same principles for how to perform the work tasks. They trust that everybody are using the same methods. A norm within a collectivity that constitute an especially important form of social capital, according to Coleman (1988a), is the norm that one should forgo self-interest and act in the interests of the collectivity. This is seemingly one of the predictors for good cooperation among the prison officers, as they perform tasks in similar ways, and have good routines in their work. Studies that found role problems as significantly associated with job stress, pointed out difficulties with knowing “who is responsible for doing different tasks” within the prison workplace (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Finney et al, 2013). The participants did not mention any difficulties knowing who was to perform which work tasks, at what times (in relation to all the prison staff); they had good routines to perform their work.

Additionally, their common shared values was that; “all help each other until everybody have finished their work tasks”, which indicates an existence of an important norm showing that prison officers always help each other out until each one have finished all their work. This also meant that prison officers arriving at late shifts helped those working day shifts, to complete their work, so that people could avoid working overtime. Important to note was that there were differing opinions about letting others take over unfinished work, as some explained it to be representing bad moral and behavior. It seemed helpful that colleagues would remind each other that they always help each other out if there is a risk of working overtime.

In addition to role problems, missing personal resources, like participation, skill utilization and professional worth have been found to be significantly related to high levels of burnout, including symptoms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal

accomplishment (Finney et al, 2013). Skill utilization, a prison officer's belief that they are able to use more than a basic skill set to perform their duties, for example having creatively problem solve, has been positively related to avoidance of these risk factors. One participant stated that a positive thing about working at an open prison was that there were large numbers of prisoners coming to atone each year, and that these different prisoners represented different personalities, and created challenges which he reflected upon as making him "thrive and feel well". The other participants also talked about challenges as something that made the job more exciting, or made the job easier in terms of variations in work tasks. This was seen as motivational factors, which could make them shift focus from the negative sides of the demanding jobs, towards a positive focus, and the people they actually managed to help. The participants who spoke the importance of "seeing the positive side of things" were likely to create positive influence on other co-workers, in terms of encouragement. Giving each other praise was something they acknowledged having a potential for improvement, which can contribute to solve motivational problems. Discussion of stressors with a supportive person may reduce feelings of threat through a process of reappraisal, which can reduce anxiety (Stansfeld & Marmot, 2002). Similarly, emotional support following a stressor such as an acute life event can help to reduce distress, relieve anxiety and depression, and may thus also reduce concomitant psychological arousal.

The participants spoke of good routines for standing together if someone needed help, whether it concerned demanding contacts with inmates, episodes of exposure to violently behavior or threats, or other stressful situations, they stated that it was important to support each other. It was said that; "you always get help if needed" and "there is always someone coming to help you". To walk "inspection rounds" was also something they emphasized doing together, trying to make it possible for two prison officers walk them together. Role ambiguity has been related to an increase in misinterpretations of colleagues' actions because correctional officers are often forced to work alone rather than collaboratively (Finney et al, 2013). It seemed evident that following the established norms of collaboration (helping each other out, no matter what), was performed through actively using the collective resources based on friendships and good collegial relations, which Sørensen (2007) also found to be linked with good social support. Something in which contradicts with claims outlining that prison officers are often left alone to solve tasks individually (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000).

A good cooperation among the prison officers depended on people having good relationships of trust and additionally an awareness that people would give help and return favors if needed.

A rule that seemed very important in the prison officers daily work was the generalized norm of reciprocity, as by Putnam (2000) is explained as a; “continuing relationship of exchange that is any given time unrequited or imbalanced, but that involves mutual expectations that benefit granted now should be repaid in the future” (Putnam, 1993, p 172). The outcome of following this ‘rule’ created predictability in the work environment, characterized by the participants as giving a sense of safety and security at work.

The reciprocity became significantly important as episodes of violence and threatening behaviors from the inmates took place. A prison officer never needed to question if the colleagues would come to support if ever any incident of that kind took place. If having too much work one day, the colleagues would support by assisting and take over some of the work tasks. The awareness of the collegial support made them feel more comfortable and relaxed at work, as for example, when exposed to confrontations with inmates (in terms of violently or threatening inmate behavior). The prison officers were all very certain about the fact that co-workers would immediately come to help if any incidents of that kind took place.

The reciprocity lies within the “unspoken” normative behavior of the co-workers, emerging through their interacting performances. – And in the working context, it occurred like this: The prison officer being troubled with too much work could be certain that the prison officers who entered on late shifts would take over his work. They will do that because they know that their colleague would do the same thing for them, if they were in the same position. The reciprocity at this point, appears as a source of social capital, and represents what Putnam (2000) called the “short-term altruism” and “long-term self-interest.

The norm of reciprocity is claimed to be so fundamental to civilized life that all moral codes contain some equivalent of this “rule”, according to Putnam (2000). If bringing this assertion into a work context like the example described above, one can clearly see that the good existing cooperation and cohesion within this group of prison workers, forms the basis for good ethical and moral attitudes, which again seemingly strengthens the reciprocity between them. This fact is substantiated by Bourdieu’s statement; “The profit which accrue from membership in in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible” (Bourdieu, 1986, p.249). The benefits from the existing relationship between the co-workers are based on reciprocity and trust, and it helps the stressed prison officer out of the named stressful situation.). If the reciprocal trust was not present, the establishment of good social relations would break apart, and relationships of distrust between co-workers contributes to an

increase in stress levels in a workplace (Kristensen, 2008; Endresen & Testad 2012; Finney et al, 2013).

“An effective norm of generalized reciprocity is bolstered by dense networks of social exchange” (Putnam, 2000, p.136). Putnam (2000) claims that honesty is encouraged by dense social networks, which can explain the relationships of the group of prison officers, presenting a smaller network of colleagues in a workplace.

Another thing helping the prison officer out of this stressful situation is the knowledge that the colleagues trust him, in terms of telling them the truth. On the other hand, he trusts them back, knowing that they will help him out. – Spoken of as “social trust only valuable if warranted” (Putnam, 2000). Both parts are being honest toward one another – each fearing betrayal – and following making a decision of cooperation. This is also refers to what Coleman (1988) sees as “trustworthiness within the social environment” where obligations will be repaid and where the actual obligations at stake are held. When perceptions about trust are aggravated to the group level, it is argued that it is no longer a measure of personality, but a measure of the trustworthiness of a group, that facilitates collective resources like collective action and social cohesion (Kawachi et al, 2008).

7.1.3 The importance of social support in preventing stress

Based on findings, it was clear that the prison officers represented a tightly knit group of co-workers, as all repeatedly spoke of a good cooperation as highly recognizable in every-day work, and the trust they had in that everyone performed their tasks in similar ways. The good cooperation was underpinned by good social support among colleagues, based on norms and reciprocity: everybody shared the same values and goals, and agreed that the social support is of significantly importance at work. Dense networks of social exchange can bolster the reciprocity between group members (Putnam 1993; Putnam, 2000). Even though the focus has not been towards exploring the networks of prison staff, it is likely that the collegial social support and relationships that existed in ways have contributed to the development the collegial network.

The group of prison officers seemed to have sufficiently close relationships because they shared common views of the valued importance of reciprocity and being able to trust each other, as discussed in 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. Any specific issues related to role problems were not

talked about, something that may be conditional in not having many substitutes. Unskilled and unexperienced personnel considered as leading to a risk of increasing workloads / tasks for the permanent employees. This coincides with earlier findings on prison officers' experiences saying that working with colleagues who is permanently employed and knows how to perform their work (competence), brings stress reduction and promotes well-being (Sørensen, 2007).

The participants occasionally found it challenging to take care of mentally ill or drug addicted prisoners. The perceived stress in this context, rested on insufficient competent staff who could take care of a complex medical and therapeutic treatment of the mentally ill inmates. Several participants requested health workers in full-time positions (included evening, night and weekend shifts). If the prison officers knew they had health workers available at any time of the day, they felt that it would create greater predictability in the work, being able to collaborate with colleagues with broader knowledge of medical treatment. They requested in particular psychiatric nurses; thinking of their competence as quite valuable. This can be seen in relation to the discussion of the demanding social contacts in the prison work environment, which is shown to be stress raising (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Finney et al, 2013).

Conflicting demands at work are stress-predictors, according to the Labor Inspection Authority (2015). A lack of clarity in the type of treatment to apply prisoners, together with the uncertainty of in what ways to take care of them, will contribute to unpredictability. Unpredictability leads to high levels of both cognitive and somatic stress in enterprises characterized by low social capital (Kristensen et al, 2008).

As pointing out the issue from lack of health care resources in prisons above, it becomes important to add that there were positive aspects of work environment collaborators, that provided social support. There were nurses and a doctor working day-time, on weekdays. These and the other staff like for example the priest, librarian and teachers, worked supportive to the prison officers in terms of having frequent multidisciplinary meetings. The participants found this multidisciplinary cooperation motivating and inspiring.

The group of prison officers constitutes a network, together with other employed at the prison. Social capital is, according to Bourdieu (1986) and Portes (1998), the resources that are linked to this network, the members of the network can exchange and profit from. It is what Putnam (1993) calls "features of social organizations", which facilitate action for mutual benefit. This means that the quality of the work-site social network and the resources it possesses can be very decisive for the dividend every prison officer has from being a member of the network. The group of prison officers spoke of good collegial relationships in their workplace, in terms

of trust, reciprocity, good cooperation and social cohesion. Something in which indicates reciprocal relationships of mutual obligations, that each employee can benefit from.

The prison officers explained having sometimes intense and emotionally demanding relationship with inmates, which by Schaufeli & Peeters (2000) has been characterized as a structural conflict, influenced by rule enforcement and of a relational character. The bridging social capital inheres in the type of network that describe the reciprocal and dependent relationships that the prison officers and the inmates constitute together. This can be what Putnam (1993) calls a “vertical” network; it links unequal agents of asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence. A Network, described by the participants, as of importance to the feeling of well-being, would be the basis for good collaborating relationships. Some of the inmates were harder to establish good relationships with than others, which could lead to stress in prison officers. If there were prisoners behaving badly threatening a prison officer, the prison officer would get instantly help from colleagues. The colleagues constitute the so-called “horizontal” network (Putnam, 1993), which refers to agents of equivalent status and power, operating with bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000).

However, the network where both prison officers and inmates operate together can be characterized as both vertical and horizontal. As described by the participants, they would always try to establish good relationships with the inmates, from the first day they arrive at the prison. The reason for this was explained by giving everybody a fair chance to cooperate. By getting to know all the inmates in best possible ways, and thereby meet their requirements for help (some for example was in need of special medical treatment), and secondly establish good relationships would make the future cooperation easier for both parts. The prison officers would treat all the inmates equally as long as they cooperated. These common shared values, contributed to maintenance of good conditions for cooperation and prevent conflicts from taking place in the prison facility.

In this study, it is found that the prison officers constitutes a collegial network, where each member invest and exchange capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The network is the foundation for such a barter to take place. Emphasizing the beneficial resources that accrue from being a member of a network seem to contradict with much of the focus of earlier research concerning psychosocial risk factors in the work environment. The criticism outlining that research has tended to focus too much on individual aspects of social capital (Hasle et al, 2007; Endresen & Moe; Endresen & Testad, 2012), of the psychological work environment.

One workplace network is likely to emphasize different elements of social capital of importance to maintain the quality of good cooperation. The different elements have provided different ways of interpreting the collegial and environmental health promoting resources. Relationships of trust (both horizontal and vertical) are the equivalent predictors of social capital in an enterprise/workplace, and may also affect the productivity (Hasle & Møller, 2005). Important to predict the qualities of the work environment, are also interpersonal relations dependent on the ability to cooperate, trust, and justice, as interacting factors (Kristensen et al, 2008). These elements of social capital describe relations to others, towards leaders and co-workers, but does not primarily emphasize the “broader perspective” of collective factors that may predict the cooperation in a workplace, such as; reciprocity, cohesion and social exchange between employees. These factors seemed fundamentally important manifested in the prison facility, as predicting to what extent the prison officers can achieve good relationships of trust. Not only among co-workers, but also in relation to the inmates.

According to Bourdieu (1986, p. 248) social capital is “the aggregate of the actual potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition”. Social capital is, from this point of view, related to the size of networks and the volume of past-accumulated social capital commanded by the members (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249; Coleman 1988a; 1988b) sees social capital as essentially residing in the social structure of relationships among people. Unlike Bourdieu though, Coleman sees social capital as a bonding mechanism which adds to the integration of social structure.

The participants had a tendency seeing stress as an individual problem. This seems to reinforce there is a need of a broader focus on the collective factors that predict health. Social capital is elevated from a feature of individuals and small groups in local communities to a feature of large population aggregates (Putnam 1993; Putnam 2000). Social capital, from this point of view, becomes a collective trait functioning at the aggregate level. Self-assessed and co-workers'-assessed measurements of social capital in public sectors have shown that individuals, who had psychological distress and poor self-rated health, rated their workplace social capital worse than co-workers within the same unit (Oksanen et al, 20011). The prison officers in this project took for granted that the trust, cooperation and support were measures that should stay present in a work environment. High levels of these work environmental factors among the predicted high levels of social capital, in which match the findings of

Oksanen et al (2011), in which lends support to the assumption that the perception of social capital also depends on external working conditions and shared perceptions of workplace.

The prison officers spoke of a large workload, demanding social contacts with inmates and time constraints, where the collegial social support and unity repeatedly turned back on how they cope with stressful situations. Putnam (1993) speaks of networks of civic engagement as essential to social capital. He claims that the denser such network in a community is, the more likely that its citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit. In that sense, its density can explain the collegial network among prison officers. The overall impression was that all the prison officers knew each other well. Prison officers stated through earlier research that working with colleagues they know well is confidence-enhancing (Sørensen, 2007). The participants spoke of an awareness that the social cohesion is fundamental both for cooperation, and for the sense of well-being. E.g. this shows through statements like: "I go to work to chat with colleagues" and "we use a lot of humor". Accordingly, a common perception among the colleagues was that lack of cooperation would endanger the prison officers by increasing the risks of exposure to violence and threats from the inmates, and increase the burden of heavy workloads.

The drug addicts using syringes with a potential danger of contagion, is bringing stress, as stated by one of the participants. The potential danger of blood contamination occurring when a prisoner had hurt himself was something the prison officers could perceive as disturbing. It often took a long time waiting for the blood test results to come, and that had made him feel stressed.

The participants agreed that one of the main contributors to job satisfaction was to have good colleagues whom they could chat with every day at work. Besides sharing information related to their jobs, they were able to talk about personal matters, like for example concerns towards their families, kids and hobbies. The friendships provided access to exchange of information. For Bourdieu (1986) there are two other forms of social capital that is close connected to this form of social exchange, that is; cultural and economic capital. According to Coleman (1988a), the exchange of information is an important form of social capital that inheres in social relations. As one of the participants stated, the only thing he found motivating in his job was to be able to chat with his colleagues. This made him find motivation in an otherwise busy and stressful job. It seemed like this was a way of coping with the stress; changing the focus towards more positive things in the work environment, giving him a pleasant and

relaxed feeling. Collegial motivation can be seen as a source for buffering stress by sharing information and exchange compliments and encouragement.

After situations of threats there were obligatory doing “debriefing”: Often performed through a conversation with the prison inspector, prison officers, and a representative of the prison management – if necessary – directly after an incident of threats or violence has taken place. This way of processing exposures are having a therapeutically psychological effect within prison officers (Hammerlin & Strand, 2006; Hammerlin & Rokkan, 2010). The situation would be brought up for review and more processing after a period of 14 days’ time, to prevent late –effects in the prison officer involved, and to “make sure that the persons sleep well after shifts”, - as one participant stated. The debriefing gave ways to a type of psychological support, provided by managers and co-workers.

These social relations constitute a form of social capital that provides information that facilitates action, through so-called “information channels” (Coleman, 1988a). The shared information within the collegial network can have the effect of being motivational, as people have an opportunity to give each other compliments and encourage each other. This facilitates action by making the employees more focused on the job tasks and make them more set to keep on working. This is how the social support is explained to enable or constrain the adoption of health-promoting behaviors, provide and access individual-coping resources and thereby buffer negative health outcomes of stress (Cohen et al, 2000; Kawachi et al, 2008).

8. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the project was to seek answers to what stress-preventive function social capital can have in the work environment of prison officers. Through research, media and journals, it has been pointed out challenges with an increasingly proportion of mentally ill prisoners in Norwegian prisons, that provides more demanding work for prison staff, in terms of more complex medical treatment, and psychiatric clinical treatments. Earlier research and reports also indicates that demanding social contacts with prisoners have a significant impact in relation to stress and health of prison officers.

In this study, it is found that the reciprocal relationships that exists among prison officers forms the basis for the strong social cohesion and the cooperation that emerged clearly solid. There was a common set of shared values and norms present between the co-workers for how to solve tasks and cooperate, in the work among the inmates. Something in which makes the norm of generalized reciprocity important and applicable. The prison officers shared ideologies like “doing things in similar ways”, “trusting that colleagues help each other out if help is needed” and “help out co-workers with prohibitive workloads”. These were clearly stress-reducing predictors, and was additionally contributing to feelings of security. The motivational problems stemming from demanding and stressing work-tasks are mitigated by the conversations and exchange of information with colleagues. It contributed to positive feelings and an encouragement, making the workday easier and making the officers being better equipped to solve challenging situations. The every-day conversations and practical support constitutes a high level of social support among the prison officers.

The good cooperation, in its turn, were the results from high levels of trust between colleagues. The trust creates and maintains good relations and constructs both individual and collective social capital. Relationships of trust in the workplace did not only contribute to the maintenance of good reciprocal relationships with colleagues, but also with the management. The trust between colleagues was good, and the trust in management was overall good. The lack of trust in management depended on different views on working towards the same goals, temporarily not considered as something particularly stressful, at a risk of being potentially threatening towards health of staff if it develops into a condition of mistrust. Some participants referred to the problem of these kinds as conditional throughout the organization's

“higher level” of management, and at a political level. The participants pointed out their own management as always being available, but little visible in the work environment. Some participants wished to see more of their leaders in their daily work, which would make them feel better by being “seen and heard”. The social support from colleagues, and their relationships based on reciprocity was a good source of workplace social capital. It contributed to a reduction of the amount of stress, which is present in the everyday work of prison officers.

Throughout this study, it also became evident that the reciprocity and social support between prisoners and prison officers are clearly linked with the prison officers’ health and feelings of well-being in the workplace. At this open prison facility, characterized by a large number of prisoners present at any time, the prison officers are dependent on establishing good relationships for the purpose of achievements of good cooperation with the inmates. This mutual relationship can benefit both parts, but the importance of having good relationships with the inmates became clear in situations where the prison officers needed practical support, as when one or several prisoners puts on a violently and/or threatening behavior towards a prison officer. This latter form of social capital does not originate in the collegial support, but in support from the inmates, and it provides important preconditions for the prison officers’ sense of well-being in the work environment of an open prison.

The importance of trust, norms, reciprocity and social support between colleagues that is uncovered in this project can be compared to other similar professions like health workers and police officers, or other workplace settings that concerns work with demanding social contacts.

Further studying on workplace social capital should seek to explore collectivistic factors in terms of how networks’ and reciprocal relations among employees in high-level security prisons (and other workplaces) can prevent health damage. Such studies could improve knowledge about coping mechanisms to stress, positive measures of health and health-promoting strategies in the area of occupational health.

8.1 STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The strengths of the present study include an exploratory method for looking at stress-related issues and coping mechanisms, of people representing one profession, examined in depth and detail. I have used semi-structured interviews with open question formulations, which have sought to bring out the most information, and allowing new ideas to be brought up within the framework of social capital themes. This type of interview made it possible to discover new knowledge about the social phenomenon explored, by continuously reviewing the material. I was not familiar with the prison staff in advance of the conversations, something that might have made the participants talk more openly about issues concerning the workplace, as talking to an “outside person”.

The limitations of the present study include a small sample size (eight participants), which creates problems of generalizing to a larger population. However, it is a necessity to use small sample size to direct the attention towards the participants’ feelings and actions. By using larger samples, it is less likely that I would have had time and been able to spot individual experiences. The anonymity of the prison and participants may have led to an omission of information, or it could have had the opposite effect, as participants were familiar with confidentiality before the interviews. The final selection represented one female participant, which may have produced uniformed answers; answers less influenced by gender differences. It was my first time conducting interviews, and through the working out of interviews, I developed interview-skills, which may have made the first interviews producing less information. However, my impression as the researcher was that I gathered sufficient information, through my discovery of useful and unexpected findings, and by participants’ showing an inbound interest and involvement towards the topics.

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APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What aspects of your job do you find enjoyable? What facilitates your enjoyment?

2. Can you think of any experiences related to your job that has given you a sense of well-being and improved health in any way?

- What is good health to you?
- Is it important to have a good team spirit among the employees in the workplace, and if yes; in what ways do you think it is important to have a good team spirit among colleagues?
- Are the staff involved in any activities or public events, creating well-being at work in everyday-basis, or otherwise?

3. How do you experience that trust gets valued in the workplace?

- How do you experience trust between colleagues, and between employees and bosses?
- How does this influence daily work? (Influence on stress levels and sense of wellbeing)

4. What do you think characterizes a good social working environment?

- Shared values between colleagues/ factors shaping a good social atmosphere

5. Can you name any examples on situations where you had feelings of being stressed?

- How were these situations handled?
- Do you have a feeling that the coworkers support each other in their daily work? In what ways?

6. How do you achieve a good working relationship with the inmates?

- Are there some prisoners with whom you have easier relationships?
- Are there any particular aspects of this work that you think of as particularly demanding in terms of mental or physical stress?
- To what extent is the health and well-being of employees in focus, do you think, in the workplace? (Are there any health policies in place to protect workers?)
- What do you think are important personal skills to have in order to be able to do this kind of job?

7. How are the employee's safety being handled in the workplace?

- Does the feeling of security and safety in the workplace help increase control over the work you do?
- How does the feeling of control in the job you do, play any role in this context -In what ways?

8. Is there anything you want to add, or possibly tell more about?

APPENDIX 2 INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Background and purpose

This is a question for your participation in a research study, which has the purpose to increase knowledge about what factors that contributes to feelings of mastery and control in everyday work-life. The focus of the study aims to concern factors that contribute to the prevention of stress and stress-related factors at work. Furthermore, the purpose also relates to a contribution to develop a better understanding of the characteristics of a good working environment. There will be set focus on what makes you as an employee thrive, and how work can give ways to the feeling of meaning and belonging in personal life. Your experiences towards the role as an employee will be the key-concept to help the researcher provide new knowledge. Your perceptions of what positive aspects the job brings will be central at this concern, what characteristics you think acknowledges a good working-environment and how you think these things may have positive effects on your health. The research project conducted through the study programme Master's degree in Public Health, located at the University College of Hedmark.

What is the study about?

To get an idea of your experiences of the topics above, I will ask you for a conversation, conducted as an interview. The estimated time available for the conversation is approximately 30-60 minutes. The interview is going to be recorded by audio capturing, with the intention to use the material for the data analysis afterwards. After the end of the project period (June next year, 2015) these data will be deleted.

The information you provide in connection with the study will be held confidential and personal data will be anonymized, which means that it will not be referred to names or other personal details in this project.

It is voluntary to participate in the study. Without any given reason, you have the option to withdraw your consent to participate in the study. This will not have further consequences. If you would like to participate, please sign the consent declaration on the last page. Now, if you agree to participate, you can later withdraw your consent without it affecting this project.

The project manager will contact you to make an agreement for the exact time of the interview.

If you later on want to withdraw from the study or have any questions, please contact the project manager, Camilla Frydendahl, tlf.no: 97661649.

You can contact the departmental administrator (Reidun Ekse Johansen, 62430107) if you have any questions or information that should not be addressed directly to the undersigned.

Thanks, Camilla Frydendahl

APPENDIX 3 CONSENT FORM

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate and for the interview to be audio recorded. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

(Signed by the project participant, date)

I confirm that I have given information about the study

(Signed, role in the study, date)

APPENDIX 4 APPLICATION FOR THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Application for carrying out research

Briefly about myself:

My name is Camilla Frydendahl. I am currently working as a nurse in home care (where I have worked for 5 years). I study at Hedmark University College, campus Elverum. I plan to undertake a research project in conjunction with the study program "Master of Public Health - with an emphasis on changing lifestyle habits," which is supposed to be completed spring semester 2015. The project to be delivered at the end of October and caters me Therefore to you with a request such a project would be a useful contribution in this context, and if it could conceivably be feasible.

The contents of the project:

The purpose of the study is to look more closely at the factors that seem potentially stress preventive in a workplace. The long-term stress is documented to be a pathogenic factor which may contribute to certain types of lifestyle diseases, for example; cardiovascular diseases. Personally, I have experiences from work among different people of all ages with different diagnoses, included the field of psychiatric care. Working with people in itself, I know, can be quite demanding, with many challenging tasks. In addition, it is also known that working shifts can have an impact on health. Recent research through STAMI (2014) shows that absenteeism is highest among employees in health and social – sector and the reason for the absence is primarily due to violence and threats of violence, and it is particularly women who are prone to this. I am questioning whether there are similarities between the duties of health care sector workers and the employees of the correctional services. Thus, I wish to explore this by talking to some of the employees of this profession, to get a better insight into their everyday work. Based on the interpersonal and individual social capital including (among others) networks and social support among workers, I wish to explore effects on individuals' health based on a salutogenic perspective. It implies a broader focus on disease prevention and health-promoting factors, rather than the potential pathogenic factors in the working environment.

There qualitative research method will be applied with a purpose to go into the depth of each informant's interpretations of topics and ideas about the questions that will be asked. Practically, this means there will be conducted qualitative research interviews, which will be recorded with an audio recorder. The research question is:

“How might social capital in the work environment prevent work- related stress?”

Requirements for the task:

It is desirable to conduct the interviews in (name of prison), but there is no necessity. If the workplace manager has any objections in relation to how it may be preferred that the project is implemented, it will be taken into account in the planning and execution.

I imagine that it will be necessary to include 8-10 informants who agrees to participate in the project. There will be individual interviews with those selected. It is desirable to apply a strategic sample, but with a little variation by age, gender, education, work experience, etc. Selection of informants is desirable that must take place in consultation with the Supreme leader at the workplace. The participants will receive information letters (attached) with information about the nature of the project, and information about it to be confidential, and all the data will be deleted after the project period is finished. Approval from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) of the implementation of the project existed on 20.11.2014. If everything proceeds according to plan, I imagine that the interviews will be conducted during the month of December this year and January next year (2015).

Attached is the preliminary interview guide, consent and information letter to participants, and receipt from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) as well as a confirmation from the supervisor.

Hope this is in order and that the project will be feasible.

Any questions or comments, please contact me by telephone or e-mail.

Regards,

Camilla Frydendahl.

Phone number: 97661649

E-mail: allimacx87@hotmail.com

APPENDIX 5 RESPONSE FROM THE NSD

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Miranda Thurston

Institutt for idrett og aktiv livsstil Høgskolen i Hedmark, campus Elverum

Postboks 400

2418 ELVERUM

Vår dato: 20.11.2014

Vår ref: 40451 / 3 / HIT

Deres dato:

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TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 23.10.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

40451

Sosial kapital på arbeidsplassen (Workplace Social Capital)

Behandlingsansvarlig

Høgskolen i Hedmark, ved institusjonens øverste leder

Daglig ansvarlig

Miranda Thurston

Student

Camilla Frydendahl

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Hildur Thorarensen

Kontaktperson: Hildur Thorarensen tlf: 55 58 26 54

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Camilla Frydendahl allimacx87@hotmail.com

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices:

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no

TRONDHEIM: NSD, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no

TROMSØ: NSD, SVF, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. nsdmaa@sv.uit.no

**PERSONVERNOMBUDET FOR FORSKNING**

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 40451

Utvalget informeres skriftlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet.

Det tas høyde for at det vil kunne bli registrert indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger (stemme i kombinasjon med navn på arbeidsplass).

Det tas høyde for at det vil kunne bli registrert sensitive opplysninger om helseforhold.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Høgskolen i Hedmark sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på privat pc/mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 30.06.2015. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger somf.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette lydopptak