

2020

## Previously Incarcerated Individuals' Perceptions of Decision-Making Leading to Their Solitary Confinement

Rita Pavone  
*Walden University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Law Commons](#), and the [Public Policy Commons](#)

---

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu](mailto:ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu).

# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Rita Pavone

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

## Review Committee

Dr. Clarence Williamson, Committee Chairperson,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Ian Cole, Committee Member,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. James Frampton, University Reviewer,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost  
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Previously Incarcerated Individuals' Perceptions of Decision-Making Leading to Their  
Solitary Confinement

by

Rita Pavone

MPhil, Walden University

MA, John Carroll University

Specialized BA, Università degli Studi di Catania

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2020

## Abstract

This study explored the issue of communication in prison systems in conjunction with an overextended utilization of isolation confinement methods. Using Sexton's conceptualization of the penal subjective consciousness model as a guide, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to better understand the experiences of confined offenders related to their experiences regarding the perspectives of prison officials based on a variety of factors including criminal background, social status, and programming needs. Data from semi-structured interviews with 25 participants addressed the process of communication between prison personnel and inmates from the time of incarceration through placement in isolation confinement, and then reentry into society. All interview data were transcribed, then subjected to a modified Van Kaam reduction procedure for coding and analysis. Findings revealed that preestablished assessments by prison personnel and interpersonal communication difficulties between prison staff and inmates might have contributed to isolation confinement decisions based on erroneous or flawed considerations. Furthermore, inconsistencies in terminology and classification of offenses might have generated opportunities for subjective evaluations and lack of appropriate and consistent approaches to punishment. The subjective consciousness model provided an explanation for the elaboration of expectations of severity in punishment as the constant reality experienced by confined offenders. Social change implications include recommendations to prison administrators to improve standards of communication and training in order to address specific needs and achieve consistency of administrative specifications that contribute to improvements in the decision-making process.

Previously Incarcerated Individuals' Perceptions of Decision-Making Leading to Their  
Solitary Confinement

by

Rita Pavone

MPhil, Walden University

MA, John Carroll University

Specialized BA, Università degli Studi di Catania

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2020

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	4
Problem Statement .....	5
Purpose of the Study .....	9
Research Questions .....	10
Interview Questions .....	10
Conceptual Framework.....	12
Nature of the Study .....	14
Definitions.....	16
Assumptions.....	18
Scope and Delimitations .....	19
Limitations .....	20
Significance.....	21
Summary .....	22
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	24
Problem Statement and Gaps in Research .....	27
Penal Subjective Consciousness Model and Conceptual Framework .....	31
Phenomenological Psychological Model and Constructivist Grounded Theory .....	36
Literature Review.....	37

Search Strategies .....	37
Background Characteristics .....	38
Diversity Peculiarities .....	41
Resulting Damages .....	48
Summary .....	51
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	53
Research Design and Rationale .....	56
Role of the Researcher .....	60
Methodology .....	62
Participants and Initial Timeline .....	65
Informed Consent.....	66
Interviews, Setting, Procedure, and Data Collection .....	68
Scientific Rigor .....	72
Research Questions .....	78
Interview Questions .....	79
Trustworthiness.....	80
Ethical Considerations .....	82
Protecting Study Participants.....	84
Summary .....	87
Chapter 4: Results .....	89
Setting and Challenges.....	92
Research Questions.....	96

Research Question 1 .....	98
Research Question 2 .....	99
Research Question 3 .....	100
Research Question 4 .....	100
Demographics .....	102
Data Collection .....	104
Data Analysis .....	105
Coding Strategies .....	110
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	117
Summary .....	122
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	123
Interpretation of the Findings.....	125
Considering Previous and Current Research .....	125
RQ1: Extent of Information Review at the Time of Incarceration .....	127
RQ2: Extent of Information Review During Incarceration and Leading to Isolation.....	129
RQ3: Terminology and Description of Isolation Confinement .....	133
RQ4: Extent of Information Consideration During Rehabilitation and Leading to Reentry.....	138
Context of Theoretical Framework.....	141
Limitations of the Study.....	143
Summary of Findings.....	145



Recommendations.....	146
Implications.....	148
Conclusion .....	149
References.....	151

## List of Tables

Table 1. Standard Demographic Questions .....	70
Table 2. Analysis Codes: Primary Sets and Child Codes .....	112
Table 3. Research Question 1 Findings .....	127
Table 4. Research Question 2 Findings .....	130
Table 5. Research Question 3 Findings .....	134
Table 6. Research Question 4 Findings .....	138

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Venn diagram on context of investigation and concepts with intersecting Relationships .....	35
Figure 2. Research question areas.....	97
Figure 3. Data analysis process.....	107
Figure 4. Distribution of study participants per ethnicity .....	109
Figure 5. Distribution of study participants per level of education .....	109
Figure 6. Analysis codes: Attention to medical issues in one third of study participants	11
Figure 7. Code weighting for interpersonal communication issues primary set.....	116
Figure 8. Breakdown of health conditions per age range .....	132

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Public policy and associated decision-making processes involve the recognition of a problem and the undertaking of investigational work, leading to an increased knowledge base for proposals of a course of action that considers the desired outcomes. The issues surrounding the application of isolation confinement methods within prison systems have attracted the attention of researchers and advocates in support of changes in seclusion practices. Several researchers have focused on the justification for, and effectiveness of, this practice (Bennion, 2015).

Many conversations have focused on violations of human and constitutional rights, the implementation of discriminatory practices, and the mishandling of mental health and physical disabilities. Gordon (2014) reported an increase in the frequency of isolation confinement practice for the past 28 years. The exposure to isolation presents a host of psychological outcomes ranging from anxiety and depression to cognitive and perceptual distortions and psychotic episodes (Hinds & Butler, 2015). Grassian's investigation of isolated prisoners in Massachusetts in the 1980s, Toch's *Mosaic of Despair* on the New York prison system in 1992, and Haney's research on the psychological effects of isolation in a security housing unit (also, commonly referred to as SHU) at Pelican Bay, California, in the 1990s, addressed the mental distress experienced by inmates in isolation confinement (Hinds & Butler, 2015). Senator John McCain characterized isolation confinement as an experience that "crushes your spirit and weakens your resistance more effectively than any other form of mistreatment" (Senate Judiciary Subcommittee, 2012, p. 8). Ex-offenders reentering society often

experience reduced quality of their overall health and compromised levels of functioning, which have been mostly attributed to the harsh reality of seclusion previously endured. Sensory deprivation, the absence of social interaction, and the psychological distress inmates experience while in isolation confinement cause long-term damages (National Research Council, 2014). Chronic stress affects the hippocampus, an area of the brain responsible for the process of memories shaping, learning, and emotions control. Individuals held in isolation confinement experience social deprivation and depression, which may further damage the functions of the hippocampus (Smith, 2018).

The current study has emerged from the contemporary discourse on the application of isolation confinement system in prison environments in the United States. The protection of inmates' rights has been supported by several organizations, including declarations in defense of human rights and dignity as proclaimed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (DeMarco, 2012). Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture has offered further substantiation regarding concerns on about isolation as a torture practice (see *Estelle v. Gamble* and *Graham v. Florida*), which has been evaluated as a punishment "grossly out of proportion to the severity of the crime" (Allen, 2011, p. 228). Furthermore, the court system has intervened when inmates' constitutional rights have been put at risk (see *Edmund LaChance v. Commissioner of Correction & others*, *Hadix v. Caruso*, and *In Re Medley*). The background and problem statement section of this chapter frame the issue of the application of isolation confinement methods from a reprimand perspective. Existing case

law has indicated a potentially arbitrary utilization of isolation confinement approaches (see *Ashker v. Governor of California*, as cited in *Zubiaur*, 2015).

The focus of this study was the investigation of a potentially discriminatory predicament in relation to circumstances experienced by a diverse pool of inmates, resulting in their arbitrary placement in isolation. In this research, I employed a qualitative method through the use of semi structured interviews with open-ended questions to gather information on individuals' perceptions and experiences. A phenomenological psychological model with the support of a constructivist grounded theory facilitated the collection of answers to the research questions and permitted an inductive process to take place from the analysis of the investigative results. A penal subjective consciousness model was used to understand and report from a descriptive standpoint the experiences of individuals who had faced isolation confinement. The conceptual framework provided the structure for an appreciation of the problem to be investigated, the direction of the inquiry, and the relationships among the study elements and concepts. Cognitive apprenticeship and metacognitive processes led to the organization of concepts and a network of associated categories for reference, so that innovative patterns would be discovered.

Recent literature has indicated a decline in the use of solitary confinement in U.S. prison systems. Advocacy groups have been working toward the elimination of supermax prisons and/or a decrease in the hours spent by inmates in isolation in favor of more time devoted to social activities (Boghani, 2017). Additional conversations have begun between penal systems' representatives and professionals in academics regarding prison

reforms (Byrd, 2019). However, the peculiarity of isolation confinement systems and the autonomy in decision-making constitute a reason for concerns in the context of this research. The use of terminology to define isolation containment (such as administrative segregation, separation, special management, regimentation, restricted housing, boxed-in, or 23/7) poses some questions as to the potential existence of bias and inconsistent forms of housing inmates in seclusion. Furthermore, the variety of existing terms suggests an assortment of views on the depiction and objective of an isolation confinement approach.

I established preliminary delimitations to manage the scope and boundaries of this study. Furthermore, I took into account assumptions from an ontological angle and the acceptance of a multifaceted reality expressed by a variety of perspectives (see Creswell, 2014). Limitations of this study referred to the sampling opportunity, the timeframe for completion of data collection, and the resources needed to complete the analysis of the research. These conditions normally have an impact on the generalization of results to a larger population.

### **Background**

According to Tonry (2013), American criminologist and Professor of Criminal Law and Policy with at the University of Minnesota Law School, a shift from an *indeterminate* sentencing, from 1930 to 1975, to a *determinate* sentencing, from 1975 to the mid-1980s, gradually expanded throughout the states and created a system that increasingly removed part of the decision-making power away from judicial agencies and parole boards. This realignment from a more flexible rehabilitation perspective to an emphasis on a fixed and harsh punishment might have departed from the concept of a

fairer penalty that matched the severity of the crime (Muenster & Trone, 2016). Furthermore, the use of isolation confinement was frequently witnessed in the case of inmates perceived as *uncontrollable* (*Madrid v. Gomez*) or on death row (Lurie, 2015). Isolation confinement was also applied in support of incapacitation methods intended to separate from society or from the general inmate population those individuals who were considered dangerous by prison administrators, when it came to pretrial circumstances (see *LaChance v. Commissioner of Correction*), although this type of seclusion was commonly considered “contrary to both the presumption of innocence and the principle of limited government authority” (Reid, 2014, p. 70). Additional categories of inmates likely falling into this predicament were individuals with previous political affiliations (see *Baraldini v. Thornburgh*, *Incumaa v. Stirling*, and *Wilkerson v. Stadler*). Other potential misconceptions of the inmate population’s environment of origin, linguistic and/or cultural differences, age-related dynamics, preexisting mental health issues (see *Anderson v. Colorado Department of Corrections* and *Anna O. v. State of New York*), and LGBTQ characteristics (see *Fields v. Smith* and *Gammatt v. Idaho State Board of Corrections*) produced challenging factors for prison staff to understand and apply without adequate training (Cloud, Drucker, Browne, & Parson, 2015).

### **Problem Statement**

Most of the research on mass incarceration and isolation confinement has been concentrated on conditions of seclusion involving the African American and Latino inmate population (Kilgore, 2012). Studies on the unfair access to mental health services have tracked mentally ill inmates within the U.S. prison system and have used types of



evaluations or tri-modal systems involving a combination of surveys and focus groups (Harner & Riley, 2013; Sarteschi, 2013). Some investigations have established a comprehensive approach via a compilation of answers to comprehensive surveys, such as in the case of the 2014 Black and Pink's 133-question inquiry distributed within the prison system (Lydon, Carrington, Low, Miller, & Yazdy, 2015). The Black and Pink's investigation explored a variety of areas characterized by demographic information, criminal paths, sexual orientation, and the social background of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) inmates. Solitary confinement was one of the issues examined in the study and primarily focused on opportunity, reason, and length of stay in seclusion. The above-mentioned research projects focused on one category of inmate population and/or explored a variety of issues affecting the life of incarcerated individuals.

Several researchers have used statistical information from prison institutions to examine the distribution of inmate population, the type of offenses leading to confinement, and the outcomes of this practice (Beck, 2015). Quasi-experimental approaches have addressed changes in internal prison safety and the impact of isolation confinement practices on self-harm infliction and possible violence among inmates and between prisoners and prison staff (Bulman, Garcia, & Hernon, 2012; Kaba et al., 2014). Data distribution patterns on seclusion numbers have reflected information from inmate files and/or have been based on a collection of prison administrators' perspectives on the rationale used for placement in isolation confinement (Kaeble & Gaze, 2016). The relationship between segregation and institutional misconduct was addressed by

Labrecque's (2015) research on inmates in the Ohio Department of Corrections and Morris's (2016) investigation using a propensity score matching (PSM) system (Frost & Monteiro, 2016). Smith, Gendreau and Labrecque (2015) opted for quantitative meta-analysis that combined evidence from previous investigations for the purpose of estimating an overall measure of isolation confinement outcomes.

The above-mentioned empirical approaches primarily relied on preexisting data without addressing the sources of the inconsistencies in the application of seclusion methods and the experiences of the inmates who suffered as a result (Muenster & Trone, 2016). At the time of the current study, researchers had not evaluated consequences of missed or significantly delayed rehabilitation opportunities that could have been available to inmates prior to their falling into their segregation predicament (Hinds & Butler, 2015). Furthermore, existing literature has not fully captured the significance of potentially subjective criteria for placement of prisoners in isolation confinement and the degree of awareness of the inmates' suffering by prison administrators and staff ("The Psychology of Cruelty," 2015).

The current study extended the inquiry to the issues concerning the overextended utilization of isolation confinement methods. In particular, I explored a potential link between the demonstrated or perceived manifestation of an inmate's origin, background, affiliation, needs, or other characteristics and the resulting inequitable evaluations of prison officials that may result in a hasty and injudicious placement of the inmate in isolation confinement. The purpose of this study was to broaden the discourse on the diverse population of previous offenders, contributing to positive social change by

providing multidimensional insights. This qualitative study provided a voice to previous inmates who were able to share perspectives on the circumstances that caused their placement in isolation confinement. The focus of this exploration was to shed light on the possibility that prison officials would make errors in judgment or lack an accurate evaluation of the circumstances, consequently causing an overreaching application of isolation confinement practices.

Health care professionals working in prison systems may not be in the position to provide the best physical and mental care possible to a high number of inmates who are at risk of being placed in seclusion or are already held in isolation. Health care workers' ethical standards are likely to continue to clash with the disciplinary priorities of the prison system, particularly in cases of a perceived need for medical attention and/or an immediate danger of harm caused by the placement and custody of inmates in confinement (Shaley, 2008). Moreover, the 2015 report issued by the National Prison Rape Elimination Act Resource Center, a joint project of the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, validated the concerns that placement in isolation confinement "can create or exacerbate serious mental health problems and assaultive or anti-social behavior, and lead to decreases in physical health and functioning" (Hastings et al., 2015, as cited in Appelbaum, 2015, p. 410).

Ignoring the long-term health consequences of isolation confinement has complicated the discourse on public health concerning the attainment of a healthy life, which should take place via the betterment of social and structural contexts, as well as the dismantlement of societal violence. The achievement of significant improvements would

require a comprehensive approach to the recognition of the root causes and the implementation of preventive techniques (Cloud et al., 2015). Finally, the nature of transcendental intersubjectivity of a person's world and experiences rely on the individual's perceptions, "social cognition and relations to others" (Gallagher, 2014, p. 2). The prolonged application of isolation confinement methods will continue to deprive inmates of both basic and sophisticated opportunities for adequate physical mobility, sensory awareness, and appropriate connection to the world, therefore compromising prisoners' future successful return to society (Appelbaum, 2015).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This research addressed the predicament involving isolation confinement from a new approach that will close the gap in consideration of the increasing diversity range in the inmate population. The inquiry on the seclusion experience took place within a qualitative paradigm that included the ontological perspective of a subjective nature of a participant's experiences and the epistemological assumption in relation to the researcher's participation in the process and interpretation process (see Buthe & Jacobs, 2015; Scotland, 2012).

The purpose of this study was to broaden the discourse on the diverse population of offenders who end up in isolation confinement following a potential misconstruction of their origins, backgrounds, affiliations, and needs. The lack of understanding and evaluation of the prisoners' diverse traits and circumstances might translate into a hasty placement in isolation confinement, therefore adding another layer of disadvantages, because life in confinement creates a long-lasting state of mental disability (Demarco,

2012). Furthermore, the background characteristics of isolation confinement systems, the unethical treatment of prisoners, the physical and mental health consequences might be at the root of the challenges ex-offenders face at the time of reentry in society should they become eligible for rehabilitation during their stay in prison (Lowen & Isaacs, 2012).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions (RQs) were related to main problem statement areas I intended to examine:

RQ1: According to interviewees' accounts, to what extent did the information about inmates' background, health, and needs appear to be available to prison administrators and staff at the time of incarceration?

RQ2: According to interviewees' accounts, how did prison administrators and staff appear to view inmates' specific needs or requests prior to and up to the time of placement in isolation confinement?

RQ3: What types of terminology and adjustments are used to describe isolation confinement methods and practices within prison systems?

RQ4: If rehabilitation and reentry into society programs were available, what types of conversations occurred between prison administrators/staff and prisoners in reference to inmates' background, health, and needs?

### **Interview Questions**

The use of open-ended interview questions allowed for an advancement in inquiry opportunities, based on the study participants' openness to exploration of a given question:

1. Please indicate which category/categories you believe describes/describe you:  
Diversity of backgrounds, needs, mental health, physical health, religion, political affiliation, gang affiliation, language or educational difficulties, or other.
2. Explain how any information about your background, health condition, affiliation with an organization or belief, or other relevant characteristic was discussed and addressed by prison administrators and staff at the time of your incarceration.
3. Discuss what types of assistance or counseling, if any, were available to inmates at the time of your incarceration.
4. Explain what conversations, if any, took place between prison administrators or staff and you in reference to any area concerning your background and needs prior to your being placed in isolation confinement.
5. Describe the situation(s) or incident(s) that caused you to be placed in isolation confinement.
6. Describe whether there was any communication with prison administrators or staff as to your specific needs or requests during the period of isolation confinement.
7. Discuss the types of terminology used by prison administrators and staff to indicate what types of segregation or seclusion and associated arrangements the prison system had in place.

8. Describe your understanding of the types of segregation or seclusion and associated arrangements your prison system had in place.
9. Discuss what types of rehabilitation and/or reentry into society program were available at the prison institution.
10. Explain what kind of exchanges, if any, occurred with prison administrators and staff as to your experience in isolation confinement.
11. Describe any conversations you had with prison administrators and staff about your background, health condition, affiliation with an organization or belief, or other relevant characteristic prior to your being released.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A theoretical framework permits the alignment of the investigational problem with the objective and assists the researcher in making sense of the phenomenon under investigation through a pattern of organized concepts and standards (Tavallaei & Abu Talib, 2010; Lederman & Lederman, 2015). The theoretical base holds together and justifies the rationale, objective, relevance, and questions for a study. The choice of a theoretical framework reflects “personal beliefs and understandings about the nature of knowledge” (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 13). Although the framework is organized as a systematic configuration, this structure encompasses a certain degree of creativity by initially working as an outline and maintaining its provisional status until a more methodical evaluation of the phenomenon is rendered (Imenda, 2014).

In this study, I explored the diversity of perspectives and the level of elaboration of isolation experiences through a structure that allowed the expression of the

participants' voices (see Sexton, 2015). A penal subjective consciousness model was used as the ideal approach to incorporate the perceptions and experiences of individuals who used to be held in isolation confinement, particularly as they relate to an emphasis on the dimensions of a harsher concrete and symbolic punishment orientation of a criminal justice system that has been favoring severe reprimand over rehabilitation techniques (see Frederique & Sexton, 2014; Sexton, 2015). Therefore, the penal subjective consciousness model supported the investigation and description of the phenomenon explored in the study (Mathia, & Gumbo, 2015).

In addition, I used a conceptual framework that provided a speculative opportunity to map the research phases and procedures, as well as the categories to investigate. Under a conceptual framework, a researcher understands how the problem can be investigated, the direction of the investigation, and the relationships among the study variables (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). As an integrated structure, this approach makes sense of a group of concepts and proposes an inductive path to explore and evaluate an event (Imenda, 2014). Scaffolding allows the utilization of a series of steps to achieve a higher degree of knowledge, cognitive apprenticeship, or metacognitive processes (An & Cao, 2014). Therefore, the organization of concepts and the associated categories of reference serve as a guide to scaffolding opportunities with the objective of discovering innovative patterns in the investigated context (Wener & Woodgate, 2013). In the literature review chapter, a Venn diagram illustrates the intersecting relationships among key elements of this framework, covering various areas involving the history of isolation confinement, the diversity of needs and backgrounds, the physical and psychological



damages, additional traumas, coping mechanisms, as well as the effects on potential rehabilitation opportunities. Scaffolding mechanisms and related cognitive processes establish a path to learning survival opportunities and a reconciliation of traumatic events, which may be in synchronicity or in severe contrast with the discovery of the answers to the themes posed by the research questions.

### **Nature of the Study**

Social science field theories provide ideal models in individual, organizational, and group contexts of investigation on the merit of their flexibility in approach and consideration for multiple perspectives (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Tavallaei & Abu Talib, 2010). Qualitative research techniques allow the researcher to be part of the study and communicate directly with the investigation participants, who provide their account of the experiences as a more personal view of the phenomenon of isolation confinement (Higgins, 2009; Latham, 2014). The recognition of a problem-based research and the utilization of qualitative research methods are fundamental tools for the exploration of an issue with the objective to discover the reasons of the occurrence and to arrive at potential answers or solutions (Englander, 2012).

I used a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions for the collection of information on participants' perceptions and experiences at the time of their isolation confinement. Study participants were recruited in a South Central geographical area in Texas and were individuals who had spent a considerable amount of their prison time in isolation confinement, often several weeks to a few

months, but who were also later eligible for rehabilitation and reentry programs into society.

The qualitative approach to the study enabled the collection of data for an idiographic knowledge base on themes of behaviors and emotions. Idiographic methods have been used in psychology and personality fields to analyze and establish patterns of relationships or associations and to better understand personality traits and developmental processes (Anney, 2014). The participants' responses to open-ended questions were uploaded and analyzed using computer-aided qualitative data analysis software. The data were processed for coding purposes and to complete the search of relationships among concepts. The creation of a concept map assisted me in building a coding scheme for the final analysis and reporting (Miner-Romanoff, 2012).

This study benefitted from a social ecological approach, specifically, the phenomenological psychological model, which has been useful in projects that require the compilation of vivid accounts by the study participants. Aside from clinical and scientific assessments, descriptive accounts within the phenomenological psychological model establish a structure of the phenomenon investigated and provide an additional source of valuable information on isolation confinement experiences by highlighting perceptions and behaviors and how events cause a variety of reactions and behaviors (see Englander, 2012; Glanz & Bishop, 2010). The stories useful in the discovery process of both the psychological effects of isolation practices and the "existential commentary on the impact of the practice" (Hinds & Butler, 2015, p. 13).

Expressive accounts by the study participants are reflectively analyzed by the researcher, who discovers themes and provides a structure for interpretation of the findings, as “supported by appropriate intuitive validations” (Finlay, 2009, p. 11). The phenomenological psychological approach was suitable for this research, since the aim was to “describe what we find to belong to psychological subjectivity as it appears, or is experienced...[and] the evaluative, ethical, emotive, and aesthetic aspects that previously had been excluded from our narrow natural-scientific focus on causality” (Davidson, 2003, as cited in Englander, 2016, p. 4). Rather than utilizing a research approach that merely filled the voids of a predeterminate orientation, I used a model that allowed for a more creative perspective stemming from the study participants’ accounts of their perceptions and experiences, therefore establishing the foundations for a knowledge base that was expressed in an advancing direction as to insight and innovative assessment (see Cosmelli & Preiss, 2014). Furthermore, a constructivist grounded theory foundation allowed an inductive process from the analysis of the data to produce a potential theoretical explanation (see Bhattacharjee, 2012). This approach served my objective to achieve an understanding of the meaning of the events experienced by the study participants in terms of “a world made real in the minds and through the words and actions of its members” (Charmaz, 2000, as cited in Glaser, 2012, para. 33).

### **Definitions**

Prison administrators have often preferred the designation of administrative/disciplinary segregation instead of solitary confinement when indicating the types of restraining action exercised on inmates and in a likely effort to circumvent

the debate over the use and consequences of the latter choice of terms (Frost & Monteiro, 2016). Theoretically, administrative segregation is a nonpunitive form of separation of a prisoner from the general inmate population, while disciplinary segregation refers to a manner of separation in response to an inmate's noncompliance with internal prison standard of conduct. A special management unit (SMU) may comprise include both an administrative section and a disciplinary division. In reality, many SMUs also keep inmates in solitary confinement (National Immigrant Justice Center & Physicians for Human Rights, 2012, as cited in Shahshahani & El-Sergany, 2013).

The concept of solitary confinement encompasses at least three types of containment: (a) punitive segregation for violating prison rules, (b) protective custody for individuals who would otherwise be at risk in the general inmate population, and (c) administrative segregation in the case of inmates who could harm others. The difference among the three categories has become somewhat imprecise in many prison environments where decisions are often made according to lax or rather arbitrary standards (Gottschalk, 2016). The American Bar Association has classified long-term solitary confinement as an internment that lasts longer than 30 days. This arrangement has become frequent in the case of inmates "awaiting a murder sentence, attempted escapees, violent offenders, and prisoners with mental health issues" (The New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty & The ACLU of New Mexico, 2013, p. 5).

Closed custody units, departmental disciplinary units, and management control units are among the alternative terms used to describe solitary confinement, which enforces social and sensory deprivation due to the physical and psychological restrictions

imposed on inmates. In fact, Grassian's research in the 1980s generated the discovery of the secure housing unit (SHU) syndrome, which manifested in hypersensitivity, concentration and memory problems, panic attacks, paranoia, and perceptual alterations among the consequences of prisoners' exposure to prolonged isolation confinement (Story, 2014). Prison administrators and staff appear to have some degree of latitude in deciding which inmates to place in isolation, as well as the length of seclusion time, commonly recurring to a tactic referred to as "a pre-emptive strategy...[and] routine and cynical perversion of penological principles" (King, 1999, as cited in Kerr, 2015, p. 498).

### **Assumptions**

A constructivist grounded theory foundation to this research favored an inductive process and methodological assumptions through the examination of the data and interpretation of the resulting categories with the ultimate opportunity to substantiate a theoretical explanation (Cooper, Chenail, & Fleming, 2012). The nature of the experiences by the interviewees was subjective and proposed from a variety of angles, in accordance to ontological assumptions. I accepted the reality produced and shared by the study participants' accounts and assumed the veracity of the experience description (see Scotland, 2012). The production of an evaluation was based on the understanding of the resulting information under the expectation that the study participants were honest and forthcoming in sharing their experiences and perspectives. This was made possible by the fact that interviews were offered on a voluntary basis and that the study participants had the prerogative to be excused from further sharing of their perspectives if they felt uncomfortable with particular questions or with the overall process at any point during

the exchange. Furthermore, the interviewees were reassured that their identity would be concealed, and other personal information would be kept confidential at all times. Finally, there was a recognition that the reality of isolation confinement experience would be fundamentally subjective in nature and that the resulting analysis might not reveal a fixed or predictable outcome (Creswell, 2014).

Epistemological notions allow a researcher to directly interact with study participants. The interactions provide a sense of the participants' meaningful perceptions of their reality, thus facilitating the creation of the basis for a new knowledge that can assist in "understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (Ahmed, 2008, p. 3). The foundations of the study assumptions cannot be confirmed or refuted, because the considered patterns derive from a diverse pool of perspectives and generate various levels of reality and data (Scotland, 2012). Procedure transparency and a discussion about the limitations of the study provide a platform for suggested generalizations and/or additional investigative efforts (Buthe & Jacobs, 2015; Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010).

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The research problem is of an ongoing nature, since the issue of isolation confinement continues to affect a large prison population. This qualitative research collected information on the perceptions and experiences of previously incarcerated persons in relation to their diverse background and the consequent quandary resulting in isolation placement. I did not include statistical data from prison administrators' perspectives, quasi-experimental approaches, or meta-analysis collections. The number of participants for the study was expected to be between 25 and 30 individuals, with

recruitment primarily sought through contacts with non-profit organizations in the South-Central geographical area in Texas. I decided not to collect information from individuals living outside the selected geographical boundaries, due to budget and time constraints. Although the research outcomes produced a valuable perspective on this subject, the transferability of the findings was not an expectation of this investigation. The lack of a longitudinal study and the geographical limitations of this study provided an opportunity to benefit from the analysis of a narrowed context. A broader study would have to take into consideration a diverse realm of elements and a continuous two-way interactive practice, which could be peculiar to a future environment of investigation (Leung, 2015).

### **Limitations**

As an ethical researcher, I took into consideration elements that were out of my control, particularly in the area of sampling, time, and analysis considerations, which could reduce the degree of generalization of the study results to a larger population. I was aware that there might be limitations in the provision of sensitive information or gaps in comprehension of the informed consent and/or interview questions (Valera, Cook, Macklin, & Chang, 2014). This study provided a snapshot of the population, given the limitations in time and the geographical constraints of the research. The phenomenological approach includes intrinsic limitations, due to the lack of replicability opportunity in an analogous natural setting (Simon & Goes, 2013).

In addition, there could have been the potential for biases in the interpretation of the study results, as well as in extending the findings beyond the context of the observation sample. An empathetic position toward the study participants and the

expression of their experiences was supported by the application of an interpretative phenomenological approach (Bhattacharjee, 2012). A process of self-reflection and transparency provided for an elucidation of the procedures and collection and analysis tools used in this study. This position could also be fundamental in preparation for potential study limitations, which surfaced at the time of analysis and discussion of the study outcomes.

### **Significance**

Given the interest in isolation confinement issues under the phenomenon of mass incarceration, this project represented a unique perspective by providing multidimensional insight on the predicaments of a diverse inmate population in terms of distinctive origins, backgrounds, affiliations, and needs. The investigative focus and direction were supported by case law, legal standards, and internationally recognized instruments for the protection of human rights as well as the Mandela Rules (Manduric, 2015; Shaley, 2008). Furthermore, fundamental ethical and legal principles of reference throughout the research project have been proven to be fundamental for a continuous effort toward “a paradigm of retribution to one of healing and transformative justice that seeks to restore wholeness to individuals and communities” (Kerness, 2012, p. 4).

The study contributed to positive social change by offering policymakers and other decision-making groups in the criminal justice sector valuable information for revisions and improvements in isolation confinement application criteria. Furthermore, the results could promote effective training programs directed to prison administrators and staff in terms of recognition of diversity elements in prison populations and how to



handle prison populations competently. Furthermore, this investigation contributed to an enhanced discourse on incarcerated individuals' backgrounds/needs and experiences while in isolation, with consideration of the potential impact of the isolation confinement experience on the reentry phase into the community.

### **Summary**

The issue of confinement assignment remains a contemporary issue during conversations of criminal justice reforms. The purpose of this study was to broaden the discourse on the diverse population of previously incarcerated individuals, who had experienced isolation confinement as a possible consequence of a misconstruction of their backgrounds and needs. I used a qualitative approach to explore interviewees' perceptions and experiences at the time of their isolation confinement. A penal subjective consciousness model and cognitive apprenticeship or metacognitive processes were used to examine the phenomenon and explore a network of relationships among the elements and concepts surfacing from the study. Although some initial limitations and delimitations were indicated, the report of the study outcomes also included additional obstacles and restrictions encountered in the process.

Chapter 2 presents the current literature on isolation confinement issues, practices, terminology to describe seclusion methods, and groups affected by these methods in prison systems. A Venn diagram (presented as Figure 1 in Chapter 2) is offered as an illustration of intersecting relationships among various experiences of the study participants and the outcomes. The discourse on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks is provided in support of an inductive process and analysis. The literature

review provides a comprehensive justification for this study and encourages continued conversation on the current utilization of isolation confinement methods.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This research addressed the circumstances leading to isolation confinement in consideration of an assortment of definitions of the practice and the diversity range pertaining to the inmates' origins, backgrounds, affiliations, and needs. This investigation was needed in light of the subjective application of isolation confinement practices. The goal of this project was to contribute to social change policies by enhancing the discourse on potential predicaments deriving from misunderstandings between prison staff and inmates.

Current literature has illustrated the magnitude of the issues surrounding the utilization of isolation confinement practices in U.S. prison systems. Although confinement methods have existed throughout the history of U.S. correctional systems, their application and frequency have increased over the past two decades. This situation has generated a variety of approaches to the utilization of the seclusion methods, causing controversial opinions on the utilization and validity of the same (Weir, 2012). The American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project has been among the initiatives addressing isolation processes regarding whether they have infringed on constitutional and human rights, often on the grounds of improper mental health care and human propriety. Prison health professionals have continued to share communicated their ethical dilemma of balancing the need to voice concerns and the resulting inferred endorsement of isolation methods once their efforts have not produced the desired results (Rienzi, 2015).

Research projects on the phenomenon of isolation confinement have focused on seclusion conditions experienced by the African American and Latino inmate populations and by mentally disabled individuals (Kilgore, 2012; Sarteschi, 2013). The issue has become more complex and further investigation was needed considering a broader range of the prison population affected by isolation confinement practices. In 2013, the U.S. Government Accountability Office's GAO-13-429 report identified at least three types of segregation units (special housing units, special management units, and administrative maximum) and inquired as to the Bureau of Prison's trends, application of policies, and compliance with monitoring guidelines. The agency's investigational effort has contributed to the broader discourse on the multiplicity of terms describing isolation confinement, such as administrative segregation, separation, special management, regimentation, restricted housing, boxed-in, or 23/7 (Metcalf, Morgan, Oliker-Friedland, Resnik, Spiegel, Tae, Work, & Holbrook, 2013). Given that a variety of opinions exists regarding the purpose and specifications of isolation, a potential ambivalence of the penal intervention has been generated in various contexts of operation and within the complexity of an assorted prison population (Birkbeck, 2011; Carson & Sabol, 2016).

The selection of the appropriate theoretical model and conceptual framework provided the foundation for the study. A supporting structure provides an opportunity for a researcher to build a set of explanations for the event under study, while elevating the discourse for a higher degree of knowledge achievement (Ngulube, Mathipa, & Gumbo, 2015). This section discusses the penal subjective consciousness model adopted for this study as a theoretical framework that establishes the necessary boundaries and elements

for the project. Sexton developed the penal consciousness theoretical framework during a qualitative study on the interpretation of punishment experienced by a group of inmates in three Ohio State prison systems (Frederique & Sexton, 2014; Sexton, 2015). An integrated and analytical conceptual structure allows a researcher to make sense of the event under investigation and connect the emerging concepts from the study and the resulting relationships. Cognitive apprenticeship and metacognitive processes are possible through a series of scaffolding techniques leading to a further degree of knowledge acquisition (An & Cao, 2014).

The current literature review explains the project's focus in the evolution and application of isolation confinement methods, illustrating the urgency to investigate how background diversity may unfavorably affect inmates placed in forced seclusion (Hinds & Butler 2015). A better understanding of the utilization and expansion of isolation confinement practices can be achieved through the analysis of several elements: the increase in numbers of inmates in isolation confinement for the past decade, a philosophical and religious transformation beginning in the late 18th century shifting from self-reflection and rehabilitation to a restoration of a punishment objective, and the appeal to human rights focusing on the concept of torture and possible violations of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Cloud et al., 2015; Davila-Ruhaak, Schwinn, & The John Marshall Law School Human Rights Project, 2014; Honigsberg, 2014). Resulting damages from forced seclusion have been discussed in their physical and psychiatric ranges, as well as coping mechanisms that are a form of self-preservation

often leading to additional damaging behaviors (Gabdreeva, 2015; Hinds & Butler, 2015).

A misinterpretation of diversity peculiarities has been proposed among possible reasons for isolation confinement arrangements, often revealing that the terminology for confinement systems, such as security management units, security housing units, and administrative maximum, confirm a degree of ambivalent and arbitrary use of seclusion facilities and practice (Metcalf et al., 2013; Reiter, 2012). Additional areas of concern pertain to misconstruction of individuals' backgrounds and needs, punishment for assorted ranges of violations of prison rules, and potential lack of adequate training for the prison staff (Cloud et al., 2015). The evolving legal framework demonstrates that the courts have intervened and expressed opinions on the legality of the isolation confinement procedures, as well as on the damages inflicted by seclusion practices. Furthermore, rights advocates and lawmaking entities have become involved in this discourse. Their efforts have resulted in investigational efforts and consequent policy proposals (American Legislative Exchange Council, 2019).

### **Problem Statement and Gaps in Research**

In an investigation on crime and punishment, Reid (2014) wrote about “the rule of proportionality and restorative justice” (p. 6) in the context of the objectives of punishment practices. This concept evolved in the course of several decades, from Kant’s view on retribution to the 2002 Rome Statute’s expressed opinion on deterrence by the International Criminal Court. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the concept of “danger to the community” (Reid, 2014, p. 24) arose in support of incapacitation methods and/or

rehabilitation practices. This evolution was based on early discussions in 1979 about the need for probation methods and by the 1978 Article 10(3) of the American Convention on Human Rights regarding social reformation and the assertion of “punishments consisting of deprivation of liberty” (Reid, 2014, p. 30).

Muenster and Trone (2016) discussed the prominence of an austere punishment tendency in the past three decades on the part of U.S. prison systems in the handling of inmates. Several factors contributed to the emphasis on the retribution practices, including high recidivism rates and the impression that rehabilitation might be linked to inconsistencies among various types of sentencing decisions (Bennion, 2015). In many prison institutions, punishment has become a standard cure for all or most instances of poor behavior and violations (Reid, 2014). Placement in administrative segregation or isolation confinement is normally established by the administration staff in response to an institutional infringement, for prison population management reasons, and following an internal incident requiring an immediate order restoration (O’Keefe et al., 2013). Additional explanations given by prison administrators include the need to protect a vulnerable inmate against a possible assault by other prisoners, the requirement to hold an inmate until final classification or transfer, and the opportunity to isolate the prisoner until a sanction is administered or the date of the hearing approaches. Underlying these reasons is the discretion for variations in “duration and conditions of confinement” (Beck, 2015, p. 2).

Most of the research concerning mass incarceration and isolation confinement has been concentrated on conditions of seclusion involving the African American and Latino

inmate population. Investigators have provided accounts on the development and explanations surrounding seclusion practices via the use of historical accounts and the criminalization of labor theory (Kerness & Bissonette Lewey, 2014; Kilgore, 2012).

Studies on lowered or denied access to adequate mental health services have utilized evaluations, or tri-modal systems, involving a combination of surveys and focus groups (Harner & Riley, 2013; Sarteschi, 2013). O'Keefe et al. (2013) investigated whether psychological damages occurred, or a worsening of mental issues took place as a result of administrative segregation. The study utilized a Brief Symptom Inventory to evaluate a series of psychiatric constructs after the inmates indicated the level of distress experienced for each of the proposed categories and for a given timeframe. O'Keefe used a multi-level modeling was finally employed to statistically analyze the patterns of answers in this longitudinal project.

Some investigations have established a comprehensive approach to the understanding of inmates' experiences during incarceration and isolation confinement. In 2014, Black and Pink, a prison abolitionist group, conducted a 133-question inquiry through surveys distributed within the U.S. prison system. The research explored a variety of areas characterizing demographic information, criminal path and pre-trial, sexual orientation and social background of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) inmates. Solitary confinement was one of the portions of the study and focused on opportunity, reason, and length of stay in seclusion (Lydon, Carrington, Low, Miller, & Yazdy, 2015).



Data distribution patterns on seclusion numbers have reflected information from inmate files and/or have been based on a collection of prison administrators' files and perspectives. The National Corrections Reporting Program and the National Prisoner Statistics Program provide a wealth of information that is compiled from administrative archives, inmates' records, and prison systems statistics. A broader collection of prisoners' characteristics has been possible using surveys for the purpose of estimates calculation and verification of distribution patterns among races or ethnic groups in prison systems (Carson & Sabol, 2016). Research on incidence of self-harm episodes was conducted via the examination of medical records of inmates in the New York jail system from 2010 through 2013. A propensity for mental illness and an extended stay in isolation confinement involving more Latino and White prisoners, compared to African American inmates, were revealed following the application of logistic regression models in order to establish ratios and a 95% confidence interval to be used for forecast purposes (Kaba *et al.*, 2014).

Quasi-experimental approaches have been concerned with changes in internal safety and have investigated the impact of isolation confinement practices on possible violence among inmates and between prisoners and prison staff. The relationship between segregation and institutional misconduct was addressed by Labrecque's research on inmates in the Ohio Department of Corrections and Morris' investigation using a propensity score matching (PSM) system (Muenster & Trone, 2016). Further studies by Labrecque, Smith, Lovins, and Latessa (2014) and by Gendreau and Labrecque (2015) opted for meta-analysis approaches that have quantitatively combined evidence from

previous investigations for the purpose of estimating an overall measure of isolation confinement outcomes (Frost & Monteiro, 2016). Marie Gottschalk, political scientist and criminal justice researcher, confirmed that disparities in the criminal justice system have often investigated and reported through the use of statistical models. The above-mentioned empirical approaches did not examine the sources of the inconsistencies in the application of seclusion methods and the experiences of the inmates who suffered as a result (Muenster & Trone, 2016).

### **Penal Subjective Consciousness Model and Conceptual Framework**

According to Lederman and Lederman (2015), the purpose of a *theoretical framework* is to provide a guiding structure to support the answers to the problem investigated and demonstrate the viability of the approach utilized in the unraveling of the study results. Theoretical frameworks have been used in social science contexts for the investigation of a phenomenon within a set of established boundaries and elements that are necessary for an effective study organization. Maxfield and Babbie (2012) discussed the main goals of criminal justice research in terms of elaboration of association among elements and/or the exploration of events with the intention of providing explanations or for discovery purposes. A theoretical model is a valuable foundation in the pursuit of enlightenments on phenomena, behaviors, and contexts to be studied. It provides a guiding structure in the process of satisfying the study questions requirements and advances knowledge and discovery (Lederman & Lederman, 2015; Ngulube, Mathipa, & Gumbo, 2015).

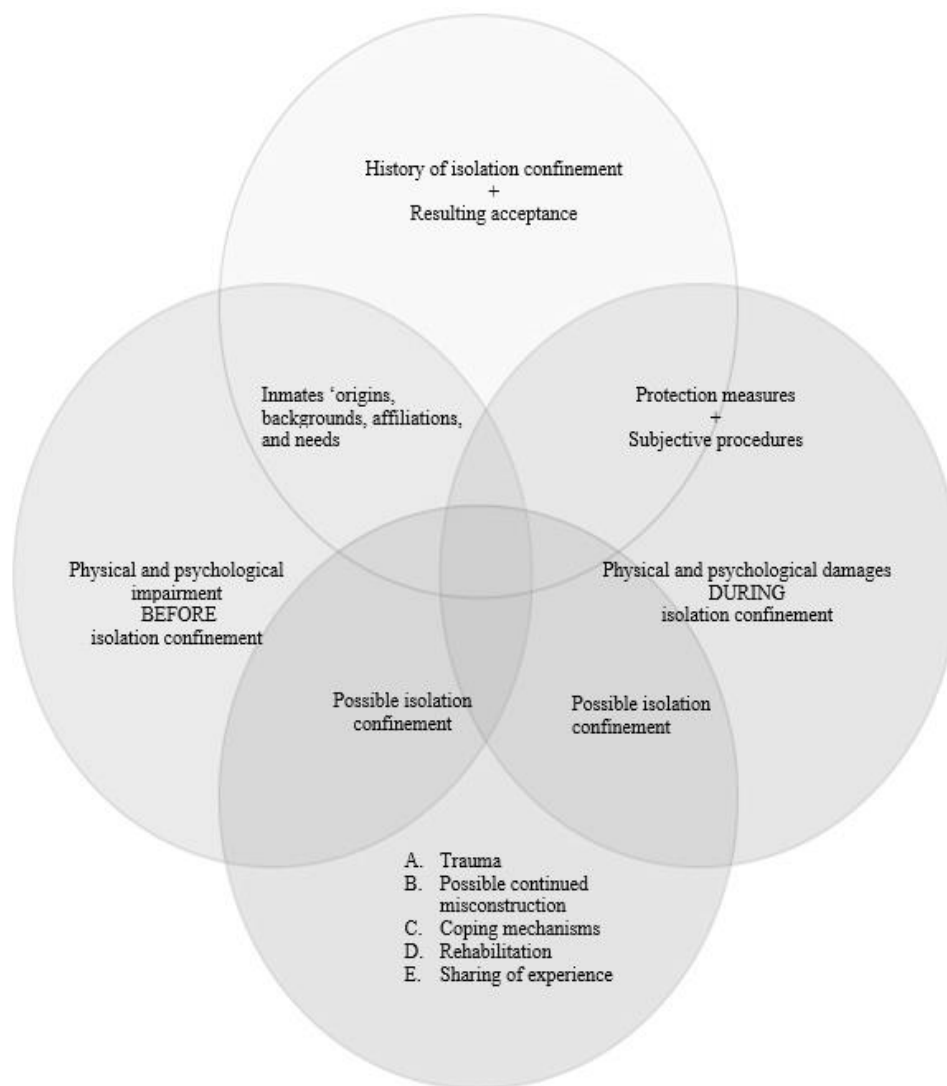
This research utilized a *penal subjective consciousness model*, which was originally developed by researcher Lori Sexton, following her 2010-2012 study on the incarceration and isolation confinement experiences of 80 inmates in three Ohio State prison systems. Her qualitative research utilized a series of interviews to understand how prisoners interpreted the punishment they had received. The subjectivity of the inmates in the evaluation of the punishment received had to be considered in order to conceptualize and assess the totality of their experience. Sexton developed a penal consciousness theoretical framework to support her investigation of the inmates' elaboration of the concrete and symbolic retribution received (Frederique & Sexton, 2014; Sexton, 2015). Deriving from the *attention schema theory*, subjective consciousness is a fundamental element in the investigation of a personal elaboration of stimuli and events in internal and external environments. Furthermore, this model can be used to supply testable forecasts. The concept of subjective consciousness is associated with the notion that a subject may not be in tune with a phenomenon or may recognize a situation and respond to certain cues to elaborate the context (Webb & Graziano, 2015). This research intended to evaluate the relationship between the diversity of the inmates' perspectives and the degree of elaboration of isolation experiences via a configuration that supports the expression of the participants' voices (Sexton, 2015).

Vithoukias and Muresanu (2014) discussed the role of consciousness in the utilization of the five senses and a tendency to analyze leading to emotions, memorization, and creative adaptations of the reality that individual experience. Knowledge from events is processed in a subjective conscious manner that cannot be

evaluated under a rigid scientific test, given that standard assessment criteria can be challenging to establish and apply to all individuals, as well as the fact that variations may occur in the case of the same individual and depending on the event and timeframe (Campana & Tallon-Baudry, 2013). Subjective consciousness and interpretation were significant models to consider in approaching the sensitive topic of isolation confinement experience. These paradigms allowed a better comprehension of the nuances of the seclusion punishment as it was perceived by the study participants, particularly in consideration of their elaboration of the concepts of fairness and harshness of the penalty, the degree of uncertainty, the psychological and physical harm, and the role of self-regulation or coping mechanisms.

Sexton's (2015) research focused on the prisoners' narratives on the severity and relevance of punishment in the context of their perception of what constituted their reality of their current existence. The use of semi-structured interviews allows individuals to express how they conceptualize the type of reprimand they have received and to describe their overall experiences. The utilization of this information collection instrument provided additional data on perception of punishment beyond the placement in isolation confinement, such as in the case of lack of medical treatment, inadequate nutrition, and/or other deprivations the prisoners suffered. Furthermore, procedural application inconsistencies on the part of the prison institution staff surfaced as compounding and destabilizing elements leading to consciousness state space (CSS) dimension, defining and shaping the level of awareness and behavior of the affected individual (Berkovich-Ohana & Glicksohn, 2014; Sexton, 2015).

In this review of the literature, the conceptual framework guided me in establishing the direction of the investigation and the relationships among the study variables (Bambale, 2014; Grant & Osanloo, 2014). This conceptual structure allowed me to attain a complex pattern of associations, particularly via cognitive apprenticeship and metacognitive processes, ultimately producing innovative interpretative models by recommending an inductive path to explore and evaluate the impact of the model on the investigated phenomenon (Imenda, 2014; Wener & Woodgate, 2013). The account of the interviews for this study offered “an enlightening story about some phenomenon, one that gives you new insights and broadens your understanding of that phenomenon” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 49). An and Cao (2014) indicated the opportunity for researchers to implement cognitive apprenticeship or metacognitive processes in order to achieve a higher degree of knowledge via scaffolding techniques. Scaffolding is particularly important in the process of learning about a subject matter and the related environment and also permits the application of a series of tools to achieve a higher level of knowledge or cognitive apprenticeship (Ngulube, Mathipa, & Gumbo, 2015; Wener & Woodgate, 2013). In Figure 1, a Venn Diagram illustrates the fundamental elements of the context investigated and an initial shaping conceptualization of possible connections among the events experienced by the study participants.



*Figure 1.* Venn diagram on context of investigation and concepts with intersecting relationships.

### **Phenomenological Psychological Model and Constructivist Grounded Theory**

This study benefitted from a social ecological model, as a typical approach of qualitative research in social science investigation and criminal justice research. Specifically, the *phenomenological psychological model* has been vital in projects that report the experiences of the research participants in the context of the phenomenon under study. This model analyzed consciousness and perceptions of the study participants and brought to light how behaviors were affected by the environment of operation and how interactions at multiple levels contributed to individuals' conduct and reactions (Glanz & Bishop, 2010; Sexton, 2015).

The use of interviews in this study offered an opportunity to gather information on the experiences and perceptions of the participants, who had previously experienced isolation confinement for extended periods of their prison stay. The exceptional benefit of this approach was that “qualitative interview-based data also provide the answer in an unlimited range of possibilities and with an accompanying context” (Tewksbury, 2009, p. 44). The objective was to discover trends or themes as to the predicaments of a population with diverse backgrounds and discrete needs. Thus, the conversation on the already recognized deprivation practices and resulting trauma could provide further details on the cumulative consequences of a potentially arbitrary application of seclusion methods (Armour, 2012). The resulting insights would contribute to knowledge advancements and positive social change.

The application of the *constructivist grounded theory* has gained recognition in qualitative research and has frequently been utilized in combination with the

interpretative phenomenological model to follow an inductive process that culminates with a potential conjecture (Escalante Gómez, 2011; Bhattacharjee, 2012). For this reason, grounded theory was considered an important reinforcement piece to this study, given that the process of collection of information could attest to the cognitive development and possible occurrence of distortions and then contribute to the generation of a proposal of reference model (Tavallaei & Abu Talib, 2010). The objective of a supporting resulting outlook contemplated the integration of propositions and launched an ideal platform for further research developments.

### **Literature Review**

The Federal Bureau of Prisons' (2012) *Inmate Information Handbook* originally advised in favor of placing inmates in seclusion based on their risky behavior. Examples of this type of conduct included suicide tendencies and aggressive behavior towards other inmates. Furthermore, monitoring of the inmates' in their isolation cell was implemented to assure their safety. However, subsequent confinement practices became ideal methods to manage and control inmates, as many departments of corrections and rehabilitations across U.S. states provided broad specifications regarding isolation environments, including the concept of *single-cell housing*, which might lodge prisoners on a voluntary or involuntary basis and under a variety of restricting conditions (Hinds & Butler 2015).

### **Search Strategies**

The organization and breakdown of the research components are essential for an effective literature search strategy. Key search terms were comprised of isolation in prisons, isolation confinement, inmate seclusion, and supermax prisons. Research



elements pertained to background and diversity areas, as well as damaging effect and legal foundations. Digital libraries, Internet sites, and books/publications constituted some of the sources of information. Academic Search Premier via EBSCOhost, ProQuest, SagePremier with Walden University proved to be valuable sources of information. Furthermore, JSTOR, Medline/PubMed, and various legal searches databases, along with the literature available through Google Scholar, were added to the pool of essential sources of information for the research process.

### **Background Characteristics**

Presently, the United States surpasses the rest of the industrialized nations with an average of 716 detainees per 100,000 people and a rise of more than 17 percent in number of inmates in isolation confinement between 2008 and 2013 (Cloud *et al.*, 2015).

Solitary confinement is generally understood as

a form of segregation in which individuals are held in total or near-total isolation. Individuals in solitary confinement are generally held in small cells for 23 hours a day and rarely have contact with other people... In all cases, they are subject to stringent restrictions on recreation, visitation, and other privileges available to the facility's general population.

(National Immigrant Justice Center & Physicians for Human Rights, 2012, p. 2)

A philosophical and religious transformation began in the late eighteenth century, when the American penology system decided that isolation confinement practices would be the best alternative to corporal punishment methods and provide the inmates with an

opportunity for self-reflection and repentance (Gordon, 2014). It was common belief that this form of isolation from potential negative elements could take an individual through a *reclamation* stage and psyche's changes towards a path of rehabilitation (Gordon, 2014). Although the silence and solitude of an isolation cell initially captivated their interest, political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville and literary icon Charles Dickens later voiced concerns about potential damages to the detainees' psyche. Francis Gray, legal expert and literary writer, joined physicians' initial reports with his *Prison Discipline in America* in 1848 and declared the likelihood of insanity and death deriving from lack of human contact and the deprivation of sensory exposure (Cloud *et al.*, 2015). *In Re Medley*, 134 U.S. 160 (1890), gave the Supreme Court the opportunity to contribute to the discourse on the risks of isolation. The court deliberated on the use of the practice and its abuses, particularly in light of the case of an inmate sentenced to be executed, it but kept in isolation confinement for the period prior to the administration of the final punishment. Isolation confinement was deemed an *ex post facto* penalty beyond the statutory procedure permitted (Gordon, 2014).

A revival of the isolation confinement concept and application began in the 1970s, when a new age of distrust and condemnation translated into the determination that an individual was directly responsible for the crime committed. The purpose of rehabilitation was replaced by reprisal and deterrence goals (Cloud *et al.*, 2015). Security Management Units (SMU), which first opened in Florence, Arizona, in 1986, "represented the first modern supermax prison, especially designed .... to maintain prisoners in indefinitely long-term solitary confinement" (Reiter, 2012, p. 72). In 1989,

Pelican Bay in Crescent City, California, was the next large scale supermax prison that was created. Subsequently, similar prison systems were built in 40 states with isolation environments intended to severely deprive inmates of tactile and visual contact with other individuals and for extended periods. Data on the reasons leading to confinement and length of isolation time may not be retrievable, given the frequent lack of recording systems by most prisons (Cloud *et al.*, 2015).

The length of time inmates may endure in isolation has been typically 23 hours a day for an unlimited number of days. The physical setting is restrictive and equipped with a metal door and strips. There is only a narrow opening that allows the passing of a food tray. The only human interaction occurs when food is brought to the cell and if medical staff is on shift to make the schedules rounds. Opportunities for showers and exercise are infrequent and may be even denied at the discretion of the prison officers (Rienzi, 2015).

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy commented on the lack of procedural process opportunity in *Wilkinson v. Austin*, 545 U.S. 209, 214-15 (2005) and described the isolation confinement system as “more restrictive than any other form” of incarceration available in that state [of Ohio]” (Metcalf et al., 2013, p. 1). In fact, control in this type of environment relates more to suppression techniques of the inmates rather than to a mode of regulation of the facilities and the permitted activities (Birkbeck, 2011; Frost & Monteiro, 2016).

The Convention Against Torture (CAT) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) are among the clauses that condemn isolation confinement practices and have denounced the containment methods as an expression of torture and

inhumane treatment (Honigsberg, 2014). The definition of torture has provided by Article 1 of the CAT as “any act by which severe pain or suffering is intentionally inflicted on a person” (Davila-Ruhaak, Schwinn, & The John Marshall Law School Human Rights Project, 2014, p. 5). Claims of prison damaging conditions have been raised under the Eighth Amendment and have included statements against the use of supermax prisons and isolation confinement. Yet, recurring to protection measures under the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution may be challenging, since the claim normally must meet with a two-prong test: [1] the conditions are sufficiently proven to be sub-humane or potentially considerably damaging and [2] the treatment received has been intentionally administered with negligence (Glidden & Rovner, 2012).

### **Diversity Peculiarities**

According to Metcalf et al. (2013), various terms have been used to indicate the type of seclusion prison systems utilized. Separation, special management, regimentation, restricted housing, boxed-in, or 23/7 are among the well-known expressions, which may present slight differences in terms of objective of practice and depiction. Moreover, security management units (SMUs), security housing units (SHUs), and administrative maximum (ADX) units have been utilized as the larger technologically advanced facilities to house and contain inmates per special internal administrative process that may not consider rehabilitation as part of the prison life journey. Furthermore, inmates can end up in such strenuous conditions for a variety of reasons that prison administrators perceive as a threat to order or disruptive to a degree that is discretionally established at the particular facility level (Reiter, 2012). The use of quasi-equivalent terminology does

not necessarily indicate a convergence in terms of conceptualization of methods. Instead, it poses some concerns as far as the penal system's interpretation of the contexts of operation and the resulting decision-making (Birkbeck, 2011; Muenster & Trone, 2016). Finally, the lack of a framework in the classification and identification of the various forms of isolation practices might indicate a tendency to intersect characteristics of the facilities and the reasons for this choice of punishment, by producing an overarching effort to cluster various features and regulations (Honisberg, 2014).

In his *Survivors manual: Survival in solitary*, Kerness (2012) wrote about individuals held in isolation confinement for a variety of reasons. Mental illness, gang affiliation, religion preference and suspected terroristic association, and various levels of physical and mental disabilities have been among the characteristics associated with a preferred tendency to place inmates in isolation. The department of corrections is more than a group of establishments; "it is a state of mind" (Kerness, 2012, p. 5) that has been able to inflate the purpose and use of confinement practices under the provisions and direction of Homeland Security against various forms of activism.

The process of misconstruction of individuals' backgrounds and needs in U. S. territories can be traced back to the time of the war against the native tribes of the Mississippi River. The prisoners were separated from the rest of the inmate population and subjected to torture, which was used as a political instrument of control. Degrading practices through isolation and constraining measures have been implemented throughout history as a justification for reformation. In 1776, the Wall Street Jail project in Philadelphia was intended to *transform* criminal and poor individuals into labor sources.

However, the degrading physical and psychological conditions of work were criticized as means that neither the individual nor the community found beneficial (Kerness & Bissonette Lewey, 2014).

Aside from the perceived possible harm to other prisoners or prison staff, many inmates may receive the harsh punishment of isolation due to minor infractions, their alleged previous or current political/gang affiliation, sexual orientation, and physical or mental conditions. Their background makes them vulnerable individuals in interactions with other inmates and the correctional officers, with the latter deciding whether to keep them with the general population or place them in isolation. From 1955 to 1980, social movements for change emerged, “The free speech movement, the American Indian movement, the Black Power movement, the anti-imperialist movement, the prisoner’s rights movement, and the anti–Vietnam War movement” (Kerness & Bissonette Lewey, 2014, p. 27). The struggle for changes and a more equitable society began to worry authorities who then proceeded with plans to strike the movements and imprison the alleged perpetrators. In the late 1990s, the Departments of Corrections of Minnesota and Oregon considered most Asian groups as possible gang members and the Departments of Corrections of Minnesota added Native Americans to the group. The Black Cat Collective was later added by the New Jersey Departments of Corrections, due to the demonstrated activism during the Civil Rights era (Kerness, 2012).

The tendency to place inmates in isolation confinement may be further compounded by the fact that prison staff members rarely receive adequate training in distinguishing the needs of the inmates, the reasons for their behaviors, and the

peculiarities of their personal history. Furthermore, healthcare professionals are often required to perform health assessments within the constraints of the limiting cell or through the opening of the cell's door or bars. They do not have the authority to request better accommodations or any other change that would allow for the delivery of their service. This situation places many individuals with special needs and a misunderstood and/or misconstrued background in a severely disadvantaged and unequal position as to the handling and treatment of the prisoners' physical and mental health (Cloud *et al.*, 2015).

Linguistic and cultural barriers, compounded with political affiliation and other needs, severely limit the communication opportunity and increase the chance for misunderstandings and lack of compliance with expectations. Jose Padilla was an American prisoner, suspected of terrorist affiliations and placed in isolation confinement for 21 months. He was eventually convicted and transferred to a federal supermax prison in Florida. In 2011, an interview with his mother, Estella Lebron, revealed the physiological and psychological damages he had inherited for his previous stay in isolation. Perceptual and human contact deprivation had a dramatic psychological effect on his personality (Honisberg, 2014).

The environment of origin has an impact in the development of language constructs and interpretation modes of the surrounding world. Subsequent contexts of operation and socialization normally serve as an assessment and validation tool of the acquired communication abilities. However, interaction skills and social identity development may be derailed by physical and psychological isolation. Moreover, limited

resources for assistance and for an effective understanding of judicial procedures can worsen the quality of the interfacing and the level of expected compliance (Honigsberg, 2014; Twersky, Glasner, & Miller, 2010). Finally, sensory deprivation and extended periods of forced inactivity have proven to generate or worsen mental health conditions (Allen, Wakeman, Cohen, & Rich, 2010; Armour, 2012).

Immigrants may be subjected to periods of isolation confinement, while waiting to get through non-criminal (deportation) proceedings. The detention process is not in place to punish them, but to make sure that they will attend the scheduled immigration hearings. Moreover, dangerous criminals and vulnerable individuals have often been housed together. Mental illness and some form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are prevalent among these individuals and asylum seekers (National Immigrant Justice Center & Physicians for Human Rights, 2012). In 2012, Detention Watch Network investigated detention centers in eight states and reported that there were no provisions for the assurance of protection and adequate care of the immigrants detained in those facilities. Given their status as “illegal”, these individuals often live in an unknown section of the community and do not have a voice (Hernandez, 2013).

In recent years, the incarceration of older age offenders and the consequences of “the long-term aftermath of stricter sentencing and parole policies from the 1980s” (Maschi & Aday, 2014, p. 16) have created the phenomenon of an aging prison population, 50 years and older. Furthermore, comprehensive traumas from previous life experiences and the current placement in isolation have often complicated the mental health picture affecting these older inmates. Medical expenses, special needs assistance,



and end-of life care may be among the needed services for this segment of the population. Specialized and long-term attention could constitute a logistics and financial burden for prison systems, while a lack of sensitivity towards the aging inmates by the prison administration might also take place. Finally, the treatment in isolation and the stigma caused by their criminal history may affect their level of functionality, should they reenter society (Maschi & Aday, 2014).

Mental health issues also exacerbate the confinement problem. There are cases involving isolation confinement of individuals considered to have a mental health condition and judged to be a threat to the general inmate population. Moreover, the mental health condition may degenerate into a perceived inability to interact with correctional officers. The reasoning applied to the decision to isolate inmates may eventually play a role on the affected inmate's inclination to initially view the resolution as wise and for his best interest. In *Anderson v. Colorado Department of Corrections*, 10-cv-01005-RBJ-KMT (2012), the plaintiff originally accepted to be placed in isolation confinement for his own protection, but he later realized that he was not provided with the adequate mental health treatment for his condition (Glidden & Rovner, 2012).

Women's mental concerns have often been dismissed, as negative interactions with prison staff and bullying from other inmates complicate or prevent the adequate assessment of their condition. In their study of 1,600 women in a maximum-security prison, Harner and Riley (2013) found that the main reasons for stress were: the fear of other aggressive inmates, the rigidity and frequency of administration of prison regulations, and the lack of adequate resources for mental health problems.

Political prisoners and individuals with previous affiliations with social movements of change have continued to fall victim to long-term prison sentences and isolation confinement placement. Herman Wallace was one of three prisoners at Angola 3 in Louisiana, held in isolation confinement after being framed for murder; whereas the previous political activities with the Black Panthers movement is thought to be the actual reason for the seclusion treatment. In reality, the three men had established a sub-chapter of the movement at Angola 3, requesting better prison conditions and working towards some form of cohesion among inmates (King, 2008). Wallace was incarcerated and placed in solitary confinement in 1972. In recent years, he developed cancer and was finally released on the grounds of an unfair trial in the fall of 2014. He died of terminal cancer in a New Orleans hospital in October 2014 (Goodman, 2013). Robert Hillary King, aka Robert King Wilkerson, is one of the three above-mentioned men from Angola 3. King spent thirty-one years in prison with twenty-nine in isolation confinement. In 2001, the Federal Appeals Court overturned his conviction on grounds of probability of innocence. King has continued to speak and work on issues of isolation confinement, the release of political prisoners, and to end the slavery treatment of prison industrial complexes (King, 2012). Albert Woodfox, the third member of the afore-mentioned group, was finally released in February 2016, after spending a total of 43 years in isolation confinement at the David Wade Correctional Center in Homer, Louisiana (Goodman, 2013; Pilkington, 2016).

This study was urgently needed in light of a rise in the use and/or overextended application of isolation confinement practices in diverse prison contexts. This

investigation explored the dilemma involving harsh seclusion methods from an angle that would fill the gap in consideration of both the current varied spectrum of definitions of the practice and the diversity span of the distinctive origins, backgrounds, and needs of previously incarcerated individuals.

Utilizing a qualitative approach, this study focused on the perceptions and experiences as directly shared by individuals who had spent a considerable part of their imprisonment in isolation confinement. A concern for a potentially discriminatory predicament causing the overextended application of isolation confinement methods was at the core of the collection of the information and examination of the resulting themes. This project contributes to positive social change by offering a supplementary multi-dimensional illustration of the circumstances of a diverse inmate population. This study finds support in case law, legal standards, and internationally recognized principles for the protection of human rights.

### **Resulting Damages**

General consensus on the harm caused by extended exposure to isolation confinement has focused on the long-term impairment of both social skills and sensory experiences, not to mention the extensive damage to physical and mental health (Bennion, 2015). Nevertheless, many supporters of prison segregation methods have continued to stress principles of safety, the need for order, and the establishment of this punishment technique as a system intended to shape inmate behavior (Appelbaum, 2015). Further strengthening of these positions have derived from attempts to structurally justify the application of isolation confinement methods, such as in the case of a National

Institute of Justice funded study on the effects of prolonged seclusion on circa 247 male inmates in a Colorado State Penitentiary between 2009 and 2010. Completion of a series of standardized tests at a three-month interval proved that about 20 percent of the participant sample demonstrated some degree of cognitive improvement versus 7 percent indicating some level of deterioration (Bulman, Garcia, & Hernon, 2012). At the same time, the researchers admitted that no definite predictors of psychological and mental harm or lack thereof could be effectively conceived. Furthermore, they indicated that their research findings could not be transferred and applied to other prison systems with a different application of isolations confinement procedures. Finally, they considered that that might have been additional negative effects of seclusion practices, which were not the objective of their research (O’Keefe *et al.*, 2013).

Isolation presents a host of psychological outcomes, ranging from anxiety and depression to cognitive and perceptual distortions and even psychotic episodes (Hinds & Butler, 2015). Prison health providers are not always in a position to adequately assist inmates with mental and psychological conditions created or exacerbated by periods of isolation, primarily because of lack of resources and due to the stringent regulations in place. Inmates with peculiar health issues may not be able to get the care they need. Continued isolation periods, due to unresolved mental issues and possible misinterpretation of inmates’ backgrounds and needs, worsen the psychiatric outcomes (Metzner & Fellner, 2010; Rienzi, 2015).

Starting with Grassian’s *SHU syndrome*, which illustrated a multitude of elements to consider in disturbance traits, Guenther (2011) questioned how the symptoms of the

disorders were generated. He proposed Edmund Husserl's phenomenological approach to the experience defining the association among consciousness, other individuals, and the surrounding world. The world would not be defined as an objective and definite reality, but rather as the result of an individual's *meaningful* process. Therefore, the ranges of psychiatric disorders acquired by inmates during extended periods spent in isolation may be consequently expressed via the damaged or unbalanced perceptions of the meanings created. "In *Meditation 5*, Husserl proposes a further "reduction to ownness" (Guenther, 2011, p. 263), thus requiring a process of acknowledgment and sorting out the realm of interactions with other individuals - phenomenon that cannot be realized in intense periods of confinement. The attainment of a possible harmonious rapport with the world is interrupted by the isolation experience, due to the lack of "a concrete, everyday experience of other subjects" (p. 265).

Coping mechanisms for traumatic situations require the cognitive ability to strategize and apply problem-solving techniques. When in lack of alternatives in stressful conditions, people may resort to a mental state change "through the unconscious use of psychological defenses" (Gabdreeva, 2015, p. 4). In situations that are perceived as unavoidable and in absence of adaptive skills, some individuals will rely on primitive, but not necessarily relevant, defense mechanisms in an effort to preserve some sort of wholeness in the confrontation with the destabilizing circumstance (Gabdreeva, 2015). A higher number of self-inflicting injuries and suicides have been reported among prisoners held in isolation confinement in comparison with the overall prison population. In case of youth in isolation, 60 percent of suicides were reported circa 2007. The trauma and

subsequent violent behavior may interfere with the opportunity of a successful reentry into society. In 2011, Texas Correctional facilities released about 1,347 individuals who were previously held in isolation. No special provisions had been made for a rehabilitative program before their reentry journey (Cloud *et al.*, 2015).

### **Summary**

Isolation confinement practices have been in place under a new criminal approach to the concept of responsibility in the crimes committed. The legal and human rights framework has focused on the constitutionality and humane treatment perspectives of this punishment method. Isolation presents a multitude of psychological issues and physical health damages, as well as distortions in coping mechanisms.

Isolation confinement practices have been defined under a variety of terminology: Ad seg, isolation confinement, supermax, the hole, special management / housing unit, restricted housing. The use of this quasi-equivalent terminology to define isolation confinement practices has generated a number of concerns as far as the penal system's interpretation of the contexts of operation and the resulting practice application (Resnik, Baumgartel, & Kalb, 2016). Potentially erroneous interpretation of individuals' backgrounds, particular health conditions, and needs and inadequate training might place many inmates in a vulnerable position. Linguistic and cultural barriers might also contribute to a high incidence of placement in isolation confinement. Medical expenses, special needs concentration, and end-of life care further complicate the picture and may play a role in misunderstandings and hasty placement of individual in seclusion. Finally,

there are individuals who have been placed in isolation confinement due to their previous political association or because of conflicts with other inmates and/or prison staff.

Current literature has examined the cases of a diverse inmate population, primarily by race or disability condition, and assessed potential disparities in treatment by the penal system. Most studies have compiled data in a statistical fashion and analyzed distribution patterns. Other investigations have focused on the physical and psychological harm and how the damages could have affected or have indeed impacted inmates' lives in prison or the reentry progress in the case of individuals who have later become eligible for rehabilitation.

Chapter 3 covers the research design and methods utilized by this study, the role of the researcher, how scientific rigor can be achieved, and related ethical considerations. A brief discussion of procedural justice helps placing the subject of fairness of punishment in the context of the evolution of thought as to the rationale of seclusion methods application. The study relies on the Institutional Review Board with Walden University, which regulates the ethical standards and steps involved in an investigational process, and on the principles illustrated by the Belmont Report and the Nuremberg Code relating to ethical research standards involving human subjects.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

This chapter of the study focuses on the research design and methods, the role of the researcher, scientific rigor, and related ethical considerations. I decided to undertake this study with the intention to explore a phenomenon and allow the study participants to describe the reality of the event through a recollection of their perceptions and experiences. The application of qualitative methods in criminal justice research makes a fluid series of these accounts possible through the application of the phenomenological psychological model.

My aim was the acquisition of knowledge that would contribute to policy proposals and additional investigational efforts. At the same, I had to recognize that my previous knowledge and professional contribution might present opportunities for a predetermined outlook or interpretation. For this reason, maintaining transparency in the use of research methods and procedures was vital to the integrity of the research. Scientific rigor and the establishment of trustworthiness allowed the achievement of the standards expected for a precise and effective investigational project.

During the past 28 years, incarceration rates and practices have increased, along with an increase in the number of supermax or solitary confinement institutions in the U.S. (Gordon, 2014). These establishments have deprived inmates of the sensory and social stimulations that are necessary for a psychological constancy, therefore, potentially compromising the inmates' path for rehabilitation into society. Furthermore, an increase in instances of mass incarceration and the application of isolation have produced exorbitant prison costs in the United States. The amount of spending on incarceration has



accounted for an average of 6 times the rate of higher education expenses in the United States and for a range of \$14,000-\$60,000 cost per inmate (Gopnik, 2010; Kincade, 2016).

In 2006, an estimated 25,000 inmates were relegated to isolation confinement in the United States (Sullivan, 2006, as cited in DeMarco, 2012). Gottschalk (2016) examined two separate reports produced by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and by the Association of State Correctional Administrators and concluded that between 89,000 and 120,000 inmates were held in isolation confinement in a U.S. prison system at any given time during the year 2014. A Prison Policy Initiative report indicated that the number of individuals held in prisons, immigration detention facilities, and civil commitment centers had risen to 2.3 million (Wagner & Rabuy, 2016). According to The Sentencing Project (2019), an estimated 2.2 million people are currently held in U.S. jails and prison systems. The organization has advanced that the high numbers are not necessarily in direct correlation with crime rate, but rather the result of changes in sentencing policies and regulations.

The notion of procedural justice encompasses two elements linked to the legitimization of the accepted practice: “perceptions of staff and distributive fairness” (Rocheleau, 2014, p. 99). A variety of justifications have been provided in support of this incarceration method. They have ranged from defining it as a pillar of the penal justice system to underscoring its effectiveness as a prisoner management tool. When supporting the practice of isolations confinements, case law examples have established that the liberty interests of prisoners could still be protected under the Due Process Clause of the

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution (*Wilkinson v. Austin*, as cited in Reiter, 2014). As a result of a preference of the government's rationale and interest in maintaining order versus the individual's concerns, inmates may become victims of a possible subjective and overreaching rationalization of their background by the prison staff. Such approach is often a cultural practice element of incarceration and isolation systems. An arbitrary placement modus operandi reflects the lack of formal processes for the effective assessment of individual inmate cases (Dolovich, 2009; McConnaughey, 2012).

Establishing and implementing alternative practices to isolation confinement methods has at times constituted a challenge in this cultural atmosphere often supported by prison officials. Nevertheless, several representatives of the judicial systems have continued to speak about the need for change and its relevance. In *Davis v. Ayala*, 576 U.S. \_\_\_ (2015), U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy affirmed the necessity for doable options to prolonged segregation as supported by the condemnation of the practice according to the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Lober, 2016).

This study provides an illustration of situations leading to isolation confinement, considering an assortment of definitions of the practice and the diversity range pertaining to the inmates' origins, backgrounds/affiliations, and needs. This study was conducted to contribute to positive social change by offering a further demonstration of the predicaments deriving from a potential misconstruction or misunderstanding of the inmates' origins, backgrounds, affiliations, and specific needs, and how such

misinterpretation might lead to a placement of the same prisoners in isolation confinement.

The decision for a suitable methodology involved a plan for the sampling portion, the collection of the data, and the analysis of the data for the purpose of establishing patterns and relationships to obtain a logical explanation (Latham, 2014). I established a few preliminary delimitations to manage the scope and boundaries of the project (Creswell, 2014). Study participants were recruited in the South-Central geographical areas of Texas among individuals who had spent a considerable amount of their prison time in isolation confinement, but who were later eligible for rehabilitation and reentry programs into society. Study time and budget constraints did not allow for recruitment of participants at additional geographical locations. The research questions focused on the time period and circumstances immediately preceding the placement in isolation confinement and not on comprehensive details regarding the previous experiences of the interviewees, their potential crimes, and rehabilitation process, unless salient related information was voluntarily shared by the interviewees.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

According to Latham (2014), the research problem is a component of the overall conceptual framework, which encompasses a series of values and theories. A researcher is then equipped to investigate a phenomenon that may resolve into consequences or other results needing possible explanations. Problem-based research allows for the exploration of a phenomenon and for a response to the investigator's quest for answers to an issue and related circumstances. Study results may also contribute to an extension of a

current theory or create a new theory. A research problem not only directs the study; it also fosters the connection among various elements of the process, such as the objective, the methodology, and the research questions. A research problem has an impact that can be easily identified and may not have an appropriate and immediate solution available (Ellis & Levy, 2008). The current study problem has an ongoing active nature, since the issue of isolation confinement has continued to involve a larger prison population in the past 28 years. The controversy and discussions on the issue persist, given that an increasingly diverse population of inmates continues to be detained in the U.S. prison system and the complex web of isolation confinement practices (Cornelius, 2016). The degree of impact of confinement practices has been discussed in the evaluation of prison rehabilitation programs, sometimes after ex-offenders reenter society (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2017; Muhlhausen, 2015).

The criminal justice field is multidisciplinary and related investigative efforts are in line with a variety of goals. Therefore, it is vital for a researcher to carefully select the study framework and rationale that will serve the purpose of the investigation and use of the results. Under the umbrella Within the conceptual framework, the researcher can rely on a far-reaching foundation for the organization of the investigation, assure clarity of the information to be reported, and express a high degree of consistency in the discussion of the study results. The conceptual framework facilitates the formulation of the research questions through a structure of expectations and conceptions for the goal of generating an understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014; Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The objective of a study can generate specific inferences for the organization of the project.

Explanation and application purposes pertain to this study, since the investigation intends to identify the particular background of the inmates who previously spent time in isolation confinement and to analyze the impact of their background on the opportunity for placement in segregation. Explanatory research may focus on the potential reasoning for the incidence of an observable fact. This study intended to illustrate the perceptions and experiences of individuals who had spent a considerable part of their imprisonment in isolation confinement, so that adequate insights would surface as to the increase in number of a diverse inmate population in seclusion. Applied research paradigms stemmed from the data and elucidations for further investigation and discussion on policy evaluation and changes (Mawfield & Babbie, 2009; Zikmund et al., 2013).

The benefit of qualitative methods in criminal justice research is that a variety of tools can be made available to the investigator for exploration and understanding of “complex personal and social issues” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, as cited in Tavallaee & Abu Talib, 2010, p. 571). According to Miner-Romanoff (2012), qualitative research tools permit the collection of information “beyond aggregate crime data and the outcomes of crime control” (p. 1) and a systematic and fluid series of accounts that make up solid evidence-based body for positive social change proposals. Under a qualitative approach, the reality of the phenomenon under study comprises various elements. The researcher and the participants are engaged in a trusting rapport of the discovery portion of the study. The outcomes are not absolute truths, but they establish the basis for an idiographic knowledge base (Anney, 2014).

This study utilized a social ecological model. Distinctively, the phenomenological psychological model allows a researcher to convey the experiences of the research participants in the context of the event under investigation (Englander, 2012). This approach provides the path for a revelation of the “lived experience of several individuals on a particular concept” (Tavallaei & Abu Talib, 2010, p. 574). The phenomenological approach permits research participants to share their experiences of an event “without considering its psychological genesis or causal explanations” (Cocozza Martins, 2008, p. 421). However, this study proposed the opportunity for the participant to offer a suggestion/speculation as to the potential reason for being placed in isolation confinement, according to how it was perceived by the ex-offender versus the reason that was given to the same individual by the prison administrator/staff (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The application of the constructivist grounded theory approach was a valuable piece in qualitative research as the investigational process became deeply built into the realm of information collected and allowed the research to take on an inductive course (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Grounded theory was taken into account as a perspective-based approach for this study, since the collection and analysis of the experiences would indicate a variety of angles and cognitive constructs of the accounts the study participants report. Thus, the realization of a reference model and the acquisition of knowledge base derive from “the relativism of multiple social realities” (Glaser, 2012, para. 7). Furthermore, grounded theory methods work beyond the description expectations and provide the basis for the creation a theoretical principle as the “outcome of research” (Lederman & Lederman, 2015, p. 574).

### **Role of the Researcher**

Qualitative investigational processes focus on a phenomenon. A researcher conducts an inquiry and produces a chain of evaluation criteria in an effort to reconfirm the relationship between qualitative research and the pursuit of the acquisition of knowledge for the greater social benefit. This process involves the investigator's ability to make sense of the study constructs, as well as the opportunity to elaborate a logical supporting structure (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Denzin, 2009). An understanding of the key problem and related literature, along with the building of a strong conceptual basis, confirms the value of the investigation. A further value of a study is reached by the query beyond the initial observations and perceptions of problem. This approach combines an appreciation for both the information deriving from existing research and the reality within the current discovery context. The findings contribute to the knowledge base that can be utilized for policy proposals and further investigational efforts (Bambale, 2014; Ellis & Levis, 2008).

Utilization of a conceptual framework, in the role of the researcher, I had to apply caution and awareness of the elements reckoning a certain mindset. First, the recognition of the influence of my knowledge base placed the research approach into a more realistic perspective as to the possible direction of the project. Second, I knew the conceptual structure might sensitize me towards details of the phenomenon under study in a manner that would impact my thought process and the study procedure itself. Finally, the same conceptual framework can shape the analysis process insofar as to unintentionally causing limitations in the use of the data outcomes (Ngulube, Mathipa, & Gumbo, 2015).

Ideally, a researcher should abstain from a subjective interpretation of the study's data and strive for an objective stance throughout the investigational process. While it may be challenging to drastically separate oneself from the wealth of information carefully assembled in the pursuit of the truth and relevant data points, it is also worth to mention the value of the researcher's role and perspective. Unluer (2012) discussed the advantage of the researcher's role in the opportunity to become part of a more personal exchange within the context of a cultural environment that soon becomes more familiar. Furthermore, the application of the researcher's experiential erudition from previously acquired knowledge and experiences allows for an additional insight in the elaboration and interpretation of the study specifics (Xu & Storr, 2012).

Miner-Romanoff (2012) utilized an interpretative phenomenological method in her study involving the collection of information on decisions and motivation for criminal behavior in a group of 35 inmates in an Ohio prison. The approach involved cyclical and critical analysis with an in-depth process of understanding of the study participants' experiences and social and emotional state. Miner-Romanoff wrote in support of this research method for the reliance on experiential data in support of information for policymaking considerations. The interpretative phenomenological approach involves an investigating stance that avoids or decreases the impact of personal assumptions and/or bias. It allows for the development of an empathetic position towards the study participants and the expression of their experiences, so that a profound understanding of the accounts can be favored and observations can be constructively absorbed in the structure of the study elucidations (Bhattacharjee, 2012).



Transparency was fundamental for me to demonstrate, as I intended to be clear as to my contribution to the project and my level of objectivity. It pertains to the revelation of the basis and peculiarities of the study, as well as the methodology and process of analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, transparency represents the groundwork for suitable social research, since it permits scholarly dialogue and evaluation along with the fostering for research advancement (Denzin, 2009; Moravcsik, 2014). A detailed and illustrative account of the investigational organization demonstrates the researcher's ethical conduct and adherence to a scrupulous study process. Furthermore, transparency confirms a researcher's honesty in revealing beliefs, prior familiarity with the context under study, and the challenges encountered during the investigational journey (Umamaheswar, 2014).

According to Snape and Spencer (2003, as cited in Carcary, 2009), the social world cannot be evaluated by "physical-law-like rules" (p. 12). An interpretative position is a holistic approach that encompasses a series of factors to be considered in research. Elements from external and internal realities have to be considered, as well as the system of interactions governing the circumstances under observation. Thus, I remained actively and personally involved in the quest for explanations of the events under study. Moreover, this approach compelled me to question my assumptions and affirm my responsibility for the study findings.

### **Methodology**

A research methodology identifies the study approach and permits the allocation of a series of steps or tools to be utilized in the strategy process, collection of

information, and interpretation of the study results (Latham, 2014). This study benefitted from a qualitative approach for an investigative process that was based on the collection of responses to open-ended questions and the utilization of a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package. The information from the interviews was inserted or uploaded into the software for coding purpose and to identify relationships among concepts. The creation of a concept map significantly helped in the building of a coding scheme, such as words and phrases, connecting to the meanings of significance that needed to be identified for the analysis stage (Miner-Romanoff, 2012).

This study's collection process eliminated the use of focus groups or a narrative approach. The methods discarded are normally less expensive and allow for associated comments/elaborations from participants (focus groups) and a more detailed gathering and reporting of the information (narrative inquiry). At the same time, they present some disadvantages that can affect the accuracy of the information to collect and the validity/reliability of the analysis. The selection of the members for the focus group, the need for verbatim recording, and the required skills for moderating a session can generate a significant burden for quality standards to be met by one researcher and within the given study time constraints (Leung & Savithiri, 2009; Morgan, 2013). Narrative inquiry may go beyond a simple replica of the event and risk producing a less authentic representation or another version of the experience, therefore developing into a "therapeutic rather than analytic [journey]" (Trahar, 2009, p. 9; Wang & Gaele, 2015).

According to Morin (2013), pilot studies may be useful preceding investigational efforts. From a feasibility standpoint, researchers may benefit from pilot studies by

verifying recruiting opportunities, as well as the human and financial resources needed, before they decide to extend their efforts to a larger project. Moreover, pilot studies provide beneficial platforms for ideas and method testing, including a confirmation of connection with the inductive methods as supported by grounded theory. This study, however, could not afford a pilot phase, given the stringent timeline for completion of the project, as well as the challenges associated with recruiting and interviewing individuals who had been subjected to isolation practices, but who later reentered society and might not always be willing or available to be interviewed. First, there are ethical guidelines regulating research within prison environments. Bulman, Garcia, and Herson (2012) wrote about the controlled and self-contained prison context and how prisoners are designated as a vulnerable category of population by the Department of Health and Human Services. Similar provisions and definitions have been provided by authorities in other countries, such as in Australia, where the National Health and Medical Research Council regulates procedural ethics and has established, via Section 4.3 of the National Statement, that prisoners may be in a *dependent and unequal rapport*, as it pertains to the interaction between researchers and participants (Anyan, 2013; Roberts & Indermaur, 2008). Second, researchers would have to rely on quasi-experimental designs to compensate for the lack of a rigorous research method. Finally, possible changes in detention application and weak opportunities to build a trusting rapport can further complicate and/or compromise the expected study standards (Bulman, Garcia, and Herson, 2012). In light of these circumstances, the study benefitted from interviews with ex-offenders, who had been rehabilitated and had reentered into society. Nevertheless,

this process was not without the opportunity for other obstacles. My window of opportunity for interaction with the ex-offenders I intended to interview was anticipated to be very brief. This was to be expected, given that the memory of an extended period of time spent in isolation confinement caused further distress beyond the physical and psychological trauma already experienced.

This study involved the collection of information primarily deriving from a process of semi-structured interviews conducted with ex-offenders, who had spent a minimum of three continuous months in isolation confinement instead of remaining among the general prison population. The following additional basic inclusion criteria were established: The participants' sex to be primary male, the overall age to range between the ages of 21-66+, and the primary prisons of origin to be located within Harris County and Travis County in Texas. The objective of the study was to gather the statements as an expression of the ex-offenders' perceptions and experiences and related to their diverse background and the consequent quandary resulting in isolation placement. Approval of the project was awarded pursuant the appraisal by the Institutional Review Board with Walden University: 03-28-18-0251771.

### **Participants and Initial Timeline**

Recruitment was primarily established through contacts with non-profit organizations, within the broader geographical boundaries of Harris County and Travis County in the State of Texas. These non-profits are involved in the spiritual and practical support of ex-offenders and that followed the established paradigm for rehabilitation and reentry procedure into society. Some of these groups fostered an atmosphere of spiritual

and psychological support for current and previously imprisoned individuals, while other programs considered the diversity of needs and backgrounds of their clients and their families in the implementation of their initiatives. Some agencies began their mission within the prison system and contributed to the successful shift into a reentry in society through a process of outreach and development.

A process of non-random sampling included convenience and/or purposive samples and stayed in alignment with the research's objective and questions. Additional notes derived from observation and content analyses. These techniques allowed for an interpretative process of the data substance through classification and identification of themes (Hashemnezhad, 2015; Higgins, 2009). The plan for the study established a 4-month data collection period for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of this project and, therefore, providing for a snapshot of the phenomenon based on the circumstances experienced by the interviewees. The period for recruitment and initial processing of the information was structured to be approximately of four (4) months and a total of 25-30 participants, considering the changing availability of participants in the study and the need to recruit more individuals, should datapoints result to be insufficient for analysis for a particular interviewee.

### **Informed Consent**

The Institutional Review Board with Walden University regulates the ethical standards and process of a study, including the provision of an *informed consent* to insure for the voluntary participation of an individual to a research project and the disclosure of

the study's nature, purpose and significance, as well as the preservation of confidentiality as to the identity of the participant and related personal data (Palmer, 2015).

The Belmont Report and the Nuremberg Code have addressed the importance of a consent form for conducting ethical research involving human subjects. An Informed Consent allows for a voluntary participation in a study and must include the language and terminology that can be easily understood by the research participants, as well as provide enough information about the study to permit the prospective participants to make a decision (Shahnazarian, Hagemann, Aburto, & Rose, 2013).

For individuals to decide whether to be part of a project, a few elements of an Informed Consent had to be unmistakably provided. The nature and objective of the research had to be clearly explained. The prospective participants were presented with the significance of the project and how it would benefit society. In addition, a statement of participation risks, if any, had to be offered to potential interviewees. An appreciation of the scope of the study could extend to the use of the information per appropriate permission by the study subjects. Finally, I had to convey to potential study participants an opportunity of choice to participate and to withdraw (Palmer, 2015). The purpose of this study was to collect information of the isolation experience from the perspectives of the interviewees. This project intended to contribute to positive social change by providing an additional insight as to the circumstances that caused inmates with diverse backgrounds and distinct needs to end up in isolation confinement. There were no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. However, the consent informed form was constructed to include the possibility of a risk, so that transparency of

procedure could be assured. The use of the information was for the stated study and for possible related publications, which did not foresee the disclosure of the participants' identity and related personal data. In fact, I personally committed to take all the reasonably necessary steps to protect the secrecy of the interviewees' confidential information. Since the principle of voluntary participation was stated for this study, prospective interviewees could refrain from answering any questions they did not feel comfortable answering at any point during the study. Furthermore, interviewees would be free to discontinue any further participation at any time and for any reason.

### **Interviews, Setting, Procedure, and Data Collection**

Interviews are effective instruments of data collection in qualitative studies. They allow for in-depth exchanges, the communication of different perspectives, and the discovery of new knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Interactional achievement and mutual influential relationships are among the products of this method opportunity (Carcary, 2009). Semi-structured interviews permit a degree of freedom in the creation of an inquiry platform that can generate the sharing of additional information for a better comprehension of the study problem (Hashemnezhad, 2015).

This study utilized semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their experiences and contribute additional information. Interviews were conducted via phone, in person, via Skype or similar tool. No recording of the interviewing session was stipulated for this study to allow participants a certain degree of comfort in sharing their experiences. Previous trauma during periods of isolation and a general culture of adversely labeling of prisoners for appearing as

*collaborators* with or *snitches* for outsiders could have been a factor in preventing the collection of truthful accounts (Ferranti, 2016; Roberts & Indermaur, 2008). Audio and/or video recording would have further jeopardized the trust-building rapport sought with the interviewees, particularly in cases where study participants would have concerns as to alternative uses of the information contributed (Anyan, 2013). Therefore, the pursuit of a trusting rapport was the main factor in the decision of avoiding the use of recording devices during interviews. In order to guarantee an accurate system of information collection and to avoid missing peculiar portion of information of interest, a note-taking method was also considered.

The interviews were conducted with prearranged times that lasted 20-30 minutes per individual, with a possible extension to 60 minutes in cases of additional themes of conversations initiated or continued by the interviewee. A series of demographic questions began the interview. Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of the categories.



Table 1

*Standard Demographic Questions*

Descriptor set	Fields			
Age range	21-31	32-45	46-54	55-66+
Highest education level	no HS	HS or GED	Vocational program	
	Some college to AS	BA/BS	MA/MS or higher	Other
Race/ethnic group	White	African American or African	Hispanic	Asian
	Mixed	Other		
Language	Primary spoken	Other		
Political or other group affiliation	Conservative	Democratic/Liberal	Independent	Libertarian
Religious orientation	Christian	Baptist	Atheist	
	Protestant	Other	None	
Mental health or physical health issue	Anxiety	PTSD	Depression	Substance abuse
	Bipolarism Panic attacks	Diabetes HBP	Epilepsy Cardiac issues	Allergies Other
	None	Undetermined		

During the interview process, I was open to consider a second series of questions to discover the prison context and diversity background, but only as a result of an interviewee's willingness to share this information. The responses to the following questions became part of the general conversation only:

- Previous or last prison of confinement
- Length of stay
- How many months/years in isolation confinement
- Approximate time of reentry into society
- Perceived adjustment into society

A series of 11 open-ended questions represented the third group of inquiry (see Table 1 in Chapter 1, referring to the Research and Interview Questions).

Throughout the interview process, the participants were reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation in the study and the opportunity for the interviewer to ask to repeat or rephrase the question for better comprehension. Moreover, the participants were allowed a prospect to refrain from answering questions of a sensitive nature, due to the potential uncomfortable character of with the inquiry, or to end the interview at any time.

Open-ended questions allowed for the collection of information regarding the participants' reaction to the proposed Informed Consent and questions, as well as their perceptions and experiences of isolation confinement. There was a possibility for limitations in provision of sensitive information or gaps in comprehension of the Informed Consent and/or questions (Valera, Cook, Macklin, & Chang, 2014). At the same time, the process was bound to produce relevant information in the pursuit of an

additional glimpse into the world of background, health condition, affiliation with an organization or belief, or other relevant characteristics as related to immediately prior the isolation confinement experience. Miner-Romanoff (2012) suggested the use of reflexivity during the interviewing sessions, allowing participants to expand on points that have been shared or to go back to an answer to a previous question and query for a potential connection. On the other hand, a navigational nudge would be an appropriate technique to redirect the conversation on the question at hand, particularly in cases where the participant decided to wander from the topic or expand on an answer for a period of time that would take the interview timeline out of allotted schedule (Miner-Romanoff, 2012). Finally, relaunching techniques or paraphrasing of questions would be useful in maintaining the participants' level of focus and confirming their accounts and may minimize the researcher's potential temptation to her personal construal. Spiraling, iterative methods, and repeated sequence of questions in interview might add a degree of accuracy and consistency to the information collected (Miner-Romanoff, 2012).

### **Scientific Rigor**

Scientific research provides valuable insights in the criminal justice field and the area of policy research and practices. Research authenticity or validity is fundamental in demonstrating the degree of sensible exchange and understanding between the researcher and the interviewees. The organization and demonstration of a careful inquiry methodology and the data analysis procedure significantly establish the soundness of an investigational effort (Carcary, 2009; Noble & Smith, 2015). A systematic attention process to the study planning and implementation encompasses a logical structure.

Scientific Rigor can be measured by credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Anney, 2014).

*Credibility* refers to the identification of the event and its description, along with the pursuit of the truth. In clinical environments, critics have warned against the possibility of non-disclosure or the diminished lack of autonomy on the part of the interviewees as a result of the researcher's tendency to dominate or influence the process (Aggarwal, Davies, & Sullivan, 2014). Credibility, as *internal* validity in quantitative research, resulted from accuracy in data collection and reporting, as well as from the prolonged exposure to the study and its participants (Sikolia, Biros, Mason, & Weiser, 2013). An extended engagement with the environment of investigation required me to invest the time to get familiarized with the contextual culture and build a trusting rapport with the study participants, while striving to avoid pitfalls in my own evaluation and judgment (Green, 2014). Prolonged field experience in terms of acquired knowledge of the study contexts and participants, time sampling, reflexivity, and a careful preparation for interviewing were among the tools utilized to establish the credibility of this study (Anney, 2014). A process of *reflexivity* allowed for the interviewees' further expansion on the information shared, as this study intended to capture the authentic expression of the participants' events in its entirety (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Miner-Romanoff, 2012). *Navigational nudging* and *relaunching* were among the techniques the researcher utilized to manage the interviewing procedure and redirect the conversation or the focus on the topic of interest (Miner-Romanoff, 2012). The phenomenological approach allows a researcher to capture the very essence of an event through reduction procedures of the

individual experiences (Tavallaei & Abu Talib, 2010). The reduction process of this study did not, however, translate into a *parsimonious methodology* through which “entities should not be multiplied without necessity”, as stated by William of Ockham, (Aarts, 2007, p. 3). The parsimonious approach would instead take in consideration the least uncomplicated theory to navigate through complex study constructs and then apply the simple model to generalizations in the compilation of the data sets (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Busemeyer, Wang, Townsend, & Eidels, 2015).

*Dependability* shows consistency of the findings and/or the elaboration of a structure to report changing conditions. The creation an *audit trail* to validate the investigation process and the launching of a *code-recode* strategy to compare results for consistency purposes were among the means available to validate the study interpretations over time (Anney, 2014). This study benefitted from a qualitative approach for an investigative process that was based on the collection of responses to open-ended questions and the utilization of a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package. The information from the interviews would be inserted or imported into the software for coding purpose and to examine the relationship among concepts. The creation of a concept map significantly helped in the creation of a coding scheme, such as words and phrases, connecting to the meanings of significance that needed to be identified for the analysis stage (Miner-Romanoff, 2012). The collection of statements from interviews and related observational/further exploratory notes produced data to be elaborated through an open coding method, which allowed for the assignment of specific properties to words and/or statements emerging from interviews and then led

to the identification of trends or themes (Moral, de Antonio, Ferre, & Lara, 2015). Consistency of findings were attained via a process of refinement of the originally established codes as new data points were revealed with information from subsequent interviews. One related strategy considered a process of *constant comparison* among statements to assure consistency of coding procedures, as well as the discovery of additional angles not previously considered (Gibbs & Taylor, 2010). An audit trail revealed how the study has been developed through the reporting of the research activities. A record of all research activities, notes, and processes on the data collection and analysis procedures throughout the study was necessary and a useful tool of verification (Creswell, 2014). Contributing to confirmability, “an audit trail offers visible evidence ... that the researcher did not simply find what he or she set out to find” (Bowen, 2009, as cited in Amney, 2014, p. 279). Finally, the implementation of an audit trail would bear significance in the process of protecting the study participants’ specific identifiers from the time a potential interviewee was contacted to the establishment of a separate secure tracking system for the creation of a code or key to be assigned to the same individual with the objective to preserve his privacy (Roratto & Dotto Dias, 2014).

*Confirmability* is in alignment with the reliance on objectivity or neutrality and in favor of the participants’ experiences and opinions. This process assures that the results derive from the study data and that future investigators will be in a position to confirm or substantiate the same. Audit trail procedures and reflexive techniques provided the necessary strategies that would lead to confirmability through a process of dependability on methods and evaluation tools utilized (Amney, 2014; Bowen, 2009). This study

examined the unique perspectives of persons who had experienced isolation confinement and ultimately sought to provide methods and techniques that might be corroborated by other researchers. After the interviews were completed and information was transcribed, a peer review or devil's advocate examination would be utilized to test the researcher's interpretation/conclusions and verify the accuracy of the data collected (Lub, 2015).

Finally, *transferability* pertains to the application of the results to other contexts and refers to an *external* validity (Sikolia, Biros, Mason, & Weiser, 2013). Given that a study may present some limitations in terms of sampling and geographical contexts, transparency would be provided as to the domain of operation, sampling reasoning, population, and related activities, at least before offering a logical explanation for a suggested generalization. Furthermore, this process required the inclusion of multiple perspectives relating to the individuals' experiences (Denzin, 2009; Noble & Smith, 2015). A certain degree of correspondence should exist between the *sending* or previous context of investigation and the *receiving* or new environment of application, therefore limiting the margin of error in offering inaccurate inferences (Carcary, 2009; Creswell, 2014). This study, however, did not intend to make a broad generalization claim, since the prison population in isolation confinement greatly varies by composition and treatment nationwide. The researcher's intent, instead, was to utilize the significance of the study results for further investigation and consideration of a variegated spectrum of diversity that might benefit policy approaches.

Qualitative research aims at the comprehension of a human and social phenomenon. It ultimately provides explanations and produces new or enhanced

knowledge (Allodola, 2014). Additional measures of scientific rigor are validity and reliability, which should be carefully envisioned at the time of the research conception (Morse et al., 2002, as cited in Cypress, 2017).

*Validity*, which is in line with internal validity in quantitative research, is associated with principles of credibility in qualitative research, as it has been explained above. Validity also refers to integrity of practice and careful revelation of the study findings that reflect the data collected (Noble & Smith, 2015). To validate the research process, it is important to stay consistent in the course of the investigation, maintain accuracy of research procedures, and verify whether the evaluation/interpretation of an event matches the objective of research (Cypress, 2017). This study maintained a transparent and truthful approach to the exploration of the phenomenon by applying the principle of descriptive validity through the faithful transcription of the experiences and perceptions shared by the study participants, as well as the direct reporting of some their most salient statements. Furthermore, this study adopted the principle of interpretive validity by analyzing the relationships between concepts and highlighting trends in accounts and opinions on the part of the study participants (Thomson, 2011; Allodola, 2014).

*Reliability*, which is based on replicability opportunities in quantitative research, is more in line with principles of dependability in qualitative research, as it has been explained above. Reliability relates to the process of consistency in the steps involved in the elaboration and analysis of the study information (Noble & Smith, 2015). Furthermore, “Whereas reliability in quantitative research depends on instrument



construction, in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument of the study” (Merriam and Leahy, 2015, as cited in Cypress, 2017, p. 258). In this study, I held the responsibility to build and maintain a structure for the data collection and analysis the information. I was the sole channel of communication with the study participants. I made sure I would adopt a process of verification of the information collected and avoid any deviations from the established study structure and protocol. Furthermore, by incorporating reflexivity as a strategy to maintain awareness of any opportunity to create pre-evaluations (Cypress, 2017).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions (RQs) were related to main problems statement areas I intended to examine:

RQ1: According to interviewees’ accounts, to what extent did the information about inmates’ background, health, and needs appear to be available to prison administrators and staff at the time of incarceration?

RQ2: According to interviewees’ accounts, how did prison administrators and staff appear to view inmates’ specific needs or requests prior to and up to the time of placement in isolation confinement?

RQ3: What types of terminology and adjustments are used to describe isolation confinement methods and practices within prison systems?

RQ4: If rehabilitation and reentry into society programs were available, what types of conversations occurred between prison administrators/staff and prisoners in reference to inmates’ background, health and needs?

## Interview Questions

The use of open-ended interview questions allowed for an advancement in inquiry opportunities based on the study participants' openness to exploration of a given question:

1. Please indicate which category/categories you believe describes/describe you: Diversity of backgrounds, needs, mental health, physical health, religion, political affiliation, gang affiliation, language or educational difficulties, or other.
2. Explain how any information about your background, health condition, affiliation with an organization or belief, or other relevant characteristic was discussed and addressed by prison administrators and staff at the time of your incarceration.
3. Discuss what types of assistance or counseling, if any, were available to inmates at the time of your incarceration.
4. Explain what conversations, if any, took place between prison administrators or staff and you in reference to any area concerning your background and needs prior to your being placed in isolation confinement.
5. Describe the situation(s) or incident(s) that caused you to be placed in isolation confinement.
6. Describe whether there was any communication with prison administrators or staff as to your specific needs or requests during the period of isolation confinement.

7. Discuss the types of terminology used by prison administrators and staff to indicate what types of segregation or seclusion and associated arrangements the prison system had in place.
8. Describe your understanding of the types of segregation or seclusion and associated arrangements your prison system had in place.
9. Discuss what types of rehabilitation and/or reentry into society program were available at the prison institution.
10. Explain what kind of exchanges, if any, occurred with prison administrators and staff as to your experience in isolation confinement.
11. Describe any conversations you had with prison administrators and staff about your background, health condition, affiliation with an organization or belief, or other relevant characteristic prior to your being released.

### **Trustworthiness**

Inaccurate observation/interpretation and/or an overgeneralization are among the potential risks in research. An investigator will have assumptions and may show bias in resolving the reading of the results and/or in applying the findings beyond the cultural and geographical context(s) of observation. A process of self-reflection allows the researcher to ponder on and honestly reveal the methods utilized to process and interpret the study data (Creswell, 2014; Mawfield & Babbie, 2009). The preparation of a *researcher identity memo* allows the investigator to record the scope and significance of the project along with the conjectures and degree of contribution of her experiential knowledge. It is crucial to take in consideration currently available theories, as well as

not to *force* principles and speculation constructs. Constraining the research efforts and evaluation within the dominant and normally accepted theoretical models may jeopardize or undermine the understanding of the participants' experiences and decrease the desired quality standards of the study (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, a researcher's previous familiarity with prison systems may affect the degree of objectivity in the analysis and interpretation of the information. Miner-Romanoff (2012) indicated the benefit of interpretative phenomenological methods in criminal justice qualitative studies. She maintained the degree of importance of this approach for an in-depth investigation and revelation of study participants' experiences and contexts of origin. Moreover, Miner-Romanoff (2012) revealed her previous work in the criminal justice system as a practicing attorney and a court clerk.

A researcher identity memo or other tool was, therefore, essential for me to develop alongside the study documentation, so that possible bias and preconceived notions could be tracked and considered in the final evaluation of the research outcomes. Furthermore, the utilization of an *intellectual audit trail* was a fundamental tool to utilize in tracking thought process developments during the investigational journey, as well as in the course of verification of steps that establish an optimal level of trustworthiness of the research. This trajectory went a step farther than the dependability and confirmability standards previously discussed. This process begins with an analysis of my own philosophical position and thoughts. It considered alternative tools for the collection of the information. After the analysis and reflection on the evidence, I could then strategize

on the interpretation of the resulting information, while on the course of attempting a suggestion on a potential theory (Amney, 2014; Carcary, 2009).

### **Ethical Considerations**

In the area of ethical research and guidelines, it is important to distinguish between procedural ethics and ethics in practice. The former refers to the measures involved in the submission and approval of the research methodologies by the pertinent institutional review board, as well as study requirement and current ethics code. The adequate proposal and structure for a study will have an impact on the degree of trustworthiness that will be attained among the recipients of the study reading and outcomes (Denzin, 2009; Gorard, 2014).

Ethics in practice concern the implementation phase for the duration of the study. Although codes of ethics and appropriate training are normally delivered in research environment, challenges arise, due to unforeseen scenarios and additional roadblocks. In this study, for instance, ex-offenders could become reluctant to share details for fear of repercussions and provide partial information. Prison administrators are normally gatekeepers in reference to access to inmates and records. Along the same lines, non-profits organizations that provide a support system for ex-offenders could be protective of the population they serve and the information that might be shared, therefore affecting the amount and quality of data I would be able to collect. Furthermore, some ex-offenders still remained under some form of pressure, given that they might have been specifically requested not to reveal any details pertaining to certain past criminal activities or circumstances experienced in prison. Background and demographics differences between

the interviewee and me, in my role as the researcher, could also affect the exchange environment. Potential power shifts – real or perceived – might occur, since the study participants at times could view me as an external party to the peculiar phenomenon under study and as the holder of a stance that might can be in antithesis to the ex-offenders' reality (Anyan, 2013; Umamaheswar, 2014). Miner-Romanoff (2012) discussed the value of implementing a process of *intersubjectivity*, which would allow the integration of the investigator's knowledge with a process of empathetic listening and accurate reporting. This was the very process I adopted throughout the collection of data when I approached and interviewed my study participants.

One-on-one interviews are more personal than focus groups or surveys. They also offer a great opportunity for further explorations of topics and discovery. My duty would be defined as a responsibility to work on a trust-building strategy, so that both parties could overcome initial blocks in communication. Miner-Romanoff (2012) suggested a researcher should adequately prepare for the interview and become familiar with most of the information from the informed consent and the questions, so that eye contact might be maintained for most of the time, therefore delivering a genuine degree of interest and empathy in the participant's stories. The good faith attempts to discover a common ground/interest was the key in my fostering of a sense of mutual understanding. The interviewees were presented with an understanding of the benefit of their participation for better practices involving current and future inmates. Moreover, I was in a unique position to pay attention to non-verbal clues of the participants, once I gave undivided attention to the individuals I interviewed. I am a cultural competence consultant and

remain aware that non-verbal communication varies by culture. Eye contact may not be ideal for all encounters, for instance. Body language may also have a different meaning depending on upbringing and culture or origin. Furthermore, Miner-Romanoff (2012) advised about the importance of maintaining a suitable degree of “sensitivity to participants’ values and norms” (p. 14), as a researcher would need to abstain from adopting stereotyping practices in the collection of the study data and interpretation the interviewee’s general behavior, as well as demonstrate integrity in the study process through constancy between the research groundwork and its implementation (Resnik, 2015). In the end, I maintained awareness of the cultural sphere and non-verbal communication in order to generate an optimal plain level field of communication and constructive interaction with the interviewees. Finally, from a human standpoint, allowing interviewees a sense of empowerment for their valuable perspectives and verbally expressing gratitude for their contribution increased the level of trustworthiness of the project and broke down potential perceptions of power differences (Umamaheswar, 2014).

### **Protecting Study Participants**

One concern of research procedures involves the management and protection of the participants’ personal information. According to the CUNY Collaborative Programs Research and Evaluation (2012), researchers and analysts are in a position of identifying and matching collected data with the study participants. However, they remain responsible for preventing any external party from accessing this identifying information. Certificates of Confidentiality are official documents issued by an agency, such as in the

case of the National Institutes of Health, to protect the privacy and identity of study participants in the case of distinct projects and in accordance to § 301(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 241(d)). This study does not rely on the issuance of a Certificate of Confidentiality, since the researcher does not intend to collect identifiable information (The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, n.d.). Nevertheless, the researcher will establish physical, administrative, and technical precautions by securing the collection instruments and data in electronic format on a computer and/or computer compatible device which will be accessed only by the researcher.

Prospective study participants were read or transmitted a consent form along with guidelines on confidentiality of the process, interview, and data collected. The informed consent clarified the purpose of the study, as well as the risks and benefits (National Institutes of Health, 2012). While I believed that this study would not implicate any risk opportunity for the participants, I adhered to ethical standards in protection of study participants by including a warning note on the informed consent regarding possible risks. The interviewees were also informed of the limits of use of the data and the safeguard measures to be utilized.

A code or key was assigned to each participant to protect the privacy of the individual and to list the subjects in the database for entry, trend identification, and analysis purposes. To this day, I do not intend to destroy the original data within a predetermined timeframe (Collaborative Programs Research and Evaluation, 2012). In light of the study's goal of social change, emerging trends from the study outcome might



become the basis for a future project. In general lines, I will eventually comply with the general 5-7 year timeframe for archival of the information before considering the removal of the same. I realized that, by the conclusion of the study, I was going to benefit from a *lesson learned* perspective and would need to revisit the previously completed study in order to plan the strategy and arrangement for a future endeavor.

In most studies involving human subjects, the language of the informed consent anticipates a clause on the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time and in accordance to federal regulations and ICH Good Clinical Practice guidelines (Gupta, 2013). In my role as the researcher, I considered previously incarcerated individuals to be part of a vulnerable population, given that many had developed physical and/or psychological conditions partially caused by prolonged exposure to isolation confinement and also remained the storytellers of valuable, yet confidential accounts. I was fully attentive to the particular circumstances relating to the interviewees' stories and intended to demonstrate sensitivity in communication and the development of a trusting rapport with the study participants by reaffirming to them that the process would take place entirely on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the study participants were reassured that they could refrain from answering any question they felt uncomfortable about and could withdraw from the study at any time. Finally, the interviewees would maintain the right to know the outcome of the study, if they shared the continuous desire to be informed (National Institutes of Health, 2012).

## Summary

Benefiting from the perspective of social science methods, this study intended to provide a broad spectrum of circumstances that led to isolation confinement, based on the accounts of previously incarcerated individuals. This type of explanatory research focused on the potential reasoning for the incidence of the phenomenon. The resulting knowledge would contribute to policy proposals and additional investigational efforts. This study utilized a phenomenological psychological model, which contributed to the understanding of the study participants' experiences and emotional state. A penal subjective consciousness framework allowed for an interpretation of isolation confinement experiences in relation to the participants' perceptions of the punishment component. The collection of information was based on the collection of responses to open-ended questions. The data were then entered in a CAQDAS package for classification and analysis purposes. An Informed Consent was provided to prospective interviewees and indicated the nature and objective of the research. Furthermore, the significance of the study and the benefit to society was explained.

Scientific Rigor can be measured by credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. As a researcher, I benefitted from several additional tools that contribute to transparency of methods and analysis, mitigation of potential biases, and tracking opportunities for progress. Confidentiality of the information shared by the study participants and their privacy was maintained. Potential interviewees were made aware of the voluntary nature of their participation, as well as their right to withdraw from the study at any point.

Chapter 4 discusses the context and conditions of the study, illustrates in details the backgrounds information as to the study participants, and the process of data collection. Furthermore, the section focuses on the analysis phase, indicates coding schemes and relevant themes, and explains discrepancies and/or particular cases that may deviate from the central purpose or add a new dimension to the discourse. Principles of scientific rigor are reevaluated in light of discovered datapoints and potential factors validating or posing an obstacle to the integrity of the process. Finally, study outcomes are presented and discussed and limitations and recommendations for future projects are provided.

## Chapter 4: Results

I used a qualitative method with semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, to collect data reflecting the perceptions and experiences of previously incarcerated individuals regarding the issue of isolation confinement. A penal subjective consciousness model supported the inquiry and description of the phenomenon. This conceptual framework permits the researcher to establish the underlying structure for an understanding of the problem, the direction of the investigation, and the subsequent emerging relationships among the main elements and concepts of the study (Sexton, 2015). This investigation gave me the opportunity to engage in the potential discovery of innovative patterns by relying on cognitive apprenticeship or metacognitive processes, which led to the classification of concepts in a network of associated groups (An & Cao, 2014).

The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (2012) contributed to the improvement of mental and physical health care standards for people who have been incarcerated. The organization investigates and addresses areas concerning a variety of isolation confinement conditions under “standard E-09 Segregated Inmates” (para. 1), often producing questions regarding the discretion in use of this reprimand method (National Commission on Correctional Health Care, 2012). In the State of Texas, recent reports have indicated a decrease in the application of administrative segregation. In 2018, Texas Department of Criminal Justice held approximately 4,200 of its 145,000 prisoners in isolation in comparison with more than 9,000 about 10 years ago. Although this decline in practice was considered a beneficial step in reforming efforts of this

system, Barajas (2018) stated that this state still held the highest number of prisoners in solitary confinement. Barajas also noted that, according to the most recent report by the Association of State Correctional Administrators and the Liman Center for Public Interest Law at Yale University, one third of the overall number on inmates in the State of Texas remained in confinement for more than 6 years.

There are times when drastic provisions are taken in response to internal scandals that trickle down to the general public and are subsequently scrutinized. Prison administrators at a County jail in Texas reduced by half the time prisoners would be forced to spend in solitary confinement; they also decreased the number of prisoners held in seclusion from approximately 240 inmates in 2014 to 122 in 2018. Although the initial explanations indicated a more lenient stance on some rule-breaking behaviors on the part of the inmates and the creation of units for mental health care by prison administrators, the public and/or family members with loved ones in the penal system did not likely forget the circumstances of almost 5 years ago, when many inmates were regularly held in cells infested with insects and human waste (Blakinger, 2018).

This problem-based study addressed the perspectives and descriptions provided by previously incarcerated individuals regarding the circumstances that might have led to a hasty placement in solitary confinement. Data collection began with questions on the availability of information regarding the inmates' backgrounds and needs at the time of incarceration. The conversation progressed to explore any potential exchanges between prison personnel and inmates in relation to similar information, or any developing exchanges, in the period of time before the inmates' placement in administrative

segregation. The interviews were also used to discover what terminology prison personnel used to refer to isolation confinement and conditions, as well as the understanding of the same concepts by the inmates. Finally, the questions addressed whether any final discussions or clarifications between prison personnel and inmates in reference to the same information had occurred prior to the inmates' release from the prison system.

The application of qualitative methodology in criminal justice research allows a flexible process in the collection of data "beyond aggregate crime data" (Miner-Romanoff, 2012, p. 1). The use of a phenomenological psychological model allowed me to maintain an open stance in the description and analysis of potential predicaments leading to misconstructions or misunderstandings of the study participants' diversity in origin, backgrounds, affiliations, and specific needs (du Plessis & du Plessis, 2017).

This chapter discusses addresses the strategies in preparation for the establishment of the standards for the project, provides considerations of the context of investigation, and explains the challenges in reaching out to and/or connecting with potential study participants. An explanation is provided as to the significance and function of the research questions and the associated interview questions. Information about demographic information, data collection processes, and modifications in the collection of data is also given. The data analysis process is discussed with attention to coding mechanisms and organization of concepts, along with unexpected scenarios and/or inconsistencies. The last section addresses the evidence of trustworthiness and the

associated scientific rigor categories, while providing confirmation of the expectations and developments not previously presented.

### **Setting and Challenges**

The recruiting portion of a study is critical for a comprehensive investigation of a problem and setting, as well as for the success of a research project that can generate vital information for future evidence-based initiatives and further studies. I had to identify the optimal strategy for the recruitment of study participants, including providing the necessary motivation for individuals to take part in the investigation. It was important to convey to potential study participants the benefits and value of their contribution to society, particularly in cases that showed was no visible or immediate common ground between my background as an investigator and the possible interviewees' circumstances and life experiences (Blandford, 2013; Newington & Metcalfe, 2014).

The original plan for this study included a 4-month period for data collection and a target sample of 25-30 participants for the purpose of meeting the objectives of this study. Given the characteristics of the study population, I decided to use of a nonrandom sampling process to include convenience and/or purposive samples, which reflected a practical plan to access the most accessible individuals (Blandford, 2013).

After spending a considerable amount of time in isolation confinement, many individuals reenter society but often have to confront straining circumstance in handling health issues and other life struggles. Furthermore, these individuals might not trust people who do not share comparable experiences. They may be willing to explore requests for interviews or surveys based on information shared by organizations of

affiliations and/or by word of mouth. For this reason, convenience and/or purposive sampling allowed me to achieve better results in recruiting members of this population. The advertisement of this study and the subsequent sharing of an informed consent form with potential participants allowed for transparency about the goal and process of this research. Furthermore, the voluntary nature of participation in the study and the objective for positive social change affirmed the value of this research and promoted trust building and rapport development with me. This approach focused on making contact with previously incarcerated individuals through nonprofit groups they had been affiliated with. Successful contacts were made with reentry organizations linked to nonprofit initiatives involving family members of previously incarcerated individuals.

Newington and Metcalfe (2014) revealed that in clinical studies posed challenges in recruitment of participants, due to the expectation of commitment on the part of potential interviewees. Similarly, given the sensitive nature of this study, I recognized that perceptions of risks and the projected dedication to the interview process might have an impact in the slow progression to full recruitment. Moreover, the lack of compensation for participation in the study contributed to a decrease in an immediate interest, despite the initial promising conversations. Newington and Metcalfe (2014) discussed additional challenges in recruitment, such as recruiter and potential participants' characteristics. Customarily, most people prefer to engage and participate in a study when they can interact with a professionally recognized individual in their organization of association and/or with peers. I neither held a professional role in one of the affiliated local



organizations nor was a peer to potential study participants under previously explained common ground standards.

I had to manage a few tests in the recruitment phase, such as the degree of readiness on the part of some organizations to embrace my research and challenging stances towards this study and myself on the part of potential study participants. Newington and Metcalfe (2014) wrote about the likelihood of improvement in recruitment of study participants following an increase of awareness of current studies in the community. I contacted organizations that would favor the engagement of potential participants, such as established religious and non-religious organizations in the community and associations affiliated with local government agencies. Additional efforts were directed to grass-root groups, and local mental and/or counseling centers. Finally, I attempted to establish a connection with a few previously incarcerated individuals, who later reentered society and engaged in public speaking events and other awareness initiatives. Unfortunately, most of these attempts fell into deaf ears.

Blandford (2013) discussed possible barriers to recruitment and indicated “gatekeeper bias” (p. 15) as a characteristic of those groups having the power to filter or place an obstacle to advertisement and effective recruiting of a study that could be of interest to community members. In fact, the recruitment for this study was delayed of two (2) months out of the originally anticipated approximate four (4) months for this very reason. It appeared that, particularly in Austin, Travis County area, the preference in allowing access to information and/or study advertisement was routinely given to students associated with a well-known local state university. In fact, I was often treated

with suspicion or indifference and in some cases was even insulted, such as when I was bluntly told “You know, we just do not allow anyone to come here.” In many instances, representatives of organizations did not return my calls or email messages. When asked directly, representatives with some of these organizations replied that they already had many projects in course with the above-mentioned state university. In a few cases, they asked me to provide full information regarding my dissertation and even indicated the need for an IRB process and/or a thorough scrutiny of this study before they could provide an answer. Upon requests for clarifications on my part, they revealed neither a timeframe for their evaluation process nor an assurance a response would even be given. Most of the representatives with the grass-root groups congratulated me for taking on this study, but they never engaged in any fruitful endeavors afterwards or invited me to an event.

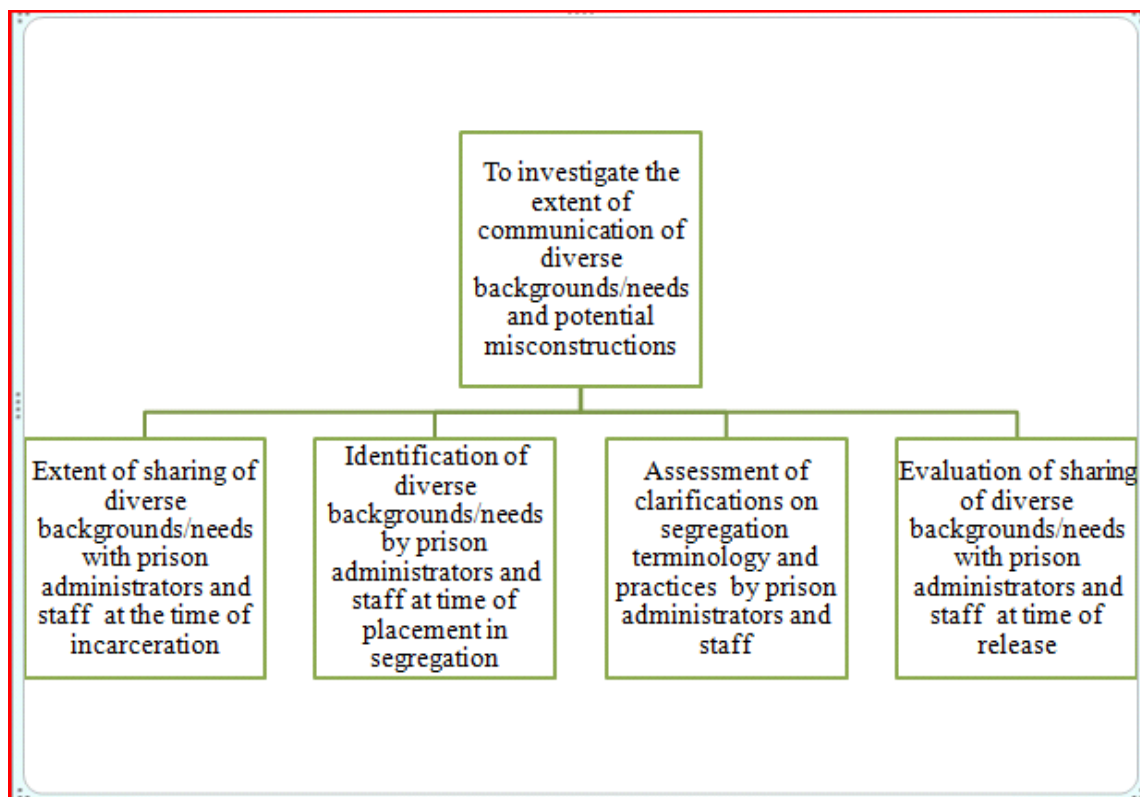
Furthermore, I was frequently considered as an outsider by organizations, whose members primarily lived in between the two counties radius, and possibly also due to my affiliation with an academic institution that was not the locally recognized state university. Regrettably, the Austin/Travis County area in particular remains an environment with challenging cultural mindsets and preconceived views that often lead to division before a dialogue can be initiated. This atmosphere contributed to an impenetrable wall in some cases. In fact, I was at times confronted, due to my determination to conduct this study within a rigorous academic framework and an independent stance in comparison with projects currently produced at the local level. My background and academic affiliation were prematurely and negatively evaluated, since

some of the parties I reached appeared to lack the motivation and the aptitude to fairly assess my good faith investigational intentions and character. In one instance, a woman with a family member in the prison system dared to declare that my “language barriers” could prevent me from getting the “true facts”. She added that she felt “violated” by the fact that I was forthcoming about my investigation and that I was probably conducting a study for my “selfish reasons” and to fulfill my “personal agenda.” In another instance, at the beginning of an exchange, a man who had experienced isolation confinement immediately confronted me stated he did not trust me and that he did not like people who use previously incarcerated individuals to write dissertations and further their careers. It is remarkable that the exchanges with the woman with a loved one in prison and with the previously incarcerated man both took place without a face-to-face meeting and without the opportunity to share my good faith intentions.

### **Research Questions**

Castillo-Montoya (2016) established an interview protocol refinement (IPR) framework as a 4-step guideline for the creation and refinement of the interview preparation practice. After considering the potential applicability of this framework to this study, I decided to implement three (3) out of the four (4) steps in the pursuit of a well-devised structure that would meet the needs and requirements of the current investigational endeavor. Step one of the IPR involved the alignment of the specific interview questions with the overall research queries. Figure 4 indicates this investigation’s comprehensive objectives through the illustration of the main research questions. In Figure 2, the objective of this investigation was identified as the originator

of the sections that followed, the research questions (RQs) areas, covering the circumstances and events from the time of incarceration to the placement in isolation confinement and through the period of a potential rehabilitation process, leading to the departure of the same individuals from the prison system to reenter society.



*Figure 2.* Research question areas.

A semi-structured qualitative study was then utilized to generate the undertaking of an exploration of the reality to be comprehended via the use of interviews, as well as some degree of observational accounts, finally leading to a process of iterative coding and continuous comparisons (Blandford, 2013). Subsequently, a list of specific interview questions (IQs) for each of the four (4) specific areas of investigation stemmed from the broader research questions (RQs). They supported an organized framework for a one-on-

one conversation with the study participant in the direction of an in-depth contribution and expression of the experiences. A process of mapping and matching the specific interview questions with the overall research queries allowed for the verification of consistency of approach and the identification of any gaps in knowledge inquiry. Moving to Step two of the IPR (Castillo-Montoya, 2016), the premises for an inquiry-based exchange were created. Research queries and interview questions had to be connected, but they did not utilize the same modality, since the former were intended to indicate what I wanted to resolve as an investigator; whereas, the latter were to be crafted to generate a process of understanding during the interview. In fact, constructing research questions involved a certain degree of creativity and awareness of the context and research process (Maxwell, 2013). According to Dörnyei (2007, as cited in Alshenqeeti, 2014), meeting the research objective via the use of qualitative interviews meant to allow for a natural flow in the exchange and facilitate a rich and detailed description of the interviewees' stories. The utilization of a qualitative approach via interviews with open-ended questions was fundamental for the acquisition of meaningful voices and the multiplicity of the meanings attached to the accounts provided by the study participants. The following sections show the four research questions and the related open-ended interview questions representing the group of inquiry directed to the study participants.

### **Research Question 1**

According to interviewees' accounts, to what extent did the information about inmates' background, health, and needs appear to be available to prison administrators

and staff at the time of incarceration? The following interview questions (IQs) were related the RQ1:

IQ1: Please indicate which category/categories you believe describes/describe you: Category of diversity of backgrounds, needs, mental health, physical health, religion, political affiliation, gang affiliation, language or educational difficulties, or other.

IQ2: Explain how any information about your background, health condition, affiliation with an organization or belief, or other relevant characteristic was discussed and addressed by prison administrators and staff at the time of your incarceration.

IQ3: Discuss what types of assistance or counseling, if any, were available to inmates at the time of your incarceration.

## **Research Question 2**

According to interviewees' accounts, how did prison administrators and staff appear to view inmates' specific needs or requests prior to and up to the time of placement in isolation confinement? The following IQs were related the RQ2:

IQ4: Explain what conversations, if any, took place between prison administrators or staff and you in reference to any area concerning your background and needs prior to your being placed in isolation confinement.

IQ5: Describe the situation(s) or incident(s) that caused you to be placed in isolation confinement.

IQ6: Describe whether there was any communication with prison administrators or staff as to your specific needs or requests during the period of isolation confinement.

**Research Question 3**

What types of terminology and adjustments are used to describe isolation confinement methods and practices within prison systems? The following IQs were related the RQ3:

IQ7: Discuss the types of terminology used by prison administrators and staff to indicate what types of segregation or seclusion and associated arrangements the prison system had in place.

IQ8: Describe your understanding of the types of segregation or seclusion and associated arrangements your prison system had in place.

**Research Question 4**

If rehabilitation and reentry into society programs were available, what types of conversations occurred between prison administrators/staff and prisoners in reference to inmates' background, health and needs? The following IQs were related the RQ4:

IQ9: Discuss what types of rehabilitation and/or reentry into society program were available at the prison institution.

IQ10: Explain what kind of exchanges, if any, occurred with prison administrators and staff as to your experience in isolation confinement.

IQ11: Describe any conversations you had with prison administrators and staff about your background, health condition, affiliation with an organization or belief, or other relevant characteristic prior to your being released.

Regarding the IPR's rule (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) on the need to create a script for consistency in communication style at the beginning of each interview, as well the use

of follow-up questions and prompts, I chose to maintain an interaction style that would allow me to adjust to the circumstance and a level of comfort in consideration of the interviewee. A natural conversation approach was the basis of every interview and was also supported by the selection of the interview setting. The location for the interview was established to occur at a public place for mutual comfort and convenience. I did not create a script for the management of the encounter, but instead I clarified the initial information stemming from the informed consent form and gradually developed the discourse into the more specific questions and answers portion.

Blandford (2013) discussed a fundamental phase in the interviewing process and the importance to work on the simplicity of approach, information sharing, clarifications, and closing remarks. For this study, I prepared for the crucial initial portion of the encounter by establishing open lines of communication and mutual easiness of mindset. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were useful for the comprehension of the participants' experiences and as they intended to contribute additional information. The objective of an open exploration was supported by documenting the interviewee's answers in writing only. No audio and/or video recording was used, so that the development of a trusting rapport between the study participant and me could be advanced in the discovery process. The method of repeating the contents of the answers back to the interviewee proved to be effective in minimizing the opportunity for unintentional biases and/or assumptions. Furthermore, a process of reflexivity during interviewees was of assistance in opening the field for a natural progression of the



discourse and in accordance with additional information the study participant felt comfortable to contribute (Miner-Romanoff, 2012).

Step three of the IPR (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) involved receiving feedback on the interviewing protocol. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) with Walden University evaluated the objective and research elements of this study before granting an approval. The dissertation committee chair and team also contributed valuable input. Furthermore, I counted on receiving additional feedback from my investigational activities, which would further validate the method utilized and/or provide additional elements to be evaluated and incorporated in future research projects.

Although pilot studies can be a beneficial method to test and verify recruitment opportunities, I had already indicated that a pilot phase would not be feasible for this study, given the expected timeline for completion of this research and resources constraints. Therefore, Step four of the IPR (Castillo-Montoya, 2016), referring to a pilot phase of the interviewing protocol, was not applicable to this research.

### **Demographics**

Demographic questions have the objective to present an accurate picture of the participants' background and/or potential prevalence of characteristics that may be helpful in future investigative efforts. The inclusion of types of variables went beyond the assessment of a study participant's social identity. They were also an indication of their personal identity and, therefore, the manner in which their experiences and relationships would be shaped (Fernandez, Godwin, Doyle, Verdin, & Boone, 2016). Along these lines, a certain degree of latitude and flexibility in the construction of demographic

questions and auspice responses was established to allow the interviewees enough ease in revealing personal characteristics and within a more relaxed framework of choices to the extent they preferred to explore. Table 2 shows the originally devised demographic questions that allowed for a decreased level of an invasive approach to the personal qualities of the interviewees.

A second series of questions aimed at discovering additional elements in prison context and individuals' diverse backgrounds and needs, but only as a result of the interviewee's willingness to share this information as part of the responses to interview questions:

- Previous or last prison time
- Length of stay in prison
- Total number of months/years spent in isolation confinement
- Approximate time of reentry into society
- Perceived adjustment into society

I considered the second list as a register of optional questions, since I deemed them to have an exploratory nature that might make study participants uncomfortable, despite the assurance that would be given as to the confidentiality of their responses. Furthermore, an insistence on this sort of peculiar questions could have taken the inquiry outside the direct scope of the research. In fact, interviewees normally provided casual, short related information only as part of a more specific answer to one or more of the interview questions.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher had determined that a period of 4 months for recruitment and interviewing could meet the objective of obtaining a localized picture of the phenomenon investigated. The original recruitment target of 25-30 participants was met, with 25 individuals becoming actual study participants; five (5) were withdrawn from the study. The 25 actual study participants signed an informed consent form and completed the study; whereas, the five individuals withdrawn from the study were confrontational with the researcher at the beginning of the interview or attempted to gain control of the interviewing process by shifting the focus of the inquiry. The informed consent form was withdrawn for three (3) out of the five removed from this study and two (2) out of the five removed from this study did not get to the point of signing the consent form. In all cases, I politely closed the encounter and offered an opportunity to meet again. No further contact occurred. In all 30 cases, I indicated that the interview process was voluntary and that the study participants could refrain from answering any of the questions and/or could withdraw from the study at any point and with no future expectation to continue. The anticipated duration of the interview was maintained at a minimum of 30-45 minutes with an additional 20-30 minutes in cases of further information sharing or for the purpose of keeping the process at a pace the interviewee was comfortable with.

Rimando et al. (2015) identified a series of challenges that novice doctoral researchers encounter during the data collection stage, particularly in the case of probable impediments in rapport-building between interviewee and investigator, as well as practical study procedures. I was already been aware of the sensitive nature of the

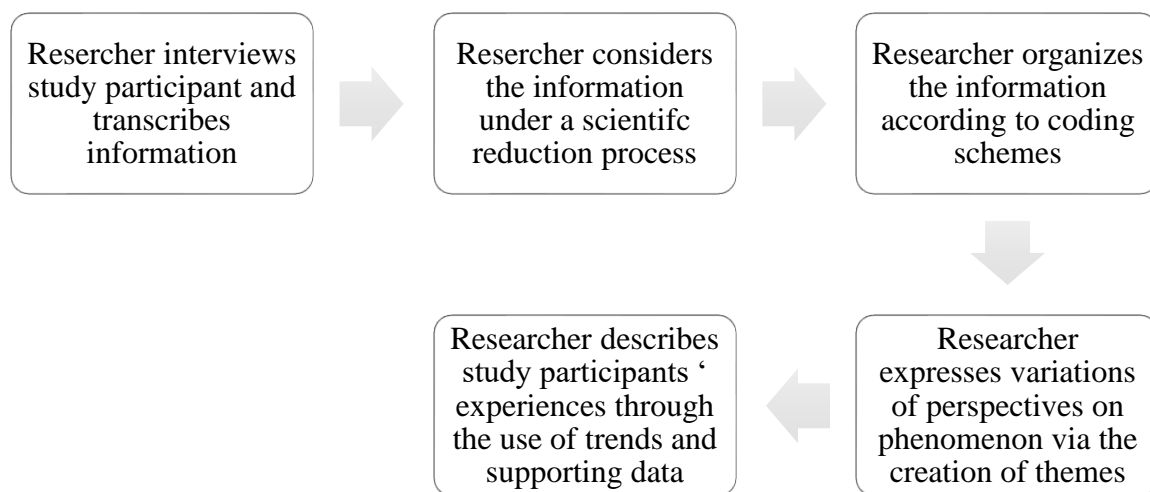
investigational endeavor and the fact that some potential study participants may feel uncomfortable at the beginning of the encounter. The voluntary characteristic of the study participation and the choice of a neutral location for the interview, such as a library or a coffee shop, were the first decisions to be implemented for the objective to decrease the opportunity of a potential sense of uneasiness in the rapport between interviewee and investigator. Furthermore, I had previously worked in clinical trials and the research sector for more than 15 years and was accustomed to sensitive matters to investigate and discuss, as well as potential conflicts or communication difficulties with patients and other study participants involved. Moreover, I used to be an educational counselor in a prison system in California in the mid 1990s and was at times exposed to testing circumstances produced by either the inmates or the prison officers. I did not overlook potential adversities; at the same time, I considered them to be elements to tackle in life in a constructive manner. Finally, in my previous roles in research, I became accustomed to create and use a variety of collection instruments design and implementation strategies and tools, therefore, overcoming some of the potential initial barriers to study organization processes.

### **Data Analysis**

The process of interpretation of the collected data should typically be supported by the theoretical position of the study. This study utilized a phenomenological psychological model with the goal to understand how previously incarcerated individuals experienced their placement in isolation confinement in light of their peculiar diverse backgrounds, needs, and requests. The process of insertion of interviews text into a

database and the creation of a coding system ultimately led to an interpretative phenomenological analysis phase with two (2) primary objectives: To understand the meaning attributed to the experiences by the interviewees and to link the very meaning to the context investigated (Smith, 1996, as cited in Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The interviewing process normally produces large amounts of information. After collecting data, my task focused on the organization of the data and the identification of the segments that were needed in support of the study's objectives, while minimizing the opportunity for a subjective process. I ultimately found it beneficial to apply to the data analysis process the five (5) steps of the phenomenological psychological method, which assisted with the organization and illustration of the phases involved, from the interview time through the description of the phenomenon and elucidations on the study results (Giorgi, Giorgi, & Morley, 2017). Figure 3 exemplifies the stages that began with the data collection process and ended with a depiction of the study outcomes. A set of organizational rules governed the process of structuring interviews and the transcription of data. Reduction procedures and organizational steps in the establishment of coding order took place, while the development of themes and the identification of similarities and/or variances took place. Finally, the study results prepared me for the stage involving the account and description of the findings.



*Figure 3.* Data analysis process.

The organization of the information collected through the interviewing process was handled by a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package. The information was stored and processed for coding purposes and to accomplish a search for relationships among concepts. This process allowed for the classification of unit of information, as well as for the generation of meaningful elements. The creation of a concept map was fundamental for the building of a coding scheme to apply to the final analysis and reporting. In the end, I applied a reflexive analysis procedure to both convey my experience with the interviewing method and curtail the activities that might jeopardize the reliability of the investigational effort (Miner-Romanoff, 2012; Alshenqeeti, 2014). Furthermore, I relied on the use of Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and graphics to get a more peculiar snapshot of the incidence of demographic data.

Figure 4 is a chart representing the distribution pattern study participants per ethnicity within the established age ranges. No study participants were recruited in the 21-31 age range. Demographic information was not reported in the case of the five (5)

individuals who were withdrawn from the study. The circumstances of the withdrawal allowed for partial or no collection of these data points. The researcher followed the ethical principle of accuracy of information reporting and, therefore, refrained from potential assumptions at the attempted interview sessions. Figure 5 is a chart indicating the distribution of study participants per level of education.

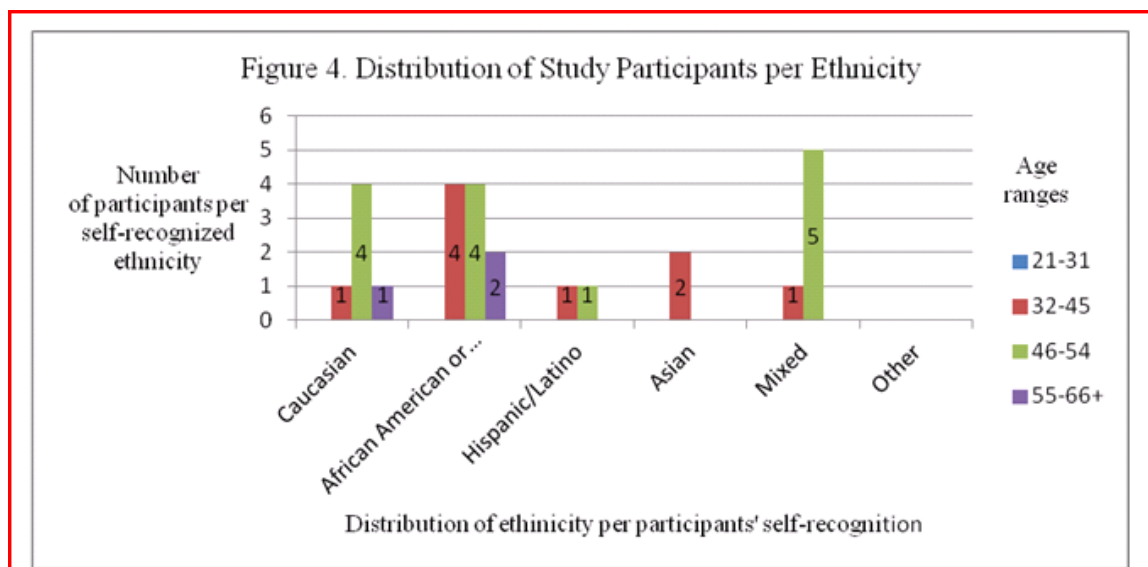


Figure 4. Distribution of study participants per ethnicity.

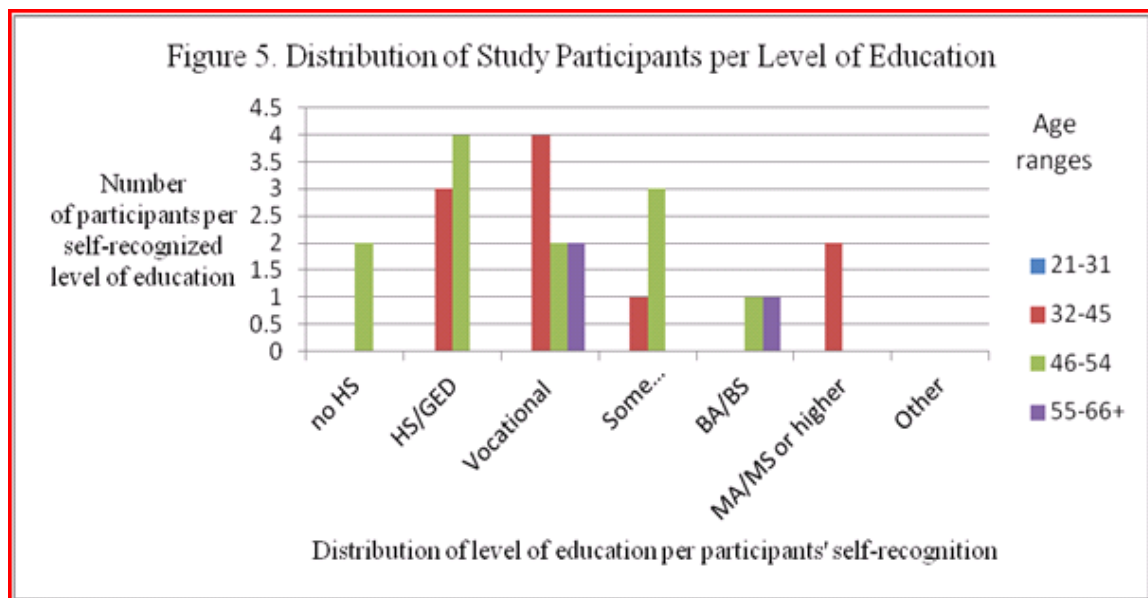


Figure 5. Distribution of study participants per level of education.



Four (4) participants in the 32-45 age range and four (4) participants in the 46-54 age range appeared to account for the highest number of cases with high school diplomas and/or vocational training. The lowest number of cases with some college courses and/or a four-year degree seemed to comprise of one participant in the 32-45 age range and of one participant each in the 46-54 age and 55-66+ ranges. It should be noted that I produced this table for pure illustration purposes. When I asked the interviewees which level of education they had achieved, I wrote down the immediate answer I received. I did not further inquire as to a confirmation of the actual degree of completion. Furthermore, education may account for a variety of elements, which include formal education and experiences in life. Finally, the relevance of the degree of education completed did not have a direct correlation with the scope and objective of this study.

In chapter 3, I listed a second series of questions to discover the prison context and diversity background. I stated that I would encourage study participants to share the information only if they were willing to share it. At the end of the study, I could not produce a fragmented picture for this second set of questions, since only a few interviewees made causal statements and in the concept of the overall interview process.

### **Coding Strategies**

Coding refers to the process of creating a concept map aiming at exploring and defining the relationship among ideas. An open coding method allows for the assignment of specific properties to words and/or statements surfacing from interviews. The procedure of analysis began with consideration of the emerging thoughts from the description of experiences and via the utilization of a phenomenological psychological

reduction system. Descriptions were expressed in lengthy statements; therefore, they had to be broken down and then properly assigned to the relevant classifications and meaning units (Giorgi, Giorgi, & Morley, 2017). For this reason, some of the most descriptive terminology was grouped under a more comprehensive category. For instance, a specific indication of a pre-classification of a non-medical issue had to be understood in the relevant context in order to be placed either under the broader code indicating dismissal of an existing issue at the time of incarceration or under the code indicating interpersonal communication issues between prison staff and inmates. The centrality of a researcher's role was the focus of Corbin and Strauss' (2008, as cited in Blandford, 2013) discussion on investigational explanations and results reporting. The authors stressed that "Sensitivity stands in contrast to objectivity ... Sensitivity means having insight... through immersion in data" (p. 28). I then proceeded to discover associations and relationships among concepts and gained an insight in the world of experiences conveyed by the study participants, finally leading to the identification of trends or themes as the basis of the analysis discourse (Moral, de Antonio, Ferre, & Lara, 2015; Sutton & Austin, 2015).

After inputting data from interviews in a Dedoose software and database system, my assignment of codes progressed to the stage of determining primary sets and then the grouping phase with related codes, also known as child codes, under the relevant and more comprehensive arrangements. Table 2 provides a listing of primary codes (primary set) and a more detailed list of characterizations (child codes).

Table 2

*Analysis Codes: Primary Sets and Child Codes*

Primary sets	Child codes
Dismissal of an existing issue	Insufficient inquiry Preestablished evaluation
Inadequate training	Inadequate process Lack of exchange Preestablished guidelines
Delayed or no medical assistance	Preexisting records reliance Time delay
Continued handling of issues	Continuous physical/mental health issue Continuous dismissal of nonmedical issue Hygiene and unsanitary conditions
Interpersonal communication issues	Language/interaction issues Preclassification of medical and nonmedical issue Aversion toward complaints and issues Mind games and breaking Ridicule and shaming
Types of seclusion and conditions	Various definitions in terminology Various related predicaments
Reasons for placement in isolation confinement	Fights  Insubordination/noncompliance Possible misconstruction of event Previous threats
End of incarceration	No final exchange/no interest No particular rehabilitation aim Some programs/treatments No strong/adequate program Processing out only

The primary group was not a pre-set listing of standards. By highlighting words or groups of words from interview transcripts, I used an open system of coding that encompassed words and segments of text relatable to the research questions. Hence, the creation of a list of child codes, which later became the basis for the structuring of primary sets as emergent codes. Observing one of qualitative research principles of having the data “speak” to me directly, I avoided imposing a predetermined structure and reserved the refinement of codes at a time when I had collected the necessary data for an in-depth look at the complexities of the scenarios shared by the study participants.

According to the interviewees, *dismissal of an existing issue* and possible *inadequate training* appeared to be common denominators in the initial stage of the incarceration process. There was often an overlapping opportunity between some degree of deficient initial evaluations and preexisting semi-faulty directives. If that was in fact the case, then the initial *delayed assistance and attention* to a possible health issues occurred, the interviewees reported that frequently the same handling of the problems continued after a time of enculturation in the prison system and leading to placement in confinement. At any point of the inmates’ journey through the general population placement to isolation, *interpersonal communication issues* appeared to emerge as an overall incisive component in the interaction between prison administrators/officers and inmates. Problematic communication modalities emerged when various requests or the need for medical attention were voiced, further triggering incidents or complicating already sensitive circumstances. *Types of seclusion and conditions* and *reasons for placement in isolation* appeared to broadly vary and remain under a relatively subjective

determination by the prison staff/officers. Finally, the *end of incarceration* period appeared to be marked by a lack of overall communication or support, although a few programs were in place to at least give referrals and some guidelines, which most interviewees recognized as not particularly helpful to their specific needs and circumstances.

One of the areas I explored was the evolution of exchanges, if any, surrounding inmates' medical issues and the attention, or lack thereof, by prison administrators and staff/officers. The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (2012) Compliance Indicator 1 alerted as to evaluation requirements necessary for possible removal of inmates from isolation or, at least, for a reasonable accommodation in accordance to an assessed medical issue. Furthermore, the Commission discussed the need for communication between prison staff and medical personnel prior to placing inmates in isolation, as well as monitoring procedures during the time the inmates spend in segregation. Figure 6 illustrates an initial configuration involving 33% of the study participants, who revealed details about the modalities of communication between prison personnel and inmates. In the case of communication or lack thereof pertaining to medical issues, the following datapoints exposed an average of at least seven (7) cases of *dismissal of an existing issue/insufficient inquiry* at the time of incarceration, at least eight (8) cases of *inadequate training* in handling conversations about potential health concerns, at least nine (9) cases of *aversion towards complaints and issues* throughout the inmates' stay in prison, and at least 12 cases of *continued handling of issues* as initially started. At the same time, a total of 22 cases pertained to *interpersonal communication*

issues, which encompassed areas of poor understanding of or insufficient knowledge regarding medical problems, as well as interaction/potential personality clashes, which might have prevented prison personnel from addressing peculiar areas of concern.

Codes	Dismissal of existing issue	Insufficient inquiry	pre-established evaluation	Lack or delayed medical	pre-existing records	time delay in assistance	Interpersonal communication	ridicule and shaming	language & interaction	aversion towards	preclassification of	mind games and breaking	Inadequate training	lack of exchange	pre-established	inadequate process	Continued handling	went you out of sight	continuous physical &	hygiene and unsanitary	continuous dismissal of
	1	1		2	1	1	2			1		1					1	1			
	1	1		1		1	2			2			2		1	1	3	2			1
	3	2	1				2			2			4		2	2	1				1
		1		2		1	4	1		2		1		1			3		1	1	1
						1	6	2	1		1		1				4	1	4	1	
	1						2	1		1		1				1			1		2
	1	2	1		1		4			1	1	4	1	1							2
	7	7	2	5	2	4	22	4	1	9	2	7	8	2	3	4	12	4	6	2	7

Codes: Preliminary classification of trends from interviews' transcripts  
 Dismissal of an existing issue: At least 7 reported examples at the time of incarceration  
 Insufficient inquiry: At least 7 reported examples at the time of incarceration  
 Inadequate training: At least 8 reported examples in handling conversations about potential health concerns  
 Aversion towards complaints and issues: At least 9 reported examples throughout prison stay  
 Continued handling of issues: At least 12 reported examples for same inadequate treatment of medical issues  
 Interpersonal communication issues: At least 22 reported examples of various interactive deficiencies

Figure 6. Analysis codes: Attention to medical issues in one third of study participants.

More specifically, Figure 7 shows code weighting attributions in accordance to a system of a sentiment weighting analysis representation in terms of value, which is based on a standard 1-5 scale where 1 is equal to very negative and 5 is equal to very affirmative. To show positivity or importance of the dimension under scrutiny, this value is assigned to each code to illustrate the degree of strength across information collected

on related categories (“Who cares? Sentiment weighing”, 2012). This strategy is vital for the understanding of the root problem via the examination of the level of interdependency among a series of concerns expressed by the study interviewees. Furthermore, a process of cross-linking allows for the discovery a primary common thread, facilitating a deductive approach (Becker, Parkin, & Sasser, 2016). After an initial processing of the answers provided by 33% of the study participants, commonly shared responses strongly revealed a 4.94 weighting value for the *interpersonal communication issues* code.

Code	Count	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Range	Sum	SD	Variance
Dismissal of existing issue	7		4.94			4.94			
Lack or delayed medical	5		4.94			4.94			
Interpersonal communication	22		4.94			4.94			
Inadequate training	8		4.94			4.94			

Interpersonal communication issues code: Accounted 22 instances with a code weighting of 4.94

Other codes: Consistent code weighting of 4.94

Figure 7. Code weighting for interpersonal communication issues primary set.

Uniformity of weighting values with other codes captured in Figure 7 appeared to underscore my initial conceptualization of potential connections among/between occurrences in the original concept mapping in Figure 1. The areas affected by this consistency of values were referenced in a possible overlapping of the *Physical and psychological impairment BEFORE isolation confinement* scenario with the *Physical and psychological impairment DURING isolation confinement* development. After an initial comparison, I assumed a moderate level of reliability of these preliminary coding groups

as a partial validation for the independent dimension of interpersonal communication influences throughout the prison journey of the study participants.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Elements of social interaction in the qualitative interviewing process translated into an emphasis of my role as a researcher who facilitated the exchange, while contributing a reflexivity approach that would concurrently serve an emphatic function and an influential position (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). Furthermore, the use of qualitative research offered the opportunity to extend the realm of inquiry and test the area of interest beyond an inflexible structure of assumptions. Therefore, in my pursuit of an understanding of the study participants' experiences, I ultimately produced the interpretation of the relevant reality in conjunction with factor-searching and factor relating components, which were two (2) of the four (4) levels of a structure defining Dickoff and James' perspective on qualitative health-related research in the late 1960s (Carnevale, 2016).

Transparency and systematic strategies to investigational projects maintain the process in line with scientific rigor, while decreasing the probability for arbitrary and/or subjective procedures and evaluations. In this study, the degree of trustworthiness of an investigational effort and its realization were reflected in the attentive and methodical strategies utilized in the process of data collection, pre-analysis standards, and organization and presentation of the resulting analysis units (Elo *et al.*, 2014). Aside from the support of the theoretical position of the study, I remained cognizant of the sensitive area that has been investigated and the confidential nature of the information of a



vulnerable population of participants in this research, while assuring the validity of the study and its scientific rigor (Peter, 2015). Scientific rigor can be measured by credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Anney, 2014).

*Credibility* refers to the identification of the phenomenon to be investigated and its description, along with the researcher's pursuit of the central truth and meaning. The degree of commitment and rigor in the utilization for the adequate data collection and analysis tools translates in a higher level of confidence in the investigational process, as well as in a confirmation of the study focus ((Elo *et al.*, 2014). From the inception of the study on isolation confinement, I applied due diligence in establishing the appropriate theoretical framework, as a fundamental support to a qualitative study via a phenomenological psychological model, and I adopted the penal subjective consciousness model as the relevant theory. Furthermore, a comprehensive engagement with the environment of investigation and the use of various techniques, such as in-depth listening, self-awareness, and sensitivity to the nature of the research, confirmed the gradual progression towards high-level commitment and trust-building rapport skills that were necessary for successful interviews. Furthermore, I adopted an interviewing style that shifted between a neutral stance and an affirmative position. Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) discussed the neutral approach as supportive of an open exchange between the interviewee and the interviewer; whereas, the affirmative position shows a nurturing and accepting trait towards the interviewee. I was certain to manage each encounter with the adequate neutral stance and means to facilitate the degree of comfort deemed necessary for a constructive conversation. However, I did not offer the same

interpretation and application of the previously stated affirmative position. In fact, I utilized an affirmative stand as a means of standing my grounds on the format of the interview process and relevance of the investigational endeavor, when there was an attempt to challenge me on the nature or progressing of the questions and/or the validity of my research within the standards provided by the academic institution of affiliation.

*Dependability* refers to consistency in processes for verification of the scope and the elaboration of data analysis structure. Leung (2015) proposed that “a margin of variability for results is tolerated in qualitative research” (p. 326), as long as there is consistency in the methodology and the degree of variety in details is reported for similar contexts. I remain confident I applied the appropriate study structure and instruments for collection of the necessary data. Moreover, the use of a Dedoose web application as data analysis software, as well as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and graphics tools, provided a satisfactory platform for processing and analysis of the study data. The structuring of a concept map and the creation of an open-coding method derived from the interviews’ transcripts and from the extraction of words and phrases representing the meaning the study participants attributed to their experiences. Furthermore, a code-recode strategy was implemented in accordance to constant data comparison, one of Silverman’s (2009, as cited in Leung, 2015) methods. By using this approach, investigators could improve the level of reliability of data processing and study outcomes. Finally, I carefully maintained a record of my research activities as an audit trail of the necessary steps and related study information, as well as for the creation of a secure code or key arrangement to protect the identity of the study participants (Roratto & Dotto Dias, 2014).

*Confirmability* relates to objectivity and the avoidance of distortion in information reporting. The neutrality character of the research collection and analysis process can be enhanced by the methodical account of the procedures (Carnevale, 2016). In this study, I utilized audit trail procedures and reflexive techniques to verify the accuracy of the process and of the associated analysis process. For the purpose of this project, a peer review was contributed by the process of revision and feedback on the part of the university research committee, which provides valuable advice as to areas to revise and concepts to expand on. As far as a devil's advocate perspective, I was already accustomed to it, as I applied this technique in my classes and workshops to promote a healthy and constructive dialogue with the use of counterbalancing opinions. In the case of this study, however, I realized that the use of this tool would not be quite adequate and could instead pose an unnecessary offsetting burden. The objective of this research was to understand a phenomenon, as expressed via the experiences of the study participants, and not to engage in an activity that could challenge the interviewees' perceptions.

*Transferability* pertains to the idea that the results of a study may apply to similar contexts. This criterion cannot be effectively tested until further studies can demonstrate the opportunity for results to adapt to another environment of investigation (Carnevale, 2016). According a Leung's (2015) proposal for a pragmatic approach, some of the processes utilized to establish credibility - such as continuous comparison, auditing, and documentation - could establish possible foundations for transferability of study results. The suggestion was to find a similarity threshold in comparing theoretical framework and elements of the phenomenon to be investigated, including shared study participants'

characteristics. However, I was already aware that significant differences would exist in geographical contexts, sampling opportunities, and cultural components. Consideration for additional multiple perspectives within a set of uncertain variables would not be conducive to a reasoning in support of generalization of results for this type of study (Noble & Smith, 2015). Nevertheless, I remain motivated to engage in further exploration ideas and concepts emerging from this investigational endeavor.

*Validity* and *reliability* are standard criteria of quality in quantitative research, which is concerned with the understanding of a phenomenon via an empirical approach. Validity may be measured via a correlation coefficient or via the degree of confidence produced by the study results; whereas, reliability may be evaluated through consistency of study outcomes (Hayashi, Abib, & Hoppen, 2019). However, in qualitative research, the application of the concepts of validity and reliability rely on a different terminology, which refers to principles of integrity of methods and consistency in procedure respectively (Noble & Smith, 2015).

In this study, I maintained a transparent and truthful approach to the exploration of the phenomenon. I also approached the interview process with the outmost consideration and sensitivity towards the study participants' emotions and perspectives, therefore, enhancing the degree of quality in interpretive validity and trustworthiness of the results. Furthermore, I applied consistency in the study practice from its inception to the analysis process. I accounted for possible preconceived notions that could have an impact in the transcription and interpretation of the data. I adopted a method of verification of the information the study participants shared by repeating the answers and

allowing them to address any missing information. This approach allowed for an enhancement of the descriptive validity via the minimization of potential alterations to the original answers. Maxwell (1992, as cited in Hayashi, Abib, & Hoppen, 2019), discussed valuation validity as a pivotal element of legitimacy of a study. Similarly, the validity this study and results was enriched by the fact that I was able to contribute the degree of knowledge and expand my understanding of issues surrounding the placement of inmates in isolation confinement, as well as the opportunity for interpersonal communication challenges between prison personnel and inmates.

### **Summary**

The utilization of a phenomenological psychological model allowed for a flexible approach to the data collection referring to study participants' perceptions and experiences. This investigation offered the opportunity to discover patterns and themes by relying on cognitive apprenticeship or metacognitive processes. The recruiting portion of this study presented some challenges in terms of the low interest by local organizations in engaging with a researcher who was not associated with a well-known local state university or who was considered an outsider. Once the initial obstacles were confronted, the process of data collection and analysis was facilitated by the structure that had been established. Chapter 5 expands on the analysis and provides clarifications and supporting information in the discussion of the results. Furthermore, recommendations for additional areas of investigation and implications for multi-group collaboration and constitutional considerations have been offered for the purpose of advancing the merit of qualitative research in the criminal justice field.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

For the past 20 years, research initiatives have evolved with a focus on the provision of evidence-based processes, which are fundamental for sound policymaking decisions (Johnson, Elam, Lebold, & Burrouchs, 2018). Quality-driven research defines the existence of a problem and undertakes an investigational structure, resulting into a richer knowledge base to be consulted by public policy and criminal justice professionals. Consistent efforts to produce sound research have been justified by changes regarding “rehabilitation vs. retribution and containment” (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 2) perspectives, as well as by following a gradual shift from a reactive stance in the face of occurrences to analysis and evaluation processes (Garrett, 2018).

The focus of this research was the analysis of the isolation confinement experience from the perspective of previously incarcerated individuals. I used a qualitative method through semi structured interviews with open-ended questions to collect data on participants’ perceptions of communication with and treatment by prison officers and other prison personnel, particularly as their recollection and events referred to their placement in solitary confinement. I investigated whether a potential link existed between an inmate’s origin, background, affiliation, health, specific need, or other characteristic and a potentially inequitable assessment by prison personnel, resulting in a hasty and imprudent placement in isolation confinement. By giving a voice to this group of participants in reference to a potential lack of understanding of the prisoners’ traits and circumstances, I addressed the predicaments of evaluation of a diverse inmate population. Johnson et al. (2018) reported a potential gap between what academic

researchers consider good quality evidence and the policies that are put in place. This may be a consequence of a difference in terminology used, as well as the peculiarities of viewpoints, in the frameworks and priorities between the two environments. The situation has been further complicated in cases in which research results have led to generalizations and/or outdated sources of information. Nevertheless, researchers should maintain a positive outlook on the importance of producing study outcomes that can contribute to the knowledge base.

Findings from the current study revealed that preestablished medical assessments and other in-take forms produced interpersonal communication challenges between prison personnel and inmates at the time of incarceration. This initial misevaluation or miscommunication contributed to the prison personnel's classification of prisoners based on potentially flawed probes, causing a delay in (or lack of) the needed assistance. During the time of incarceration leading to placement in isolation confinement, it appears that procedures and scheduling performed by prison personnel took precedent in the decision-making process. Furthermore, interpersonal and communication issues shaped the decision-making at the time of incarceration. As to the inmates' understanding of multiple terms used to define isolation confinement and arrangements, this reality was frequently complicated by their disparate cognitive levels of understanding of procedures and lack of opportunities for clarification. At the time of inmates' rehabilitation and release from the prison system, some of classes, programs, and resources did not seem to meet the specific needs of the inmates.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

My objective was to report the major findings of this study and avoid a subjective construal of the trends and associations of concepts. I abstained from intentionally manipulating the results for the purpose of producing outcomes that might be in line with preconceived opinions. A certain degree of objectivity was achieved via the identification and grouping of recurrent datapoints, which derived from the faithful transcription of the interviews. The evaluation of significant relationships, confirmations, and/or disconfirmations took place beyond the initial criteria for classification.

### **Considering Previous and Current Research**

Previous research focused on conditions of prison segregation affecting African American and Latino inmate populations, as well mentally disabled individuals. Seclusion procedures and descriptions were often discussed through historical reports and the theory focusing on criminalization of labor (Kerness & Bissonette Lewey, 2014). Investigation of racial disparity in the delivery of adequate health care focused on previous economic background of minority inmates and the development of chronic health conditions as a result of their incarceration (Hughes, 2017). Other studies addressed the inability of criminal justice systems to understand and treat inmates with mental illnesses and the degree of cognitive impairment in the framework of human rights (Spivalovsky, 2014, as cited in Segrave, Spivakovsky, & Eriksson, 2017). A qualitative study involving clinical and legal scholars investigated the link between mismanaged mental health issues and episodes of sudden death or suicide in prison systems in Texas (University of Texas - School of Law Civil Rights Clinic, 2016). The



2007-2010 Colorado project relied on a longitudinal study for the purpose of verifying psychological deterioration processes by comparing a group with mental illnesses with another one without mental illnesses (O'Keefe, 2017). Morris (2015) also used archival longitudinal data to analyze a multilevel modeling method for the purpose of evaluating effects of short-term confinement. Smith, Gendreau, and Labrecque (as cited in Frost & Monteiro, 2016) combined evidence from previous research to provide an inclusive measure regarding isolation confinement outcomes. Morgan et al. (as cited in Haney, 2018) also used meta-analytical approaches to draw conclusions regarding the effects of isolation confinement on prisoners' well-being.

The current study has not included statistical information from prison administrators' perspectives and records, quasi-experimental approaches, or meta-analysis collections. My investigating objective focused on the unveiling of possible inconsistencies in the application of confinement practices and prison administrators and other personnel's evaluation of the backgrounds, needs, and requests, as experienced by previously incarcerated individuals who might have suffered as a result (Muenster & Trone, 2016). The recruitment process allowed for a small yet multiethnic sample, which included four major racial groups and one mixed unit (see Figure 4). Study participants freely designated the category of preference without any preestablished classification made available to them or under coercion. I decided to place under a mixed category those participants who identified themselves as descending from two or more ethnic groups. Figure 4 illustrated a distribution of study participants per ethnicity and self-recognition. I broadened my efforts to recruit participants from a variety of ethnic origins,

so that I could have conversations on an assortment of backgrounds, health, and needs. I intended to create a rich platform of investigation to discover whether any underlying systemic challenges existed when it came to the interaction between prison staff and inmates, from the time of incarceration to the prisoners' containment in isolation.

### **RQ1: Extent of Information Review at the Time of Incarceration**

Table 3 provides a summary of findings from interview questions pertaining to the area of communication between prison administrators/personnel and inmates at the time of incarceration. Further supporting details follow this illustration.

Table 3

#### *Research Question 1 Findings*

Topic	Description
RQ1 objective	To discover the extent of availability to prison personnel and review of information about inmates' backgrounds, health and needs at the time of incarceration
New knowledge	1. Tendency to dismiss inmates' potential existing issue(s) 2. Discrepancies may be related to specific facility, internal procedures, and training
Research statement	Inconsistencies in communication modalities and potentially inadequate resources appear to be prevalent
Research inference	Frequent insufficient inquiry and/or lack of adequate processes may produce an opportunity for time delay in assistance

According to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) Offender Orientation Handbook (2017), Section I in chapter 1, Intake Process, "Medical care shall be given, if care is needed immediately" and "Offenders shall be given a physical

examination” (p. 1). The Harris County Sherriff Office Inmate Handbook (2012) was the only full copy available to the researcher at the time of her study analysis. According to the manual, Section VII, Medical Division, an initial screening is performed by a nurse, primarily focusing on a TB check; whereas, a further health evaluation “may be offered... within fourteen (14) days of confinement” (p. 40). The assessment seems to focus on basic vitals and blood work for possible venereal diseases. At any time, an individual could use an Inmate Request Form to solicit a health assessment. Although the medical health personnel appeared to be in charge of the final deliberation on the possible need of attention, there was no clear indication of who would be in charge of the initial determination as to whether the inmate had a need to see the medical staff. Some of the study’s interviewees indicated that initial questionnaires primarily accounted for demographics information collection, disabilities existence, suicidal tendency, or current prescription drugs. Furthermore, the overall impression was that an inmate asking too many questions or making specific requests at the time of incarceration could risk being hastily classified as a potential troublemaker. A few individuals stated that prison personnel were inclined to quickly decide the assignment of newly incarcerated persons in term of the conditions that were deemed appropriate at the time of the initial encounter. The same staff would frequently consider a more comprehensive physical and mental screening as a secondary priority. One individual shared, “I have been dealing with depression for most of my life. When you get locked up, they cannot distinguish between mental health problems and bad people. They think we are all the same.” Another

interviewee contributed the following in support of possible misconceptions and/or treatment availability

If you are lucky to see a nurse, eventually, or speak with someone else, the resources are limited to what they think you need, not what you really need. I am bipolar and this is taken as an aggressive behavior at times.

Furthermore, many indicated some degree of mutual distrust towards the prison staff, when they wanted to share particular needs and perception of reality of circumstances. A few interviewees expressed they had concerns about ongoing urgent family circumstances, but they did not have an opportunity to share, under the impression that the least they shared the least labeling process they would be under. Based on the accounts provided by the interviewees, I did not find any significant differences in initial potential opportunities for a dismissal of an existing issue per ethnic and/or age range, since there was no relevant predominance in datapoints per ethnicity or age.

**RQ2: Extent of Information Review During Incarceration and Leading to Isolation**

Table 4 accounts for a concise conclusion drawn by group of interview questions pertaining to the areas of any possible changes in understanding of the inmates' needs and circumstances during their prison stay up to the time they were placed in segregation, as well as the predicaments that caused their placement in confinement. Further supporting details follow this illustration.

Table 4

*Research Question 2 Findings*

Topic	Description
RQ2 objective	To verify prison personnel's views and review of inmates' specific needs or requests prior to and up to the time of placement in isolation confinement
New knowledge	1. If initial dismissal of inmates' potential existing issue(s), then tendency to continue the dismissal process 2. Medical staff on premises, but prison personnel frequently make decisions under stressful conditions
Research statement	1. Procedures and scheduling appear to take precedent 2. Possible aversion towards complaints and issues
Research inference	Interpersonal and communication issues may overlap with internal procedures and compliance requirements

It appeared that, if the prison personnel had already set aside the inmates' initial needs and circumstances, no significant changes in decision-making would likely take place by the time the same prisoners reached a critical stage and before their placement in confinement. One individual shared, "They try to break you and make you feel like a piece of trash; it's a mind game; strength deriving from the bible helped with coping and peace." Some interviewees reported not receiving hardly any consultation. They were instead hastily moved to segregation or "being rolled out of the tank", that is, being moved to lock-down, unless all spaces were temporarily full. Furthermore, other interviewees indicated the impossibility of getting customized counseling or another type of consideration for their family issues and other emergencies. Stressful conditions,

coupled with unmet needs and outside circumstances, might have further compromised the expected degree of compliance with prison regulations, as one interviewee revealed: “When your mind plays tricks on you and you have been in prison before, you are a walking time bomb.”

Dubler (2014) discussed the dichotomy between the healthcare providers’ duty to diagnose and treat patients and the penal system’s mission to confine and discipline incarcerated individuals. The contrast between functions has commonly been reflected in the priorities of the roles; healthcare providers have been trained to make decisions in the best interest of the patients; whereas, the penal system personnel has maintained a system of regulations in support of compliance and enforcement.

According to the interviewees, cases of bipolarism, depression, and PTSD were often missed or improperly addressed prior to placement in isolation confinement, particularly in instances of missing medical records of prescriptions inconsistencies, therefore exacerbating inmates’ conditions. Panic attacks and anxiety also contributed to a heightened state of mental anguish that should have been monitored by the adequate health staff. The same health issues continued to pose problems during the continued period of incarceration. Figure 8 illustrates the distribution of health conditions per age range.

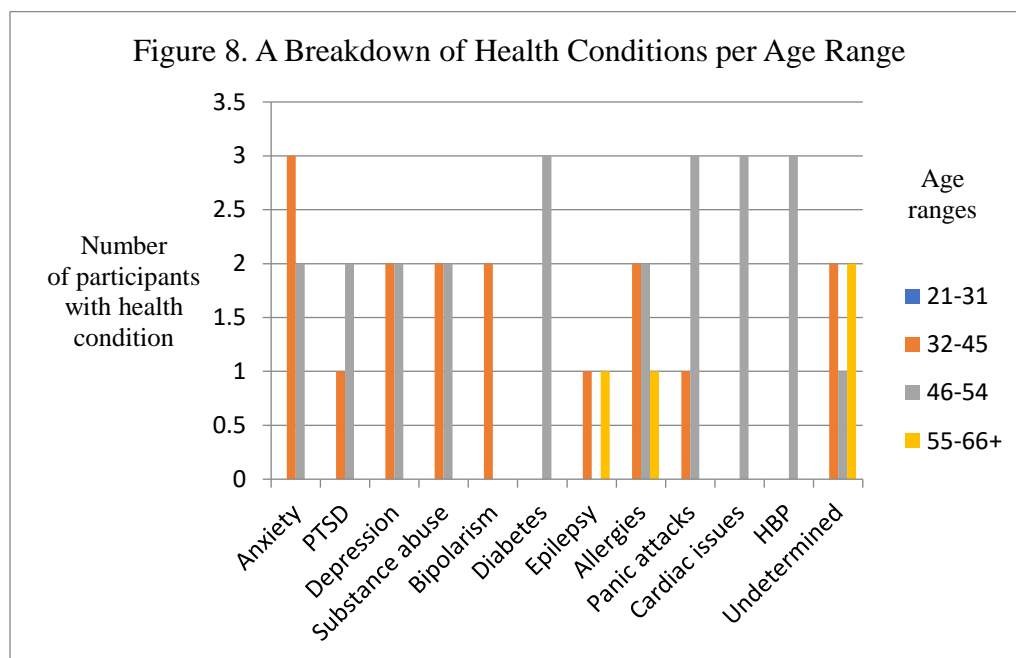


Figure 8. Breakdown of health conditions per age range.

Prison personnel might have confused some symptoms of mental health conditions or withdrawal from medication use with a display of a personality trait instead. Some interviewees reported that an offhand reaction, a demonstration of a manic phase of bipolarism, a tendency to suicidal thoughts as an exacerbation of diabetes under a different and inadequate care, were frequently misunderstood and mishandled. Opportunities for compromised hygiene and unsanitary conditions combined with the effects of medications occurred in many cases, also due to extremely high temperatures in the summer.

Although TDCJ has often claimed it monitors the situation and revises protocols, complaints have not been unusual from both the inmates and their families in various counties in Texas; one case led to the issuance of an order by a federal district judge in Houston to provide adequate cooling equipment to inmates classified as medically-

sensitive and residents at the Pack Unit in Grimes County, Texas (McCullough, 2017).

Another shared concern was that initially missed hepatitis, tuberculosis, or other infectious diseases cases caused a threat to the overall prison population. In fact, in Harris County, some occurrences of communicable maladies, including the MRSA staph infection, were overlooked and produced the deaths of at least 19 inmates in 2009 (Pinkerton, Hassan, & Caruba, 2015).

### **RQ3: Terminology and Description of Isolation Confinement**

Frost and Monteiro (2016) wrote that scholars and other researchers conducted studies on solitary confinement, but they would likely neglect to account for the differences in contexts and procedures. On the other hand, penal systems administrators utilized isolation in both administrative and disciplinary cases; however, they might have intended to avoid referring to it as solitary confinement, frequently with the intent to refrain from using a controversial angle the expression suggested. These types of incongruities have continued to pose serious concerns about the penal system's construal of contexts of operation along with the associated decision-making on the part of the prison personnel (Muenster & Trone, 2016).

Table 5 accounts for a concise conclusion drawn by a group of interview questions pertaining to any explanations prison personnel gave the inmates regarding terminology associated with isolation confinement, as well as if any description of segregation's conditions. Further supporting details follow this illustration.



Table 5

*Research Question 3 Findings*

Topic	Description
RQ3 objective	To determine whether and to what extent any explanations of terminology and conditions were provided by prison personnel to describe isolation confinement prior to and to the time inmates were placed in segregation
New knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inconsistency of explanations may be due to multiplicity of terminology used by prison personnel</li> <li>2. Inconsistency of information on isolation confinement methods and practices may be the result</li> </ol>
Research statement	Discrepancies in information and application appear to derive from handbooks and other information that generates an inadequate comprehension of and preparation to isolation confinement
Research inference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inconsistencies in perception of available information (inmates)</li> <li>2. Disparate cognitive levels of comprehension (inmates; prison personnel; medical staff)</li> <li>3. Misevaluation of mental health conditions and other relevant dynamics (prison personnel)</li> </ol>

Administrative segregation, boxed-in, 23/7, the hole, regimentation, restricted housing, separation, special management, or supermax, have been among the most familiar expressions used to refer to isolation confinement practices. *Administrative segregation* is intended to be a non-punitive type of removal of a prisoner from the general inmate population; whereas, *disciplinary segregation* would refer to a kind of seclusion justified by an inmate's non-compliance behavior. Finally, a *special*

*management unit* (SMU) may include both an administrative section and a disciplinary unit, but it often utilized for isolation confinement.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice's Special Management Units program statement (2016), the SMU designation was non-punitive. Yet, under section 2, Referral Criteria, "disruptive ... activity... serious or disruptive disciplinary infractions ... [and] participated in... any group misconduct that adversely affected orderly operation of a correctional facility..." (p. 3) are listed as reasons for an inmate's assignment to SMU. Thus, the implication of a various terms used to describe this practice and the reality of the application might have constituted inconsistent approaches to isolation confinement utilization.

TDCJ's Offender Orientation Handbook (2017), Section II in chapter 1, Unit Classification, provided a breakdown of custody levels depending on violation of prison rules. The only explanation for administrative segregation, SR level, referred to offenders deemed dangerous or "in danger from other offenders" (p. 6), as established by Security Threat Group Management Office (STGMO). An additional two sentences only indicated the conditions as to limited outside recreation time and showers, with the latter being restricted in case of expansion cellblocks. Under Disciplinary Procedures and Rules, in Section VII, solitary confinement was utilized as a result of a disciplinary hearing, a serious safety concern, or due to a "serious nature of the offense" (p. 72), although no further definition or elucidation was provided as to the last reason mentioned.

This study's research question generated a combination of responses. In the case of three interviews, I was stunned at the feedback provided by the interviewees, who

initially appeared in astonishment or almost upset about the fact that this specific question on terminology had been asked of them. These individuals advanced that, by asking whether any prison staff had explained to the inmates what isolation confinement meant and how it was going to be administrated, I demonstrated a complete disconnection from the penal system's reality and/or a lack of understanding of basic notions surrounding their experiences. At that point, I had to explain how interview questions had to meet scholarly research standards and how that format would contribute to diminishing the opportunity for preconceived opinions on the part of the investigator, therefore fostering an atmosphere of open dialogue and sharing by the study participants. However, my explanations did not completely change the interviewees' initial reaction.

All the interviewees declared they did not have any doubts as to what conditions to expect before being placed in segregation. The overall indication was that prisoners learned quickly what would happen; Sexton (2015) also referred to this form of prospect as "vicarious knowledge of prison" (p. 129). Although the receipt of a handbook or other related information was acknowledged, the participants of this study indicated that a general sense of the fragility of their condition in prison existed and how anything could trigger a change without always giving enough warning signs on how to prevent it, "There is no preparation. You are vulnerable, when you are in prison, 'cause they decide when and for how long." Some study participants indicated that the violation of any minor or serious rule could easily lead prison personnel to place inmates in isolation.

It appeared that, despite the notion that a serious offense would prompt placement in confinement, a certain degree of subjective evaluation or order restoring prioritization

might become the determining factors for decisions by prison personnel. In fact, some interviewees reported that *the mood* a prison officer displayed, possibly in reaction to a stressful schedule and/or another incident at the prison facility on a particular day, could also negatively affect a prisoner's circumstance. An inmate's basic violations involving making the bed in an inadequate manner or the statement of a sickness or condition that was misinterpreted could also lead to an unfortunate decision. Thus, reasons for placement in isolation confinement varied, but with the main ones including: Insubordination or non-compliance, fights, and a possible misconstruction of an event. Furthermore, a few interviewees reported that prison officers had used the threat of placement in segregation as a condition for the discontinuance of a non-incident related behavior or complaint. One interviewee concluded his statements about the end of his time in confinement, "Something I had to do to get through... a lot of it, it is just a head game. If you are mentally solid, you can get through it. But a lot of guys get angry and want to hit everybody."

The commitment to care for patients' health should continue throughout the incarceration time, including for the period spent in confinement. According to a position statement on Correctional Health Professionals' Response to Inmate Abuse (2016), the National Commission on Correctional Health Care declared that medical staff should care for inmates in segregation at all time and advocate for the prisoners' removal from isolation, should their mental and physical health deteriorate. The position statement insisted on the importance of the "patient's privacy, dignity, and confidentiality" (p. 261). Furthermore, this involvement remains controversial and may pose an ethical dilemma in

cases requiring a medical staff issue an official notification that an individual may be sufficiently healthy to be placed in confinement (Dubler, 2014).

#### **RQ4: Extent of Information Consideration During Rehabilitation and Leading to Reentry**

Table 6 presents the conclusions drawn by group of interview questions pertaining to potential conversations or an evolution of exchanges between prison administrators/personnel and inmates regarding needs and personal circumstances at the time of rehabilitation and leading to their release from the prison system. Further supporting details follow this illustration.

Table 6

##### *Research Question 4 Findings*

Topic	Description
RQ4 objective	To discern whether exchanges occurred between prison personnel and prisoners in reference to inmates' background, health and needs leading to and during confinement, as well as programs availability at the time of rehabilitation/end of incarceration
New knowledge	1. Communication of experience: No expressed interest (prison personnel) 2. Programs may be available, but with incomplete information and may be inconsistent with needs or not adequate
Research statement	Potential disconnect between resources and preparation for reentry
Research inference	No opportunity is created for lessons learned (prison administrators and personnel)

Prisoners experienced a high level of frustration with both the loss of autonomy and a power structure/bureaucracy that dominated their daily lives, therefore, affecting

their ability to ask for clarifications on procedures and requirements to be accepted in available programs. Crewe (2015) discussed this type of aggravation, due to the fact that inmates often interact with a system that “appears faceless... without a clear centre or a person with whom to argue or negotiate” (p. 59).

The Travis County Justice and Public Safety Division has supplied a reentry resource guide on a yearly basis. The manual strictly provides a compilation of resources per area of possible interest, such as wellness, logistics, housing, and employment search resources. Yet, no specific directive has been given. Furthermore, it has encouraged inmates to be completely responsible and plan ahead of their release, considering that some programs or services might not be available, could take a long time to reply to their requests, and/or would include a cost (2018).

The Harris County Sherriff Office Inmate Handbook (2012) enclosed a photocopy of a resource guide regarding employment search, training, shelter, and medical provider referrals. Yet, no specific instructions were imparted beyond the provision of illustrations and referral information. TDCJ’s Offender Orientation Handbook (2017) indicated a list of pre-release programs and defined them as including “many topics that are important to being successful in the freeworld” (p. 34), also without offering additional guidelines or specific information.

Interviewees’ responses varied and discussed the degree of availability of resources, as well as whether any would meet their specific needs. If programs were made available, most believed that participation opportunities were merely given to get prisoners through the process or to comply with internal regulations. Hence, it did not

appear that the prison personnel had a degree of interest in suitable plans or that concrete assistance was given. There was often a waiting time of approximately two months to access specialized classes, such as the POWER course with healing and critical thinking objectives or peer support groups in preparation for reentry into society. Yet, some believed that inadequate transition guidelines were offered to them or that the information was not appropriate to their individual needs. Community case management sessions were available to those inmates considered eligible by prison administrators. Some interviewees believed the requirements could overlook individuals who might have been mistakenly assessed at risk of re-offending, for instance.

As far as mental and physical issues that developed or exacerbated while in prison, it would be the inmates' sole responsibility to try their luck pursuing the outside resources that had been provided. Andrea Usanga, policy director with Mental Health of America of Greater Houston, has often discussed the difficult and lengthy path to realization of a mental health assistance program via case management intervention; this process is often complicated by the shortage of mental health professionals in the State of Texas. Even when funds might have been allocated, competition among health centers and affiliated professionals could make it challenging to have effective staffing for services and therapy in facilities outside prison and jail systems (DePrang, 2014). I advanced my own observations as to potential obstacles in regulatory contexts and authority channels within mental health facilities outside of the prison system, possibly generating inefficient opportunities for individuals who reenter society. As an interpreter serving in a variety of settings, including mental health contexts, I have witnessed the

decision-making process of a few program directors, who had discretion over the allocation of resources, assistance programs, and interpreting needs of their potential patients. Too frequently, they curtailed access to services and took decisions that were not in the best interest of individuals seeking proper mental health assistance.

Study participants were asked whether any exchanges had taken place between prison personnel and inmates about their conditions in seclusion and any particular needs or requests prior to their release. Most interviewees' comments appeared to confirm the consistency of the prison staff's lack of interest or minimal offer of assistance from the time the interviewees were incarcerated, through the placement in solitary confinement, and then closer to the period of rehabilitation/end of incarceration. One interviewee shared, "They really do not care even if you kill yourself, as long as it is not found out. They want you out of the way, if you are ready to leave. Good riddance and room for the next one." The opportunity to file a grievance was offered, although most recognized it would be a waste of time at the point of release, since there was no shown interest by the prison administrators directed to the inmates' experiences in the first place.

### **Context of Theoretical Framework**

This qualitative research employed a phenomenological psychological approach to gather information regarding the interviewees' experiences for the purpose of generating an inductive process from the analysis of the study outcomes. In his discussion of Stuart Grassian's investigation of Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit (SHU) in California, Guenther (2011) proposed Edmund Husserl's phenomenological method for the definition of the individuals' meaningful processes of the world they had



experienced and through their consciousness. Consciousness, or subjective awareness, was one of the elements of this structure. Its function was fundamental for the gathering and processing of events data, including the activities of storing and refuting information. Vithoukias and Muresanu (2014) drew attention to the ability to reason, imagination, emotions, and recollection as the means that support the activity of consciousness.

More specifically, this study utilized the *penal subjective consciousness model* originally formulated by researcher Lori Sexton at the time of her dissertation project from 2010 to 2012, involving a series of interviews with a group of inmates in three Ohio State prison systems. The lack of autonomy and isolation, together with a highly controlled environment, could be the basis for the shaping or distortion of the events inmates had lived through and/or could contribute to a peculiar characterization of the experiences (Crewe, 2015). Through the expression of their perceptions and experiences, study participants gave a voice to their view and interpretation of the harsh punishment they had been receiving (Frederique & Sexton, 2014; Sexton, 2015). Furthermore, it was necessary to apply a descriptive component to the phenomenological approach in light of the following: (1) Consciousness processes displayed as the means to elaborate “physical, material, biological phenomena” (Giorgi, Giorgi, & Morley, 2017, p. 178) and (2) The relationship among the study core elements and resulting concepts could be more efficiently illustrated through a reduction methodology.

One misconception about achieving quality of life for individuals in a penal justice system is that an adjustment of logistics arrangements may automatically lead to a significant improvement of prisoners’ lives. This flawed perspective does not take into

account the peculiar elements of an experience and how an event shapes the level of consciousness and a sense of self of the individual going through it. According to Berkovich-Ohana and Glicksohn (2014), a connection among various elements of an experience could be explained under the consciousness state space (CSS) model. Time, awareness, and emotions are the three CSS dimensions that function in a dynamic manner and allow for the elaboration and the association of various elements from an occurrence. Furthermore, there might be cases of prison systems' shift from an openly coercive form of power display to a more covert and psychological influence. According to Crewe (2015), interactions between prison staff and inmates often assumed a more complex overtone, which might be further complicated by discretion in decision-making with confusing mixed clues. Punishment in the prison context became the new reality in comparison with the life the inmates could have created in the outside world. Processing events in an alternative existence that was forced upon them, they would provide accounts referring to being prematurely evaluated, lack of needed assistance, misinterpretation of their requests, or falling prey of inconsistent and subjective penal practices.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study include the narrow geographical context and timeframe involved for the investigation. Given the application of the phenomenological method and the small sampling aspect of the investigation, the results would not be transferable to another setting with similar conditions or produce generalizations to be applied to a study with a larger participant population. Furthermore, there was an

opportunity for a potential predisposition towards attaining certain study conclusions, particularly in relation to an empathetic position towards the interviewees' sharing of their personal perspectives and experiences. This perspective could have become intertwined with the interpretative phenomenological approach. At the same time, I decided to adopt a transparent method of faithfully transcribing the collected data and let primary themes and trends establish the network of discovery opportunities.

As discussed in chapter 4, I encountered a few challenges in the advertising and recruitment phase with local government affiliated/ mental health organizations and previously incarcerated individuals/grass-root groups representing them. Possible gatekeeper biases (Blandford, 2013), showed a preference for studies conducted by students with a known local state university, unreasonable requests for a full review of my investigational materials, and an unresponsiveness or a plain disdain towards this exploratory project were among the examples of the foregone statements. The negative or suspicious treatment towards me and my endeavors made in good faith might be indicative of underlying flaws in the rhetoric surrounding controversial conversations regarding isolations confinement practices and significant barriers in communication abilities on the part of some of the above-mentioned contrasting and/or questioning entities. Disappointingly, many organizations and grass-root groups, with individuals who have lived and/or were previously incarcerated in the Austin/Travis County area, functioned in a context that was mostly influenced by an identity politics mindset, which appeared to permeate their peculiar understanding of government policies and activism needs geared towards a more reasonable treatment under penal justice paradigms.

### **Summary of Findings**

This study focused on the circumstances that led prison administrators and other personnel to evaluate inmates' backgrounds, needs, and requests, subsequently causing a hasty choice for an application of isolation confinement. This qualitative research employed a phenomenological psychological approach to gather information regarding the interviewees' experiences for the purpose of generating an inductive process based on the analysis of the study results. A summary of the findings shows the following:

The first group of interview questions referred to the extent of information availability about inmates' backgrounds, health and needs at the time of incarceration, as well as the degree of communication, if any, between prison administrators/personnel and inmates. Study results revealed inconsistencies in communication modalities and potentially inadequate resources. Possibly defective initial prison processes and pre-established internal procedures/training guidelines were likely the source of misunderstandings and at the origin of the lack of/delay in the proper assistance for newly admitted inmates.

The second group of interview questions referred to any prison personnel's changing views, or collection of new information, regarding the inmates' specific needs or requests prior to and up to the time of placement in isolation confinement. Study results revealed that initial inconsistencies in communication modalities and potentially inadequate resources were likely to continue in this incarceration phase. Furthermore, challenges in interpersonal communication between prison personnel and inmates were

likely and tended to intersect with internal prison procedures and stressful personal circumstances and internal incidents.

The third group of interview questions referred to any explanations of terminology and conditions that might have been provided by prison personnel to inmates to describe isolation confinement prior and up to the time prisoners were placed in seclusion. Study results revealed discrepancies in information given to prisoners regarding application standards, methods, and practice of isolation confinement. Further complications were generated by the degree of inmates' comprehension of the information, the lack of consideration for the mental and physical health conditions of the inmates, and frequently overlapping activities of prison personnel and medical staff.

The fourth group of interview questions referred to a possible evolution of exchanges between prison administrators/personnel and inmates at the time of rehabilitation and leading to their release from the prison system. This set of questions aimed at discovering whether any communication of the prisoners' needs, personal circumstances, and experiences occurred with prison personnel before the prisoners' release. Study results revealed that many prisoners believed they were moved through the system and that the opportunity for a discussion was not offered. Furthermore, assistance programs and resources for reentry into society did not necessarily meet their needs or adequately prepare them for their subsequent journey outside the prison system.

### **Recommendations**

Further research projects are needed in the area of examining inconsistencies in information distribution modalities and potentially inadequate resources, eventually

generating opportunities for time delay in the provision of needed assistance. I support the investigation of procedural flaws that may cause systemically outdated or insufficient processes regulating the flow of information and interdepartmental exchanges. Potential misevaluation of mental health conditions and other relevant dynamics would fall in this category of interest.

Incongruities involving verbal and written communication modalities need to be further studied. Traditionally, language differences and variances in education levels have been considered among the possible barriers to effective communication (Aldai-Gruppo Geopolitica e Internazionalizzazione, 2016). The main flaw is the premise that considers communication as the end result; whereas, it is a process. Cognitive levels of comprehension, culture, and personal value systems are involved in the process of response to stimuli and information. Furthermore, they constitute fundamental elements to consider compliance with regulations in prison systems is expected. Interpersonal and communication issues may overlap with procedures and compliance requirements and adversely affect the rapport between prison personnel and inmates (Bressan & Perotti, 2019). Additional investigation should focus on a potential disconnect between resources made available to inmates and the adequate preparation for a productive reentry process. Prison systems' decreased attention to standards of communication and a defective attention to inmates' backgrounds, and specific needs at the time of incarceration may translate into a seemingly lacking opportunity for useful grounding leading to beneficial outcomes.

## Implications

According to Johnson, Elam, Lebold, and Burrouchs (2018), collaboration efforts between scholar researchers and field professionals and/or policy makers should produce valuable perspectives aimed to strengthen processes of evaluation and advancement. The discourse on inconsistencies in terminology choices and subsequent confinement placement specifications was further complicated by the interpretation provided by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (Nolasco & Vaughn, 2018). The orientations towards “liberty interests”, in *Incumaa v. Stirling*, 791 F. 3d 517 (4<sup>th</sup> Circuit 2015); “atypical and significant hardships”, in *Williams v. Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*, 848 D. 3d 549 (3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit, 2017); and “baselines of comparison”, in *Kervin v. Barnes*, 787 F. 3d 833 (7<sup>th</sup> Circuit 2015) should compel additional conversations regarding how the effects of this variegated spectrum of constitutional considerations filter the mindsets of criminal justice professionals. Therefore, significant advancements in regulatory and ethical combination of directives should appropriately need to embrace a significant modification in terminology classification and associated procedures.

My initial attempts to communicate with organizations and networks about my study did not always produce either an appreciation for my endeavors or an invitation to make me part of their programs. In light of this experience, I recommend that already established institutions and associations have an open mind towards building a research platform that includes a variety of interested parties, beyond the involvement of traditionally recognized local academic institutions, social welfare agencies, and grass-root groups only. The joint efforts will be vital in the pursuit of a comprehensive

understanding of the circumstances surrounding the experience of isolations confinement and the exploration of potential flaws in procedural and training practices within penal systems. Moreover, it is vital for all parties interested in this dialogue to realize that a process of sensitization to criminal justice issues involves the participation of multiple entities and individuals, notwithstanding their personal and direct experience with the justice system, ethnic background, and or current academic/professional association. Specifically, barriers to successful communication and a constructive discourse - represented by limited perceptions, preconceived notions, and/or fictitious initial assessments of intentions - should be reworked with the objective to promote crucial openings for amplification of the connection with and participation of additional external individuals and groups.

### **Conclusion**

This research maintained a unique scope and relevance by providing an additional multidimensional insight as to the predicaments of an inmate population with diverse backgrounds and distinct needs. Studies surrounding the application of solitary confinement continue to be of profound importance at a time when conversations on constitutional rights and human rights infringements, physical and psychological long-term damages, and inconsistent definitions and associated approaches are intended to contribute discoveries to positive social change. Recent articles have reported a decline in the utilization of solitary confinement in U.S. Yet, the lack of consistency in the application of current isolation confinement systems and the autonomy in decision-making continue to raise concerns and should compel criminal justice and public policy



professionals to work towards processes improvements, to be developed within the appropriate legal and ethical framework. Continuous joint activities and the achievement of milestones can be enhanced by the participation of community representatives with a multiplicity of backgrounds and professional preparation, so that the entire community becomes an agent of change in accordance to shared standards and aspirations.

## References

- Aarts, K. (2007). Parsimonious methodology. *Methodological Innovations Online*, 2(1), 2-10. <https://doi.org/10.4256/mio.2007.0002>
- Aggarwal, A., Davies, J., & Sullivan, R. (2014). “Nudge” in the clinical consultation – an acceptable form of medical paternalism? *BMC Medical Ethics*, 15(31), 1-16. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6939-15-31>.
- Ahmed, A. (2008). *Ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions: Qualitative versus quantitative*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504903.pdf>
- Aldai-Gruppo Geopolitica e Internazionalizzazione. (2016, June 22). *Le differenze culturali e il loro impatto*. Retrieved from <http://www.milano.federmanager.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Le-Differenze-Culturali-e-il-loro-Impatto.pdf>
- Allen, J. B. (2011). Extending hope into “The Hole”: Applying Graham v. Florida to supermax prisons. *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal*, 20(1), 217-251. Retrieved from <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmborj/vol20/iss1/7/>
- Allen, S. A., Wakeman, S. E., Cohen, R. L., & Rich, J. D. (2010). Physicians in US prisons in the era of mass incarceration. *International Journal of Prisoner Health*, 6(3), 100-106. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3204660/>
- Allodola, V. (2014). *Metodi di ricerca qualitativa in medical education: approcci, strumenti e considerazioni di rigore scientifico*. Retrieved from

[https://riviste.unimc.it/index.php/es\\_s/article/view/933](https://riviste.unimc.it/index.php/es_s/article/view/933)

Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a data collection method: A critical review.

*English Linguistics Research*, 3(1), 39-45. DOI: 10.5430/elr.v3n1p39

American Legislative Exchange. (2019). Resolution of limiting the used of prolonged

solitary confinement. Retrieved from <https://www.alec.org/model->

[policy/resolution-on-limiting-the-use-of-prolonged-solitary-confinement/](https://www.alec.org/model-policy/resolution-on-limiting-the-use-of-prolonged-solitary-confinement/)

An, Y., & Cao, L. (2014). Examining the effects of metacognitive scaffolding on

students' design problem solving and metacognitive skills in an online

environment. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 10(4), 552-

568. Retrieved from [https://jolt.merlot.org/vol10no4/An\\_1214.pdf](https://jolt.merlot.org/vol10no4/An_1214.pdf)

Anderson v. Colorado Department of Corrections. (2013). Retrieved from

<https://creeclaw.org/?s=Anderson+v.+Colorado+Department+of+Corrections.>

Anna O. v. State of New York. (2012). Retrieved from

[https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?q=Anna+O.+&hl=en&as\\_sdt=4,33&as\\_](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?q=Anna+O.+&hl=en&as_sdt=4,33&as_)

[ylo=2011&case=5025259158460642177&scilh=0](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?q=Anna+O.+&hl=en&as_sdt=4,33&as_ylo=2011&case=5025259158460642177&scilh=0)

Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research:

Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational*

*Research and Policy Studies*, 5(2), 272-281. Retrieved from

<http://repository.udsm.ac.tz:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/256?show=full>

Anyan, F. (2013). The influence of power shifts in data collection and analysis stages: A

focus on qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Report*, 18(18), 1-9.

Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1005513.pdf>

- Appelbaum, K. L. (2015). American psychiatry should join the call to abolish solitary confinement. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 43(4), 406-415. Retrieved from <http://jaapl.org/content/43/4/406>
- Armour, C. (2012). Mental health in prison: A trauma perspective on importation and deprivation. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 5(2), 886-894. Retrieved from <https://ijcst.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/ijcst/article/view/35703/32435>
- Bambale, A. J. (2014). Facilitating the PhD research process: Guides for identifying research problem and establishing research gap. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology*, 4(1), 116-124. Retrieved from [https://www.ijbhtnet.com/journals/Vol\\_4\\_No\\_1\\_January\\_2014/13.pdf](https://www.ijbhtnet.com/journals/Vol_4_No_1_January_2014/13.pdf)
- Barajas, M. (2018). *Texas prisons lead the nation in long-term solitary confinement*. Retrieved from <https://www.texasobserver.org/texas-prisons-lead-the-nation-in-long-term-solitary-confinement/>
- Baraldini v. Thornburgh. (1989). In *Leagle*. Retrieved from [http://www.leagle.com/decision/19902147741FSupp1406\\_11882/MARTIN%20v.%20RISON](http://www.leagle.com/decision/19902147741FSupp1406_11882/MARTIN%20v.%20RISON)
- Beck, A. J. (2015). *Use of restrictive housing in U.S. prisons and jails, 2011-12*. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/urhuspj1112.pdf>
- Becker, I., Parkin, S., & Sasser, M. A. (2016). *Combining qualitative coding and sentiment analysis: Deconstructing perceptions of usable security in organizations*. Retrieved from

<https://www.usenix.org/system/files/conference/laser2016/laser2016-paper-becker.pdf>

- Bennett, H. (2009). *The Angola Three: Torture in our own backyard*. Retrieved from <https://insubordination.blogspot.com/2009/05/angola-three-torture-and-slavery-in.html>
- Bennion, E. (2015). Banning the bing: Why extreme solitary confinement is cruel and far too usual punishment. *Indiana Law Journal*, 90(2), 741-786. Retrieved from [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2411845](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2411845)
- Berkovich-Ohana, A. & Glicksohn, J. (2014). The consciousness state space (CSS) – a unifying model for consciousness and self. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5(341), 1-9. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00341
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). Social science research: Principles, methods and practices. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Textbooks Collection. Book 3. Retrieved from [http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa\\_textbooks/3](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3)
- Birkbeck, C. (2011). Imprisonment and internment: Comparing penal institutions North and South. *Punishment & Society*, 13(3), 307-332. [http://doi: 10.1177/1462474511404320](http://doi:10.1177/1462474511404320)
- Black History Month message of hope from famed former Black Panther Robert Hillary King. (2014). Retrieved from <http://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/black-history-month-message-of-hope-from-famed-former-black-panther-robert-hillary-king/>
- Blakinger, K. (2018). *Harris County jail cuts solitary confinement in half 5 years after*

*feces-filled cell scandal*. Retrieved from <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Harris-County-solitary-numbers-fall-5-years-after-12873061.php>

Blandford, A. (2013). Semi-structured qualitative studies. In Soegaard, Mads and Dam, Rikke Friis (eds.). *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Aarhus, Denmark: The Interaction Design Foundation. Retrieved from [http://www.interactiondesign.org/encyclopedia/semi-structured\\_qualitative\\_studies.html](http://www.interactiondesign.org/encyclopedia/semi-structured_qualitative_studies.html)

Boghani, P. (2017). *Reducing solitary confinement, one cell at a time*. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/reducing-solitary-confinement-one-cell-at-a-time/>

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Supporting a grounded theory with an audit trail: An illustration. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4), 305-316. <http://doi:10.1080/13645570802156196>

Bulman, P., Garcia, M., & Herson, J. (2012). Study raises questions about psychological effects of solitary confinement. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 269, 4-7. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/237721.pdf>

Bressan, E. & Perotti, L. (2019). *Psicologia della comunicazione*. Libreriauniversitaria.t Edizioni.

Busemeyer, J. R., Wang, Z., Townsend, J. T., & Eidels, A. (2015). *The Oxford handbook of computational and mathematical psychology*. Oxford University Press. [http://doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199957996.001.0001](http://doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199957996.001.0001)

- Buthe, T. & Jacobs, A. M. (2015). Transparency in qualitative and multi-method research  
Introduction to the symposium. *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research, 13*(1), 1-7.  
Retrieved from [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2652097](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2652097)
- Byrd, C. (2019). *Lessons from solitary confinement*. Retrieved from  
<https://socialecology.uci.edu/news/lessons-solitary-confinement>
- Carcary, M. (2009). The research audit trial – Enhancing trustworthiness in qualitative  
inquiry. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods, 7*(1), 11-24.  
Retrieved from [www.ejbrm.com/issue/download.html?idArticle=198](http://www.ejbrm.com/issue/download.html?idArticle=198)
- Carnevale, F. (2016). Authentic qualitative research and the quest for methodological  
rigour. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research Archive, 34*(2). Retrieved from  
<https://cjr.archive.mcgill.ca/article/view/1768>
- Carson, E. A. & Sabol, W. J. (2016). *Aging of the state prison population, 1993–2013*.  
Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/aspp9313.pdf>
- Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: the interview protocol  
refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report, 21*(5), 811-831.  
Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss5/2>
- Cloud, D. H., Drucker, E, Browne, A, & Parson, J. (2015). Public health and solitary  
confinement in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health, 105*(1), 18-  
26. Retrieved from DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2014.302205
- Cocozza Martins, D. (2008). Experiences of homeless people in the health care delivery  
system: A descriptive phenomenological study. *Public Health Nursing, 25*(5),  
420–430. [http://doi: 10.1111/j.1525-1446.2008.00726.x](http://doi:10.1111/j.1525-1446.2008.00726.x)

- Conway, C. A. (2009). A right of access to medical and mental health care for the incarcerated. *Health Law Perspectives*. Retrieved from <http://www.law.uh.edu/healthlaw/perspectives/search.asp>
- Cooper, R., Chenail, R. J., & Fleming, S. (2012). A grounded theory of inductive qualitative research education: Results of a meta-data-analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(8), 1-26. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol17/iss52/3/>
- Cornelius, G. F. (2016). *Handling jail special populations: a thumbnail training guide*. Retrieved from <http://garycornelius.corrections.com/?p=248>
- Cosmelli, D., & Preiss, D. D. (2014). On the temporality of creative insight: a psychological and phenomenological perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 1184. <http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01184>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design – Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Crewe, B. (2015). Inside the belly of the penal beast: understanding the experience of imprisonment. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 4(1), 50-65. Retrieved from <https://doaj.org/article/4aa20afe12a7462380f2a15a56db5b06>
- CUNY Collaborative Programs Research and Evaluation. (2012). *Anonymity vs. confidentiality*. Retrieved from [https://www.gc.cuny.edu/About-the-GC/Administrative-Services/Human-Subjects-Research-Protection-Program-\(HRPP\)](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/About-the-GC/Administrative-Services/Human-Subjects-Research-Protection-Program-(HRPP))
- Cypress, B. S. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research. *Clinical*



*Care Nursing*, 36(4), 253-263. Doi: 10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253

Davila-Ruhaak, S., Schwinn, S. D., & The John Marshall Law School Human Rights Project. (2014). *Concerning the use of solitary confinement in immigrant detention facilities in the United States of America (2013)*. Retrieved from <http://repository.jmls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=whitepapers>

Dedoose Version 7.0.23, web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data (2016). Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC. [www.dedoose.com](http://www.dedoose.com)

DeMarco, K. D. (2012). Disabled by solitude: The convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and its impact on the use of supermax solitary confinement. *University of Miami Law Review*, 66(2), 523-565. Retrieved from <http://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr/vol66/iss2/8>

Denzin, N. K. (2009). The elephant in the living room: or extending the conversation about the politics of evidence. *Qualitative Research*, 9(2), 139-160. <http://doi:10.1177/1468794108098034>

Deprang, E. C. (2014). *Barred care: want treatment for mental illness in Houston? Go to jail*. Retrieved from <https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/fellowships/projects/barred-care>

Dolovich, S. (2009). Incarceration American-Style. *Harvard Law & Policy Review*, 3(2), 237-259. Retrieved from <https://harvardlpr.com/print-archive/volume-3-2/>

Dubler, N. (2014). Ethical dilemmas in prisons and jail health care. *Health Affairs*. Retrieved from

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20140310.037605/full/>

- du Plessis, G. A., & du Plessis, C. (2017). On baking a cake: the phenomenological method in positive psychology. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 17(spe), 1-13. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2017.1299280>
- Edmund LaChance v. Commissioner of Correction & others. (2012). In *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*. Retrieved from <http://masscases.com/cases/sjc/463/463mass767.html>
- Ellis, T. J. & Levy, Y. (2008). Framework of problem-based research: A guide for novice researchers on the development of a research-worthy problem. *Informing Science: the International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*, 11, 17-33. Retrieved from <http://inform.nu/Articles/Vol11/ISJv11p017-033Ellis486.pdf>
- Elo, S., Kääriäinen, M., Kanste, O., Pölkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngäs, H. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: a focus on trustworthiness. *SAGE Open*, 1-10. doi:10.1177/2158244014522633
- Englander, M. (2016). The phenomenological method in qualitative psychology and psychiatry. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 11, 10.3402/qhw.v11.30682. <http://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v11.30682>
- Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 43, 13-35. <http://doi:10.1163/156916212X632943>
- Escalante Gómez, E. (2011). Teoría fundamentada y la investigación en criminología. *International e-Journal of Criminal Science*, 3(5), 1-27. Retrieved from

- <https://www.scribd.com/document/394287567/La-Teoria-Fundamentada>
- Estelle v. Gamble. In *FindLaw*. (1976). Retrieved from <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/429/97.html>
- Federal Bureau of Prisons. (2012). *Inmate information handbook*. Retrieved from [http://www.bop.gov/locations/institutions/spg/SPG\\_aohandbook.pdf](http://www.bop.gov/locations/institutions/spg/SPG_aohandbook.pdf)
- Fernandez, T., Godwin, A., Doyle, J., Verdin, D., & Boone, H. (2016). More comprehensive and inclusive approaches to demographic data collection. *School of Engineering Education Graduate Student Series*. Paper 60. Retrieved from <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/enegs/60>
- Fields v. Smith. (2011). In *Lambda Legal*. Retrieved from <http://www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/cases/fields-v-smith>
- Finlay, L. (2009). Debating phenomenological research methods. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 3(1), 6-25. Retrieved from [http://www.psyking.net/HTMLobj-3824/Debating\\_Phenomenological\\_Research\\_Methods.pdf](http://www.psyking.net/HTMLobj-3824/Debating_Phenomenological_Research_Methods.pdf)
- Frederique, N. & Sexton, L. (2014). Through their eyes: How prisoners make sense of their incarceration. *National Institute of Justice*, 273, 1-5. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/244149.pdf>
- Frels, R. K. & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2012). Interviewing the interpretive researcher: An impressionist tale. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(60), 1-27. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1749&context=tqr>
- Frost, N. A. & Monteiro, C. (2016). *Administrative segregation in U.S. prisons*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249749.pdf>

- Gabdreeva, G. S. (2015). The psychological features of personality protection under conditions of stress caused by forced isolation. *Review of European Studies*, 7(1), 101-108. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/res.v7n1p101>
- Gallagher, S. (2014). The cruel and unusual phenomenology of solitary confinement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 1-3. <http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00585>
- Gammett v. Idaho State Board of Corrections. (2009). Retrieved from <https://www.clearinghouse.net/detail.php?id=10262>
- Garrett, B. L. (2018). Evidence-informed criminal justice. *The George Washington Law Review*, 86(6), 1490-1524. Retrieved from <https://www.gwlr.org/evidence-informed-criminal-justice/>
- Gendreau, P., & Labrecque, R. M. (2015). *The effects of administrative segregation: A lesson in knowledge cumulation*. In J. Wooldredge & P. Smith (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook on Prisons and Imprisonment*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gibbs, G. R. & Taylor, C. (2010). How and what to code. Retrieved from the Online QDA website [http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro\\_QDA/how\\_what\\_to\\_code.php](http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro_QDA/how_what_to_code.php)
- Giorgi, A, Giorgi, B., & Morley, J. (2017). The descriptive phenomenological method. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* (pp. 176-192). SAGE Publications.
- Glanz, K & Bishop, D. (2010). The role of behavioral science theory in development and implementation of public health interventions. *Annual Review of Public Health*,

31, 399-418. Retrieved from

<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.012809.103604>

Glaser, B. G. (2012). Constructivist grounded theory? *Grounded Theory Review*, 11, 1-12. Retrieved from <http://groundedtheoryreview.com/2012/06/01/constructivist-grounded-theory/>

Glidden, B. & Rovner, L. (2012). Requiring the state to justify supermax confinement for mentally ill prisoners: A disability discrimination approach. *Denver University Law Review*, 90(1), 55-75. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/pubs/736>

Goodman, A. (2013). *After 4 decades in solitary, dying Angola 3 prisoner Herman Wallace freed, conviction overturned*. Transcript of the interview with George Kendall, Jackie Sumell, and Robert King. Retrieved from [http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/2/after\\_4\\_decades\\_in\\_solitary\\_dying](http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/2/after_4_decades_in_solitary_dying)

Gopnik, A. (2012). The Caging of America - Why do we lock up so many people? *The New Yorker*, 30, 1-6. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/01/30/the-caging-of-america>

Gorard, S. (2014). A proposal for judging the trustworthiness of research findings. *Radical Statistics*, 110, 47-59. Retrieved from <https://www.radstats.org.uk/no110/Gorard110.pdf>

Gordon, S. E. (2014). Solitary confinement, public safety, and recidivism. *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, 47(2), 495-528. Retrieved from <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjlr/vol47/iss2/6>

- Gottschalk, M. (2016). Staying alive: Reforming solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails. *The Yale Law Journal*, 125, 253-258. Retrieved from [https://www.yalelawjournal.org/pdf/Gottschalk\\_PDF\\_qo5ndnyz.pdf](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/pdf/Gottschalk_PDF_qo5ndnyz.pdf)
- Graham v. Florida. (2009). In *Justia US Law*. Retrieved from <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/560/08-7412/index.pdf>
- Grant, C. & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint from your “house”. *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice, and Research*, 4(2), 12-26. <http://doi: 10.5929/2014.4.2.9>
- Green, M. J. (2014). On the inside looking in: methodological insights and challenges in conducting qualitative insider research. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(29), 1-13. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol19/iss29/3/>
- Guenther, J. (2011). Subjects without a world? An Husserlian analysis of solitary confinement. *Human Studies*, 34(2), 257-276. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-011-9182-0>
- Gupta, U. C. (2013). Informed consent in clinical research: Revisiting few concepts and areas. *Perspectives in clinical research*, 4(1), 26–32. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2229-3485.106373>
- Hadix v. Caruso. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.clearinghouse.net/detail.php?id=5522>
- Haney, C. (2018). The psychological effects of solitary confinement: a systematic critique. *Crime and Justice*, 47, 365-416. <https://doi.org/10.1086/696041>

- Harner, H. M. & Riley, S. (2013). The impact of incarceration on women's mental health: Responses from women in a maximum-security prison. *Qualitative Health Research, 23*(1), 26-42. <http://doi:10.1177/1049732312461452>.
- Harris County Sherriff's Office. (2012). *Inmate handbook*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/240816.pdf>
- Hashemnezhad, H. (2015). Qualitative content analysis research: A review article. *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics, 3*(1), 54-62.
- Hayashi, P., Abib, G., & Hoppen, N. (2019). Validity in qualitative research: A processual approach. *Qualitative Report, 24*(1), 98-112. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3443&context=tqr>
- Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). (2012). *Invisible in isolation: The use of segregation and solitary confinement in immigration detention*. Retrieved from <https://immigrantjustice.org/research-items>
- Hernandez, D. (2013). Detained in obscurity: The U.S. immigrant detention regime. *NACLA Report on the Americas, 46*(3), 58-63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2013.11721914>
- Higgins, G. E. (2009). Quantitative versus qualitative methods: Understanding why quantitative methods are predominant in criminology and criminal justice. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology, 1*(1), 23-37. Retrieved from [http://jtprcrim.org/January\\_Articles/Quantitative\\_Vs\\_Qualitative\\_Methods\\_George\\_Higgins.pdf](http://jtprcrim.org/January_Articles/Quantitative_Vs_Qualitative_Methods_George_Higgins.pdf)

- Hinds, M. & Butler, J. (2015). Solitary confinement: Can the courts get inmates out of the hole? *Stanford Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (SJCRCCL)*, 11(2). Retrieved from <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/publications/solitary-confinement-can-the-courts-get-inmates-out-of-the-hole/>
- Honigsberg, P. J. (2014). Linguistic isolation: A new human rights violation constituting torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. *Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights*, 12(1), 22-45. Retrieved from <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njihr/vol12/iss1/2>
- Hughes, M. H. (2017, May). *Is prison why I'm sick? Examining health conditions among minority males within correctional facilities* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from the Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. (Accession number 3243)
- Imenda, S. (2014). Is there a conceptual difference between theoretical and conceptual frameworks? *The Social Science Journal*, 38(2), 185-195. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2014.11893249>
- Incumaa v. Stirling. (2015). In *U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit*. Retrieved from <http://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/Opinions/Published/146411.P.pdf>
- In Re Medley. (1890). In *FindLaw*. Retrieved from <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/134/160.html>
- Jeanfreau, S. G., & Jack, L. (2010). Appraising Qualitative Research in Health Education: Guidelines for Public Health Educators. *Health Promotion Practice*, 11(5), 612–617. Retrieved from doi: 10.1177/1524839910363537
- Johnson, L. M., Elam, P., Lebold, S. M., & Burrouchs, R. (2018). Use of research



evidence by criminal justice professionals. *Justice Policy Journal*, 16(2).

Retrieved from [http://www.cjcj.org/news/12397#research\\_evidence](http://www.cjcj.org/news/12397#research_evidence)

Kaba, F, Lewis, A., Glowa-Killisch, S, Handler, J. Lee, D., Alper, H., ... & Venters, H.

(2014). Solitary confinement and risk of self-harm among jail inmates. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104(3), 442-447.

<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301742>

Kaeble, D. & Gaze L. (2016). *Correctional populations in the United States, 2015*.

Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus15.pdf>

Kerness, B. (2012). *Survivors manual: Survival in solitary*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). Newark, NJ:

American Friends Service Committee.

Kerness, B. & Bissonette Lewey, J. (2014). Race and the politics of isolation in U.S.

prisons. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 22, 21–41.

<http://doi:10.1080/15456870.2014.860146>

Kerr, L. C. (2015). The chronic failure to control prisoner isolation in US and Canadian

law. *Queen's Law Journal*, 40 (2), 483-529. Retrieved from

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2594363](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2594363)

Kervin v. Barnes. (2015). Retrieved from

<https://www.leagle.com/decision/infco20150529133>

Kilgore, J. (2012, December). Mass incarceration and working class interests: Which side

are the unions on? *Labor Studies Journal*, 3 (4), 356-372.

<http://doi:10.1177/0160449X13482732>

Kincade, B. (2016, March 23). *The economics of the American prison system*. Retrieved

from <https://smartasset.com/insights/the-economics-of-the-american-prison-system>

King, R. H. (2012). *From the bottom of the heap: The autobiography of Black Panther Robert Hillary King*. PM Press.

LaChance v. Commissioner of Correction. (2012). In *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*. Retrieved from <http://masscases.com/cases/sjc/463/463mass767.html>

Labrecque, R. M. (2015). *The Effect of Solitary Confinement on Institutional Misconduct: A Longitudinal Evaluation*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://nicic.gov/effect-solitary-confinement-institutional-misconduct-longitudinal-evaluation>

Labrecque, R. M., Smith, P., Lovins, B. & Latessa, E. J. (2014). The importance of reassessment: How changes in the LSI-R risk score can improve the prediction of recidivism. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 53(2), 116-128. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2013.868389>

Latham, J. R. (2014). *The research canvas: A framework for designing and aligning the "DNA" of your study*. Leadership Plus Design, Ltd.

Lederman, N. G. & Lederman, J. S. (2015). What is a theoretical framework? A practical answer. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 26(7), 593-597. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10972-015-9443-2>

Legislative Analyst's Office. (2017). *Improving in-prison rehabilitation programs*. Retrieved from <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2017/3720/In-Prison-Rehabilitation-120617.pdf>

- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(3), 324–327.  
<http://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.161306>
- Leung, F. H., & Savithiri, R. (2009). Spotlight on focus groups. *Canadian Family Physician*, 55(2), 218–219. Retrieved from  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2642503/>
- Lober, J. (2016). The Liman Report and alternatives to prolonged solitary confinement. *The Yale Law Journal*, 125, 238. Retrieved from  
[https://www.yalelawjournal.org/pdf/Lobel\\_PDF\\_ojfp32mm.pdf](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/pdf/Lobel_PDF_ojfp32mm.pdf)
- Lowen, M. & Isaacs, C. (2012). *Lifetime lockdown: How isolation conditions impact prisoner reentry*. Mountain View, CA: American Friend Service Committee.  
Retrieved from  
[https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/afsc/lifetime\\_lockdown\\_report.pdf](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/afsc/lifetime_lockdown_report.pdf)
- Lub, V. (2015). Validity in qualitative evaluation: Linking purposes, paradigms, and perspectives. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1-8.  
<https://doi:10.1177/1609406915621406>
- Lurie, S. (2015). *The death penalty is cruel. But so is life without parole*. Retrieved from  
<https://newrepublic.com/article/121943/death-row-crueler-and-more-unusual-penalty-execution/>
- Lydon, J., Carrington, K., Low, H., Miller, R., & Yazdy, M. (2015). *Coming out of concrete closets. A report on Black & Pink's national LGBTQ prisoner survey*. Retrieved from <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/23129/23129.pdf>

- Madrid v. Gomez. (1998). In *FindLaw*. Retrieved from <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-9th-circuit/1365048.html>
- Manduric, A. (2015). *UN's "Mandela Rules" to set new international limits on solitary confinement*. Retrieved from <http://solitarywatch.com/2015/07/17/uns-mandela-rules-to-set-new-international-standards-for-treatment-of-prisoners-including-limits-on-solitary-confinement/>
- Maschi, T. & Aday, R. H. (2014). The social determinants of health and justice and the aging in prison crisis: A call for human rights action. *International Journal of Social Work*, 1(1), 15-33. <http://doi:10.5296/ijsw.v1i1.4914>
- Maxfield, M. G. & Babbie, E. R. (2012). *Basics of research methods for criminal justice and criminology*. (4<sup>th</sup>Ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Maxwell, J. (2012). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Metcalf, H., Morgan, J., Oliner-Friedland, S., Resnik, J., Spiegel, J., Tae, H., Work, A. R., & Holbrook, B. (2013). *Administrative segregation, degrees of isolation, and incarceration: A national overview of state and federal correctional policies*. Retrieved from [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2286861](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2286861)
- Mawfield, M. G. & Babbie, E. R. (2009). *Basics of research methods for criminal justice and criminology*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- McConnaughey, H. (2012). Punishment narratives: Tracking Supreme Court jurisprudence concerning solitary confinement. *Colgate Academy Review*, 8(7), 83-105. Retrieved from

<https://commons.colgate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1093&context=car>

McCullough, J. (2017). Heat is part of life in Texas prisons, but federal judge orders one to cool it. *The Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2017/07/20/texas-prison-heat-air-conditioning-lawsuit/>

Metzner, J. L. & Fellner, J. (2010). Solitary confinement and mental illness in U.S. prisons: A challenge for medical ethics. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 38, 104-108. Retrieved from <http://jaapl.org/content/38/1/104>

Miner-Romanoff, K. (2012). Interpretive and critical phenomenological crime studies: A model design. *Qualitative Report*, 17 (54), 1-12. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ981463.pdf>

Moral, C., de Antonio, A., Ferre, X., & Lara G. (2015) A coding system for qualitative studies of the information-seeking process in computer science research. *Information Research*, 20(4), 1-38. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1087386.pdf>

Moravcsik, A. (2014). Transparency: The revolution in qualitative research. *American Political Science Association Symposium*, 48-53. <http://doi:10.1017/S1049096513001789>

Morgan, D. L. (2013). *Focus groups as qualitative research – planning and research design for focus groups*. SAGE Publications, Inc. <http://doi:10.4135/9781412984287.n4>

- Morin, K. (2013). Value of a pilot study. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 52(10) 547-548.  
[http://doi: 10.3928/01484834-20130920-10](http://doi:10.3928/01484834-20130920-10)
- Morris, R. G. (2015). Exploring the effect of exposure to short-term solitary confinement among violent prison inmates. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 32(1), 1-22.  
 doi:10.1007/s10940-015-9250-0
- Morris, R. G. (2016). Exploring the effect of exposure to short-term solitary confinement among violent prison inmates. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 32, 1-11.  
 DOI 10.1007/s10940-015-9250-0
- Muenster, B. & Trone, J. (2016). *Why is America so punitive? A report on the deliberations of the interdisciplinary roundtable on punitiveness in America.* *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, 8(5), 340-347.  
<https://doi.org/10.1525/fsr.2016.28.5.340>
- Muhlhausen, D. (2015). *Studies cast doubt on the effectiveness of prisoner reentry programs* (Report No. 3010). Retrieved from <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/report/studies-cast-doubt-effectiveness-prisoner-reentry-programs>
- National Commission on Correctional Health Care. (2012). *Segregated inmates.* Retrieved from <https://www.ncchc.org/spotlight-on-the-standards-26-2>
- National Commission on Correctional Health Care. (2016). Position Statement: Solitary Confinement (Isolation). *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 22(3), 257–263.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1078345816654233>
- National Immigrant Justice Center & Physicians for Human Rights. (2012). *Invisible in Isolation: The Use of Segregation and Solitary Confinement in Immigration*

- Detention*. Retrieved from <https://immigrantjustice.org/research-items>
- National Institutes of Health. (2012). *Protecting human research subjects*. Retrieved from the National Human Genome Research Institute website <https://www.genome.gov/10001752/protecting-human-research-subjects-guide/>
- National Research Council. (2014). *The growth of incarceration in the United States: Causes and Consequences*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org.10.17226/18613>.
- Newington, L., & Metcalfe, A. (2014). Factors influencing recruitment to research: qualitative study of the experiences and perceptions of research teams. *BMC medical research methodology*, *14*, 10. Doi: 10.1186/1471-2288-14-10
- New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty & The ACLU of New Mexico. (2013). Inside the box: The real costs of solitary confinement in New Mexico's prisons and jails. Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/solitary-confinement-report-FINAL.pdf>
- Ngulube, P., Mathipa, E. R., & Gumbo, M. T. (2015). Theoretical and conceptual frameworks in the social and management sciences, in Mathipa, E. R. & Gumbo, M. T. (eds). *Addressing research challenges: Making headway in developing researchers*. Mosala- MASEDI Publishers & Booksellers cc: Noordyk. <http://doi:10.13140/RG.2.1.3210.7680>
- Noble, H. & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence Based Nursing*, *18*, 34-35. <http://doi:10.1136/eb-2015-102054>
- Nolasco, C. A. & Vaughn, M. S. (2018). Construing the legality of solitary confinement:

- analysis of United States Federal Court Jurisprudence. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-018-9463-5>
- O'Keefe, M. L., Klebe, K. J., Metzner, J., Dvoskin, J., Fellner, J., & Stucker A. (2013). A longitudinal study of administrative segregation. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry Law*, *41*, 49-60.  
Retrieved from <http://jaapl.org/content/jaapl/41/1/49.full.pdf>
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Leech, N. L., Slate, J. R., Stark, M., Sharma, B., Frels, R., ... Combs, J. P. (2012). An exemplar for teaching and learning qualitative research. *Qualitative Report*, *17*(1), 16-77. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1807&context=tqr>
- Palmer, B. W. (2015). Study participants and informed consent. *American Psychological Association*, *46*(8), 62. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2015/09/ethics>
- Paz Dennen, V. (2003). Cognitive apprenticeship in educational practice: research on scaffolding, modeling, mentoring, and coaching as instructional strategies. In D. H. Jonassen, D. H. (2003). *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, Inc.
- Peter, E. (2015). The ethics in qualitative health research: special considerations. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, *20*(9), 2625-2630. DOI:10.1590/1413-81232015209.06762015
- Peters, I. (2014). Too abstract to be feasible? Applying the grounded theory method in social movement. *German Institute of Global and Area Studies*, *247*, 1-28.
- Pezalla, A. E., Pettigrew, J., & Miller-Day, M. (2012). Researching the researcher-as-



instrument: an exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity. *Qualitative research*, 12(2), 165-185. doi:10.1177/14879411111422107

Pilkington, E. (2016). Albert Woodfox released from jail after 43 years in solitary confinement. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/feb/19/albert-woodfox-released-louisiana-jail-43-years-solitary-confinement>.

Pinkerton, J., Hassan, A, & Caruba, L. (2015). Harris County jail considered ‘unsafe and unhealthy’ for inmates, public. *Houston Chronicle*. Retrieved from <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Harris-County-Jail-is-unsafe-and-unhealthy-for-6649163.php>

Reid , M. (2014). Crime and punishment, a global concern: Who does it best and does isolation really work? *Kentucky Law Journal*, 103(1), 45-93.

Retrieved from

<https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1061&context=klj>

Reiter, K. A. (2012). The most restrictive alternative: A litigation history of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, 1960-2006. *Studies in Law, Politics and Society*, 57, 71-125. [http://doi:10.1108/S1059-4337\(2012\)0000057006](http://doi:10.1108/S1059-4337(2012)0000057006)

Reiter, K. A. (2014). *Testimony on solitary confinement - U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee*. Retrieved from <https://solitarywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/keramet-reiter-university-of-california-irvine.pdf>

Resnik, D. B. (2015). *What is ethics in research & why is it important?* Retrieved from <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/>

- Resnik, J., Baumgartel, S., & Kalb, J. (2016, January 15). Time-in-cell: Isolation and incarceration. *The Yale Law Journal Forum*, 125. Retrieved from [https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/time-in-cell-isolation-and-incarceration#\\_ftnref29](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/time-in-cell-isolation-and-incarceration#_ftnref29)
- Rienzi, G. (2015). *Thousands of American prisoners spend 23 hours a day in solitary confinement*. Retrieved from <http://hub.jhu.edu/magazine/2015/spring/is-solitary-confinement-ethical/>
- Rimando, M., Brace, A., Namageyo-Funa, A., Parr, T., Sealy, D., Davis, T., Martinez, L., & Christiana, R. (2015). Data Collection Challenges and Recommendations for Early Career Researchers. *Qualitative Report*, 20(12), 2025-2036. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2428&context=tqr>
- Roberts, L. & Indermaur, D. (2008). The ethics of research with prisoners. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 19(3), 309-326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10345329.2008.12036436>
- Rocheleau, A. M. (2014). An exploratory examination of a prison disciplinary process: Assessing staff and prisoner' perceptions of fairness. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology*, 2(1), 95-118. Retrieved from <https://epps.utdallas.edu/jqcjc/documents/v2i1.pdf>
- Roratto, R. & Dotto Dias, E. (2014). Security information in production and operations: A study on audit trails in database systems. *Journal of Information Systems and Technology Management*, 11(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4301/S1807->

17752014000300010

- Rosenberg, S. (1990). Female political prisoners and anti-imperialist struggles. *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, 2(2), 1-3. Retrieved from [http://www.jpp.org/documents/forms/JPP2\\_2/Rosenberg.pdf](http://www.jpp.org/documents/forms/JPP2_2/Rosenberg.pdf)
- Sarteschi, C. M. (2013). Mentally ill offenders involved with the U.S. criminal justice system: A synthesis. *SAGE Publications*, 1-11. <http://doi:10.1177/2158244013497029>
- Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 9-16. <http://doi:10.5539/elt.v5n9p9>
- Segrave, M., Spivakovsky, C., & Eriksson, A. (2017). The maelstrom of punishment, mental illness, intellectual disability and cognitive impairment. *Punishment & Society*, 19(3), 267–271. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474517703907>
- Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights Hearing on Solitary Confinement, Cong.1-19. (2012) (Testimony of Professor Craig Haney). Retrieved from <http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/12-6-19HaneyTestimony.pdf>
- Sexton, N. (2015). Penal subjectivities: Developing a theoretical framework for penal consciousness. *Punishment & Society*, 17(1), 114-136. <http://doi:10.1177/1462474514548790>
- Shahnazarian, D., Hagemann, J., Aburto, M., & Rose, S. (2013). *Informed consent in human subjects research*. Retrieved <http://oprs.usc.edu/files/2013/04/Informed->

Consent-Booklet-4.4.13.pdf

- Shahshahani, A. & El-Sergany, A. N. (2013). Challenging the Practice of Solitary Confinement in Immigration Detention in Georgia and Beyond. *CUNY Law Review*, 16(2), 243-268. Retrieved from <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1323&context=clr>
- Shaley, S. (2008). *A sourcebook on solitary confinement*. Mannheim Centre for Criminology. Retrieved from <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24557/1/SolitaryConfinementSourcebookPrint.pdf>
- Sikolia, D., Biros, D., Mason, M., & Weiser, M. (2013). Trustworthiness of grounded theory methodology research in information systems. *Proceedings of the Eighth Midwest Association for Information Systems Conference*. Retrieved from <http://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=mwais2013/>
- Simon, M. K. & Goes, J. (2013). *Dissertation and scholarly research recipes for success*. Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success LLC.
- Smith, D. G. (2018). *Neuroscientists make a case against solitary confinement*. Retrieved from <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/neuroscientists-make-a-case-against-solitary-confinement/>
- Smith, P., Gendreau, P., & Labrecque, R. M. (2015). *The impact of solitary confinement on inmate behavior: A meta-analytic review*. Paper presented at the North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology (N3) Conference, Ottawa, Canada. Retrieved from [http://media.wix.com/ugd/7fc458\\_2efc5654e7ea4d27a9d45a64f331fec5.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/7fc458_2efc5654e7ea4d27a9d45a64f331fec5.pdf)

- Story, B. (2014). Alone inside: solitary confinement and the ontology of the individual in modern life. *Geographica Helvetica*, 69, 355–364. [http://doi: 10.5194/gh-69-355-201](http://doi:10.5194/gh-69-355-201)
- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, 68(3), 226-31. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- Tavallaei, M. & Abu Talib, M. (2010). *A general perspective on role of theory in qualitative research*. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 3(11), 570-577. Retrieved from [http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt3/sayi11pdf/tavallaei\\_abutalib.pdf](http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt3/sayi11pdf/tavallaei_abutalib.pdf)
- Tewksbury, R. (2009). Qualitative versus quantitative methods: Understanding why qualitative methods are superior for criminology and criminal justice. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology*, 1 (1), 38-58. Retrieved from [http://www.jtpcrim.org/January\\_Articles/Qualitative\\_Vs\\_Quantitave\\_Richard\\_Tewksbury.pdf](http://www.jtpcrim.org/January_Articles/Qualitative_Vs_Quantitave_Richard_Tewksbury.pdf)
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). (2017). *Offender Orientation Handbook*. Retrieved from [https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/Offender\\_Orientation\\_Handbook\\_English.pdf](https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/Offender_Orientation_Handbook_English.pdf)
- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (n.d.). *How do I get access to the safety data?* Retrieved from <http://www.trb.org/StrategicHighwayResearchProgram2SHRP2/SHRP2DataSafet>

yAccess.aspx

The psychology of cruelty: Recognizing grave mental harm in American prisons. (2015).

*Harvard Law Review*, 128(4), 1250-1271. Retrieved from

<https://harvardlawreview.org/issues/volume-128-issue-4/>

The Sentencing Project (2019, June). Trends in U.S. Corrections. Retrieved from

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Trends-in-US-Corrections.pdf>

Thomson, S. B. (2011). Qualitative research: validity. *Journal of Administration &*

*Governance*, 6(1). 77-82. Retrieved from

[http://www.joaag.com/uploads/6\\_1\\_-7\\_Research\\_Method\\_Thomson.pdf](http://www.joaag.com/uploads/6_1_-7_Research_Method_Thomson.pdf)

Tonry, M. (2013). *Crime and Justice in America: 1975-2015*. University of Chicago Press.

Trahar, S. (2009). Beyond the story itself: Narrative inquiry and autoethnography in

intercultural research in higher education. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung /*

*Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(1), Art. 30. Retrieved from

<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1218/2653>

Travis County Justice and Public Safety Division. (2018). *Reentry resource guide*.

Retrieved from

<http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/HR/TravisCountyReentryGuidebook2018.pdf>

Twersky Glasner, A. & Miller, K. A. (2010). Communication isolation as reported by a

group of deaf Texas inmates. *Western Criminology Review*, 11(2), 1-8.

Retrieved from

<http://www.westerncriminology.org/documents/WCR/v11n2/TwerskyGlasner.pdf>

United States Government Accountability Office. (2013, May). Improvements needed in Bureau of Prisons' monitoring and evaluation of impact of segregated housing.

Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/654349.pdf>

University of Texas - School of Law Civil Rights Clinic. (2016). *Preventable tragedies*.

Retrieved from <https://law.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2016/11/2016-11-CVRC-Preventable-Tragedies.pdf>

Unluer, S. (2012). Being an insider researcher while conducting case study research.

*Qualitative Report*, 17(29), 1-14. Retrieved from

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1752&context=tqr>

Umamaheswar, J. (2014). Gate keeping and the politics of access to prisons: Implications for qualitative prison research. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology*, 2(2), 238-267. Retrieved from

<https://www.jqcjc.org/documents/v2i2.pdf>

U.S. Department of Justice – Federal Bureau of Prisons. (2016). *Special management units*. Retrieved from [https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5217\\_02.pdf](https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5217_02.pdf)

Valera, P., Cook, S., Macklin, R., & Chang, Y. (2014). Conducting health disparities research with criminal justice populations: Examining research, ethics, and participation. *Ethics & Behavior*, 24(2), 164–174.

<http://doi:10.1080/10508422.2013.826581>

Withoukaskas, G. & D. F. Muresanu (2014). Conscience and consciousness: a definition.

- Journal of Medicine and Life*, 7(1), 104-108. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24653768>
- Wagner, P. & Rabuy, B. (2016). *Mass incarceration: The whole pie 2016*. Retrieved from the Prison Policy Initiative website <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html>
- Wang, C. C. & Gaele, S. K. (2015). The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2, 195-198. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014>
- Webb, T. W. & Graziano, M. S. A. (2015). The attention schema theory: A mechanistic account of subjective awareness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 1-11. <http://doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00500>.
- Weir, K. (2012). Alone, in 'the hole' - Psychologists probe the mental health effects of solitary confinement. *American Psychological Association*, 43(5), 54. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/05/solitary>
- Wener, P. & Woodgate, R. L. (2013). Use of a qualitative methodological scaffolding process to design robust interprofessional studies.305-312. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 27(4), 305-312. <http://doi:10.3109/13561820.2013.763775>
- Who cares? Sentiment weighing and qualitative text analysis. (2012). Retrieved from the Dedoose website [https://www.dedoose.com/resources/articledetail/who\\_cares\\_sentiment\\_weighting\\_and\\_qualitative\\_text\\_analysis](https://www.dedoose.com/resources/articledetail/who_cares_sentiment_weighting_and_qualitative_text_analysis)



Wilkerson v. Stadler. (2007). Retrieved from

[https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?q=639+F.Supp.2d+654,&hl=en&as\\_sdt=6,33&case=7799665964042851647&scilh=0](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?q=639+F.Supp.2d+654,&hl=en&as_sdt=6,33&case=7799665964042851647&scilh=0)

Williams v. Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, (2017). In *Justia*.

Retrieved from <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca3/14-1469/14-1469-2017-02-09.html>

Xu, M. A., & Storr, G. B. (2012). Learning the concept of researcher as instrument in

qualitative research. *Qualitative Report*, 17(21), 1-18. Retrieved from

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ978741.pdf>

Zikmund, W. G., Babin, J., Carr, J. & Griffin, M. (2013). *Business research methods*. (9<sup>th</sup> Ed.). South-Western Cengage Learning.

Zubiaur, G. (2015). *Rethinking solitary confinement*. Retrieved from the Florida

International University Law Review website <https://law.fiu.edu/rethinking-solitary-confinement/>