

2018

# Perspectives of Racism Among Offenders Post Incarceration

Anna Phillips  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

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Anna Marie Phillips

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Perspectives of Racism Among Offenders Post Incarceration

by

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MA, Western Seminary, 2010

BA, California State University, Hayward, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2018

## Abstract

Racial segregation in California prisons is a primary means of maintaining control and safety for inmates and correctional staff, yet little is understood about how racial segregation in prison impacts reentry of offenders into the community. The research question examined in this study focused on how living in the racial segregation of a California State prison, for 2 years or more might influence African-American, White, and Latino men's ability to interact with other races in a culturally diverse community upon release. Using Donald Clemmer's theory of prisonization as the foundation, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of men who lived in a racially segregated environment in prison regarding post-release reintegration. Specifically, their experiences with interacting in a culturally diverse environment after prison were examined to understand how behaviors and attitudes in prison were adapted by formerly incarcerated men in community life. A sample of 15 formerly incarcerated males were interviewed in response to posted fliers and community presentations. Collected data were analyzed between and among races for similar responses to the interview questions according to the Van Kaam method. Fourteen of the 15 participants reported that racial reintegration added challenges such as difficulty trusting and interacting with races other than their own post release, and additionally they stated they were grateful to return to a culturally diverse community. Positive social change stemming from this study include recommendations to prison leaders to introduce social skill building training into reintegration programming that supports former inmates to more effectively interact with diverse populations as they transition to community life.

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate the work in these pages to several people. First, to all of those who have served time behind bars and felt the pains of relearning how to appropriately engage with varying races and overcome the myriad other challenges faced during reentry. Second to my husband, Danny, who is living proof daily that people can change and that you can overcome the toughest of challenges with commitment to the Lord and family. Third, to my daughter so that she may know that hard work, determination, and full reliance upon the grace of God will allow the opportunity to pursue and accomplish all of her goals. Finally, to the families and communities that inmates return to, may you find understanding of those who have lived in racial segregation and may that understanding lead to hope and encouragement for you and those reentering society from behind prison bars.

## Acknowledgments

There are so many individual and organizations to acknowledge for their support, guidance, and encouragement during this long process. First to my family, who has made more sacrifices than I am aware to support me in the completion of this study. To my mom, who has stood by, encouraged me, and believed that I was capable and smart enough to accomplish anything I set my mind to do. In my most frustrated and hopeless times you told me I could do it and provided whatever support I needed to get this done! To my husband, who refused to let me give up no matter how bleak my situation seemed; you reminded me there was an end in sight and giving up was not an option. To my Dad, who was always the driving force behind so many of my accomplishments, my heart is saddened that you are not be present to see me finish this journey. I have no doubt that you would be thrilled to see this degree hang on the wall and open doors to do many great things for our community.

Next, I would like to acknowledge the community organizations and individuals that allowed me the opportunity to post fliers, present my study in order to gain participants, read my research questions, and edit my papers. Specifically, the three organization that allowed me to engage with their communities, thank you for your time and graciousness in welcoming me to your organizations and communities. Second, to Jeannette, who willingly volunteered to read this entire document for initial edits and feedback, your work on this was appreciated more than I can ever communicate. Finally, to the three professors who took the time to read my interview questions and complete

the feedback rubric, your feedback was of great benefit in the development and execution of my interview questions and interviews.

I would also like to thank my chair, Dr. Richard Worch, for your patience during this process and for answering all of my pestering questions to make sure that I was on the right track. To my committee member, Dr. Joyce Haines, thank you for taking this study on and providing your feedback to make sure my study was up to par. And to my university research reviewer, Dr. Paul Rutledge, your time in reviewing this study is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge each participant who took time to meet with me. Your willingness to share your story and be transparent about your experiences, and your openness to discuss your struggles, humbled me greatly. To each of you, I wish you continued success in your journey of reintegration.



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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Each year, thousands of prisoners are released in the United States who must learn to readjust to societal norms and unlearn norms that were adapted while in prison. Seim (2016) reported that 700,000 inmates are released each year in the United States. These individuals reentering society have been exposed to conditions that have taught them certain ways of thinking and surviving. As Clemmer (1940) noted, inmates conform to the prison environment, and many will fully embrace its social norms. Clemmer's concept of prisonization explains this adaptation process highlighting how they change their language, daily schedules, and behavior in order to better blend into the prison environment.

Racial segregation is one of the norms inmates learn while in prison which follow them after release from prison. Lindsey (2009) highlighted the use of racial segregation in California prisons as a means of environmental control. The use of segregation to control the level of violence that occurs in prisons may, at times, be justified, but potential long-term consequences often follow inmates who have learned to adapt to the prison environment in order to survive. There is extensive research that explores the fact that former inmates have a great deal to overcome in addition to their criminal records. Articles such as the one written by Davis, Bahr, and Ward (2012) discussed six specific barriers that former inmates self-identified overcoming upon reentry to their communities.

In conducting this study, I focused upon uncovering the potential barriers that former inmates might encounter when reentering a culturally diverse community. If former inmates have developed negative response patterns to various races, those attitudes will likely follow these individuals as they reintegrate into society and potentially put community members at risk. I specifically sought to identify additional challenges that former inmates face surrounding racial reintegration. Insights gained from the participants of this study will expand knowledge on this topic and may ultimately influence policy and practice in both prison and in post prison environments. In this chapter, I provide background information on racial segregation in contemporary U.S. prisons; present the problem and purpose statements and research questions; and discuss the nature and assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study. Before concluding the chapter, I consider the study's significance and implications for positive social change.

### **Background**

The ability to minimize racial violence behind bars has been a pressing issue as long as people of different races and ethnicities have been incarcerated together in multicultural environments. The issue of racial segregation in the California prison system has been researched and written about for several years, such as by Spiegel (2007). A number of articles published in 2016 also addressed the racial composition in California state prisons. Walker (2016), for instance, identified racism as a correctional system tool and noted that inmates engaged in racial self-segregation in the state's prisons. Additionally, in two articles published in 2016, Lopez-Aguado (2016a, 2016b)

focused more specifically on gang segregation and the influence of the prison environment on the communities which offenders reenter.

The goal of this research was to examine how racial segregation in the prison system affects prisoner responses to various races following incarceration. In reviewing the current research on racial segregation in prison, I found it more limited than I initially assumed and, therefore, decided to examine articles that are 20 or 30 years old and, in some cases, older. These older articles helped provide a foundation for the study by providing evidence that racial segregation has negative consequences for the inmate and society. Walker's (2016) and Lopez-Aguado's (2016a, 2016b) studies are more recent and are clearly supportive of the California penal system's use of segregation. In spite of this recent research, it was clear to me that there was much more that should be researched and understood about the influence of segregation upon individuals post release.

An example of older research laying a crucial foundation was the article, "Socialization in Correctional Communities," by Wheeler (1961). Wheeler specifically examined the relationships formed between inmates and their ability to transition from prison culture when preparing for release, which is a topic that is relevant for the present study. An even older foundational study was conducted by Clemmer (1940). Clemmer developed the term *prisonization*, which has become a commonly used term in the criminal justice community to identify a prisoner's adaptation to the prison culture (Clemmer, 1940). These two articles laid the foundational groundwork for this research project.



Authors of a few recent studies have highlighted prisoner adaptation and supported Clemmer's (1940) theory that inmates will fully integrate themselves into the prison environment and subsequently mirror the prison environment completely upon release. Schnittker and Massoglia (2015) discussed the lasting impact of prisonization on individuals as they reenter their community. They noted that prisonization leads to a stigma that inhibits former inmates' ability to succeed outside of the prison environment (Schnittker & Massoglia, 2015). Seim (2016) discussed the challenges of preparedness to reenter the community and highlighted the "world of individuals" that Clemmer defined. Seim focused on an individual's ability to prepare for reentry after having been incarcerated for 6 months or less. While Seim did not examine prisoners' adaptation to the prison environment, he drew attention to how imprisonment influences one's future and ability to succeed in his community. In documenting the increase in violent tendencies during the incarceration period, Walker (2016) provided clear evidence of the influence that prison has on individual inmate's behavior. Lopez-Aguado (2016b) also highlighted how the prison environment changes one's views and mindset. In reviewing this research, I concluded that the prison experience alters an individuals' perceptions of life as well as their ability to integrate fully into society following release. All of these studies point to different barriers and limitations that former inmates face, and each arrived at the conclusion that there is more to understand about the incarceration and reentry process

The other major inspiration for this study was my experience of working with recovering addicts and alcoholics who have served a prison or jail sentence. Observing and hearing the struggles that these former inmates have encountered made me interested

in studying racial reintegration as an added barrier for former inmates. Understanding the potential barriers and frustrations these former inmates experience may aid in creating a safer and higher functioning society.

### **Problem Statement**

This study was aimed at helping former inmates express the personal challenges and consequences they face living in a racially segregated environment. Former inmates face many challenges and barriers upon release into their post incarceration communities. This study addressed the personal experiences of 15 former inmates and encouraged them to identify potential struggles interacting with various races after living in a highly segregated prison environment. The impact of forced racial segregation in prison has been studied closely by two researchers, Walker (2016) and Lopez-Aguado (2016b), both of these authors have highlighted the added risk of violent behavior faced, and participated in, due to racial segregation in California state prisons. A third resource, *First Available Cell: Desegregation of the Texas Prison System* (Trulson and Marquart, 2009) briefly examined the occurrence of racial segregation in California state prisons and the reason that this practice was used, as a way to control prison violence. These three resources support the fact that California's use of segregation has implications for its inmates, yet the study did not arrive at a conclusion regarding post incarceration effects.

Offenders are faced with many barriers, such as unemployment, unstable housing, and poor social connections (Schnittker and Massoglia, 2015). These factors inhibit former inmates' ability to quickly and successfully reintegrate into his community which

often led to reincarceration due to these challenges (Serin, Lloyd, and Hanby, 2010). The question examined in this study was as follows: in what ways does living in California State prison, a racially segregated environment, for two years or more influence African-American, White, and Latino males' ability to interact with other races in a culturally diverse environment upon release? In prison, the racial identity of prisoners often determines their living environment (Lopez-Aguado, 2016a). Roth (2011) recounted that the prison system has always used segregation as tool of control, which based on research has highlighted that it has only become a stronger part of the environment (Walker, 2016 and Lopez-Aguado, 2016a). Lindsey (2009) discussed in further detail the use of racial segregation as a means to control the level of violent acts that occur within prisons. Lindsey also emphasized that although the California correctional system has attempted to integrate races, reaching that goal may not happen. Another research article concluded that cross-racial interactions in prison often led violence (Berg and DeLisi, 2006).

Another important aspect to in custody racial segregation it considered a violation of one's human rights. Court cases such as *Johnson v. California* (Robertson, 2005) exposed the injustice experienced by prisoners who have been forced into segregation. While racial segregation appears to be common knowledge among offenders, the general public seems to know little about racial segregation in the prison system and even less about the potential impact it might have upon society. Additionally, in my literary research there are very few research articles that have explored the inmate's perspective on racial segregation and none that have addressed the barriers it leads to in his ability to reenter a racially diverse society. Mears, D. P., Wang, X., Hay, C., & Bales, W. D. (2008)

addressed the increased hardship that non-white former inmates face when they come from poor and racially segregated neighborhoods. Mears et al. (2008) provided many helpful insights to the social changes faced by former inmates but they did not address prison segregation or how prison segregation might influence the ability to be successful.

A challenging aspect of incarceration is violence. There are two primary contributing factors to the level of violence in incarceration which are race and dominance. Worrall and Morris (2012) studied the impact that gang affiliation, which often has a racial component to a prisoner's involvement in the chosen gang, had on a prisoner's likeliness to engage in violent conduct. Michalski (2015) studied the role of masculinity and the need for status as influential for British prisoner's engagement in violence. Another study by Bell and Lindekugel (2015) observed that race, education and community ties influenced participation in violence. Morin (2015) examined how fear and conduct of violence altered the prison environment and highlighted just how violent the prison environment can be for both inmates and correctional staff. A slightly different approach to examining violence was noted in the work of Placido et al. (2006). Placido et al. explored the impact of providing therapeutic services to gang members during incarceration in order to reduce recidivism and institutional misconduct. Each of these studies highlighted the fact that violence, no matter the driving force, was a key risk factor for all those incarcerated.

The key principle that the aforementioned articles address was the role that segregation is forced to play in the California prison system. The California prison system has mandated that inmates be racially segregated (Lindsey 2009) in order to control racial violence and

Webster (2005) reported California prisons are among the most racially diverse. He quoted that, “37 percent are Hispanic, 29 percent white, 29 percent black, and 6 percent Asian, American Indian, and Pacific Islander” (para 2, line 3). Webster (2005) also highlighted challenges of managing the various gangs and racial tension that exists in the California prison system. Therefore, racial segregation may initially make sense in an extremely contained environment, but the benefits to the individual and the community to which he will return are uncertain. Correctional punishment, such as imprisonment, is intended to serve as a deterrent in committing future crimes, but if inmates are forced into seclusion and learn how to associate only with people they are racially similar to, racial segregation may likely cause more harm in the end for the inmate and society.

California’s prison population and the number of prison facilities are among the highest in the nation. However, recent research by Wagner (2014) noted a decline in the prison population in both California and New York, which began trending down in 2006. California Governor Jerry Brown supported initiatives that limit the number of individuals incarcerated at a given time and advocated for the early release of non-violent offenders (California Department of Corrections, 2013). Therefore this change requires an increase community awareness and positive support for newly released offenders.

Living in an extremely contained environment for a pro-longed period of time will increase a prisoner’s hesitance or inability to respond “normally” to a new environment. My study was designed to gain understanding and perspective on the exact perception and challenges that former inmates face upon reentry. This research may also shed light onto a needed area of understanding, which is how prisoners respond to their

environment post incarceration. The larger issue is that inmate's experience both during and post incarceration did not appear to be well researched, which presents challenges to truly supporting inmates and his community post incarceration. Studies on *prisonization* conducted by Clemmer in the 1940's and Wheeler in the 1960's disclosed the mentality and behavioral shifts that occur for inmates. Society needs to understand that it cannot expect former inmates to simply let go of behaviors that have been, at times, severely reinforced. Therefore, without research studies such as this one, society will remain uninformed as to the proper support for former-inmates and ultimately, how to maintain safety and stability in society at large. Hence, understanding the variety of prisoners' experiences will assist in promoting the creation of policies that are effective and useful to giving former inmates support to be successful in returning to his community.

The goal of rehabilitation, as discussed earlier, is to help an individual become successful in the community to which he returns. If an aspect of rehabilitation is not addressed, then the former inmate will continue to struggle and rehabilitation will not be complete. If the State of California focuses on substance abuse, mental health stability, work capability, but forgets that interpersonal skills must also be addressed, these other areas will not truly be "corrected." If former inmates cannot successfully engage with individuals from various racial and cultural backgrounds, interaction with the community will be difficult, and therefore, their employment and relationships will suffer. As inmates return to their community, they must be able to successfully and positively engage with others; they cannot permanently isolate themselves and be successful. My study highlighted the interpersonal gap that exists for former inmates specific to racial

interactions. This insight and understanding is essential in order create a safer communities and to increase former inmates successes in rehabilitation and continued avoidance of criminal activity.

There has been little to no research on racial interactions post incarceration. There are several articles that examined and tried to address the psychological and social effects of reintegration. For example, McNeill (2012) addressed three components to reintegration: legal, moral, and social; he proposed that rehabilitation should be more finitely defined and analyzed. Rehabilitation is the ultimate goal of the criminal justice system. This study provided information that prison administrators and policy-makers need to achieve goal of complete and successful rehabilitation. The insight that is gained from my study will help policy makers, correctional leaders, and treatment providers become more aware of racial interaction's impact on an individual's long-term success.

How do racial interactions in prison impact re-integration post incarceration? That is the gap in the literature. There was not a single research article that focused on or even alluded to the need to understand racial interactions as impactful on inmates upon reentry into the community. While Lopez-Aguado (2016a, 2016b) and Walker (2016) most clearly addressed racial segregation implications while in prison, neither examined racial challenges as a direct result of segregation. Lopez-Aguado (2016b) emphasized the influence of prisons on the communities that former inmates reenter and elected not to focus on how racial segregation during incarceration prohibited community success.

Due to the lack of available research that specifically focused on how racial segregation might decrease successful reintegration, the emphasis of my research study

was instead on Donald Clemmer's theory, Prisonization. This theory reveals the fact that inmates will adapt to the prison environment by adopting the language, attitude and behaviors of the prison environment. This was an important theory in establishing prison climate and cultural norms for prisoners, as this theory assisted the researcher in identifying potential counter-cultural behaviors in free society. Prisonization has led to the need to examine rehabilitation efforts and how one might be able to reintegrate successfully into their community. For my study the specific focus was racial reintegration. In all the literary research that I conducted I was unable to locate any articles that focused on the impact of racial reintegration post incarceration.

Several studies discussed the importance of social support in the rehabilitative process. Pettus-Davis et al. (2011) pointed out that one's natural support system can be the most influential in the process of avoiding future criminal behavior and substance abuse. Additionally, Taxman and Kras (2016) emphasized the importance of a support system and noted specifically that individuals who were married were less likely to recidivate. While neither of these studies focused specifically on the potential challenges of racial interactions, they do highlight the importance of social interactions as a component of one's successful reintegration back to society. A synthesis of the findings of these studies lead to the conclusion that racial tensions behind bars might continue into post incarceration interactions.

The current body of research on racial interactions post incarceration is significantly limited, yet clear evidence that social interactions are important exists. This topic needed to be addressed to further understand how to increase opportunities for



former inmates to be as victorious as possible in the journey to stay out of the criminal justice system well into their futures.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study sheds light on the potential long-term consequences of racial segregation during incarceration from the perspective of White, African-American, and Latino men who were formerly incarcerated. This study had two main goals. The first was to give voice to the experience of racial segregation of former inmates and allow them to state how it has affected their societal interactions post incarceration. The second was raise awareness among California correctional system staff, both in the prison and the rehabilitation system, of the long-term consequences of racial segregation. Article's such as those written by Lopez-Aguado (2016a) on inmate experience of the prison environment provided a foundation for the current study and assist in informing policy makers of the use of segregation in prisons as a means of controlling the environment.

Although correctional systems leaders seem to be aware of the issues of segregation within jails and prisons, they have attempted to increase segregation as a means to minimize racial conflicts, according to Akins (2009). Smith (2012) noted that segregation only creates more challenges for the individual inmate and continues to perpetuate racial disparity, particularly for African-Americans. Based upon my personal interactions with both correctional officers and inmates, segregation is present in the California correctional system and appears to be common knowledge, yet research on the impacts of racial segregation is minimal, based on my review of the literature. According to Lopez-Aguado (2016a, 2016b) and Walker (2016), this area of study, prison racial

segregation, seems to be of growing interest to researchers. Both researchers highlighted the cause and consequence of segregation during incarceration in their studies.

The court case of *Johnson v. California* presents a great deal of significance for the fact that segregation is used to decrease negative racial interaction and violence. A ninth circuit judge, who participated in a the *Johnson v. California* case, reported that the need for segregation among races while in prison was “common-sense” (Robertson, 2006, 795). This sentiment demonstrates the need to increase awareness of the potential effects of institutional racial segregation upon inmates’ reentry into his community. California is unique in its requirement of racial segregation in prison, as pointed out by Taxman and Kras (2016) during their examination of Texas’s process of desegregating its prisons. California’s requirement of segregation in prison appears to be incongruent to me with the culture and history of the State of California, which consists of an extremely racially diverse and integrated society, and which has traditionally led integration efforts. The 2014 California Census reflects that while California is mainly White it has a very high percentage of Latinos (36%) and African-Americans (6%) (United States Census Bureau, n.d.).

The concept of rehabilitation, as it exists today, was implemented in the early 1970’s, when, for the first time, the State of California started to examine community-based alternative programs (Drawbridge, Monteiro, & Frost, nd). In the four decades since the introduction of rehabilitation, the California criminal justice system has faced many challenges. One of the main challenges has been overcrowding, which has necessitated efforts to decrease the rising prison population (Horne & Newman, 2015). A

result has been early release initiatives, which have created a new problem within the correctional system; which is to manage these former inmate outside of custody (Drawbridge, Monteiro, & Frost, nd)

The research on rehabilitation is readily available on topics such as mental health, drug and alcohol programs, and employment (Turney, Lee, & Comfort, 2013; Western, Braga, Davis, & Sirois, 2015). However, research that examines interpersonal relationships during the rehabilitation process for former inmates is lacking. Research that focuses on racial reintegration is nonexistent, according to my review of the literature. Hence, there was a need for this study, which offers insights regarding reintegration and rehabilitation efforts, especially as they pertain to racial reintegration.

The discoveries of this study may assist the correctional system and community-based organization in the development of better rehabilitation programs inside and outside of prison. There is not extensive evidence showing how segregation presents issues for individuals nor are these issues identified or understood individuals with the authority and influence to make substantive changes to the correctional system. This study has provided support to decrease segregation efforts in the California correctional system, despite the belief of some researchers such as Lindsey (2009) who concluded that nothing could be done to change the use of segregation in California prisons. Another important component was to give a voice to former inmates, as individuals who have spent time in prison often feel less than their peers and are frequently viewed as such (LeBel, 2012; Schnittker & Massoglia, 2015). This study gave them an opportunity and platform to openly report their experiences and potentially influence the correctional and

rehabilitation systems. The exploration of inmates' experiences and perceptions has provided clarification for the need and demand for other studies in the areas rehabilitation and prison segregation.

Research is often inspired by the observance of a behavior, whether of something human or innate (Creswell, 2013). This study was inspired by the observation that this I have made over the last 5 years of working with individuals who have come through the California prison system. The repetition of stories and individuals' experiences that were communicated in those five years have led to the need to conduct research and gather data to better understand the way that racial interactions during incarceration change an individual. The occurrence of prison racism and segregation appears to permanently alter these former incarcerated individuals' abilities to interact with varying races. These reports from individuals identified a consistent theme: former inmates wanted little, to nothing to do with individuals of opposing races. Self-reporting articles such as the one written by DeVeaux (2013), who recounted his own experience in prison, noted the racial tension and violent racial acts that occurred during his time incarcerated, have led to the conclusion that there is a behavior, mindset, or experience that incarcerated individuals go through which changes their ability to interact with other races. This study was about understanding this change or phenomenon of incarcerated individuals and how it has influenced their success in society.

Through the observation of this phenomenon the need to explore individual experience of former inmates became clear. A key way to understand a person's experience is to ask them to share it. Therefore, the research questions asked for this

study allowed for former inmates to share their experience openly, discussing the challenges and adjustments that they made. If the occurrence of segregation is as altering as indicated by the inmates I has encountered, then the questions of experience and consequence must be asked and examined. The situations and experiences that people face in their life alters their view and perspective; this research study examined the altering perceptions that inmates go through because of their time incarcerated. There is much to be understood about the incarceration experience and how successful reentry can be achieved. Conducting this study provided me with an opportunity to explore the reentry process specific to racial reintegration. This research is pivotal, I believe, for understanding exactly how racial segregation in prison affects the reentry process and poses additional challenges for formerly incarcerated individuals.

### **Research Question**

The research question for this study was, in what ways does living in California State prison, a racially segregated environment, for 2 years or more influence African-American, White, and Latino males' ability to interact with other races in a culturally diverse environment upon release? This question was designed to gain insight into former inmates' personal experiences post incarceration, specifically in California, to better identify, understand, and ultimately aid in the reentry process of offenders. I wanted to identify and compare former inmates' personal perspectives of the phenomenon being studied.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Listening to former inmates articulate the challenges and struggles they face in

order to be successful in society, and to have positive interactions with all people, brought forth the idea of examining these individuals' experiences. What is it that happens during incarceration that changes their attitudes and abilities to engage with others of various races? That question was overwhelming so it needed to be more focused and changed to: how do they succeed after being in the prison environment? The exploration of the prison environment, prison culture and the factors that influence an individual's response, have led to the discovery of *prisonization* and the theory of behaviorism. These two theories provided the necessary frameworks to further explore the challenges of racial reintegration post incarceration.

Behaviorism was introduced by John B. Watson and was the primary theorist that will be utilized to explain the design and intention of this research project. Watson's view of science was to use the subject to better understand human behavior. He conducted many experiments to explore the development of one's thoughts and behaviors. A hallmark study that Watson, along with J.J.B. Morgan, conducted in 1917, examined the emotional reactions of infants based upon their experiences with their mothers (Watson & Morgan, 1917). Their study demonstrated that infants became conditioned in their response to their mother's based upon their mother's interaction with them. Therefore, clearly demonstrating how behavior was learned over time.

Behaviorism aids in the understanding of one's learned responses to their environment, a key component of understanding the impact of racial segregation within prisons. Watson sought to understand how a person developed a set of responses to various situations. Therefore, the use of Watson's theory both aligned and provided an

appropriate structural framework in which to design the proposed study.

The second theory used to ground this study is *Prisonization*. This theory speaks to an individual's ability to conform to the prison culture and was proposed by Donald Clemmer in 1940. This theory has laid a foundational perspective that has enlightened researchers for decades. Prisonization has become a standardized term to explain the process that all prisoners go through during their time of imprisonment. Clemmer's research has given clarity to the prison culture and adaptation process.

Each of these theories individually have provided a foundation to explore the change in perception and interaction with various races, but the combination of both behaviorism and prisonization allowed for a deeper understanding and framework to explore former inmates' experiences. The foundational setting that these theories provided was a concrete, evidence-based, explanation for an individual's actions. A more in-depth look at each of these theories as well as the associated literature are discussed further in Chapter 2 of this study.

In looking through the many theories on prison, culture, race and one's response to these factors, *prisonization* and behaviorism became evident as an appropriate theoretical framework. They have been researched and tested extensively over many years, which has increased their acceptance in social science and psychological research. The theory of behaviorism has been a foundation in psychology over the last one hundred years as numerous psychologist and researchers have built upon Watson's work. In a similar fashion, Clemmer's theory of prisonization has impacted the correctional system over the last eighty years and served as the foundational theory for other researchers.

Clemmer provided research that the culture of prison was influential and that an individual changed his previous attitude and behavior to mimic that of prison. Gillespie (2002) provided a comprehensive list of the various aspects of the prison environment that an individual adheres to and accepts while incarcerated that were initially identified by Clemmer. Both Watson and Clemmer demonstrated that behavior, attitudes, and personal perspectives are adapted in the right circumstances and through repetition.

### **Nature of the Study**

Qualitative research focuses on the human experience (Polkinghorne, 2005). Marshall and Rossman (2011) described phenomenology as a tool to analyze one's lived experience (p.19). Therefore, in choosing the best way to capture this experience one must identify the method of gathering data that will best portray this experience. Creswell (2013) highlighted that data collection involves considering key components of research: who, what, where, when, and how. Both elements of qualitative data collection, observation and interviews, were needed to thoroughly examine the research question posed for this project. The use of phenomenology for this research project was the optimal method to allow me to gain thorough insight to the participant's experience. Starks and Trinidad Brown (2007) stated that the goal of phenomenology is to "describe the meaning of the lived experience of a phenomenon" (p. 1373). The intent of this study was: to provide insight and understanding of how living in a racially segregated prison environment has changed a former inmate's thoughts and interactions with other races. In order to explain this phenomenon, interviews were conducted which allowed former inmates to share their personal experiences.



The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine 15 individuals' experiences living in a racially segregated prison environment and their ability to interact with various races post incarceration. The use of phenomenology allowed me the opportunity to examine each participant's perspective on how racial segregation during incarceration had impacted his ability to reenter society. Through time spent with individuals who have previously been incarcerated, I have noted a commonality of former inmates' inability to successfully interact with races different from their own. Therefore, the individual's resistance has led to both individual and communal consequences. The individual consequences have consisted of negative reports from rehabilitation programs to parole and probation officers. Their inability to interact with other races has often created an unsafe environment for all people in the program. Therefore, the phenomenological design provided the needed structural framework for individuals to discuss their perception of the specific phenomenon: the barrier that racial segregation plays in reentry.

### **Operational Definitions**

A number of terms and ideas that are used consistently throughout this research study are described below.

*Behaviorism:* Behaviorism is the study of how humans learn or take on a certain action or attitude. John Watson, who is considered the founder of behaviorism, defined behaviorism as, "the scientific study of human behavior. Its real goal is to provide the basis for prediction and control of human beings: Given the situation, to tell what the

human being will do; given the man in action, to be able to say why he is reacting in that way” (p. 2, as cited by Weibell, 2011).

*Former inmate:* The term "inmate" refers to one that has been convicted of a crime and is currently serving a sentence in a jail or prison (42 U.S. Code § 15609 – Definitions, 2003). Therefore, the term "former inmate", refers to one who has served time in prison and has been released back into society. These individuals may still be on probation or parole but are no longer in prison or jail.

*Phenomenology:* Phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology. This approach is about examining the study of human experience through individual expression such as art, story- telling, and poetry. All of these methods have previously been used to study an individual’s response to a specific situation. The Stanford Encyclopedia defines phenomenology as, “the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view” (para. 1, Smith, 2013). This definition helps the reader to understand the specifics of phenomenology.

*Prisonization:* Adaption to the prison environment. Donald Clemmer was the originator of this theory and term in the 1940s. A later definition of Prisonization by Austin (2005) defined prisonization as, “Prisonization is a process of assimilation into inmate society that is characterized by the adoption of a particular constellation of norms, values, and beliefs that then shape the prisoner's worldview and undermine the goals of reform” (para. 2).

*Reentry:* The Bureau of Justice Assistance defines reentry as, “the transition of offenders from prisons or jails back into the community” (para 1). This term will be used to reference individuals returning or having returned to society after incarceration.

*Rehabilitation:* This term is used in various contexts, for the purpose of this study, rehabilitation refers specifically to those who have served time as an inmate in the California correctional system. When this term is applied in the context of offenders, rehabilitation is a commonly used strategy to restore these individuals back to a time when they were not engaging in criminal behavior. (Robinson & Crow, 2009) wrote a book titled *Offender Rehabilitation: Theory, Research and Practice*, in this book they defined rehabilitation as, “a return to normal, law-abiding behavior” (p.2).

*Reintegration:* This study is about examining and understanding how individuals adapt to a culture that they have been removed from for a pro-longed period of time. The Director General of Offender Reentry in Canada, Arden Thruber (1998), defined reentry as, “all activity and programming conducted to prepare an offender to return safely to the community and live as a law-abiding citizen (p.14).” This is a clear and concise definition for how the word will be used throughout this study.

### **Assumptions**

There are four main assumptions that are considered true but will not be validated in this study. The first was that all prisons in California rely on racial segregation as a means to control the environment (Lindsey, 2009, Lopez-Aguado, 2016a, 2016b, and Walker, 2016). This assumption makes the specific prison facility where individuals served their sentence for two or more years, inconsequential. The second assumption was

that the prison environment was the main reason why subjects find it challenging to interact with various races. The research conducted by Aguado-Lopez (2016b), as referenced above, supported the fact that individuals in the California prison environment will engage in racial and gang segregation throughout their time imprisoned. Individuals were asked about their previous experiences with races as a means of establishing a baseline experience and to demonstrate the increase in negative interactions with varying races during incarceration. The third assumption was that inmates did not violate, or feel it necessary to violate, the segregation that occurred. Essentially, inmates willingly accepted the racial segregation that was practiced in the prison environment. The final assumption has to do with the use of phenomenology. In order for the use of phenomenology to be appropriate all subjects must experience a shared phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). For this study, serving a prison sentence in any California State prison was used as the phenomenon with the assumption that all prison environments are similar enough to create the same learned behavior and post release challenges.

A working knowledge of the California prison community was important to have in order to understand the relevance of this study. The general view of the prison environment and the inmate experience of racial segregation in California's prison systems were identified above as a real and present issue. Therefore, I made the assumption that the California prison environment is uniform and that inmates' experiences are similar despite the prison facility that they enter. The various research articles and books presented throughout chapter one have provided the necessary support

that the California prison is racially segregated and the frequency of violence due to racial interaction are key elements of its culture.

These facts and assumptions afforded me the ability to decrease time spent on establishing the intricacies of the California prison culture. Society has a general understanding and common belief that the above items are true and that I am not creating or introducing new concepts.

The final key assumption made in this study is that all inmates' behaviors are changed due to their time in prison (Clemmer, 1940, Wheeler, 1961, and Walters, 2003). However, the degree to which the change is a permanent part of their personality and on-going behavior was the goal of this study.

### **Scope and Limitations**

The scope of this study was focused on the individual experiences of 15 former California inmates' ability to reintegrate into a racially diverse community after living in prison segregation for two or more years. The literary resources that helped to define the parameters of this study are limited. There are articles that discussed the occurrence of racial violence among offenders (Speigel, 2007) and then the individuals' perspective articles such as the one Mika'il DeVeaux (2013) that discussed his personal experience of imprisonment and the use of segregation. These resources clearly examined the place that racism and segregation have in the prison system yet there is little known about the long term results of this segregation and more importantly how it influences the individual's ability to interact with various races in a non-controlled environment. Therefore, the scope of this study was not well supported by direct literature but rather a wide range of

articles addressing potential contributing factors to the long term barriers former inmates had upon release into racially diverse communities.

There are three classifications and characteristics of the prison population that were not included as participants in this study. The first is high-risk offenders, which were identified as those who have committed extreme acts of violence or sexual offenses. The reason for restricting these previous offenders was to insure my safety and for the fidelity of the research study as potential personality instability might skew data. The second limitation on participants was race, I did not engage races identified as Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, or other. The number of individuals that are classified in these people groups is small in comparison to the population as a whole and therefore not included. The third and final factor in relation to participants was on time served. In order to show effective adaptation the researcher did not interview individuals who have spent less than two consecutive years in a California prison. The goal of this study was not to determine how long it takes for an individual to change their behavioral reactions but simply that they are changed within the environment, which leads to difficulties in society post-release from prison.

Theoretical framework was the structural component of the research used throughout to guide and support the study (Grant & Oslanoo, n.d.). Identifying the most appropriate theoretical framework was a challenge since the relevant literature was minimal. Therefore, to identify theoretical frameworks that were not used came down to understanding that this study was not about gathering numbers, reviewing reports, or leadership analysis but personal experience and how those experiences are shared with

others. Research conducted by Berg and DeLisi (2006) examined incarceration violence and segregation. They gathered data by examining written reports of prison violence that occurred between differing races and drawing conclusions from those reports. The goal of this study was not to gather the frequency of how often a former inmate had difficulty interacting with other races but rather the challenges that arose due to their potential hesitation to have bi-racial interactions. This study was also not about drawing analysis for reported numbers or examining incarceration behavior but rather understanding the entirety of what prompts individual's response in prison and understanding how those responses have become learned responses despite being in prison.

The sample for this study was comprised of 15 African-American, White and Latino male volunteer who have served 2 or more consecutive years in the California prison system. Data was collected through individual interviews. These interviews consisted of ten open-ended questions that allowed each participant to explain his individual experience. Moustakas (1994) discussed the structure of phenomenology as the exploration of the individual's phenomenon experience, carefully tracking all statements and comparing statements for similarities. This design outlined by Moustakas is the proposed method and structure for conducting the data collection for this study. The research was focused on individuals that have experienced the prison system for at least 2 years so that participants can adequately speak to their lived experiences in prison. Interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to identify any potential synonyms used by participants for each question.

Transferability is the ability for another researcher to use and apply the findings of this research project. The material presented in this study can be used for various research projects. The goal of this study was that the information presented will be able to speak further into racial responses, learned behavior, and greater understanding of post incarceration barriers for former inmates. This study was about gaining awareness of released inmates experiences and potentially providing insight which helps to encourage further research on former inmates' struggles in society, societal response, and inmate support that might need to be developed.

Three main limitations to the study were in relation to the lack of previous research on racial reintegration, individual report on the prison environment, and clear understanding of how long, or if at all, inmates take to self-segregate in prison. The first limitation, lack of previous research, made it challenging to build from previous studies and improve on what has been done. The previous articles discussed, addressed racial segregation (Lindsey, 2009, Lopez-Aguado, 2016a, and Walker, 2016) but did not examine the challenges of racial reintegration. The last limitation, related to the second, in that there was not sufficient research to explain the process of change for inmates. The work of researchers such as Clemmer (1940) and Wheeler (1961) established that the prison environment requires inmates adaptation, but does not clearly document how long the process to adapt was for those studied. Even articles since Clemmer's 1940 article have not clearly articulated the adaptation time and have relied in larger referred to and relied on the work of Clemmer and Wheeler.



An additional limitation of this study was the personal connection of the myself to the topic. Since I have both personal and professional experiences with the people group being studied, I might have been tempted to analyze data in a way that concludes that there are racial barriers. Chenail (2011) also warned about the researcher's personal interest as a bias. Chenail (2011) went on to state that the very use of interviews as the main form of data collection increases the likelihood that there will be bias on the researcher's part. Researchers can easily become invested in their topic and have a desire for a specific outcome; I am no different. Therefore, I built-in structures for accountability and validity of the data collection. The first way was to have random doctoral-level qualitative researchers review and respond to the interview questions designed for the study. The second level of accountability occurred through taping all interviews and having them transcribed by a completely removed third party. The reason to pursue research has to do with one's passions but the natural design of a dissertation sets up the researcher to be held accountable to multiple neutral sources that can help to identify the occurrence of bias.

Earlier in this chapter the limitations identified were lack of research and insight to incarceration experience. The number one way to reduce the impact of limitations was to widen the scope of the research. In an effort to reduce the limitation on the lack of research was to broaden the areas of literary research included in this study. Therefore, the topics of examination addressed research that focused on racial interactions, prison segregation, and reentry after prison were used to help generate an appropriate understanding of both the population and environment being researched.

The delimitation of this study was to address the specific challenge of racial reintegration for previously incarcerated males. Rehabilitation is often studied in order to prove effectiveness, but the goal of this study was to identify potential gaps in the area of rehabilitation. There has been no research dedicated to racial interactions among offenders post incarceration. This research did not address factors related to gangs and the challenges interacting with other gang members, as that matter presents an entirely different set of complexities. The methodology used for this study, phenomenology, allowed each participant to openly recount and discuss his individual experience.

The inherent problems that could have arisen with the use of phenomenology are the number of participants that the method seeks to engage, data analysis, and limited generalizability. Researchers who have used a phenomenological approach to their study have stated that the information gathered is informative but challenging to generalize to the population at large. Tavakol, Dennick, and Tavakol (2012) conducted a phenomenological study that examined the empathetic abilities and training of medical students. They noted at the end of their study the limitation of generalizability. The common occurrences of these problems give the researcher an ability to be prepared to address these throughout the study. While these problems might have been limiting for the overall future implications of the study these problems did not impede the overall conduction of the research. The benefits of shedding light on this topic outweigh the potential problems associated with using this methodology. The ability to give even a small number of former-inmates a voice to explain their experience and struggles in returning to the community will be helpful to the rehabilitation community.

### **Significance of the Study**

The progress made in California's rehabilitation programs and the general awareness that has grown immensely in the last 40 years makes way for research like this study to be needed and welcomed. This research project was designed to identify the need to assist and support formerly incarcerated individuals by explaining potential racial barriers. The current literature, as previously discussed, focuses on the challenges of employment, housing, future crime deterrence, and drug and alcohol treatment post incarceration. None of the current research examined the potential of poor racial interactions as a contributing factor to a lack of success. My study was about increasing awareness of how learned prison behavior will follow a former inmate well beyond his prison sentence. Correctional officers, probations officers, treatment providers, and the community that receives former-inmates need to have a more informed understanding of the barriers faced upon release.

The long-term consequence of racial segregation in prison has not been explored and my study proposed a way to start the exploration process. The California correctional system has implemented segregation to maintain safety (Lindsey, 2009) but there is little to no research on the true effectiveness of segregation. Additionally, there is definitely a void in the current body of research on the long-term challenges of inmates reentering a culturally diverse community. This study sought to answer the result of the long-term result of living in segregation. The insights of this study should lead to additional research on the reexamination of segregation.

The origin of this study came from counseling and interacting with individuals reentering society after spending years in prison. Observing the struggles of numerous former inmates, sparked my desire to further investigate the potential barriers that are faced based on living in segregation for several years. The information gleaned from this study will help to further inform the corrections, rehabilitation and treatment programs. The more information that can be gathered, analyzed, and applied to improve how all three of these systems work independently and then interdependently, the greater the benefits to former inmates and society at large. Millions of dollars are spent each year trying to improve and maintain the rehabilitation system. There seems to be a needed change in the support given to former inmates. Far too many former-inmates return to the correctional system (Zhang, Roberts, & Callanan, 2006). Studies such as these that seek to understand individual experience and long term consequence of being in the current correctional system will aid in creating better, more productive correctional sentencing. The hope is that this research will lead to a closer examination of the use of segregation as a population control method and that rehabilitation services will adapt better practices in helping individuals racially reintegrate into society.

Individuals who have been released from prison frequently carry a certain stigma in society (Davis, Barh, & Ward, 2012). Society usually has a lowly view of those who have come out of prison; many desire to have no interactions or contact with former inmates. This view is strongly felt by former inmates as they struggle to obtain jobs and reintegrate into society. An additional outcome of this study is the benefit to society as a whole. I hope to assist the general public understand the barriers that former inmates face

and shed light on their experiences. The attitudes toward former inmates needs to change; progressive societies need to embrace these individual former inmates as individuals who have a story to share and talents to offer their communities. Studies, such as this, help to emphasize the human aspect of former inmates. Allowing former inmates to share their views and experiences assists in painting a clearer picture of a real person, beyond the crimes that they have committed.

The other entities that will benefit from a changed perspective on former inmates are the rehabilitation and correctional system. These systems assign case numbers to the individuals that walk through their doors and often forget that they have a name and a personal story. While my study has been about identifying potential shared experiences it is also about pinpointing the effects that these systems have on society. Change is needed in these systems in order for society to change. Treating all people, the exact same way, does not correct the behavior. The behaviors stem from different places for different people. This study was about identifying shared experiences and exposing the harms they are causing the individual and the increased risk of violent occurrences once the inmate returns to society. Imprisonment is a cycle, people and families are in and out of it for years as noted by Lopez-Aguado (2016b) because the individual is lost, they are branded upon entering and the actions that follow while in the system are likely doing more harm than good for these individuals and consequently society as the individuals are forced to adapt to a imposed set of rules.

## Summary

The focus of this research was on gaining insight to the potential barriers that racial segregation in prison has on an individual, post incarceration. This chapter has provided an overview of racial segregation during imprisonment, the occurrences of violence in prison, and the adaptation to the prison environment. The sections above developed a reason and logic for conducting the study and have supplied a general overview of the methodology used to conduct this study. Specifically, the above sections have provided the reader with important insights and understandings to the various challenges that former inmates face. Additionally, outlined were the definitions, identified potential limitations, explored benefits for professionals, and the desired social change that might occur as a result of the study. All of these areas are important to the development and explanation of this study, but more importantly, why this study was needed.

Chapter 1 has provided the foundation for this study. The chapters that follow will support and build upon this foundation. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I focus on the literary research conducted to support the hypothesis and research methods. Conducting this review helped me to know what has and has not been done in the field of study. The review provides readers with a fuller understanding of the subject as well.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the racial reintegration challenges that former California inmates face upon reentering racially diverse society. The California prison system relies heavily upon racial segregation and is known as one of the most segregated prison systems in the United States (Lopez-Aguado, 2016a; Trulson & Marquart, 2010; Walker, 2016). In the previous chapter, I introduced racial segregation in prisons. The literature review in this chapter includes further exploration of the role of inmate segregation in contemporary prisons.

Mandated racial segregation in prisons forces inmates to quickly learn and adjust to segregation in order to survive their prison terms. Clemmer (1940) and Wheeler (1961) came to nearly identical conclusions that individuals will, through time, adapt to prison culture, a concept which Clemmer called prisonization. For inmates, prisonization leads not only to the acceptance of the prison environment but the assumption of a new personal identity (Clemmer, 1940).

In this study, I sought to better understand potential racial barriers that former inmates are faced with upon reentry into their community. Racial segregation may have been part of many inmates' experience pre-prison. For many inmates, however, the experience of racial segregation in prison further influences their views toward other races. Therefore, inmates returning to communities in California which force them to engage with various races throughout their day, a now foreign concept. California, much like New York, is known as a "melting pot," in which people of different ethnicities and

backgrounds live with one another. In a diverse community such as California, individuals are expected to talk, work, or interact with someone from a different race on a daily basis. Therein lies the added challenge for these former inmates as they must relearn to communicate with and work alongside individuals from whom have been kept separate and, at times, been taught to possibly hate while they were in prison.

In this chapter, I review the relevant research on racial reintegration challenges faced by former inmates. In order to thoroughly and effectively discuss the need for this study, I first examine previous research that has been conducted and comprehensively review published works. This chapter is divided into topic specific sections: (a) behaviorism and prisonization; (b), prison racism, prison violence, and rehabilitation; and (c) the qualitative methodology of phenomenology.

Literature that is directly related to racial reintegration is currently lacking, according to my research. As discussed in Chapter 1, Lopez-Aguado (2016b) explored racial segregation while in prison and how the prison environment is communicated to and influences the community of gang members. Taxman and Kras (2016) identified social relationships as a challenge and need for inmates reentering the community; however, they did not specifically report on racial interactions. In addition to a thorough literature review, literary search methods, and information on my chosen qualitative methodology, phenomenology.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

Through the use of multiple databases and the review of many scholarly articles, I compiled an extensive review of the research conducted on rehabilitation and reentry, the



prison environment related to segregation in California, and prison violence. The bulk of the literature focuses on the key challenges faced by former inmates as they reenter their community. The articles on rehabilitation and reentry reviewed discussed similar challenges: employment, housing, social support, and educational limitations. In addition to these challenges, the authors consistently reported a need for further examination of what hinders former inmates from abstaining from further criminal engagement. This dissertation was about understanding racial interactions post incarceration as a potential barrier due to prolonged segregation. The literature I reviewed did not address this specific aspect of reentry. However, while searching for potential articles that addressed this aspect, I found numerous articles concerning the challenges of the reentry process. Each article read in the literature review revealed how consistent these challenges are for former inmates regardless of the state in which they had been incarcerated or from which they had been released.

Another portion of this literature review is focused on the incarceration experience in order to solidify the fact that California prisons are indeed racially segregated and that inmates self-report that they experience it as racially segregated. Lindsey (2009) provided evidence of the extreme segregation of the California prison environment. The prison environment promotes and even mandates conformity in order for the greatest amount of inmate success and survival (Lopez-Aguado, 2016a). Wheeler (1961) noted that individuals who enter the system will quickly adapt to prison culture by taking on attitudes, perceptions, and the language of the culture.

Findings from this dissertation as well as those from the research presented in this chapter help to explain the challenges of former inmates. The methodological approach used in this study supports the need to understand former inmates' challenges from their perspective; in order to make effective change for other former inmates post release. The increasing number of offenders who are incarcerated and released (Drawbridge, Monteiro, & Frost, n.d.) provides support, I believe, for new research in which different aspects of reentry are examined.

The literary resources for this study came from multiple discipline-specific databases, which were accessed through *Walden University* and *William Jessup University* libraries. These databases were National Institute of Justice, PsycINFO, PsycBOOKs, PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, ProQuest Criminal Justice, LexisNexis, SAGE Premier, and Deepdyve, as well as ProQuest Doctoral Dissertations and Masters Theses. I searched these wide-ranging databases in order to provide a thorough summary and analysis of the current body of research on this topic. The keywords used to identify possible sources of valid research were prisonization, segregation, racial integration, racial segregation, rehabilitation, phenomenology, behaviorism, and prison. These terms were used individually as well as in various combinations.

### **Review of Related Research**

In a review of the related research, the absence of studies focusing upon racial reintegration made it clear that research in this area of study was needed in order to further develop a more comprehensive understanding of the reentry process. There

several studies that addressed the reason for racial segregation in prison (Lindsey, 2009), prisonization (Wheeler, 1961), and research that spoke to the challenges that former inmates faced upon reentry to their communities (Van Olphen, Freudenberg, Fortin, & Galea, 2006). Since there is a limited amount of literature it is clear that there is significant need for this study; the absence of current research articles addressing racial reintegration barriers for former inmates led to a clear and present demand for clarity on this topic. Through exploration of the research there is support for both the appropriateness and need to examine this aspect of former inmate experience.

Relevant court cases, specifically those addressing the use of segregation as a control tactic and its' violation of one's civil rights, also provide insights to the body of research. One of the most well-known cases is *Johnson v. California* (2005). This court case addressed the violation of an individual's fourteenth amendment rights and the correctional systems right to segregate as needed due to violence between races. The mere fact that these court cases have occurred demonstrates the negative impact racial segregation has on an individual. Cases such as *Johnson v. California* (2005) help to increase awareness of the existence of segregation, its misuse in the prison systems and its potential perpetuation of negative views between races. Court cases and case law also support the fact that racial segregation has an impact on the individual as well. While these cases do not articulate or outline the extent of the impact, they provide evidence that demonstrates the negative impact for certain individuals.

## **Search Strategy**

The strategy for literary research for this study examined the following areas of study: psychology, criminal justice, and public policy. The identification of these fields of study provided direction and strategy as to the proper databases to search. The databases used to collect resources were: PsycINFO, PsycBOOKs, PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost, ProQuest Criminal Justice, LexisNexis, SAGE Premier, and Dissertation & Theses. I accessed two library databases, *Walden University* and *William Jessup University*, for additional research. The use of another university's library provided an opportunity to review other databases and journals available within each school's database. Researching databases through Walden required first the identification of the field of study and then the provision of a set of recommended databases. In addition to the library database, multiple search engines were used. The search engines were Google scholar, Deepdyve, National Institute of Justice, and California Department of Corrections (CDCR). Google scholar has become a very popular search engine as it brings together multiple databases, professional journals, academic publications, and universities. The other search engines used were mainly to gather more specific information and understanding about the correctional system.

## **Key Search Terms**

The key words and phrases used to identify research and gather references included racial segregation and prison, racism and prison, racial reintegration, challenges of reintegration, prison culture, racial segregation, racial rehabilitation, phenomenology

and prison, former inmates and racism, inmate culture, prison racial culture, behaviorism and racism, and barriers and reintegration.

In each database these word combinations were used to identify potential journal articles. The combinations of these search terms were used in efforts to find the most relevant resources. Oftentimes the researcher would use the works cited feature to find other connected documents. The search efforts were often very challenging, as finding data specifically addressing racial reintegration challenges for former offenders does not seem to exist. There were a few articles that presented the challenge of leaving the prison environment behind and having brought it to their communities (Lopez-Aguado, 2016b). Schnittker and Massgolis (2015) stated in their article that there is not enough research at this time on that challenges that former inmates face as they reenter society. There is a clear deficit on full integration into society as was demonstrated through the literary search process.

The term “behaviorism” was limited to PsycINFO, PsycBOOKs, PsycARTICLES, and EBSCOhost. Behaviorism is a term that is rooted in psychology, consequently, psychology databases provided the most robust information and viable research studies on the theory. Attempts to search the criminal justice databases for scholarly research on behaviorism proved to be fruitless as none were found.

### **Literature Research Challenges**

In the data found I was unable to locate published articles or dissertations on racial reintegration for former offenders. Attempts to broaden the search and locate research conducted on the challenges of racial reintegration for any population did not

yield substantive results. The lack of any true body of research on this topic presented a significant challenge for me in developing literary support. The strategy for obtaining resources was then to broaden the search criteria. I went from searching strictly for articles related to racial reintegration to these three main areas: racial segregation in prison (Berg and DeLisi, 2006; Hayes-Smith, 2009), changes in an individual's behavior due to incarceration (Wheeler, 1961; Walters, 2003), and challenges to overcome during rehabilitation (Davis, Barh, & Ward, 2012). The resources available on each of these topics were limited in their specific support and connection to this study. The articles and dissertations that were available provided a substantial amount of support to the culture of prison and the challenges that former inmates face.

Another challenge that I faced was identifying current studies of prisonization and racial segregation. Many primary resources were dated more than 20 years ago. The inability to locate recent research articles added an additional barrier and caused me to question the lack of proper literature on this topic. Articles such as the one written by Davis, Barh, and Ward, (2012) and Western and Mueller (2013) clearly stated the fact that incarceration rates have grown exponentially over the last several decades in the United States. The trend of increasing incarceration rates seemed to point to the need for more current studies. As the population released increases it seems appropriate to examine the need to reexamine the optimal environment and note the experience for the individuals incarcerated. The lack of research and the increase in the number of people incarcerated only strengthens the need for this study to provide society with additional understanding of the implications of imprisonment and specifically racial segregation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The two theories that were used to provide foundational support were prisonization and behaviorism. Each of these theories provided an appropriate structural framework upon which to build and support the concept that the research study has attempted to explain. The concept was that the prison environment created in inmates a changed attitude and perception. The theory of Prisonization provided support to the adaptation individuals go through due to the prison environment. Behaviorism supported the fact that attitudes and behaviors are learned through exposure and repetition. One of the important aspects of each of these theories was their longevity, which is further discussed below.

As mentioned above, both prisonization and behaviorism have strong theoretical roots and have provided support within their respective fields for many decades. Donald Clemmer in the 1940's introduced the concept of prison adaptation and was the originator of the theory of prisonization. Clemmer's research provided insights to the prison culture that has benefited many researchers since. Google scholar identified 1815 resources that have cited this book and referenced this key theory. The importance of Clemmer's research has been continually noted and cited for the past thirty years. Wheeler (1961) used the work of Clemmer to guide and build his own research which allowed him gain further understanding of the inmate experience. The theory of prisonization has become common place within the criminal justice literature and is commonly referenced in research articles that examine prison behavior and interactions (DeLisi and Walters, 2011, DeVeaux, 2013, and Walters, 2015, and Lopez-Aguado (2016), in his recent study

on the influence of prison on communities, noted the role that prisonization plays for each inmate. For the criminal justice system, the research and development of prisonization has concretely answered the question of inmates adjustments to the prison culture and helped to solidify that prison is indeed its own culture.

The second theory used as a foundation for this study, is behaviorism. The theory of behaviorism was discovered by John B. Watson in the early 1900's, and is still a theory commonly used in the practice of psychology. Watson's theory was discovered and established through observation of mothers and infants. He observed how interactional patterns between mother and infant influenced the infant's behavior and response to their environment. Behaviorism focuses on the theory that individuals can learn behaviors that then become a routine process. The use of behaviorism as a theoretical framework for research has grown stronger over the years and served as the framework for such renowned theorists such as B. F. Skinner and Ivan Pavlov. Each of these theorists have conducted studies that support the idea that behaviors are a learned process. Skinner is most known for training with rats and positive reinforcement for performing a behavior. Pavlov in a similar manner demonstrated conditioned behavior by training dogs to salivate to the ringing of a bell. The extensive work and conclusions from both of these provided further credibility to the proof of human adjustment and behavior.

The two theories used for this study, prisonization and behaviorism, share a similar hypothesis, which was summarized by adaptation through exposure. They have both hypothesized that an individual is trained to respond to their environment through exposure and repetition to stimuli. For this study, the exposure and repetition to stimuli



would be the racial segregation experienced while in prison and how that environment causes a prisoner to respond in a negative manner to other races. Watson (1913) proposed that human behavior, much like animals, is simplistic and easily influenced. Likewise, Clemmer (1940) stated that individuals entering the prison system would adapt to and take on prison attitudes, language and mentality. Each of these theories proposed and supported the fact that human behavior is, at some level, a learned response. Watson and Clemmer spent years of their lives conducting research and observing how individuals learned to respond to their environment. Watson appeared to be very passionate about behaviorism's role in psychology and science (Moore, 2011) and felt that to ignore the way in which individuals learned to respond to their environment was an injustice (Watson, 1913). Wheeler who also examined the prison environment and individual inmate's ability to take on the established culture further supported Clemmer's hypothesis.

In preparing for this study and deciding upon which foundational resources were needed, the importance of a theory or theories that would address how individuals adapt to their surroundings became clear. Even more specifically the theory would also need to address how an individual learns a specific behavior. In researching theories to support this project both behaviorism and prisonization presented a straightforward approach to an individual's learned behavior in the prison system and support to the fact that these attitudes and behaviors might perpetuate beyond the prison experience. These theories present an understanding of both the individual experience and also the potential group response to a similar surrounding, such as prison. These theories support the fact that

attitudes toward various races become a learned response, which may also give place for those attitudes and behaviors to transition into society, post incarceration.

Prisonization and behaviorism clearly support the goals of this research project and provide a background to give needed support to the study's structure. It has become evident during the research of each theories' development, that they both are designed to give a clear understanding of the human experience and the importance of environment on that experience. The work done by Donald Clemmer and John Watson have provided support to extend research in addition to this study as multiple researchers have used these theories to further examine their fields. This study used the work of the Clemmer and Watson, as well as those who have followed, to explain and justify the need for further research on understanding the influence of prison on individual behavior. Additionally, this study contributes to the previous work done by these researchers and helps to provide an individual look at how one's behavior and adaptation to prison are influenced. This study also examined how cultural adaptation stays with an individual post incarceration, an aspect of prisonization that has not been previously explored.

### **Literature Review of Theoretical Framework**

In an effort to provide a well-grounded study, a thorough review of the literature surrounding the two key theories, prisonization and behaviorism, is summarized here. As noted above, in the exhaustive search I conducted of the many databases utilizing the identified keyword search terms and orders, revealed no previous research of racial reintegration grounded in these two theories. A broadened search to address behaviorism and prisoners also yielded no results. There were a number of dissertations available on

the topic of prisonization, but none addressed reintegration into a community or examined the impact of prisonization on an individual.

Of the several research studies have been based on the concept of prisonization, one study in particular is pertinent to this review of the literature. Walters (2003) studied inmates that had not been in prison before versus those who had previously been sentenced to assess their adaptability to life in prison. While resources such as Walters solidify prisonization as a theory they do not directly relate to the purpose and scope of this purposed research study. The lack of academic literature that support this research topic has and will remain a challenge for this study. The background provided on the theories and the intentional use of each is crucial in explaining how and why these theories are relevant.

As the theory of prisonization has developed over the past 60 years, there are additional research studies that must be noted throughout that time. The first study that is important to review was written by Stanton Wheeler, and entitled *Socialization in Correctional Communities*. In 1961 Wheeler took another look at the theory of prisonization and its potential impact on inmates some twenty years following the theory's inception. Wheeler reported that he reviewed the theory as Clemmer had proposed in the 1940's and then conducted his own research to observe individual adaptation to prison over time. Through his research, Wheeler noted that Clemmer's theory, even 2 decades later, was still an accurate and relevant account of what occurred for inmates.

In his study, Wheeler heavily relied upon Clemmer's previous research as the main source referenced throughout the study. Wheeler conducted a slightly different study than that of Clemmer, and desired to gain understanding of how, and at what levels, adaptation for individuals occurred in the prison environment. Wheeler examined the time to adapt to the environment and then used that examination to gain insight into various factors such as, duration of stay and number of times incarcerated, and how those factors influenced one's adaptation to prison culture. Wheeler concluded his study with a presentation of what the impact of prisonization theory in addition to ways to expand upon and better articulate the prison adaptation process as a springboard for future research ideas.

In 1977 another 10 years after Wheeler's research and observations on the development of individuals in prison due to prisonization, Akers, Hayner, and Grunniger (1977) studied prisonization across multiple countries. The researchers examined five countries and the adaptation of individuals to the various prison environments. The five countries were the United States, Mexico, England, West Germany, and Spain. Between all five countries they studied twenty-two prisons in total, seven from the US, eight from Mexico, two from England, two from Spain and three from West Germany (p.531). Through the use of questionnaires, they gathered experience and perception data to examine individuals' responses to the prison environment.

In this study, the researchers stated that their goals were to further analyze the theory of prisonization by broadening the study of prison environments. The findings from this study were conclusive and aligned with Clemmer's theory some 40 years earlier

in his research of prison adaptation. The fact that individuals will adapt to and take on the attitude and behavior of the prison environment does not depend on the geographic location or nationality of the prison community. Mexico was the only country where there was a difference in the adaptation to prison culture. The exact reason for that was not well described in the article. This research by Akers, Hayner, and Grunniger (1977), provides additional supporting evidence of the accuracy and continued relevancy of the theory of prisonization.

Another key supporting document for the theory of prisonization was the research conducted by Paterline and Petersen (1999). These researchers conducted an in-depth study of individual inmate self-concept. This was a component that they stated had not been an initial focus of their research. This study was designed to use the previous work of Clemmer and his theory of prisonization to gain new insight to the inmate's engagement with the identified prison community. They conducted 239 individual interviews at one maximum-security facility in the United States. Paterline and Petersen (1999) concluded that the theory of prisonization was needed to look at both importation and deprivation to better understand exactly how inmates succumb to prison culture. They felt that their research assisted in developing an aspect of the individual and the prison environment that had not yet been examined and understood in previous prisonization research. Paterline and Petersen's 1999 study, explored personal factors of an individual, such as how their race, marriage status, pre-prison employment and several other individual factors that made them more susceptible to succumbing to prison culture. In the conclusion of their study Paterline and Petersen affirmed that Clemmer's theory of

prisonization was accurate and that they had obtained a clearer understanding of how this process occurred for various individuals. This study enhances the understanding of what key factors occur for individuals as they adapt to the prison environment.

Attempting to find current research that specifically examined the theory of prisonization presented a challenge. The limited research indicates that prisonization is an assumed occurrence with a more recent study having used prisonization to measure future criminal behaviors. DeLisi and Walters in 2009 conducted a study that examined the influence of prisonization on homicide offenders. In their research, DeLisi and Walters provided a very interesting summary of Clemmer's theory and stated that prisonization provided an explanation for prison serving as a school for criminals. The researchers examined inmates' likelihood to recommit crimes, specifically murder, after being in prison through this lens. From their study of 654 inmates they concluded that prisonization has a negative impact on individuals and actually increased their criminal behaviors.

An important conclusion of DeLisi and Walters' study was the idea that prison environments must change in order to change the outcomes of being incarcerated. This study highlighted the stark impact of prisonization and took the potential of what prisonization is and demonstrated exactly how detrimental the concept is on individuals, the prison community, and society as a whole. Prisonization served as the researchers' structural framework to understand what occurs in the prison culture. This article summarized the harsh reality about the challenges faced by inmates who have to survive

in the prison community and pointed out just how challenging it is for an inmate to not be influenced by his environment.

The origins of behaviorism are primarily contributed to John B. Watson who began his theory development in the early 1900's. The first major work that he published on behaviorism was produced in 1913 and was republished in 1994. While this article is now over 100 years old the findings and significance still serve as a foundation that is used and acknowledged frequently in research that address behaviorism. Therefore, as the first literary source of behaviorism, Watson's findings and research are essential to this current review of the literature. In Watson's opening remarks he notes that behaviorism is designed to be an objective and observational part of psychology. This article explained the barriers of psychology as Watson viewed them. Watson clearly felt that psychology needed to be more scientific than the common approach of his time and outlined his procedural methods of examining responses to situations. Watson clearly sought to understand the larger context of the situation to better understand why the individuals within the environment would react the way that they did to a given stimuli. Watson's work has provided a structural framework for future research that seeks to understand the development of a certain behavior. Watson's behavioral theory emphasizes the understanding of one's environment and looks objectively at how a behavior is formed or learned and is consequently an invaluable foundation for this current research study. Watson's work on behaviorism was progressive for his time and still today stands out as a unique way of explaining human behavior.

Behaviorism has been the subject of controversy over the last several decades. The work of John B. Watson stressed that behaviorism, in dealing primarily with observations, needed to be a science (Moore, 2011). Since Watson's work there has been a great deal of examination and implementation of his theory, while individual theorists have altered Watson's original work, behaviorism is now a cornerstone to the world of psychology.

An article written by Moore (2011) entitled *Behaviorism*, discussed the progression and development of this branch of psychology. This article presented the support and arguments made by behaviorist throughout the years on the need for behaviorism to be considered a separate branch of science. Watson most specifically was quoted for being the behaviorist that fought fiercely to create recognition and separation for behaviorism. Moore's explanation of how behaviorism has developed over the years, and how different theorist contributed to the development of behaviorism, was informative for the reader. Moore explained that Watson identified the stimuli and response analysis and brought forth insights on one's learning ability. Moore's article is a fundamental document that provides an overview of behaviorism's challenges and applications. This was a key resource used and applied to understanding behaviorism's role in psychology and science.

In 2012 Joao Paulo Watrin and Rosangela Darwich wrote a comparative article addressing the differences between behaviorism and cognitivism. They pointed out the place that behaviorism had in the field of psychology for the first part of the century and how the theory continues to have a key role in the understanding of the human



experience. This article reiterates the fact that behaviorism seeks to examine the stimuli and the response of an individual. A large portion of Watrin and Darwich's writing was spent debating the history of behaviorism and how its role in psychology was challenged by the rise of cognitivism. At the conclusion of this article the researchers stated that each approach, while right in its own way, would be more complete with the adaptation of components of the other. Behaviorism's focus on understanding and examining the behavior ignores the cognitive process that occurs for the individual. The cognitions of an individual are an important component to truly gain insight into how and why he adapts with a specific behavior. A benefit of using the Watrin and Darwich article to support the theoretical framework for this study is that their results assist in giving context to the development of behaviorism. They also demonstrated that change was important to keep the theory relevant and applicable and that behaviorism has been able to manage change fairly successfully over the past 70 years.

The article, *Advances in Behaviorism: It's Not What It Used To Be*, by John C. Malone (2003) demonstrated the purpose and necessity of behaviorism. Malone directly pointed to the fact that many individuals in the field of psychology would claim that behaviorism is a dying area of study. Malone presented behaviorism and its role in the conduction of his study on school children behaviors and what environment had the greatest influence on their behaviors. Malone's research is similar to the one proposed for this research study, which is to understand the level of influence that outside stimuli has on an individual response. Malone's viewpoint, that behaviorism has changed over the course of the last 50 years, is valid and likely strengthens the theory. To many, an

analysis on an individual's behavior in response to his environment would be a common-sense practice, yet as Malone reported, there are those that would seek to see this theory left out of formal research. The work of Malone therefore becomes significant to supporting the need for the continuing to apply the theory of behaviorism. Malone stated in his conclusion that he had written this article with a desire to support the role and need of behaviorism.

### **Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts**

#### **Prison Culture**

The following summary contains a brief synopsis of the literature available on the topic of prison culture. These articles highlighted the challenges that inmates face while incarcerated. The challenges addressed are ones such as inmates inability to connect with their families and community and the stress of violence faced, are all factors that make prison a unique environment. An important part of this study was to gain insight in understanding the prison environment's influence on one's behavior and responses.

A fascinating study conducted by Cochran, Mears, Bales, and Stewart (2015) examined the impact that spatial distance had on inmate social behavior, both during and post incarceration. These authors observed the negative consequences of an inmate's inaccessibility to his social community while incarcerated. This was due to the fact that they were imprisoned in areas that were too far for family to travel for frequent or periodic visits. They also discovered that the frequency of this occurrence happened most often for minority groups and those from disadvantaged communities. Data was collected over a period of a year and a half in the state of Florida, in which records of visitation

were examined for 34,115 inmates, all who spent more than 2 months incarcerated. The data revealed that the further the inmate was imprisoned from his social community the less likely he was to have visits. They also found that inmates who did not have visitors were more likely to have poor success while incarcerated and decreased success post incarceration. Another insight shared by the authors was the idea that when offenders are removed from their community, preemptively connecting with needed social services upon reentry was more challenging. This article in conjunction with Nasher and Visher (2006) demonstrate the importance of social support; both articles highlight how important engagement in positive social relationships is for inmates. This proposed dissertation seeks to identify if in-prison relationships and views towards other races leads to challenges once released into a racially diverse environment. As definitively demonstrated from the review of the associated literatures, social interactions have an important influence on one's response to his environment.

There are many theories and factors of why offenders re-offend. Researchers, Cochran, Mears, Bales and Stewart (2012), asked the question, "Does inmate behavior effect post-release offending?" They hypothesized that inmates who engaged in misconduct, specifically violent misconduct, would be at a greater risk of reoffending and returning to prison. Furthermore, Cochran et al.. (2012) suggested that inmate behavior while incarcerated be studied more closely, as they believed this would likely prove to be the greatest indicator of post incarceration behavior. They noted the most concern and assessed the greatest risk for those with violent misconduct. This thinking is in line with this current, proposed research study. The behaviors learned, within the environment

created while incarcerated, leaves a strong impression and imprint on an individual. Prison can create trauma for an individual and trauma often alters one's behavior. These authors emphasized the behavior alterations that inmates experience during incarceration. Their conclusion for helping to reduce negative behaviors was to intervene during incarceration by creating better programs, such as vocational and educational training, that can assist in developing better coping skills. This article exposed the failure of the prison system as a form of rehabilitation and highlighted its need to better prepare inmates to be productive members of society. This article is a key support for the fact that prison behavior is challenging to overcome. While this research was not specifically focused on segregation as a barrier to success, the authors did clearly communicate that the prison environment creates a myriad of complex barriers to reentry.

Prison is often viewed and perceived as a dangerous, violent environment. The general public often seems to have little awareness of exactly what occurs behind bars. The assumption of prison violence is not completely inaccurate; Worrall and Morris (2012) conducted a study that examined inmate violence. Worrall and Morris specifically desired to gain a deeper understanding of the connection between gangs and violence. Their study proved that gang membership does have an increased effect on participation in prison violence. The authors concluded that further examination needs to occur to truly understand the existence and strength of the correlations. An examination of contributing factors to inmate violence that were noted, primarily related to a restrictive, controlled environment, which gives cause to potential post incarceration violence due to continued restrictions set by parole. Few inmates are released and have completed all their

sentenced time, therefore they are likely released on probation or parole to complete their sentencing; true freedom is still not true for these individuals. Therefore, former inmates may likely continue these same violent behaviors in society as they still have many restrictions on them through their probation or parole. The same scenarios hold true with gang membership, as many did not become gang members as a result of incarceration, the authors noted that gang members often participated in gangs prior to and following incarceration. This study seems to draw light to the risk of continued negative behaviors after release from prison. Studies such as this one provide strong evidence that prison behaviors and mentalities are not so easily forgotten upon release. Worrall and Morris did not examine inmates' level of violence pre and post incarceration but did draw a secondary conclusion that gang association continues post incarceration. The mere level of uncertainty that was drawn from this article strengthens support and justification for the conduction of this research study.

An important environmental and cultural aspect of prison is gang membership. Pyrooz, Decker, and Fleisher (2011) compared prison gangs and street gangs and then specifically discussed the challenges faced by prison gangs and gang members as they attempted to reintegrate into society. Pyrooz et al. (2011) reported that 12 to 17 % of all prisoners are considered to be gang members. Research has noted that gang members are more likely to engage in a higher level of violence while incarcerated. Therefore, a high number of individuals are viewed as a greater threat to the safety of the prison environment. The authors noted that there are a number of challenges that prison gang members face upon reentry, such as adaptation to culture shifts within their street gang,

lack of employment skills and poor social interactions in general. Gang members are more likely to be placed in administrative segregation and therefore have less of an opportunity to engage in rehabilitation programs. This article shines light on a key issue, a lack of knowledge on former inmates post incarceration challenges. There is no current data that has or is being collected that examines all the challenges and barriers individuals face upon reentry to society. The authors made clear that there are significant challenges for this population, but remained unclear as to the extent these challenges are occurring. While this dissertation is not specifically focused on challenges of gang members, this study provides support for the idea that interpersonal relationships with individuals from opposing cultures adds an additional barrier to reintegration. There are a number of connections between gang association and racism with the most significant connection being the idea that another person is seen through a lens that builds race-based hatred toward another. The recommendation of this article was for further examination of the barriers faced by gang members upon release. This was the clear goal of this dissertation, to understand how negative racial views impede one's success upon reentry to society.

Schlesinger (2005) conducted a research study on pre-trial racism within the justice system, focusing specifically on who is awarded bail. Schlesinger examined pre-trial data collected by the *State Court Processing Statistics (SCPS), 1999-2000: Felony Defendants in Large Urban Counties*. The findings of the research show that there is a clear bias towards Latinos and African-Americans as judges were more likely to set a high bail or incarcerate these races until their trial. Analysis also revealed that Latinos were viewed as a more violent group and therefore were the race most likely to be

incarcerated. This article highlighted the criminal justice system's racial fears and prejudices. When racial preference and discrimination are built so heavily into the criminal justice system individual defensiveness seems to be inevitable as individuals are guarded about their race and interactions with others. For individuals who are repeat offenders within the system, the racial preferences and discrimination create even more of a challenge to avoid stigmas which lead to further separation from society. Schlesinger noted that even the brief incarceration of the pre-trial time period impacted individuals' ability to obtain jobs, their level of pay, marriage opportunities, and increased potential of recidivism. The racial lens that influences how a person is treated and whether or not he can be trusted, highlights the brokenness within the system and provides traction to the proposal of this dissertation that racism during incarceration increases barriers for these individuals reentering society.

Prison is not just life changing for inmates. Incarceration impacts family members, friends and others who are close to inmates. A research study conducted by Buckler, Wilson, Hartley, and Davila (2011) examined a specific aspect of the influence of incarceration, views of the justice system. They hypothesized that exposure to prison altered one's view of the justice system and believed that their race further influenced their perception. Buckler et al. specifically focused on how one's race and prison exposure might change or greatly influence their perception of the criminal justice system. Their extensive research made clear that African-Americans are the most affected by the system and that African-American inmates have the most negative views of how the system works. The results of the study supported their hypothesis about which of the

three racial groups most who were asked to respond to their view of the justice system. This study provides validation to the fact that perceptions and prejudices are lasting opinions. The assumption for this dissertation is whether limited racial interactions while incarcerated influence post incarceration interactions among varying races and the work of Buckler et al. (2011) provides additional support for this assumption. This question assumed that there is a lasting impact from the prison environment and here within this article data was provided that occurrences with the prison system alter one's views permanently.

How does prison culture affect one's level of violence both entering and exiting the prison system? That was the key question that Reidy, Cunningham, and Sorensen (2012) examined in their study entitled *Community Violence to Prison Assault: A Test of the Behavioral Continuity Hypothesis*. From their data collection of over 22,000 participants, the researchers concluded that one's past behavior greatly influences their future responses. The identified future research areas shared in this article stir more questions that deserve better answers. The researchers were able to successfully note that high level violent offenders would likely perpetuate violence while incarcerated while all other categories combined showed a 50 % chance of being involved in a physical altercation. Their brief discussion on race confirmed that race has a notable influence on prison violence. They stated that race played a challenging role in violence and that a more extensive examination of the exact influence race has on prison violence was clearly needed. This study provides clear support for the fact that one's past behaviors are closely linked to their future behavior within the prison population. This article supports



the idea that prison culture is not an easy experience to let go of and there is a need for better understanding of the incarceration process. While this article focused on how pre-prison behavior relates to during-prison behavior there was evidence that each has an effect on the other. That conclusion and concept is valuable for this dissertation. The hypothesis of this dissertation is based on the idea that prison has a great influence on how one interacts within their community. Reidy et al. (2012) reported that violence is a challenging behavior to overcome, which indicates a clear caution that racism is also likely to perpetuate post incarceration.

Richardson and Johnson (2009) confronted the role of race and leisure within the California prison system. Their research, consistent to previously summarized studies, found that race was a main determining factor in all activities in which inmates engage. The authors used the Critical Race Theory to support their perceptions and observations of the in prison experience. This theory concludes that individuals of color are at a disadvantage due to the fact that our society is built upon white privilege. The outcome of this design then leads to a contentious power struggle between races. The application of this theory seems appropriate to apply toward the prison system since there is a large population of minorities incarcerated per year and the high racial tensions within the system have been repeatedly documented. Richardson and Johnson engaged ten individual males in 4-hour phone interviews, which asked them to recall their race and leisure experiences while incarcerated. Through these interviews the stark reality of segregation and the role of race was explained by each prisoner. The culture of prison is impactful on each individual. The authors stated that the transition from the culture of

prison to society is often difficult on the individuals who have been incarcerated and that the transition is often a considerable factor in their return to prison. This article concludes that prison has a lasting imprint on the individuals that enter the prison system regardless of the length of their incarceration. The researchers noted this lasting imprint on individuals in this research who had only been incarcerated for nine months. While this study does not explicitly examine the aftermath of incarceration, it does lend support to the fact that the prison environment alters one's life. The individuals in this study appeared to easily recall the culture of segregation and racial tensions. This article demonstrated the need to further examine the implications of the racial component in prison.

Racial segregation in the California prison system is recognized as a top down issue, which means that California Department of Corrections (CDCR) not only allows inmates to be racially segregated but the systems' structure is built upon the foundations of racial segregation. Goodman (2008) conducted a study observing the receiving centers at two California prisons. Goodman spent 60 hours at each facility observing over a thousand inmate intakes in each prison. He sought to understand the process and creation of racial segregation as created by both inmates and correctional officers (CO). The conclusions of his observations were that racial segregation rules the prison environment. He noted that the language used by CO's was a large contributing factor to the racially segregated environment. This article showed that racial segregation runs the system and forces individuals to compromise their individual identity as they are forced to associate with one particular race. Goodman noted that further interviews should be conducted

with inmates and CO's to better understand the intricacies and influence that this environment has on the individual. This article continues to lay the needed justification for this dissertation. California prisons are run based upon one's race and that the individual must learn to fully become part of their race while incarcerated, despite how they were identified before prison. The behavioral and mental shift an inmate goes through has further influence beyond the prison walls. This article brings light the lack of understanding of the impact of race in and after prison. Moving forward, Goodman's (2008) research served as a needed platform for this study.

An important part of being in any environment is one's ability to adapt. Dhimi, Ayton, and Loewenstein (2007) asked the following question to 712 male prisoners: Can one adapt to the prison environment? They engaged these individuals in surveys to understand their pre-prison lifestyle, relationships and their attitudes about their current imprisonment. Their analysis demonstrated that being incarcerated was an easier adaptation than is often portrayed. Inmates reported that they did not feel any less happiness but did feel less hope based on their incarceration. Interesting to note that there was no major significance for prisoners based on their lives before prison with regard to impacting their ability to withstand incarceration. The work done in this article makes evident that imprisonment is an environment that individuals, on a whole, are able to successfully embrace. While their research analysis did not show any significant findings in the difference between poor quality of life versus good quality of life pre-prison, they did note that engagement in the prison environment was essential for all inmates. Their

researcher also noted that those who had good pre-prison quality of life more often engaged in activities to make them personally more successful while incarcerated.

This article supports an individual's ability and need to adapt to the prison environment. A component of the main purpose of this dissertation is to assess the influence the prison environment has on an individual's emotions and thoughts. The work conducted by Dhami, Ayton, and Loewenstein (2007) provided evidence that prison does alter one's views of life.

### **Prison Racism**

A main focus of this study was racial interactions post incarceration. Therefore, the literature review must include information on the place that race has in the prison environment. California has established and allowed racial segregation as a key part of its system. The research articles below bring to light the level of racism that occurs during incarceration and how those levels present an additional challenge for inmates. Gaining insight into the role of racism during prison is important to understanding what inmates are exposed to and the potential that prison racism might lead to a permanent change in one's behavior.

As noted by Spiegel (2007) in her examination of prison riots throughout the past 40 years, the biggest fear of any correctional facility is a riot. Spiegel provided a very interesting history on the way that racial integration occurred, or rather how it has failed to occur, in prison. The prison riots, court cases, and the correctional system's response, collectively make for a volatile prison environment. The years of history presented by Spiegel clearly support that race is a major issue in the California prison system. Spiegel

did not propose possible solutions or recommendations that might remedy the epidemic of racism on the part of the correctional system. Rather, Spiegel spotlighted the fact that racial segregation, while initially might be effective, in no way aids the offender's rehabilitation. His point supports this dissertation's goal of examining how racial segregation impedes one's ability to integrate successfully with other races. The years of segregation and extra-racial violence have taken a toll on so many individuals. The several incidents that Spiegel presented in the article demonstrate that poor racial interactions have led to extreme violence and inappropriate system responses. Articles such as these highlight the fact that transitioning into racially diverse communities will seem foreign to long-term inmates. The expectation and desire to interact with various races has become pointless while in prison and is often dangerous as Spiegel discussed this article. Further examination of how this might alter a former inmates success post incarceration becomes a bit more pressing in a society that has so many individuals reentering society.

The role that racial segregation has had in the California prison system has been viewed as a violation to an inmate's civil rights. The classic court case, *Johnson v. California* has been an intriguing starting point for researchers to begin inquiry in to the California correctional system. Lindsey (2009) referenced this court case several times in her research article on the perpetuating place that racial segregation has in prisons across the state of California. Lindsey investigated inmate response to the ability to be in an integrated housing program (IHP). This data was gathered through the observation and review of reception interviews at which point inmates were given the option to participate

in IHP. Analytics showed that inmates were more likely to opt out of participating in IHP, the greatest indicators of their choice was gang membership, safety concerns, and age. At the conclusion of the article Lindsey reported that the IHP had been suspended due to the safety concerns of the program. This research article is a prime example of how influential prison culture is on the choice one makes. Inmates given the opportunity to integrate still opted to remain with their own race and segregated from other races. There is a sense of safety and comfort interacting with individuals that are perceived as similar to oneself, especially within the prison system. Articles such as this give warning to the culture within prison and give support to concerns about the potential long-term consequences of this type of living.

Prison and college-level education are not often terms associated with one another. Prisoners have access to higher education while incarcerated but the role this educational opportunity plays for individual inmates is not always clear. Researchers, Frank, Omstead, and Pigg (2012), conducted a phenomenological study to gain insight into how secondary education can influence inmates. Their study included six individual males in Indiana's state prison system. These individuals were all violent offenders with average incarceration of 14 years. The research was focused on the examination of the in-service learning programs, which provided inmates the opportunity to pursue their education. The researchers found that inmates who participated in the in-service learning programs were much more successful during incarceration and post incarceration. Frank et al. (2012) specifically reported that inmates who achieved undergraduate degrees while incarcerated were approximately 50 % less likely to recidivate. In addition, to decreased

recidivism inmates overall social abilities were improved, both in relation to their view of self and others. The conclusions of this article show how appropriate programming during incarceration can have a meaningful impact on an inmate's success. This type of awareness is helpful in the design of this dissertation in that inmates' exposure to factors outside of their normal environment assists them in long term success. While this dissertation is focused on the examination of post incarceration, understanding what occurs while incarcerated is important for recognizing factors that increase or decrease inmate success. Reducing the risks of poor community interactions is extremely beneficial to the individual and society. Articles such as this one written by Frank et al. (2012) highlighted the need for better programming while incarcerated to increase post incarceration success.

There was a point in history when states other than California racially segregated its inmates. Trulson and Marquart (2010) wrote a book on the process of desegregating Texas state prisons. They examined the history of the Texas prison system and the key events that led to the significant change in practice. Their information presented the idea that the belief, that racial segregation was necessary to reduce violence, was not an accurate assumption. In fact, the opposite was true and through the integration of prisoners they observed a decrease in the rates of violence. However, the California correctional system has not yet transitioned to the practice of racial integration. Trulson and Marquart noted that while California prisons allow inmates to interact with various races in the day rooms and other common areas, shared cells are still segregated. They also reported that rates of violent acts due to racism are still high and noted that a large

challenge California prisons face is gang activity. Racial segregation is in-large upheld in California prisons as an attempt to minimize gang violence, often viewed as synonymous with racial violence. The reiterated fact of racial segregation as a key element of the California prison culture gives support to the idea that racial reintegration may be a challenge to former inmate success in the community. The evidence that Trulson and Marquart provide in their book on the role of segregation in California prison highlights concern. The insistence of this method of controlling inmates is likely to indwell in them a fear and unwillingness to engage with various races.

### **Rehabilitation**

The percentage of released inmates that will commit a future crime or violate the regulations of parole are high. The following articles help to bring light to the challenges that are faced by former inmates and support the gap that has been identified in the lack of understanding of the role of segregation in possibly increasing the challenges of reentry. The research articles below detail the main barriers faced by former inmates.

The Risk-Need Responsivity (RNR) model was designed to help assist in appropriately punishing offenders. The article written by Andrews and Bonta (2010) provided a thorough examination of the RNR model. Through the use of historical data Andrews and Bonta provided evidence that supported the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts to best assist the offender in discontinuing engagement in criminal activity. A key element of their research was the use of data to best influence an individual offender. They identified factors such as individual need, ability, and social influence. The authors recognized that one's response to his environment was an important factor in the success



of his rehabilitation. This article is used to support, non-incarcerated rehabilitation efforts. While the article did not specifically examine the negative impact of the prison environment, the authors' conclusion was that incarceration is not an effective solution to criminal acts. This article has been included for the current study as it strengthens the need for supportive rehabilitation efforts and addresses the need to examine one's responsiveness to their environment. Andrews and Bonta clearly answered the question of how environment influences one's behavior. My desire was to gain insight into the process of reentering into society based specifically on potential racial presuppositions.

A criminal is more than just the crimes he committed; he has a life story full of various experiences that have led to every decision he has made. The article *From Corrections to College: The Value of a Convict's Voice*, provides an opportunity to gain understanding of who a criminal might be pre, during, and post incarceration. Leyva and Bickel (2010) recounted details about his childhood, teen years, criminal behavior, imprisonment and finally, his rehabilitation. While this article is not a standard research article, it does help provide a needed resource for the prison research community. Relevant to this dissertation was Leyva and Bickel's discussion of the role of racial segregation in prison. The mention of racial segregation in the article supports its major role in the culture of prison. Racial segregation appeared to be a component of incarceration that further wounded Leyva and his writings further supported the fact that racial segregation increases stigma and further distance between races.

A research article written by Phelps (2011) addressed the challenges of the rising prison population and specifically focused on the idea of rehabilitation through the last 3

decades. Phelps sought to gain an understanding of the use and change of rehabilitation efforts over the years. There has been a great deal of change in the penal system over the last 30 years. Phelps discussed the 1970s era which started the strong epidemic of “getting tough on crime”. As a result, the number of individuals incarcerated sky-rocketed and rehabilitation efforts seemed to go away according to Phelps. Over time, this change in policy was identified as being not effective, which necessitated the need to make a shift towards aiding offenders in reentering society. Phelps reported that rehabilitation efforts have shifted to not simply include educational opportunities but also life-skills training. Phelps’ research showcased the idea that individuals more frequently accessed the life-skills training as compared to education. The most important piece of information to glean from Phelps’ study is the need for comprehensive rehabilitation services. Based on the reports that were presented, there is evidence that merely locking someone away from society is not beneficial to anyone. That is a large aspect driving this dissertation, that imprisonment does not truly allow for the criminal to reenter their community as a productive member of society. Phelps did not discuss the racial tone of prison but he did briefly identify that there was a psychological aspect of reentering the community. The fact that Phelps discussed rehabilitation needs and the place they have in prison is helpful in supporting the efforts to keep them available to inmates.

LeBel (2012) conducted a quantitative research study that examined the stigma experienced by formerly incarcerated individuals. LeBel sought to understand former inmates in three ways: the experience of personal stigma, stigma felt as a part of the larger group, and the actual occurrence of rejection based on former incarceration. He

interviewed a total of 229 male and female formerly incarcerated individuals in the state of New York. The results of this study pointed to the fact that individuals did not experience strong stigmatization yet as a part of the larger group of those formerly incarcerated, the stigmatization was felt in a much stronger way. The research conducted highlights the added challenges that former inmates have following incarceration. One section of this article that was particularly significant was the literature which discussed social bonds. LeBel noted that strong social bonds upon reentry could help to safe guard against the experience of stigma. That was a key point for this research study examining racial interactions as a barrier for reintegration. LeBel did not specifically address racial interaction but rather, noted family and employment as success factors. From these findings one can reasonably assume that conversely, negative attitudes towards various races will have a negative impact on one's ability to successfully establish social relationships in their new racially-diverse communities.

A study conducted by researchers, van Olphen, Freudenberg, Fortin, and Galea (2006), examined the challenges of community reentry for formerly incarcerated individuals released in the state of New York. Data was collected through the use of focus groups and included a total of 37 individuals who had been released from jail or prison in the last 12 months. During the focus group sessions these former inmates were asked to respond to questions about reentry experiences specifically addressing education, employment, housing, and substance use. The results of these groups revealed that former inmates did not feel that they were prepared to reenter the community and be successful. The authors used the data collected to propose several initiatives that would

assist offenders in their time of preparing/planning for community reentry. While this article was almost 10 years old, the data gathered on former inmate experience was helpful to highlight the need for a strong supportive reentry plan and relational support. Former inmates that did have some success in reentry contributed that success to family and friend support. The fact that relationships play such a strong role in success point to the fact that relational interactions need to be further researched and understood. Former inmates become accustomed to a way of life in prison or jail and continually report that the transition back to society is overwhelming and often unsuccessful. Van Olphen et al. (2006) noted that half of inmates released would reenter jail within 12 months. Clearly intervention and preparation is needed to reduce the rate of recidivism.

A qualitative study, which focused on the challenges of former inmates' abilities to reenter society was conducted by Davis, Bahr, and Ward in 2012. The article allowed former inmates to share openly their perspectives on what had been a challenge for them in avoiding further criminal involvement and being able to successfully integrate back into society. The researchers conducted a one-time interview with sixteen individuals who had been released from jail or prison in 2009. Their research yielded six key factors: substance abuse, employment, family support, types of friends, personal motivation to change and age that impacted successful reintegration. Personal experiences and quotes were used to demonstrate each factors' influence on reintegration. The researchers noted that family and friend support were the most important components of successful reintegration. This result gives credibility to the possibility that due to poor racial interactions in prison, additional barriers are added to the reintegration process. This form

of community engagement, even from behind bars was needed for post incarceration success. The fact that social connections are so important to former inmates' successes points to the assumption that anything that could potentially jeopardize their success would be noteworthy. The need for social support and connection identified as a conclusion in this article provides an important element of support to the research proposed for this study.

In 2014 Hlavka, Wheelock, and Jones conducted a study that examined reentry for former inmates. This article's approach was unique; they interviewed those who had been successful rather than focusing on what did not go well. The researchers conducted 58 interviews with both female and male former offenders who were engaged in voluntary case management services in Milwaukee, WI. The insights gained by the interviews conducted as well as the general consensus of the interviews, identified relationships as the key to success. The relationship could be with a higher power, such as God, or with family or friends. This research made clear that, upon release, these former inmates needed social interaction. The interviewee responses the authors provided for the reader demonstrated just how impactful community interactions were for each inmate. Another important aspect to highlight in this article is the self-reflection needed from former inmates. For example, a dedicated section of the literature research conducted discussed the need for former inmates to work on their self identifies. This seems like a crucial component for former inmates who have likely lost a large part of their identity through the prison process. The theory of prisonization has emphasized the fact that inmates must adapt to the prison culture by embracing the rules of its society in

order to survive. Therefore, the fact that these authors noted the need for re-identifying one's self seemed significant to this researcher and pertinent to this current study. This article did not address racial interactions or the fact that this was a barrier that might need to be attended, rather, this article does highlight that relational interactions are key to success. If former inmates struggle to embrace the need and opportunity to interact with various races upon release, their racial segregation, even when self-imposed, will inevitably impact community relational building. The lack of racial interactions discussed appears to be a shortcoming of this article and therefore was slightly less impactful for the research conducted in this dissertation. However, the reoccurring research on the importance of socially oriented tasks is important to supporting the overall identification of barriers for former inmates.

A former offender's success does not start at the point of their release but rather is a process, which takes preparation. That was the perspective of the authors who wrote *Variables Affecting Successful Reintegration as Perceived by Offenders and Professionals*. Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle, and McPherson (2004) conducted a research study that examined both former inmates and professionals working in the criminal justice system to offer their insights on the reintegration barriers faced by inmates reentering their communities. The researchers engaged former inmates in conversations about their experiences of things that had stood in their way of being able to fully reintegrate into society. In addition to the former inmates' reports, professionals in the criminal justice field were also asked to comment on the designated barriers. The researchers focused on six domains: "Personal conditions, social network/social

environment, accommodation, criminal justice system, rehabilitation/counseling support, and employment and training support needs and conditions (p.154).” This article highlighted the fact that former inmates have many challenges ahead of them once they leave the walls of prison. While prison has its own set of challenges, reentry into society can also be overwhelming for these individuals. The researchers recommend four principles that should be implemented to help inmates in as they transition to former inmates: “Early intervention, responsiveness, comprehensiveness, and long-term commitment” (p.166). Supporting former inmates in their transition is clearly important to their success. One of the domains discussed in the article was social environment. As repeatedly noted, social interactions are an important aspect of reentry. They did discuss that relational interactions were challenging for former inmates and that those who were most successful had supportive family and friends. Their research would have been strengthened had they inquired about the inmates’ ability to successfully interact with various races in reentry social situations. Yet, even without the examination of potential racial barriers, the fact that there are barriers to reentering society supports this dissertation's claim that reintegration is challenging for former inmates.

The challenges that former inmates face upon community entry are numerous. Day, Ward, and Shirley (2011) recognized the challenges and decided to examine the effectiveness of community support services. The researchers looked at a particular rehabilitation services organization, based out of Australia, to assess their ability to support the rehabilitation and reentry process. Two key tools used to aid in the assessment of the program's success were the Good Life Model (GML) and the

Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI). The GML was a theoretical model developed to assist offenders in reaching their goals, focusing on the strengths of the offender, and building on these to help the offender succeed throughout the reentry process. The CPAI is 131- item scale was used to assess quality of the programs delivery of services. The unidentified community based program that Day, Ward and Shirley (2011) reviewed appeared to not be a strong program that was able to successfully meet all aspects of the CPAI as the program did meet a key need of the offenders which helped them succeed. They formed a long-term relationship with the offenders for whom they provided services. While this article provides a very limited understanding of how all rehabilitation programs function and their success in supporting previous offenders, this research did well to highlight just how intricate and important the process and need was for former offenders to receive support. This article does not address community or personal relationships that former offenders need to work on and there was no identification of how these relationships influence success. The research of Day, Ward, and Shirley does provide awareness of the long-term process of reintegration. For this dissertation, understanding what stands in the way of successful integration is important. This article highlights length of time needed or required to build success. Former offenders need a pro-longed period of time building community relationships in order to have success in the community they are released. The observation that this community program spent 3 or more months prior to release preparing inmates for reentry, brings a focus to the idea that former inmates are not easily able to reenter the community.



Looking at this article through the lens of how racial interactions might further impede or not impede the process would have provided even better support to this dissertation.

Disenfranchisement happens to offenders in 48 states while they are incarcerated and/or on community probation or parole. Miller and Spillane (2012) conducted interviews with fifty-four ex-felons in the state of Florida to explore their thoughts and perspectives on disenfranchisement. In the state of Florida any convicted felon, whether prison time is served or not, loses all civil privileges. Miller and Spillane allowed each individual participant to express their feelings and responses to their inability to no longer vote and how that has influenced their process of reintegration. Many of these former previous offenders conveyed feelings of disconnect because of their inability to vote. This research article looked at a subject matter that has not been explored and they found that voting rights were actually very important to ex-felons. This article brought to light a subject that has not been examined and is not deeply understood at this moment in time. As well as it supports the fact that those convicted of a crime are removed from society and isolated in manner that creates barriers in ways that many do not understand. There is a great deal about the reintegration process that has not been examined and articles such as this one highlight the fact that there is a lot of work still to be done in understanding the many barriers that former inmates face when reintegrating into their communities.

The correlation between males who do not complete high school and are incarcerated was very eye opening. Western and Muller (2013) provided statistics that showed over time the number of males who were incarcerated and how that correlated with incarceration. These statistics indicate that individuals who do not complete high

school were 20 times more likely to be incarcerated (p.166). This was just one area that Western and Muller highlighted in their examination of the increase in incarceration rates. Their study explored the key components that have contributed to the steady increase of those behind bars. The top barriers that impede one's ability to be successful in the community are race, educational level, and socio-economic status. This article also highlighted the relational difficulties that inmates go through as the ability for former inmates to engage in romantic or marital relationships is frequently unsuccessful. The relational discussion was an essential and supportive piece for this dissertation. A large part of adapting to the community is being able to interact with others. The prison environment is controlled and segregated therefore individuals have limited interactions with others and this transition becomes impactful on their post incarceration success. While the focus of this article was not specifically relational interaction, they did find the topic significant enough to discuss and identified the need for further examination.

The growing number of individuals incarcerated and those who have returned to society likely have an influence on the community to which they return. A research article by Morenoff and Harding (2014) examined the potential risk factors of former inmates and the community to which they return face. This article pointed to an area that would seem self-evident to many, but the exact factors identified in the study drew a saddened conclusion. Prisoners are coming from a disadvantaged culture and return to the same culture but now with additional barriers to becoming successful members of this culture. The societal dynamics that Morenoff and Harding described in their article suggest a vicious cycle for many inmates. The neighborhoods, that inmates come from

and return to, seem to perpetuate the inmate's state of criminal behavior in that, as they engage in criminal behavior their communities become more unsafe and disadvantaged. The picture painted by this article was very bleak and provides little hope for change and advancement for the communities and the individuals within them. The constant battle for these individuals seems overwhelming according to this article. The conclusions from this article reinforce the significant need for this dissertation. Identifying the additional challenges beyond education and employment for former inmates, leads to the need for examination of all aspects of incarceration and reentry. This article did not specifically address racial barriers, but clearly identifies a number of barriers, including interpersonal relationships, faced by former inmates. The article also helps to support the need for looking at multiple viewpoints to get a clear understanding of the breadth and depth of challenges that former inmates go through during their transition into society. One clear piece of evidence that this article did discuss, was that the communities to which inmates return, are at greater risk of criminal and violent behavior. This evidence was consistent to the researchers' suspected hypothesis.

The release of inmates back to society is becoming a growing concern for many metropolitan communities here in the United States. In the last 40 years incarceration has skyrocketed, one in every 100 individuals is incarcerated (Kirk, 2015) and almost all will return to their neighborhoods upon release. Kirk (2015) evaluated the types of communities that former inmates found themselves living in and how these neighborhoods would correlate with their rate of recidivism. Kirk (2015) specifically examined New Orleans pre and post Katrina to see if the relocations that occurred would

affect former prisoners' behaviors due to the community's changed dynamics. The conclusion of Kirk's (2015) study was that if released offenders return to the neighborhood they were in before they were incarcerated, their risk of re-offense increases. One may conclude that former prisoners have as much influence on their environment as their environment has on them. One statement made by Kirk (2015) suggested that assisting and encouraging former inmates to enter an unfamiliar neighborhood may actually increase reentry success. This article also examined the challenges of the former inmates' physical environment. Kirk (2015) analyzed the success of reentry based on community location and relationships. He was able to successfully draw a conclusion that inmates have a great deal of barriers to overcome outside of jobs, education and relational interactions. This article gives cause to the reader that further understanding is still needed to truly know all the aspects a former inmate has to overcome. Neither race nor racial interactions were noted in this article, yet the conclusions provide leeway and cause for further investigation. This dissertation benefits from articles such as this that examine ideas outside of the need for employment and drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and truly supports the fact that former inmates must face and overcome many barriers to be truly integrated into society.

The impact that incarceration has on individual former inmates' relationships has not been exclusively studied. There are many research articles that note the importance of social connections to friends and family members during and post incarceration. Previous studies have found that former inmates need a strong social support when returning to their community. The article *Explaining the association between Incarceration and*

*Divorce* by Siennick, Stewart, and Staff (2014), which examined former inmates' ability to be successful in maintaining a marital relationship. The authors noted that at some level marriage could serve as a life vest for an inmate and might keep them on track and more connected to positive community resources. The results of their study showed that inmates were 40% more likely to divorce their spouse. They also noted that inmates were more likely to be violent with their partner and to engage in extra-marital sexual relationships. This research points to the idea that inmates come out of prison challenged in their ability to engage in appropriate healthy relationships. This fact leads to the question, if inmates cannot engage with spouses who have supported them through a very dark season of life, how can they then engage with individuals they have intentionally had conflict with? This article gives backing to the need to further examine the existence of interpersonal interaction limitations due to racial segregation while incarcerated as these potential challenges might impede successful reentry.

In 2011, Arditti and Parkman conducted a phenomenological study with young males who had served time in prison and their reentry process. They conducted in-depth interviews with nine individuals in order to gain understanding of their transition back to their family environment, community, and how the participants saw their futures. All participants were on community monitoring, probation or parole, and had a caregiver that needed to be supportive and engaged in the participation of this study. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the reentry process by specifically looking at these former inmates' emotional development and how that development might have been hindered due to incarceration. The authors concluded that individuals who are

incarcerated at a young age struggle significantly both emotionally and financially. Engaging in the prison environment impedes one's ability to grow and mature at the same rate when compared to those similar in age outside of the prison walls. While those results may not be surprising, they should give pause and caution to the expectations and supports that are given to those exiting the prison environment. Many prisoners have a history of multiple offenses and likely started committing crimes and being arrested at a young age. This knowledge gives cause to change the reentry process to have a broader span of support. There is clearly a need for relational support that can teach former inmates appropriate ways to interact with others. Since racial engagement with others while in prison is often volatile, there is a clear need to focus on interracial interactions post incarceration. The study conducted by Arditti and Parkman stated a need for more relational focused support upon reentry to the community. This article does not discuss poor racial interactions specifically but its conclusions on individual inmates poor emotional processing it does support the fact that racial interactions is an area that should be further examined. If former inmates have low motivation and coping skills, they will likely struggle to engage appropriately with others, which leads to the question: If they have had poor interracial experiences in prison, why would that struggle not persist post incarceration?

Petersilia in 2001 wrote an article, *Prisoner Reentry: Public Safety And Reintegration Challenges*, which the challenges of prisoners and the lack of parole support. Petersilia reported that there are approximately 700,000 individuals on parole and that this number would continue to rise over the coming years. The author also

proposed that the level of support and structure of the parole system is failing the individuals that are released to community supervision. While there are many factors to inmates coming in and out the community, Petersilia addressed the hardships that are endured by both the inmate and their families. The instability of this lifestyle is physically and emotionally wearing for individuals and is costly to society, as the cost of housing an inmate is over 20,000 dollars annually. All of the factors point to the fact that parole needs to be a more productive experience for former inmates. The costs that are accrued are of no benefit to the individual, their loved ones, or the community. The funds spent for the individual to be incarcerated have not necessarily led to a reformed individual but rather one who is more broken and further removed from being a successful community member. This article sheds additional light on the fact that former inmates need better support to effectively integrate back into their communities. Additionally, the variation in quality and type of support becomes even clearer through her research. Petersilia did not identify any racial issues or relational challenges but noted that there is much work to be done in this area and strongly suggested the need to increase awareness.

The process of community reentry for inmates is still unclear. The challenges of housing, employment, support services for mental health and drug and alcohol issues have been identified. Beside these four issues, little else has been explored on the topic of successful reentry of inmates into their communities. Wodahl (2006) wrote an article, *The Challenges of Prisoner Reentry from a Rural Perspective*, that brought to light vocational challenges that a former inmate might face. Wodahl specifically examined the challenges

of individuals in rural areas. He found that the challenges were increased for individuals living in rural areas because of their lack of ability to access supportive resources.

Environment is often noted as a risk factor for those reentering the community because of potential continued associations with negative influences. The examination of geographic location as an additional barrier that was first examined by Wodahl. In the conclusion of this article Wodahl reported that continued research of the challenges faced by former inmates needs to be conducted. The conclusions of this article demonstrated that reentry is a very complex process with barriers that are still not yet understood. The purpose of this dissertation was filling a portion of that gap by exploring racial interactions post incarceration.

A reentry program in Connecticut works to support offenders following incarceration. Recently, a study conducted by Hunter, Lanza, Lawlor, Dyson, and Gordon (2015) examined the effectiveness of this program. They followed 296 male inmates over the course of 2 years, starting during incarceration. The researchers engaged in multiple interviews to assess the risk factors and strengths of the participants. The goal of the study was to gain better insight into strength-based case management and reentry success. The authors identified that inmates' strengths needed to have more of a role in the reentry process. The most common strengths for inmates were family relationships and employment. The assessment examined many areas of function including relationships, but mainly focused on family or other personal relationships. An identified common risk factor was that of fewer social relationships. The overall conduction of the study helped to demonstrate the need for supportive case management services that start pre-release.



Additionally, the study identified the importance of focusing on and building up inmates' individual strengths for successful reentry. The authors noted that a follow-up report would be beneficial to see how long these offenders would remain crime free. They also discussed the need for quantitative research to gather more data on success of more inmates. This research study made clear that the reentry process is not a simple, single moment experience but rather a drawn out process that requires a high level of continued support. One can assert from this article that the reentry process is overwhelming for inmates and that there are likely elements that have not been considered, highlighting the need for this dissertation. The article did not address race as a barrier in any way for these reentering inmates demonstrating a clear gap in the literature for exploring the potential barriers of pro-longed racial segregation and its implications.

What are the necessary components of a community neighborhood that will increase a parolee's success? That was the goal of the article, *Parolee Recidivism in California: The Effect of Neighborhood Context and Social Service Agency Characteristics*, which was written by Hipp, Petersilia, and Turner (2010). The authors examined the risk and success factors that former inmates face upon reentry into their community. The two main issues that seemed to be most influential to reentry and the avoidance of recidivism was accessibility to social services and the absence of liquor stores. Hipp et al. was able to correlate the recidivism and the presence of liquor stores in the neighborhood of a former inmate. They were also able to gather data that showed former inmates who were easily able to access support services, such as drug and alcohol treatment, were more successful in avoidance of re-offending or violating parole. They

studied data trends from all individuals released from a California prison during 2005-2006. There have been many studies that focused on socio-economic challenges within a community and its influence on a parolee's community success, but Hipp et al. desired to look at things through a different lens that might further support effective reentry. This article makes clear that the immediate surroundings of former inmates are extremely important. Data have shown that approximately 30% of parolees will end up re-incarcerated within 1 year of release. Therefore, the more that is known about the resources available within the community and areas of challenge for former inmates, the better society can help these individuals truly become rehabilitated. This dissertation topic falls in alignment with the concepts researched within this article, adding further depth of understanding of what creates barriers for former inmates' successes. This dissertation seeks to draw light to racial interactions as a potential barrier or challenge for former inmates these authors did note race as it pertained to neighborhood environments and the increased risk individuals who return to poor neighborhoods of color influence potential of success.

Over a 2 year span, from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> 2002, the recidivism rates of California parolee's was examined to gain insight into the effectiveness of Preventing Parolee Crime Program (PPCP). The researchers that conducted this study were: Zhang, Roberts, and Callanan (2006). Their data analysis looked at several factors to see what potentially led to the greatest long-term success for inmates. They examined every newly released parolee that was considered a "two-striker". The authors examined the usefulness of the PPCP and the individual use of this program. Their results were that the

PPCP was an effective program but its complete success was limited by the level that individuals chose to engage in the resources available to them. A key factor that might have skewed individual success was that the individuals they examined were one strike away from a lifetime of incarceration. The article further explained potential changes that can be made to improve participation in the resources available and advocate for the continuance of services for parolees. The redundant theme within many of the rehabilitation articles was the need for better and more structured support. This article was no different in that regard, but the authors brought a higher level of proof for why the support was needed through their detailed examination of Parole efforts to support individuals upon release from prison. Racial challenges were not studied explicitly in this article but the reality of reintegration challenges was clear through the examination of multiple areas of the parolee's life, such as education, employment, and appropriate community support. The author's also made clear that correctional administration and policy makers are not often well-informed on the role and structure needed to truly help individuals successfully reintegrate. This dissertation assists in the message of the challenges faced by those reentering society.

In the process of understanding the current literature on rehabilitation there have been a few articles that look specifically at the types of neighborhoods to which they are returning after incarceration. An article by Massoglia, Firebaugh, and Warner (2013), titled *Racial Variation in the Effect of Incarceration on Neighborhood Attainment*, evaluated the types of neighborhoods that ex-offenders are most likely to return. Their main focus was to identify what type of neighborhood each racial group, Latino, African-

American, and White, would enter. Their findings revealed that all racial groups returned to a disadvantaged neighborhood where there are few job opportunities and limited housing options. They noted that White inmates were most likely to reenter neighborhoods different from the ones they left. They reported that White inmates had far more to lose by entering the prison system due to the fact that they would likely not be able to return to their previous neighborhoods. The data used in the study came from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79) study which followed 14-22 year olds released from prison in 1979. The NLSY79 followed these individuals for twenty-five years and they conducted annual interviews with participants. Massoglia et al. used this data to examine the inmate's patterns of neighborhood reentry.

Disadvantaged neighborhoods are likely accumulating higher numbers of ex-offenders yet the ramifications of this finding are unclear, and the conflict that potentially exists within these neighborhoods is also unknown. This study does suggest a need for further understanding of how these inmates entering the community are likely altering the neighborhood's culture. This dissertation was about examining that aspect of uncertainty, looking at how inmates are able to interact with others upon reentry.

The efforts of Western, Braga, Davis, and Sirois (2015) to examine the social reintegration challenges that former inmates face were unique in the literature. They noted that there is a gap in the former inmates' experience during prison that greatly limits their ability to interact with society both in personal relationships and economic interactions. Former inmates who have mental health illnesses and suffer with drug addictions have an even bigger struggle to adapt to appropriate social interactions. This

study used a year's worth of interviews with 122 individuals released from prison in Boston as well as additional data on 336 former inmates looking at employment, financial income, and housing. The data revealed three categories of individuals that most struggled in their reentry efforts: those over 40 years of age, those with a mental health illness, and those with drug addictions. These individuals were found to be the most isolated and had the hardest time finding employment and housing. The researchers concluded that the transition from prison to community was a challenge that most individuals, without a strong and supportive female family member, did not successfully make. The researchers examined a number of challenges faced by inmates who are returning to the community. One critical challenge noted was that of social relationships. The researchers were able to validate that those who have social connections in the community are more likely to be more stable during their transition. The fact that this article focused on and highlighted the importance of social interactions was a supporting foundation for the direction of this dissertation. While this dissertation was about racial interaction that is connected to social engagement, this article makes clear that there is still a lot to be understood about relational interactions and development. This article further demonstrates the fact that relational interactions are important and need to be more fully understood how they can benefit former inmates.

The complexity of community reentry for former prisoners has more challenges and heartbreak than any one study can fully discover. Researchers Harding, Wyse, Dobson, and Morenoff (2014) studied the reentry process for 22 inmates that were reentering different communities in the state of Michigan. The researchers conducted

multiple interviews over a 1 year period to understand the economic challenges that former inmates face. This article presented many bleak statistics about the disadvantages that former inmates face and the challenges that they need to overcome in order to be an active and respected member of their communities. Harding et al. were able to narrow the hardships faced to five categories: Desperation, Survival, Stability, Independence, and Custody. The detailed stories that were presented in this article bring to light the plight of individuals and describe the overbearing number of failures that they are often unable to overcome. The former inmates who were successful in reentry were able to obtain stable social support that helped to provide connection to stability. However, the article helps to support the fact that social connection is a crucial component of former inmates' successes in reentry. An important question that arises from these interactions might be: Is reentry hindered or challenged if there are issues with various races upon reentry? Since this dissertation is about understanding potential relational barriers specific to racial interactions this article emphasizes just how important social interactions are for former inmates.

An important aspect of inmate reentry is their social support. Nasher and Visher (2006) conducted a study that examined the family member experience of housing and interacting with these newly released inmates. Through the use of phone interviews, 247 family members were asked to respond to a series of questions about their experience interacting with their newly released family member. The results of the study were not surprising; they revealed that male inmates most commonly identified a female family member as primary support. The family members reported financial and emotional

challenges interacting with these former inmates. Family members had a lot of reservations about the release of the inmate and were not equipped to truly support and assist the inmates. One reason for the reservation of receiving these inmates might have been due to the limited contact while the inmate was incarcerated. According to the research gathered by Nasher and Visher most inmates were incarcerated 3 or more hours away from their family members and therefore created a great hardship to be able visit. The expense and distance greatly limited contact and hindered relationship building. The challenges that multiplied during incarceration made the reunification process for both the family and inmate more difficult for the family members to provide support post incarceration . While this article was focused primarily on family member experience, it highlighted the importance of social support and its connection for inmates to their post incarceration success, which is what this dissertation sought to understand, the specific barriers to reentry regarding relational interactions with those of differing ethnicities. This article did not look at racial interactions but did examine relational interactions, which are relevant to the reentry process. This relational connection is essential to reentry and any potential challenges that might create further setbacks in the reentry process.

Berg and Huebner (2011) conducted a study that examined over 401 individuals during their return to their communities after serving a sentence in prison. They tracked participants over a 4 year period in order to gain an understanding of the possible significance that social ties had for offenders reentering their community. The statistics provided by the researchers showcased the idea that social connections had a significant impact on successful reintegration. The researchers also explored social ties and their

connection to gainful employment. While social ties did increase employment rates, pre-prison employment was also a factor in their ability to gain employment. The article stated that individuals that were not employed before prison were at a great risk to be arrested and not gain employment post incarceration. The complexities of reentry can be very strenuous for those leaving incarceration and social support is a must. This article supports the need for further knowledge of the needs and types social support in order to be beneficial. For this dissertation, the goal was to gain understanding of potential social barriers due to the influence of the prison environment. While this article was not about social barriers, it did highlight the importance of the need for social relations.

What is the perception of former inmates towards their community? Do they perceive reentry as a challenge? These are the questions that Benson, Alarid, Burton, and Cullen answered in their article, *Reintegration or stigmatization? Offenders' expectations of community reentry* (2011). This study found that inmates had, on a whole, a rather positive outlook on their reentry process. The researchers collected survey responses from over a 1,000 inmates that were sentenced to a boot camp program in Texas. They surveyed them about how they perceived their reentry process would be. They found that inmates were mainly positive about their reintegration and had very little reservation about being accepted back into their communities and into their family. Two limitations of this study were that these inmates were very young, with an average age of 19.5 years old, and that they were in a 90-day boot camp program as compared to a regular prison environment. This study provides a unique take on inmate experience and more importantly helps to provide an understanding of what an inmate perceives as threats to



their success. Any research that helps to bring further insight into what transpires for inmates as they prepare and reenter society was extremely important. The application of this study was still relevant to this dissertation as it supports the fact that there are a number of unknown factors that need further exploration in regards to inmates' reentry process.

The article, *Basic Challenges to Prisoner Reentry*, provided a summary of the research that has been conducted concerning inmate reentry barriers. The author clearly desired to gain understanding of all challenges that are faced by former inmates and what current support is already in place to support their community reentry. The conclusion of this article proposed a dilemma for the correctional system. This dilemma was around the idea that the basic challenges for former inmates are quite varied, consequently, designing an all-inclusive program is very difficult. Within this study, the former inmates expressed barriers with housing, family relationships, and employment, yet further research is clear that there are still more issues that arise that were not formally considered within this research. The author used previous research on the key identified areas: housing, employment, and social interactions. All the research gathered shows that each one is a necessity for programs that assist an offender in becoming and remaining a productive community member. This article supports the on-going theme that there are many complexities to the reentry process and that research on reentry needs to be continuous. This stated need for further examination of various aspects of reentry was a necessary support to the efforts of this dissertation, reiterating the fact there was much to know about this process.

Serin, Lloyd, and Hanby (2010) wrote an article addressing community and system challenges for releasing an inmate back into society. The topic of this article was the large number of individuals incarcerated and the strain on the community that their return creates. The authors examined the forms of support needed and focused on assessing the risk each offender has of reoffending. The findings of this article appear to be bleak. The various meta-analysis that the authors used to gain understanding of the process and risk faced by ex-offenders and the community demonstrated that former inmates have a number of barriers to overcome. An interesting note was the offenders' lack of complex processes and their inability to plan. Typical community members do not struggle with these simple tasks. Consequently, the inmates' struggle with these tasks creates an additional barrier for the former offender. These struggles lead to further frustrations, and with a lack of support and appropriate community connections, these former offenders offend again. Serin et al. provide data on just how complex the process of reentry is, the many factors that have to be considered in maintaining reentry, and the deficits of the current system. There is still a significant amount of research that needs to be done in the area of reentry. The conclusion of this article aligns with this dissertation's effort to improve the reentry process and gain insight to what barriers former inmates face upon reentry.

The advancing field of rehabilitation has brought forth two structural frameworks, Risk-Need-Responsivity Model and Good Lives Model. These two frameworks have created an opportunity to assess individual offenders as they reenter their communities and provide more effective support during their rehabilitation process in order to reduce

recidivism. Authors, Fortune, Ward, and Willis (2012), wrote an article that focused on the use of both of these frameworks and how they benefit the rehabilitation process. The authors explained that each of these frameworks has been used to help inform the criminal justice system on how to best support individuals during reentry and what things have made them continually successful during their reentry process. Tools such as these are good starting points for the rehabilitation process. The challenge to truly understand all the ins and outs of what is occurring for those entering society after a prolonged period of time remains. For the purposes of this dissertation, this article supports the efforts needed to understand individual experience and the various barriers that are faced. These frameworks lay a needed foundation but are not complete in looking at all of the needs and barriers of the former inmate and successfully reducing recidivism. In addition, neither of these tools examined the ramifications of the adaptation to the prison environment or the effects of long-term segregation. The Good Lives Model does examine social relationships and the need for these relationships in order to increase community success. There is much to gain from the use of these frameworks, but still more to be examined and added to, in order to better understand the individual's process.

The impact of the prison system appears to be growing with the number of offenders being arrested and released to the community. The correctional system is not able to appropriately respond and handle the number of offenders within the system. Through the research and work of Seiter and Kadela (2003) they identified that parole system is unclear on its role and that the definition of parole's place within the system has continually changed throughout the years. The constant changes of the parole system

make the sentencing of prisoners and the assistance in the process of reentering the community, a challenge. The research conducted by Seiter and Kadela was proposed to assess and gain understanding of just how beneficial programs and systems for reentry are for offenders. They evaluated several programs that are used to assist offenders in preparation for community reentry and others that were designated for post release. They used the Maryland Scale of Scientific Method (MSSM) to determine whether these programs were truly of assistance. The conclusion was that each program was beneficial to some extent and that more funding should be dedicated to the reentry process than is currently being allocated. The work of these researchers support the fact that there is not enough being done to evaluate and support offenders in their reentry process. This article did not discuss all the many barriers faced by former offenders in detail, but did discuss former inmates housing and employment challenges. There are more complexities to this process than are commonly realized. The goal of this dissertation continues to be in assisting the further understanding of the barriers regarding racial interactions and their direct results upon the reentry process.

The reentry process has multiple components that must be considered. The multiple articles that have previously been examined have well supported the fact that reentry to the community post incarceration is a challenge. However, the question eventually arises, what makes these former offenders successful. They are individuals who have been able to complete their prison sentence and time on parole successfully. Authors, Bahr, Harris, Fisher, and Armstrong (2010) conducted a study with 51 parolees to gain an understanding of why offenders were or were not successful. They followed

these offenders over a 3-year period which was the length of their parole sentence. The researchers hypothesized that this would provide enough information to understand the success or lack of success of these individual parolees. The research came to the conclusion that drug treatment and friendship were actually the best indicators of success. They did note that family, housing, and employment were additional factors that were important to the reentry success. This research demonstrates the complexity of reentry and the importance of digging deeper into the reentry process in order to understand parolee success. The authors noted that previous research has helped to understand that employment, family support, and housing are essential to inmate success, yet the research they conducted provided more personal data. These findings support the need for further research on reentry that is more focused on individual experience such as that examined by this dissertation.

Kubrin, Squires, and Stewart (2007) brought attention to the influence of neighborhood environment of former offenders. They examined the influence that offenders have on the neighborhood and how the neighborhood might influence the offender and specifically attempted to examine race as a factor. Kubrin et al. wrote extensively about the overwhelming increase in the prison population and also the number of offenders released each year. Due to these changes the authors researched and identified ways that neighborhood environments might be of benefit or hindrance to those released from prison. Their study showed that one's neighborhood is influential to their success. The main reason being, the neighborhoods that they have left and returned to are challenging environments as lack of housing and employment, poor educational

opportunities, and current criminal activity were frequently present in their neighborhoods, especially for African Americans. Bahr et al. (2010) also pointed out that social environment is a key aspect of rehabilitation. The understanding of how much one's environment changes or encourages behavior was supported through the work of Kubrin et al. (2007). The authors in this article have explored environment, a key element of this dissertation. This dissertation has proposed that prison environment has changed an individual and therefore makes for a great challenge to reenter a racially diverse community. In a similar way this article has examined former offenders' abilities to adapt to their neighborhoods in a productive way and have shown the significance of the challenge and provided evidence that almost all of those that return to society will return to prison.

The factors to be considered in inmate reentry and rehabilitation are many and with each article written on the topic more is examined and understood. The article, *Criminal Propensity, Social Context, and Recidivism A Multilevel Analysis of Interactive Relationships* looked at recidivism, criminal propensity, and county-level moderating factors of inmates that reentered various counties in the state of Florida from 1998 to 2001. Their research, like several others, found that African-American's face the greatest challenges, both socially and economically. They also noted that spatial dependence, the accessibility to services, was a key factor to success. Their reports did not speak to efforts to lower recidivism and increase reintegration, but rather focused on what was influential in former inmates' reentry process. Wang, Hay, Todak, and Bales (2014) noted that social interaction combined with an individual's ability to connect with their surrounding

community and the freedom to move within a given area were all beneficial to reentry. Former inmates struggle to be able to become a part of their community. This article has examined the risk factors of community environment but did not acknowledge how the prison environment had influenced their success or lack of success. As this dissertation sought to understand the challenges of reentry, this article assisted in looking at the environment as a contributing factor. This article also supports the need to continue discovering and researching the challenges faced by inmates reentering their community.

Hipp, Petersilia, and Turner (2010) conducted a study that followed parolees who were released in California from 2005 to 2006. They examined the engagement of parolees with social service agencies and the influence of that engagement on successful reentry. Through their examination and comparison of various neighborhoods their hypothesis was confirmed, that the presence of a social service organization in a neighborhood would increase reentry success. The mere presence of a social service organization aids in one's community success is an interesting conclusion to note. Hipp et al. described the idea that participation in the social services programs did not necessarily decrease recidivism, but simply the presence and accessibility to the programs was what proved to be helpful. While this article did not focus specifically on racial interactions and their potential additional challenge to successful reentry, their research does highlight the importance of environment as influential to former offenders' behaviors. The support that this article provides for the need to understand social environment and its influence on an individual's behavior was important to the potential success of the individual and group that has endured the environment of prison. Returning inmates need support as

they re-adapt to society; therefore, looking at and understanding how society influences their potential success is essential. This dissertation was about understanding how prison environment has influenced racial interactions and the way those interactions continue post incarceration to become potential social barriers. Hipp et al. supported the fact that social environment is crucial to the reentry process.

The influence of one's physical surroundings are always noted as important, but for those returning from prison, those influences, when negative, can be particularly challenging. There are multiple challenges that these individuals face upon their return to the community: family dynamics, employment, avoidance of illegal activity, re-adjusting to a new environment, and sobriety. Therefore, researchers have started to question and examine the ecological factors for inmates upon reentry. A study conducted by Wright, Pratt, Lowenkamp, and Latessa (2012) revealed that physical environment was more impactful on a former inmate's rehabilitation process than treatment such as drug and alcohol services. This information was extremely important to be noted and considered as the rehabilitation process was designed and improved for former inmate success. In their discussion, the authors noted that treatment was not what leads to the biggest level of success for former offenders. The authors did note that treatment was not completely ineffective but rather its effectiveness was dependent on the integrity and reputation of the program. The Wright et al. study was very helpful in the support of the need for former inmates environment to be considered. This dissertation was about examining and gaining the influence that environment has on behavior, specifically racial interactions



and Wright et al.'s work was beneficial in supporting the fact that environment remains an important component of rehabilitation success.

The community to which an offender reenters after prison is an important factor to their success. If they have stable housing, job opportunities, and positive social support, their success in reentry increases. Harding, Morenoff, and Herbert (2013) observed data collected on over 3,000 inmates released in the state of Michigan in 2003. The researchers wanted to understand the living environments and communities former inmates left when entering prison and where they returned following incarceration. The researchers found that almost all of the population returned to the same communities they left and would move within a 5 to 7 mile radius during the 3 years they observed their living patterns. They did note that some individuals, for purposes sanctioned by parole, did not return to their previous community due to the increased risk of recidivating if they returned. This study examined a large population of former inmates and the analysis of the data demonstrated that housing was a main barrier to their success or lack of success. Most inmates returned to poverty stricken neighborhoods, especially African-American former inmates. While this article did not address racial complexities, the authors gave context to one of the many barriers that are being faced by former inmates and revealed the fact that the environment was an influence on former inmate success. This article opens the doors and lays a helpful foundation for the need to continue looking at various aspects of community interactions and former inmate success.

Turney, Lee, and Comfort (2013) examined the influence that Criminal record and racism had on 172 inmates released in the cities of Oakland and San Francisco,

California. They proposed that the stigma of each of these areas increased psychological distress and therefore created an even more severe state of mental health. The researchers desired to understand how psychological stress impacted an individual's health. While this study built upon already conducted research specific to New York, the authors felt that looking at a different region and specific of each stigma and combined stigma provided a new level of insight. Their results indicated that both racism and criminal record increased psychological distress and had a negative impact on their health. The authors noted that there are a wide range of stressors that former inmates face and that there is more to be examined in future research. This article addressed racial discrimination as a barrier to rehabilitation but did not specifically look at racial interactions as the hardship, rather the authors examined racial discrimination of the former inmates in their community. The assistance that this article provided toward this dissertation was that race is an important factor faced by returning inmates and is a stressor. This research made clear that there is more to understand about how racial interactions are influential to successful reentry into one's pre-prison community.

In 2011, Raphael researched the challenges of reentry for former inmates. His article, *Incarceration and Prisoner Reentry in the United States*, spent a great deal of time discussing the history of how the increase in the those incarcerated has risen over the last forty years and the changes that increase has had on crime in the community. Additionally, he noted that the longer sentences individuals now face for committing crimes has also had a negative effect on the criminal justice system. This history was very informative and provided a great deal of insight into how the criminal justice policies

over the years have had such a detrimental impact on communities and those who commit crimes. Raphael (2011) seemed to focus a great deal of his research efforts on the disadvantages that former offenders face in their reentry process and seemed to convey a message of little hope for offenders with the current correctional system. He pointed out that in order to understand the gravity of the challenges faced by those returning to society, the criminal justice system, as a whole, needs to reevaluate its policies and procedures. Raphael's point is important, which is understanding all of the challenges former inmates will have to face upon release is a significant challenge. Raphael, along with other researchers, identified the process of reentry as having many barriers and that an important determiner of success depends upon previous socio-economic status and environment. Therefore, this dissertation sought to continue in closing the gap by looking at another potential challenge racial interactions.

### **Updated Articles**

This section focuses upon articles that have been written within the last two years that apply to all three previous sections: Prison Culture, Prison Racism, and Rehabilitation. There have been a few key, recent articles that are worth noting and have therefore been reserved for this section. The challenges of incarceration and specifically that of the California prison system are important to note. The articles examined below provide the readers with a deeper understanding of the prison environment, its influence on prisoners and the communities these former inmates return to after incarceration.

Morin (2015) conducted a study on the effect of space and violence. She sought to understand the change in prison violence due to the new modular design that the Douglas

County Department of Corrections in Omaha, NE implemented throughout their prisons and jails. The modular design involves the arrangement of the cells in a semi-circular shape and requires that a correctional officer (CO) be on duty amongst the inmates. The formation led to an overall decrease prison violence and increase in inmates' comfort. The majority of inmates felt that the openness of the space and the presence of the CO created a safer environment. Morin's study provides insight into both prison structure and inmates' view of their space. From this report one may conclude that a less restrictive environment improved safety in a more efficient manner than racial segregation. This article highlights the importance of positive and open communication between inmates and the assigned correctional officers. Morin's interactions with inmates and her research design that allowed them to voice their experience, further supports the importance of giving voice to inmates, a key part of this study. Morin's ability to hear directly from inmates brings an accurate and relevant point of view that is needed to make housing inmates a safer process for all involved.

In the last 30 years the California prison population has increased by 600% according to Horne and Newman (2015). The article examined the various consequences and benefits that have come forth through federal mandates to reduce the prison population. They highlighted how other states have addressed this issue by creating community based treatment programs that offenders are mandated to participate in rather than serving a prison sentence. The main programs created were designed to address mental illness and substance abuse. California in recent years has developed and created programs to address these two major contributing factors to criminal involvement. The

benefit of this article was that it demonstrated the effectiveness of appropriate system support and addressed the true challenges that offenders face. This study emphasized the fact that not everyone should be imprisoned because of their engagement of crime but rather due to a closer examination of the behavior behind the crime. I have sought to address the motivation of behavior and the challenges that the prison environment lays upon an individual. This article highlighted that there are multiple factors that need to be addressed in sentencing an offender in order to assist in decreasing their likelihood of recidivism, which again aligns with the goal of this study in gaining insight into challenges faced by former inmates. The more these barriers faced by former inmates are understood, the better the system can be at aiding them in the reintegration process.

The research article, *The Collateral Consequences of Prisonization: Racial Sorting, Carceral Identity, and Community Criminalization*, written by Lopez-Aguado (2016a), examined the influence that prisoners have on their communities. Lopez-Aguado developed a strong body of literature that highlighted the vicious cycle that prisonization has on poor communities of color. He noted that these communities have a particularly high number of individuals who are incarcerated or have been incarcerated. The goal of his research was to articulate how entrapped these communities, as well as the individuals, have become. He also noted the influence that prison gang culture has altered communities. While this article does not directly support or address racial reintegration, the author provides insight into the difficulties of leaving the prison culture behind upon release. If inmates are returning to communities that are entrenched with violence, heavy gang activity, and a high level of police surveillance, former inmates will

be truly challenged as they attempt to leave the prison life and behavior behind. If the communities that inmates return to mirror that of prison, one may ask: How can they learn to adapt new behaviors and attitudes towards life or various races? Lopez-Aguado did spend a portion of the article addressing racial and gang segregation as part of the California prison culture. Therefore, he has shown support and further evidence of the built in racial behavior of the prison system. Lopez-Aguado's article has become an essential body of evidence for this study as the conclusions emphasize the negative impact of racial segregation and lasting behavioral impressions left on former inmates.

*"I Would Be a Bulldog": Tracing the Spillover of Carceral Identity*, by Lopez-Aguado (2016b) examined the influence of prison environment on community. Lopez-Aguado collected data from a southern California juvenile correctional system over the course of 15 months. He both observed and interviewed the individuals that entered the facility. Through his observations he noted that correctional system too frequently imposed segregation upon the juveniles which often pointed them towards gang interactions. The juvenile offenders were forced to identify with a gang, even when they claimed no gang involvement. Additionally, Lopez-Aguado recorded the juvenile offenders' acclimation to the correctional system. Many of the individuals he interviewed reported that due to the community they were in prior to entering the correctional system they were prepared for the environment. They were prepared due to the large number community members they interacted with that had spent time in prison. The communities these youths were raised in led them to a disconcerting comfort with prison. This research article drew light to how instrumental racial segregation is to the entire correctional

system in California. As well, this research emphasized the long-term consequences that come from incarceration. While this article does not specifically examine individual challenges of reentry there is clear evidence that racial segregation is detrimental.

The role of racial segregation in the California penal system was made painfully clear through Walker's (2016) research article. Walker lived in a south county California jail for 135 days. His article discussed in detail both his personal interactions with various races, the correctional officers, and other inmates' interactions. Walker recalled multiple different environments while incarcerated and noticed how each housing unit varied in its response to cross-racial interactions. The detailed interactions that Walker noted came as a surprise and challenge his personal beliefs and assumptions as to how racial segregation occurred for inmates during incarceration. Walker's previous research on the use and implementation of segregation in other states led him to the belief that segregation was not necessary and was not proved to be a useful form of inmate control. However, during his time incarcerated he learned differently from both inmates and staff, both who believe that racial segregation is necessary. Walker's research provides substantial support to the fact that California prisons are racially segregated and clearly demonstrates that this attitude and mindset is instilled in prisoners. Walker described the acclimation process in which he was shown by another African American inmate the phone, shower, toilet, and table he was allowed to use. Segregation is a clear behavior and mentality that an inmate must take ownership of in order to secure their own safety as well as that of others. Walker laid the support needed to prove that racial segregation is a learned and enforced prison behavior.

The impact of incarceration for the individuals entering and leaving are far more life altering than is realized. Schnittker and Massoglia (2015) evaluated the stigmatization that occurs for former inmates. They studied stigma at three key times of an inmates incarceration experience: during incarceration, upon initial release, and after time in the community. They found that due to both society and the individuals' beliefs about how prison condones who they are, the former inmate faces many challenges to truly be successful. Schnittker and Massoglia clearly supported the fact that the challenges faced to the reentry process was extremely difficult to articulate. The authors clearly delineate at the end of their article that there are many more areas of reentry that must be explored to be able to effectively support inmates release into the community. This article's acknowledgment of the fact that former inmates are overwhelmed with challenges to successful reentry provides support to the conduction of this research study. While the authors do not specifically address racial segregation challenges they did highlight the fact that individuals' adaptation to the prison environment alters their perceptions.

The process of reentering the community after any period of incarceration is challenging. Taxman and Kras (2016) pointed out that while incarcerated, one is removed from society and their daily living skills are altered. They examined five areas of challenge of reintegration that offenders face upon release: housing, employment, social support, substance abuse treatment, and community supervision. The information presented on each area of challenge highlighted the exact struggles that former inmates have to overcome in order to maintain life outside of prison. An interesting point that Taxman and Kras made was on the importance of social support. They reported that



individuals who had a spouse or intimate partner to engage in relationship with were less likely to commit future crimes and were more successful in general in the reentry process. This is an important factor to note as this idea aligns with the proposed hypothesis of this current study. The role of social support and engagement is clearly impactful and highly influential on individual success. Taxman and Kras do not address racial interactions, yet they specifically mention social engagement as a factor in reintegration as important. This notation provides the possibility that cross racial interaction post incarceration might create further challenge or barriers for former inmates to be successful.

Prison violence is not limited to just California state prisons but is actually a challenge in all prisons. The work of Bell and Lindekugel (2015) explored factors that increase an inmate's engagement in violence. They focused specifically on the occurrences of violence in Washington state prisons. Their literary research addressed various states and the previous research that was conducted to understand potential risk factors for engagement in violence. Bell and Lindekugel examined gender, race, education, residency, and program involvement as factors that might influence inmate's engagement in violence. Their results did not yield significant findings but did look at factors other researchers had not previously noted. They noted that African Americans and Latinos engaged as frequently in violent acts as White. The most relevant part that Bell and Lindekugel offer to this study was that they noted the longer one is exposed to the prison environment the more likely they are to engage in violence. This factor is

important in providing continual support to the influence that the prison environment has on inmates.

### **Overview of Current Literature**

The complexities of reentry are overwhelming to inmates and former inmates. Over the past two decades, these challenges have become clearer thanks to the efforts of many researchers. This dissertation was about specifically understanding potential implications of racial segregations, upon reentry into the community. The literature examined and summarized above has brought to light the need for more research on focused aspects of reentry and inmate incarceration experience. The literature pointed out that racism while incarcerated creates an increased level of violence and hostility. Therefore, the manner in which race is managed during incarceration is important and extremely influential to one's behavior. The work of Wheeler (1961) and Clemmer (1940:1958) laid the foundation of how the adaptation of prison environment occurs rapidly for inmates. The literature review covered three areas: prison culture/environment, racism in prison, and reentry/rehabilitation. Within each of these areas, research studies found consistent results, findings, and recommendation. In regards to culture, the body of research made clear that prison is an extremely stressful and contained environment that required adaptation in order to successfully endure one sentence. Racism during incarceration was found to contribute to the very same violence and racial segregation that led to the correctional system's enforcement of segregation for inmate control. The body of research made clear that within this last area approximately half of those released would re-offend within a three-year period. In addition to re-

offending, former prisoners struggle with three main issues discussed in the literature: employment, social connections, and housing. The most important theme that the literature revealed was that more research needs to be done on inmate reentry, hence the need for the same insight that supports this dissertation. This current study is about creating a voice for former inmates to further understand their reentry process, specific to racial interactions. There is much more to know about the correctional system and its processes through an examination of inmate's experience. These factors are the prison environment, an individual's ability to readjust to society, and barriers to long-term success in the community. In the research conducted for this dissertation there was a new aspect of the reentry process that current and past literature has failed to discuss racial interactions post incarceration.

The phenomena proposed in this dissertation, is how former California inmates reintegrate in a racial diverse culture after living in an extremely segregated environment. In the many articles that were reviewed and summarized within the literature review, none actually explored this potential barrier. All of the articles on reentry and rehabilitation addressed four basic challenges; stable housing, social relationship, employment, and avoiding engagement in criminal behavior. The challenge of finding support and research on the proposed phenomenon was primarily supported in that these research articles consistently reiterated numerous challenges to the reentry process and indicated the need for further research. Authors such as Bahr et al. (2010) and Van Olphen et al. (2006) conducted research on the reentry process for inmates and noted the fact that gaining complete understanding within one study was not possible. Their work

along with other respected researchers shows over and over again that the reentry process is extremely multifaceted. Therefore, the complexity of this dissertation, racial reintegration, points to only one of many areas, yet still seems to be relevant and needed. The more data that can be gathered on the reentry process and experience the more that can be done to increase the success of rehabilitation. Over 700,000 inmates are released into communities each year (Petersilia, 2001); Harding et al. (2014) reported that 1 in 48 Americans are on Parole or Probation, which is equal to 2% of the population. In addition to the challenge of reentering a community, many return to prison (Kubrin et al., 2007) because of parole violations or committing new crimes. The depressing reality of unsuccessful community reentry and the large population of released inmates each year makes emphasizes the need for further understanding about the reentry process and the potential barriers that inhibit community reentry success.

Through the vast number of articles focused on reintegration and the reentry process none were able to specifically address the research question presented. This dissertation was about exploring how racial segregation might lead to an increased barrier for former inmates during the reintegration process back to their communities. The literature review demonstrated that prison is indeed a racially segregated environment. Goodman (2008) observed the occurrence of racial segregation during the intake process at multiple jails. DeVeaux (2013) wrote from his own personal experience of being incarcerated and how racial segregation was both imposed upon him and his peers by correctional officers as well as fellow inmates. In addition Lindsey (2009) specifically discussed how engrained racial segregation is in the California prison system and

expressed little hope for any change in the forced racial segregation practices and policies. These articles highlight how entrenched racial segregation is in the prison culture; therefore, a natural assumption is that this attitude toward various races, and avoidance of them, would continue upon reentry into the community. However, this dissertation appeared to be the first study that specifically addresses relational racial interactions following incarceration. As synthesized in several of the sections above, there has been much research on the barriers to, and challenges of, reintegration. Most of the research articles presented here in this chapter are a reflection of the work done to-date on the reentry process. Unfortunately, none of these great studies on post incarceration experiences of inmates addressed or examined racial interactions as a potential challenge or barrier. Some of the studies did examine racism, but looked at the barriers individuals faced due to being a person of color in the community (Hayes-Smith, 2009; Goodman, 2008). The factor of racism remains important but still does not provide clarity around the potential challenges for the inmate in his interactions with others, based on race. The current body of research around the understanding of how prison environment influences or alters one's ability to reengage with his previous community, or the new community that he is released to post incarceration, appears to pose more questions than answers. This dissertation aimed to answer the question of racial interactions as a potential barrier to reentry success.

### **Methodology Review**

Lior Gideon (2010) conducted a qualitative study on how motivation increases one's success in detoxification and rehabilitation for prisoners. Gideon (2010)

interviewed 39 individuals who engaged in an in-prison drug and alcohol program and then continued in recovery programs post incarceration. While Gideon did not identify his methodology as phenomenology, the structure of the research was very similar to that of the methodology of this research. The researcher's use of interviews and data analysis was the same as proposed for this dissertation - individual interviews and analysis of answers. The researcher collected his data through individual interviews at a convenient location for the participant, recorded all interviews, transcribed them and analyzed each in order to identify possible similarities within all responses. Gideon (2010) concluded from the data that motivation was a primary factor for the participant's success in remaining engaged in the recovery process. The most important aspect of this article's design was that the methodology used first-hand, personal reports on a specific experience. Gideon (2010) wanted to understand from the inmate or former inmate how their experience in recovery program involvement and motivation might help them be successful in long term rehabilitation. One helpful point made was that the number of participants was not significant to be able to generalize the findings for all potential individuals in this situation, but that the findings were substantial enough to support the idea and need for continued exploration.

The work of Natti Ronel (2011) looked at the phenomenology of criminality and self-centeredness which leads to "criminal spin". Ronel's theory was that criminality is a process in which an individual, group, or society's behavior, thinking, and emotions around criminal activity escalate until they are no longer in control of their actions. He compared this behavior to that of an alcoholic or addict who continues to get further and

further entrenched in their substance abuse behaviors until they no longer have control of their choice to engage in drinking or drug use. Ronel painted a very severe picture for those involved in criminal activity that will likely not have a positive outcome for anyone involved. The use of phenomenology to help the reader understand that this is a limited number of people that will reach this level of criminal thinking and behavior. This was similar to the goal behind using phenomenology for this dissertation. This dissertation assumed that not everyone experiences prison but rather a limited group of individuals in society and that the prison environment is unique. Ronel's discussion of the phenomenological experience of that group of individuals has allowed criminality to become an embedded part of who they are. For many, these issues are logical and heart breaking to know that the former inmates will have a great deal of struggle ahead of them if at some point they see an error in their ways.

The health and mental health risk that former inmates face upon release has been found to exponentially increase their mortality rate. According to research by Binswanger, Nowels, Corsi, Long, Booth, Kutner, and Steiner (2011), Washington prisoners are at three and a half times greater risk of dying after release from prison. Binswanger et al. (2011) conducted a qualitative study to understand directly from newly released inmates the challenges they faced upon community reentry and how their health and mental health was a specific challenge. Through the conduction of twenty-nine individual interviews Binswanger et al. (2011) asked these newly released inmates about their experience of reentry into society and focused primarily on their access and use of health care services. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for analysis, looking

for consistency and similarity among the individual reports. This qualitative research study reflects the goal of this dissertation, which was to understand first-hand from former inmates experience and compare those experiences for any potentially consistent themes. Binswagner et al.'s (2011) use of individual interviews was a great demonstration of how qualitative research gives voice to those directly involved and provides the opportunity to more deeply understand the hardships and challenges that former inmates face. Qualitative research, as discussed in this article, appears to provide a simple and direct methodology to gain needed data to better assist the criminal justice system and former inmates.

The work of Bowman and Travis (2012) provided support to the developing literature on the overwhelming challenges newly released inmates' experience. The collection of data provided by Bowman and Travis (2012) was disheartening. Bowman and Travis (2012) conducted focus groups to allow individuals from two different positions to discuss the inmate process of reentry with the two groups having been former inmates and service providers. Bowman and Travis (2012) proposed that verbal behavior would have an influence on how inmates responded to their challenges and views of the reentry process. They found that both former inmates and service providers had a very negative attitude toward former inmates' abilities to be successful in their reentry process. The use of these qualitative methods provided the needed support for both communicating the exact challenges faced and the discouragement felt by all participants in the reentry process. The research design was not exactly as the one conducted for this dissertation, but the qualitative methodology and data analysis are very similar. The



ability to focus on the first hand report of the barriers to successful reentry and to find similarities among all verbal reports in order to draw a consensus on the feelings or attitudes of former inmates was an important aspect of this dissertation. The key attributes of this article are very useful in the support of this dissertation's methodology, which desires to contribute to the field of research on former inmate reentry.

Phillips and Lindsay (2011) conducted a mixed methods research study to gain a better understanding of released inmates coping strategies. Their research question, "What themes describe how individuals cope with reentry from prison to society?" (Phillips and Lindsay, 2011, p.140). They reported their primary methodology was phenomenology as they focused on a group of individuals with a shared experience. As this article pertains to this dissertation the authors' use of qualitative methods was very similar to those proposed here, individual interviews with a small group of participants. Phillips and Lindsay (2011) interviewed 20 individuals who were currently reentering person after having been released and lived in a community for any length of time. The interview questions for the study were open-ended in order to allow the researcher to ask follow up questions and were designed to be unbiased so that the participants would not be led to answer in a certain way. Their research revealed that most participants lacked effective coping strategies and defaulted to avoidance of the problem. This research design was beneficial in laying out the pros and cons of individual interviews and ways to avoid potential researcher barriers. Phillips and Lindsay's (2011) work made clear that there are many factors to be addressed during and prior to the reentry process that might increase reentry success.

One of the many reported challenges of community reentry is drug and alcohol abuse. The work of Binswanger, Nowels, Corsi, Glanz, Long, Booth, and Steiner (2012) examined the risk of drug overdoses for released inmates. Binswanger et al. (2012) conducted twenty-nine semi-structured individual interviews to examine the challenge of remaining sober upon reentry to their community. After the conduction of the interviews the researchers transcribed all data and entered it into the software program Atlas.ti©, which assisted in the data analysis to find consistencies in the individual reports of experiences involving substance use. The researchers concluded from the interviews that former inmates were placed in multiple situations that exposed them to substance use and therefore made were extremely challenged to resist substance use. Some participants were successful in avoiding use and a list of aids was discussed in the article. The methodology is consistent with the format of this dissertation in gathering data through individual interviews and analyzing each interview for common themes in their reports. This research article is another good demonstration of how qualitative methodology and specifically, individual interviews are used for gaining data on personal subject matter. Binswanger et al.'s (2012) examination of the risk of overdose did not just impact the individual interviewed, but also that of future released inmates and the community that they enter.

### **Methodology Rationale**

Life is full of challenges many that are known because they are evident while other challenges have come to light through years of research. Research is conducted frequently because there is a pattern or need for clarification on a topic. The goal of this

dissertation was to understand in more detail the challenge a former inmate might face upon returning to their community and the specific challenge of being in a racially diverse environment. Observing behavior and reviewing other research conducted provide a clear pattern of how challenging the reentry process is for inmates that this dissertation topic has developed. The several studies discussed above all highlighted the methodology chosen for this dissertation, which was a qualitative methodology, specifically phenomenological. The goal of this dissertation was to give former inmates the opportunity to report directly their experiences of interacting with various races upon reentry into their communities and express whether or not this adds additional barriers or stress. The articles above each used a qualitative research approach to examine the prisoner reentry process and gain insight to the challenges that this population faces. Each article brought clarity in that allowing former inmates to discuss their experiences and study in-depth factors that influence their behaviors, provide essential support to the need for this dissertation. In reading how various researchers have used qualitative methods to understand former inmate experience the idea that qualitative measures offer unique and important insight to the field of study was reassuring. Qualitative methods allow for a more detailed approach to gain information that can be compared for similarity that will ideally lead to changes in behaviors, actions, and policies. Binswagner et al. (2011) and Gideon (2010) both provided great examples of how the use of individual interviews supports the challenges faced by inmates reentering their community. The data collected from the qualitative studies above has laid a necessary supportive foundation for this dissertation.

The methodology for this dissertation was designed to gather data on former inmates' challenges with racial interactions. Through the use of personal interviews, the data will be gathered and analyzed for similarities in experience and attitudes. The several articles above have provided an excellent example of the use of qualitative methodology in gathering and analyzing data to help provide an element of closure to the gap in the literature. The research conducted from articles such as Bowman and Travis (2012) provided a prime example of how useful self-reporting can be in understanding the experiences of former inmates and the challenges they face. Additionally, Binswanger et al. (2010) conducted individual interviews that assisted in gathering data in newly released inmates' experiences with accessing needed post incarceration services. This demonstrated the need for addressing the concept of barriers to reentry. The research design and appropriate methodology used in this dissertation demonstrated clarity in that only individual interviews would suffice to best explore the potential of interpersonal relational racial barriers upon reintegration into society. Phillips and Lindsay's (2011) used of the term phenomenology as the experience shared by a specific group of individuals helped to solidify the concept behind this dissertation's use of this methodology, as their research related to the belief that there was a distinct group of individuals, former inmates, that have experienced the challenges of community reentry. The literature has been an important resource for the concept of the importance and advantage of individual interviews for this special population of former inmates.

## Literature Summary

Through all of the various articles summarized in this chapter, one major theme was evident - more research is needed. Despite the many different approaches, areas of research, and methodologies used, there remains no single comprehensive understanding of the reentry process for newly released inmates. Therefore, that conclusion makes evident the need for this dissertation as another needed component of research on this topic. From the environment of prison to the communities that former inmates return, each stage can and often does overwhelm inmates. A secondary theme noted by the synthesis of the research was former inmates' frequent hopelessness in the process of reentry, especially noted through the on-going self-report of the inmates. The research of Phillips and Lindsay (2011), Lebel (2012), and Hlavka et al. (2015) all were prime examples of the self-report of individual inmates' frustrations with being successful in the community following incarceration. These articles also all highlighted the exponential increase in the numbers of individuals incarcerated and indicated that the rise has occurred since the 1970s through to the early 2000s. The high rate of incarcerated individuals has consequently led to a higher number of released individuals each year. Over 700,000 individuals are released each year (Petersilia, 2001). The number of released individuals coupled with the overwhelming challenges of reintegration is concerning and clearly needs to be addressed. For California inmates they have the additional barrier of racial segregation. The role of racial segregation in California prison as a management tool to decrease violence has a clear and documented negative impact on inmates (Trulson and Marquart, 2010, Lopez-Aguado, 2016a, and Walker, 2016). This

dissertation was an attempt to increase further understanding of the challenges faced in the reentry process in order to help assist in more successful re-integrations for these individuals. As previously mentioned, the more that is understood about the challenges faced, the better success there will be in addressing them, helping to reduce them, and ultimately increasing their success in living in society. The revolving door in and out of prison has become all too familiar to far too many former inmates, with over half returning to prison (Kubrin et al., 2007). Therefore, this cycle is not beneficial for society or for the individual caught in the cycle. All of the articles presented and the research conducted for this dissertation are proposed to stop the cycle, increase awareness, and create better policies for the criminal justice system.

The information known on the topic of rehabilitation and barriers faced by inmates returning to their community is fairly extensive. As discussed in each of the various articles presented above there are four main areas that are most noted and understood to be a challenging: housing, employment, social interactions, and avoidance of future criminal behavior (Taxman and Kras, 2016). One of the best-known researchers of California reentry is Joan Petersilia. Many of the articles that were cited within this literary review quoted the work of Petersilia researchers such as Lindsey (2009), and Morenoff and Harding (2014), and Lopez-Aguado (2016a, 2016b). Despite all the extensive research conducted on rehabilitation and the reentry process, there is a great deal of work to be done in examining all that occurs in order to truly understand what prohibits former inmates from remaining former inmates. Therefore, this research project should be conducted in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the

challenges faced, specifically addressing racial interactions. While, the research within the general field of rehabilitation is vast, no current research addresses interpersonal racial interactions. Racial interactions seem to be so significant and impactful during incarceration that one is naturally drawn to the conclusion that exploration of racial reintegration might add an additional barrier to reentry.

### **Summary**

The literary sources presented in this chapter have clearly defined and outlined many of the challenges that offenders face both during incarceration and following incarceration. The literature reviewed, made clear that former inmates face multiple challenges in their community, yet none of these researchers were able to focus on or articulate the challenges of racial reintegration. The segregation of the California prison system was clearly presented by Lindsey (2009), Walker (2016), and Lopez-Aguado (2016), who reported that there is likely no possibility of restructuring the system so that segregation is not an essential element of prison. However, there is a substantial lack of clarity at this point and time as to how this level of pro-longed segregation will influence an individual as they reenter their community. This study gives insight to an area that has not been well researched. The literary resources presented here have demonstrated that the reentry process is extremely challenging for individuals and that a high number of those released from prison will reoffend within a 3-year period (Serin et al., 2010 and Zhang et al., 2006). The most common areas of challenge listed were housing, employment, education, and substance abuse, almost every article presented in the literature review discussed these challenge but none hypothesized that racial relational

interactions maybe present a challenge. This current research study provides an opportunity to explore this part of community reentry and continue to give voice to former inmates and their experiences post incarceration.

The goal of Chapter 2 was to present a comprehensive understanding and review of all relevant literature on this dissertation topic which is post incarceration, racial integration. The literature has been summarized and each article examined for clarity of its role in relation to this study. There has also been an examination of literature related to the methodology of this study. All of these resources combined have provided the necessary backbone to explain why the research for this study will be conducted. The next chapter will be about presenting a clear and detailed approach to the methodology. The next chapter builds upon the literature review of Chapter 2, to develop relevant and necessary data to help in closing the research gap that exists. Chapter 3 will assist the reader in understanding exactly what will occur in order to gain the necessary data that will be analyzed in Chapter 4. This next chapter provides me an opportunity to explain how the information was gathered and synthesized in a manner that contributes to this field of study. Chapters 1 and 2 have provided a detailed view of why this study is needed and how this research may contribute to the larger body of work on racial segregation of inmates and the effects on reintegration. Chapter 3 explains exactly what will be contributed to the field of study, pending any and all significant results.



## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to provide insight on how racial segregation during incarceration might alter former inmates' post incarceration interactions with various races. The body of research clearly indicates that former inmates face multiple changes upon reentry to the community. Authors such as Binswanger et al. (2011, 2012), Petersilia (2001), Raphael (2011), and Schnittker and Massoglia (2015) have written about these challenges. In my review of the literature, I did not find a study concerning the potential barriers one might face due to prolonged segregation. In California, there has been a significant effort to release nonviolent offenders, which has led to a greater number of inmates reentering society (California Department of Corrections, 2013). In order to provide adequate support during inmate transition, there should be a clear understanding of the barriers faced by these former inmates. The goal of the research conducted in this study was to shed further light on barriers, specifically racial barriers related to living in a diverse culture, faced by former inmates after their release from prison.

The stated problem of this dissertation is perpetuated from the idea of gathering data through the use individual interviews which became a clear choice to fully understand their lived experience post incarceration. The stated problem addressed the potential challenges or barriers that former inmates face upon reentry to racially diverse communities after pro-longed segregation, individual interviews allowed them to speak about their experiences post incarceration and provided the necessary data to better

understand all potential challenges. Qualitative methodology involving individual interviews with a small sample were appropriate, I believe, in order to gain insight and identify any potential patterns in participants' recall of their experiences in their communities with various races.

Phenomenology is used to explore a shared experience by multiple individuals (Moustakas, 1994). The data for this methodology is commonly gathered through semi-structured individual interviews that allow participants to freely report his perspectives on the situation. Multiple research articles used qualitative methods specifically individual interviews, which assisted men in affirming the use of this methodology (Phillips and Lindsay, 2011; Lebel 2012; and Hlavka et al., 2015),. The goal of this study was to understand the challenges of former inmates from their first hand reports.

Phenomenology was the best methodology, I concluded, to allow the participants of this study to report their experiences first hand. The insights I gained from these first hand reports allowed me to see potential patterns in experience and identify better ways to handle similar situations in the future.

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to observe, listen, and gain an understanding of the participant's experience (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). My role was, thus, to perform all data collection and analysis. For this research project, I conducted, recorded, entered, and analyzed all data collected. The role of the researcher might initially appear simple and straightforward, but there are many challenges to the data collection process. It was important when conducting interviews that the I take responsibility in creating an environment that allowed the participants to

feel comfortable enough to openly share responses when being asked questions. A final and key role is to maintain ethical concerns that might have arisen both prior to and during the conduction of the interviews (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

Purposeful sampling, a common approach in qualitative studies (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002), to gather participants was used for this study. I screened for individuals who have spent 2 or more years in a California prison and who identify themselves as African-American, White, and Latino. Additionally, the sample size was 15 participants, a small sample size frequently used in qualitative studies (Mason, 2010). The setting occurred in interview rooms that were traditionally used to conduct therapy sessions or other forms of assessment interviews so that participants are familiar with the setting. Binswagner et al. (2011) also note of the environment when conducting research to increase safety and comfort for their participants.

Data for qualitative research is most commonly collected through written or oral presentation from the participant (Polkinghorne, 2005). For this dissertation, data was collected through oral presentation, individual face to face interviews. Each interview was recorded, and additional notes were taken during each of the semistructured interview questions. Each participant was interviewed in one session with a duration of 8 to 30 minutes.

The data was analyzed through review of both the audio recording and the transcription of each interview. I looked for matching words or synonyms in each interview question asked. All data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, which allowed me to organize data into appropriate columns and tabs, as necessary.

The trustworthiness of this study was demonstrated in the data collection and interview methods. I read each participant a set list of open-ended questions and asked clarifying questions only when I deemed it necessary. As Lietz, Langer, and Furman (2006) observed, one of the best ways to increase trustworthiness is to keep as accurate as possible to the participants' stated responses. The transcription of each individual interview served as an additional method to increase the trustworthiness of this study.

The protection of participants' rights is an important and challenging aspect of research. Orb et al. (2001) described many potential reasons for confidentiality to be broken and how discussion of certain topics might cause emotional harm to participants. I was clear from the start about the topic to be discussed, informed participants of mandatory reporting, and the risk of emotional upset that might occur. I kept the focus of the questions to a fact reporting versus a participant recalling of events.

The results of this study are presented in a manner that highlighted any consistencies found in each participant's report. Along with the summary, I used charts in which I listed the frequency of a word used to answer each question. The results of the data collect allowed me to easily identify potential similarities in former inmates' experience with different races upon community reentry.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

As stated in Chapter 1, the research question for this study was, In what ways does living in California state prison, a racially segregated environment, for 2 years or more influence African-American, White and Latino males' ability to interact with other races in a culturally diverse environment upon release? This question explored any potential barriers that former inmates faced with regard to racial interactions in a post incarceration community. Lindsey (2009), Walker (2016), and Lopez-Aguado (2016a) noted that California prisons are highly segregated for behavior management, which provides evidence showing that inmates live in segregated environments which prohibit their ability to interact with different races. They did not identify any specific race but rather reported that all inmates engage in segregation. My research question allowed me to examine and gain further understanding of the challenges that former African-American, White, and Latino inmates face upon reentry. More information about the barriers that former inmates face may provide those in the rehabilitation system with information they can use to ultimately increase former inmates' ability to successfully reenter society. The motive behind this research question was to gain understanding of inmate experience that might prohibit successful reentry.

This study was about understanding the phenomenon of post incarceration racial reintegration. In chapter two numerous articles examined the challenges of the reentry process for former inmates. These articles identified that employment, housing, sobriety, and high levels of re-offense were the primary stressors that inhibited former inmates' success in the community to which they were returned. While researchers were able to

continually support these challenges, none addressed how racial interactions might additionally prohibit community success. The examination of the racial interactions following incarceration have yet to be examined as an additional barrier for inmates to overcome. Therefore, that was the phenomenon explored and the subject to which I brought light, in order to allow other aspects of reentry challenges to be examined.

For this research study qualitative methodology was best suited to answer the research question, which focused on lived experience of an individual. Qualitative methodology allowed me to gather focused and often more thorough information from participants. As previous qualitative research has demonstrated, individual interviews have allowed the researcher to gather understanding of former inmates lived experiences. Researchers such as Binswagner et al. (2011 and 2012) conducted interviews with a small group of former inmates to understand their fears, challenges and successes during their reentry process. Additionally, Binswagner et al. (2011 and 2012) and Phillips and Lindsey (2011) have assisted in confirming that qualitative methods will be the most beneficial design for dealing with the stated problem of racial reentry challenges.

Qualitative research design provided an umbrella that several specific methodologies fall under. From these various methodologies, phenomenology became the most appropriate for this study. As discussed previously, phenomenology is primarily used to gather individual perspective on a shared experience. This study was about examining a shared experience that only affects former inmates. While other qualitative methodologies use individual interviews for data gathering, none focused on shared experience comparison the way that phenomenology has been shown to do. Grounded

theory and ethnography would have been other potential methodologies that could have been appropriate for this study. Ethnography seeks to look at customs of a particular people group or culture and prison is often seen as a specific culture. Grounded theory as well, offered a strong base to build the research study structure upon as this approach is about developing evidence to support a proposed theory. While each of these two methods offered a strong potential, phenomenology offered a uniqueness that the others did not, which was the ability to examine individual experience to understand the context of a whole group. The ability to provide individual participants the opportunity to share their perspective was key to showing the way to change. The data gathered from each individual had consistencies, a pattern that became clear and gave way to the need for a potential change in the area of rehabilitation.

The research question answered in this dissertation was about individual experience upon reentry to the community and how easily former inmates are able to interact with various races after prolonged incarceration. Therefore, the research design provided a structure that allowed first-hand reports of an experience to be the primary data collected; phenomenology gave this opportunity. As discussed in the section above, phenomenology was the most appropriate methodology and provided direct data, focused on a single group of individuals with a shared experience. Phenomenology's most common form of data collection is individual interviews with a small group of individuals. According to Creswell (2013) a minimum of ten individuals is needed for structural design. This study was conducted using individual interviews with 15 individuals, five from each major racial group incarcerated. The ability to collect detailed

interview responses from participants gave a solid foundation to build a potential consensus upon especially with multiple participants who reported the same or very similar challenges with various races. There are several other methodologies available that would have allowed for individual interviews or written responses to the research question but none are as focused on the individual and their personal experience. I wanted to look intently at how individuals have dealt with the challenge of reintegration specifically pertaining to racial relational interactions.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher I was both an observer and participant in this study. I was responsible for conducting each interview, which required that I observed by examining and taking notes of the answers. As well, I was a participant due to the fact that I did engage with participants by asking each interview question. Therefore I had to be aware of the participant's tone and body language to ensure that he was comfortable and did not feel threatened or unsafe in any way during the interview. This required that, I, the researcher be observant.

One of the main tasks for the researcher is to gather all data for analysis. The data collection for this study required that I asked all interview questions, recorded each interview, and took notes that would serve as an aid during analysis. The my ability to effectively connect with each participant in order to assure participants' full participation was very important in order to collect data that is as accurate as possible. Since the data collected is derived solely from interviews, my role in the interview process was essential to successful data collection.



For the validity of the research, any personal or professional relationships that would have interfered with the process of data collection and analysis were identified. I identified the potential participants that may be involved in this study, and there is no appearance of any conflict in my role or the participant's role. There was a potential that the participants might have been intimidated working with me due to the power differential caused by my educational standing. But that would only be due to the participant's previous experiences and not caused by the nature of the study itself. All participants in this study were volunteers from local organizations that work with parolees, consequently, I had minimal or no previous interactions with participants prior to the interview.

There was a potential bias for me due to personal interactions I have had with former inmates and observing how challenging community reentry is and how negative racial interactions affects them while in drug treatment. Due to this potential bias I managed it through the use of open-ended, non-leading interview questions. I carefully sought to identify other potential biases which might arise, but was unable to foresee other aspects that might interfere with the my ability to stay neutral during data gathering and analysis. The other aspect that could have created conflict was the participant's view of the power dynamic between themselves and the researcher. Therefore, I had to ensure that I presented myself as approachable and genuine in order to help participants feel valued and comfortable. I had a great deal of responsibility in conducting this research and had to be fully aware during the recruiting, interviewing, and data analysis of the study.

There were two clear ethical challenges that were present in this study, researcher bias and participant incentives. Researcher bias was discussed and explained previously as personal bias due to previous exposure to the former inmate experience. This bias had the potential to interfere with my interactions with participants when asking interview questions and during data analysis. I had to guard against the bias by using open-ended questions that allowed the participant to freely describe his experiences and behaviors. Managing bias during the analysis phase required that I use qualitative software to assist in comparing participant reporting as a means of reducing misinterpretation. The second possible challenge was providing participants with incentives for their participation in the study. In order to increase attendance and engagement in this study, I offered a 5 dollar gift card to a local community shop, Starbucks, McDonald's or Subway. Several other studies discussed in chapter two used gift card incentives for participants' engagement in their studies. However, there was a risk when offering such incentives, as they may be seen as manipulation or bribery for participation in the study. That is why the gift card was no more than 5 dollars and was given to all participants at the beginning of their interview. Both of these ethical concerns have been well defined in this section and their manageability clearly addressed.

## **Methodology**

### **Setting and Sample**

The sample for this study was collected from various community based organizations (CBO) throughout the California San Francisco Bay Area that serve individuals who are currently or have been on parole. Also, I attempted to connect with

local parole and probation offices to inform them about the study and ask to post fliers in their offices or give fliers to their probationers. In the same manner I contacted the CBOs and asked to post fliers and meet with their staff to inform them of the study and asked that they make all clients who have a history of incarceration aware of the opportunity to engage in the study. Stark and Trinidad (2007) found that in phenomenological studies, the sample needs to have had a similar shared experience. Therefore, recruiting participants from CBOs that provide services to former inmates ensured that individuals have had a shared experience. The recruitment methods allowed me to have interactions with the needed sample size. Participation in the study was voluntary and did not affect their standing in the community or with the CBOs they were engaging with for services. Engaging individuals from local CBOs and parole/probation officers who are providing services to former inmates increased the number of individuals who participated and decreased the extent to which I had to connect with additional sources in order to develop a sufficient sample for data collection and analysis.

The goal of this study was to understand the influence that the prison environment has on an individual after incarceration, specifically examining racial interactions. Therefore, the chosen population for this study was individuals who have served two or more consecutive years in a California State prison and were released from prison to a community in California. I decided to work with individuals who have been released from prison in order to understand how segregation while in prison might have created additional barriers to community reentry. The choice to start with individuals post incarceration allowed me the ability to ask how former inmates view various races due to

segregation and also allowed me to gain insight into their thoughts and feelings while working and living daily with various races. The criteria for participants to participate in this study were few: they must have lived in a California State prison for 2 or more years, no criminal record for excessive violence, and may not have been convicted of any racially motivated crimes. These few but extremely relevant criteria easily allowed me to recruit appropriate participants.

The sample size for this study was greatly influenced by two factors; the structure of the methodology and the need to gather sufficient evidence to draw a conclusion. The methodology identified for this study was phenomenology which limits sample size to no greater than 15 individuals (Stark and Trinidad, 2007) and for this study I interviewed 15 males, five from each major racial groups: African-American, White, and Latino, who had served two or more years in a California state prison. The major racial groups identified in California state prisons are White, African-American, and Latino (Sakala, 2014). With 15 as the maximum sample size and the three most prominent races in California prisons, interviewing five former inmates from each of these racial groups was the most appropriate.

Identifying the appropriate sample size for this study required the examination of the total population of released offenders in California per year, which in 2010 was 123,578 individuals (Office of Research Offender Information Reports, 2011) as well as the adherence to the structure of the chosen methodology. The identified sample size for this population was 15, which aligned with the most common sample size needed for an effective study using phenomenology. The main motivation behind sample selection was

to ensure that the data collected was substantial enough to contribute to this field of study and assist in closing the identified gap in the literature. The small yet sufficient sample of 15 provided evidence and light to an area of study that has not yet been examined in the field of rehabilitation.

The criteria for this study was fairly broad because the pool of individuals was already narrowed and self-selected. However, there are a few key criteria that had to be met to ensure that the data collected was appropriate and related to the topic. Each participant in this study was a male who has been incarcerated for 2 or more years in a California state prison. This study required individuals to self-identify as White, African-American, or Latino during their time incarcerated. The participants could have a criminal history of any number of charges with the exception of charges of extreme violence or racially motivated crimes, which will disqualify them from participating in the study. I chose these two limitations for the safety of myself and to reduce potential bias towards various races before entering prison.

The sample for this study was African-American, White, and Latino males between the ages over the age of 18. All committed a felony crime that resulted in serving a sentence in a California state prison for 2 or more years. The range of crimes committed varied because the focus of the study was not their criminal offense, but rather their reentry process. Identifying these key characteristics of the sample were few and direct. As mentioned, I worked with individuals that served a minimum of a 2 year prison sentence and had not committed any extremely violent or racially motivated crimes.

There are no specific features of the sample that distinguished them from all others in the population of former inmates.

The procedure for recruiting participants took over a year to complete, I had initially anticipated that it would only take 30-60 days. I worked with local community organizations that provide services to those who are currently or have been on parole. These community programs were parole offices, drug and alcohol treatment programs, universities, and local counseling centers. I posted fliers at these various locations and spoke with the service providers about the study so that they could refer individuals. Additionally, I made personal presentations to various community resources so as to spark the interest of potential participants. Individuals interested in participating were asked to call a designated number or connect with me via the community resource representative. Those responded to my flier or presentation were asked four questions:

1. Did you serve 2 or more consecutive years in prison?
2. Please identify your racial ethnicity as they reported in prison.
3. Were any of your convictions for a serious violent offense or racially motivated crime.
4. Would you be willing to engage in an hour-long interview to answer questions about your experiences with various races following incarceration?

If they answered all of the questions in accordance with the study requirements then I arranged to meet with them at a community organization that they have previously attended or a local library room in order to increase their comfort with the process.

## **Data Collection**

In qualitative research one of the main forms of data collection is interviewing. Data collection for this study occurred as a result of the review of the audio recordings of the face-to-face interviews. The goal of phenomenological research is to create an environment that the participant can openly share their story (Stark and Trinidad Brown, 2007). This research study created a structure that gave the participants the opportunity to report their experience of post incarceration interactions with various races. Therefore, I asked a series of ten questions related to former inmates' experiences with various races prior to, during, and following incarceration, primarily focusing on post incarceration interactions (see Appendix A). The interview questions that were asked had not been developed from a previous instrument or research study. Due to the fact that there is no previous research studies that address racial interactions post incarceration, following my review of the associated literature, I developed my own open-ended questions that allowed the participant to openly share their experiences. In addition to the open-ended questions, I collected general demographic information on each participant. The questions were designed to gather data for comparison analysis, similar studies, such as those conducted by Binswagner et al. (2011 and 2012), Bowman and Travis (2012), and Phillips and Lindsay (2011) have demonstrated the effectiveness of this framework. Each of these studies used researcher developed interview questions to gain insight into former inmate experience in the community. While these studies addressed varying challenges, the structure of the data collection was very similar. I have developed a set of questions to understand former inmate experience. These questions were reviewed by three

qualitative researchers who were not familiar with the population or research study to identify any potential leading or bias within each question. The feedback from these researchers was reviewed and changes were made in accordance with consistencies in their responses. Each reviewer was provided with a form that reviewed any bias or other areas of weakness (see appendix C).

The research question for this study was about understanding personal experience. In order to accomplish this I designed interview questions that brought forth such insight. As discussed above, the use of phenomenological methods is about gathering participant experience. The experience examined in this study was former inmates' feelings, attitudes, and interactions with various races post incarceration. Therefore, I asked a series of questions during 8 to 30 minute face-to-face interview that gathered participant responses to their experience. After the interviews were conducted with 15 individuals there was a sufficient amount of data to analyze for similarity in the individuals' reports to conclude the degree to which interactions with various races upon community release was or was not a barrier for former-inmates. This research study did not require the use and development of multiple instruments but rather appropriate and well suited interview questions that allowed the participants to state their individual lived experiences.

The data collection instrument for this study was semi-structured interview questions. I developed the set of interview questions as listed above. As I have discussed above, there has not been research conducted that examines racial interactions following incarceration; therefore, there was not an appropriate instrument to build upon. Qualitative research appears to frequently require that the researcher develop their own



data collection tool. For this qualitative study, I have developed a brief series of questions that the participants answered during their interview. The interview questions were focused on exploring the lived experiences of each former inmate specific to his racial interactions following incarceration. Prior to conducting the study, I submitted my interview questions to three qualitative researchers to review and give feedback. I used an interview question rubric developed by Jacquelyn White and Marilyn K. Simon (2016) to assist in reviewing and providing standardized feedback. This feedback greatly assisted me in refining and developing questions that were truly focused on the participants' feelings and experiences and were not lead by potential bias or assumption by myself as the researcher.

Content validity for this instrument was demonstrated at multiple levels. The first level, as previously described, came through the peer-review of the interview questions. Secondly, validity was noted by the audio taping of each interview and these recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist who was not previously connected to the study. Qualitative studies rely on trustworthiness, which is about credibility, transferability, and dependability (Creswell, 2013 and Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers, 2002). A third validation to the interview questions was similar responses by each participant during the interview. Similar participant responses to the questions were of great support to the effectiveness of the developed questions.

This study only required one form of data collection to answer the research question, in what ways does living in California State prison, a racially segregated environment, for 2 years or more influence one's ability to interact with other races in a

culturally diverse environment upon release? The identified collection instrument was individual interviews. Qualitative analysis most frequently relies upon interviews as a primary form of data collection and more specifically phenomenology relies on individual storytelling through interview, art, or writing (Polkinghorne, 2005). Therefore, the primary source for data collection was through individual interviews. There were 15 total interviews conducted in this study. Each interview was scheduled and conducted by myself. Interviews were conducted within a 30 day period depending upon the availability of the individual participants. Interviews were approximately thirty minutes and there was only one interview conducted per participant. Each interview was audio-recorded and in addition I took detailed notes to assist in the data analysis process. The recruitment for this study was on-going until the appropriate number of participants are gathered and interviewed.

At the conclusion of each interview participants were given the opportunity to make any further statements about their post incarceration experiences with various races. Participants were then given the chance to ask questions of the researcher as they pertain to the research study. After all questions were asked and answered participants were thanked for their participation and time. Participants were assured that their responses and other personal identifying information would be coded so they were kept anonymous. Participants were provided with the gift card and escorted out of the office and building.

The design of this study was to conduct one interview, which could be up to 60-minutes, with each participant. Therefore, there was no need for future contact or more interviews unless clarification is necessary for data analysis. I did not foresee the need to

have further contact with participants but is aware that member checking (Harper and Cole, 2012) might be necessary if there are any responses that would be considered major outliers. A major outlier for this study would have been responses to the interview questions that did not in anyway report similar experiences as others in the study have reported. I determined the necessity for follow up after all interviews have been transcribed and the initial data analysis had occurred. My desire was to collect all necessary responses at the initial interview in order to limit the need to re-engage participants as there could be challenges for participants to be available on multiple occasions.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The goal of this research study was to gain insight into the lived experiences of former inmates through the use of individual interviews. Therefore, the data collected identified potential barriers faced by former inmates as they racially reintegrate into society. This study used one primary data collection instrument, individual interviews with consistent researcher-developed questions. I have prepared the data for appropriate analysis. I proceeded past the collection to analysis by imploring the use of a transcriptionist to type each interview. I needed to be able to read through each interview question response word by word to identify similar terms. The key to successfully working with the data lied in both the transcription and the notes taken during the interviews. These two tools allowed me to accurately analyze and summarize the data collected. While the data collected was from a large number of participants and was only ten questions long, I had to implore due diligence to objectively look at each participant's

response to each question for accurate and unbiased responses. The ability to work with reports from various individuals gave me insight to their experiences and lead to the ability to identify themes and either a shared, or lack of shared, experiences.

The appropriate method for data analysis was coding. I gathered all transcribed responses to each interview question for review and coding. The goal of coding the data was to identify similar themes in each response to each question. The process of coding was very detailed and I had to expend a great deal of time to closely reading and comparing responses. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), defined coding as the ability to retrieve and organize the data collected. That was exactly what occurred in this study as each question was examined individually in order to highlight the stated feelings that former inmates had during their community re-integration. Bradley, Curry, and Devers (2007) and Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), have both noted that I needed to be clear on my biases and presuppositions before the coding was conducted. The coding of the research was driven by the themes identified once I was able to thoroughly read through each participant's interview response to each question. The coding process gave me the needed ability to truly understand the former inmate experience in reentering a racially diverse community by coding emotions and descriptive wording. In addition, coding provided concrete data to draw any potential conclusions on shared experiences among former inmates.

I used both Microsoft Word and Excel to organize all data collected. The use of these software programs allowed me to be organized with a specific structure in order to effectively identify the key words for comparison. The limitation of the software was that

I had to list the words or synonyms to locate, as the program did not auto populate what should be found within the data collected. While the use of software enabled me to process and analyze the data, there were some limitations that needed resolution independently, such as the creation of key words and identifiers. This ability to sort through the data without my leading, was of great advantage in saving time and, as already stated, decreased potential researcher bias during the analysis process.

Since the data collected only came from one source, individual interviews, the chance of discrepancies are low. However, there was a chance that during data analysis there was a large discrepancy between each individual report or that all reports but one may be similar to each other. As the anticipation of what participants reported as their post incarceration experience is challenging, there were some differences between reports. All discrepancies between individual reports, were openly and honestly reported during the results and dealt with the consequences related to the affects the study. Any major discrepancies in this study could have potentially be very harmful to the overall purpose of the study as they could lead to a potentially inconclusive study and give support to the potential that racial interactions did not add any challenges or barriers to community reentry.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

One aspect of trustworthiness is noted in the credibility of a study. For this study I built in several factors that increased the credibility of this study. These components were: peer-review, audio-recording, and field notes. Each of these factors occurred at various stages of the data collection and analysis process to increase the validity of the

results of this study. Peer-review was used to review and give feedback to the researcher developed interview questions to address any potential bias or participant leading. Audio recording was essential in ensuring that what participants say was clearly heard and transcribed for data analysis to code and draw themes. Along with the audio recordings, field notes were taken and applied as necessary to the data analysis to provide clarification for any responses that might be unclear during the analysis phase of the study (Creswell, 2013). All of these validation methods were employed to increase the credibility of this study.

There were three essential forms of dependability in this study. I have already highlighted them previously during the discussion on credibility but will discuss them in further detail here. The reliability of this study was demonstrated in audio-recordings, typed transcriptions of the interviews, and peer-reviewed feedback on the interview questions. These three measures were designed to provide evidentiary support to the lived experiences of participants and how their post incarceration racial interactions present a potential challenge to their community success. The ability to provide transcribed data greatly increased reliability as evidence that the data was not been altered. Additionally, transcription allowed the researcher to gather information from participant's statements and not simply what was observed or noted.

The ability to replicate a qualitative study was important in checking for researcher bias. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that when the same results can be determined by multiple researchers then the study has meet objectivity. For this study I provided a detailed step-by-step procedures for how I conducted data collection and

analysis. These steps were identifying appropriate participants, conducting individual interviews, transcribing each interview, and then coding data based off of the identified themes in participant responses. If other researchers are able to read and understand the procedures of the study, they will be able to successfully complete the study and gather similar results. The ability of other researchers to replicate this study is very important in continuing to build support and establishing trustworthiness in this research.

The coding for this study, as in all qualitative studies, was essential for assigning appropriate themes to truly understand the data collected. The process of coding, as previously discussed in detail, highlights the importance of carefully reviewing each individual response to each interview question to truly identify the participant's stated experience. My goal was to be able to successfully code every response to each question to successfully obtain saturation. The ability to intra code the data allowed me to compare participant responses and provided me with the evidence to support the hypothesis that segregation leads to additional challenges upon release from prison. If I gain saturation from intra coding, then I am able to ensure trustworthiness within the study.

### **Ethical Procedures**

All participants in this study signed a detailed consent form that detailed their right to participate and have access to the finalized results of the study. Participants have the right to not participate in the study. If at any point in the interview process a participant did not feel comfortable and communicated their desire to no longer participate, then the interview process stopped immediately and they were allowed to leave. I did not foresee any potential areas of harm that will come from participation;

however, the discussion of personal experiences can be difficult for an individual.

Therefore, a list of local therapeutic low-cost services was available to each participant

The proposed research study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) upon the final approval of my dissertation committee. As detailed in this chapter, the IRB received a completed application submitted by me that informed them of all points of participant engagement and how the participants' rights and privacies were protected. I sent the step-by-step process of data collection and all documents that will be seen by the participants. These documents included the created flier, interview questions (appendix A), and consent form. The actual data collection for this study did not begin until the IRB had received, reviewed, and granted approval for this study.

The recruiting process for this study included a flier that will give general information about the study as well as my contact number. Since I was working with a three racial groups, that necessary information was clearly stated on the flier. I did not foresee any potential ethical concerns with the flier or its circulation. The other part of the recruitment process was a brief phone or in person screening to ensure that participants had served a minimum of a 2-year prison sentence in a California prison and to state the crime committed for which they were incarcerated. I did my best to cautiously ask all questions and be sensitive to the responses. Again, I did not feel that this was a potential ethical concern but rather an appropriate caution for both potential participants and myself to ensure everyone's safety.

I worked with several CBOs and government reporting centers to advertise for this study. These organizations were contacted through phone and/or email to gain



permission to hang fliers to recruit participants. Pertaining to each participant, they were required to sign an informed consent form. This consent form reviewed the purpose of the study, procedural process of the data collection, the fact that the study was voluntary, contact information if they have future questions, risks of participation, and finally a section in which they acknowledge their understanding of the study and willingness to participate. This document was presented and signed by each participant at the start of the study. If they did not feel comfortable signing the informed consent, then they would not be able to participate in the study as their consent and signature were prerequisites of participation in the study.

Data collected was confidential. I assigned each participant a number one through 15 after I finished all interviews. Since complete anonymity was impossible due to the fact that they needed to sign the informed consent document, however all of their personal information were confidential. Therefore, the use of assigned numbers allowed me to present statements made by the participants without disclosing their name and potentially compromising their safety or current community standing in any way.

The collection and storing of participant data was very important and challenging. I recorded all interviews using three separate audio recording devices to ensure that they were indeed recorded. The interview data was stored in a locked box to ensure this information was not lost or accessed by anyone other than myself. After the collection of all interviews I submitted them to a transcriptionist to be transcribed. The transcribed files were kept on a password protected portable storage drive. This portable storage drive is also the only place that all data analysis was kept. I also backed up data on a

password protected storage cloud, dropbox. The results of the study were presented to the dissertation committee through tables and narrative descriptions. The interviews and data analysis will be stored for 2 years and then erased.

All collected data is stored on the password protected portable storage drive for up to five years, per the IRB requirement. The data was only viewed and accessible by transcriptionist, the committee members, and myself. The transcriptionist was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement,

In examining other potential ethical challenges, beyond what has already been addressed throughout this chapter, I do not foresee other potential risks. The use of incentives was implored in this study but should not cause any concern for bribery or payment for participation. The amount of the gift cards given was only 5 dollars and was presented at the start of each interview, whether or not a participant completes the entire interview.

The results of this study is displayed through the use of tables and text descriptions. Tables presented the change in views, comfort with other races, and previous exposure to segregation. The use of tables aided in providing a visual demonstration of the major themes and the frequency of their appearance in the interview process. I used participant statements in the data analysis portion of this dissertation to support the themes that have been drawn from reviewing each interview. Additional summary and visual depictions were used as necessary based on the participants' responses and the summary of the pertinent themes. I was able to concisely demonstrate

the conclusions of the study through the use of table for ease of analysis and clearly communicated my efforts to organize the data collected.

### **Summary**

In this chapter I have discussed in detail how the data will be collected and analyzed. The challenge that former inmates face upon reentering society has been written upon in numerous research articles as discussed in Chapter 2 but in this chapter I have discussed the process I will go through to gather an understanding of racial relational interactions. The ability to individually interview each participant and provide them space to openly discuss their post incarceration experiences with various races provided a new set of data to the field of rehabilitation that has not previously been explored. Through the use of phenomenology, the hope was that former inmates were given a voice regarding the challenges faced as a result of the racially segregated environment of prison. The data analysis portion of the chapter detailed the exact steps that I took to establish themes and truly relate the former inmate experience through the use of thick descriptions. I have clearly detailed and described the benefits and challenges that will arise during data collection and analysis. This chapter clearly details the fact that phenomenological research requires an open, safe environment for the participant and a skillful, aware researcher in order to produce the best results. I have clearly communicated the efforts I went through to recruit, screen, prepare, and thank participants for their participation. An essential part of the methodology was the trustworthiness and how it will be established. As the researcher, I have a responsibility to be mindful of my biases and presence during both data collection and analysis. The

methodology of this chapter has been well detailed and has clearly presented the idea that the use of individual interviews will yield a necessary understanding of former inmate experience.

In this chapter, I have addressed the specifics of data collection and concise data analysis. The next chapter, Chapter 4, will focus on the analysis of the data collected through in-depth individual interviews. This upcoming chapter will also provide a detailed discussion on the background of each participant, the themes found through participant report, and the conclusion of the collected data.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

The research question I sought to answer in this study was, In what ways does living in the California State prison system, a racially segregated environment, for 2 years or more influence one's ability to interact with other races in a culturally diverse society upon release? Through individual interviews I hoped to gain insight and understanding as to ways that prolonged segregation may or may not create reentry barriers for those who were formerly incarcerated. In Chapter 1, I presented multiple resources (Binswanger et al., 2011, 2012; Petersilia, 2001; Raphael, 2011; Schnittker & Massoglia, 2015) that highlighted the challenges former inmates face upon release and why many are ultimately not successful in their reentry process. I designed this study to examine potential challenges or barriers that that former inmates face upon reentry to the community, specific to racial re-integration post incarceration .

The data collection process for this study proved to be very challenging. There were two specific barriers I faced. Those barriers were the posting of my flier and a lack of response to the flier. I had initially planned to gain approval from various community-based organizations to post my recruitment flier on their community announcement boards. However, staff at several of the organizations refused to allow me to post my flier due to state contracts that they held. These staff said that posting anything to do with research would be a violation of their respective contracts. They reported that their contract stated that they cannot conduct research with their clients. I was able to obtain access at some organizations to post my flier, but I did not gain the potential interest in

my study that I anticipated. I, therefore, deemed a change to be necessary. I submitted a request to Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to alter my recruitment method in order to conduct a presentation at various locations where group activities were held. I believed that this modification would likely provide me with the opportunity to present to those who had previously been incarcerated. For each organization in which I was allowed to present, I had to gain written documentation and submitted that documentation to the IRB for approval before making presentations.

Initial participant contact happened in varying ways as well. I had initially anticipated that each participant would see the flier and call the number listed. However, only two participants contacted me via the telephone. One participant volunteered to serve as a participant in the study when I had inquired if he would post my flier at his community organization. Three participants were referred by community members who were aware of my study. I recruited the other 12 through my community organization presentations. The process of engaging individuals and organizations in my study proved to be a much greater challenge than I had initially anticipated.

Additionally, the interview stage of my research proceeded in a different way than expected. Each interview took no more than 30 minutes, which was half of the time that I had posted on the flier.. While each interviewee was able to answer the questions I posed, some participants needed further clarification in order to answer certain questions. Therefore, I had to re-explain the questions or ask further questions for clarification before giving my responses. I had anticipated that participants would have more to say

about their post incarceration experiences. While this did not change the design of the study, it was different from what I anticipated.

The overall design of the study did not change significantly from design to implementation. I was able to successfully complete the data collection, evaluation and summary process as I had initially proposed. The challenge was in collecting data, which was more difficult than expected.

### **Pilot Study**

I did not conduct a pilot study this research. In consultation with various researchers about this project and its design, I was advised that it was not necessary to conduct a pilot study. While a pilot study is often used to ensure that the structure and execution of the interview process is appropriate, it was clear to me and those that I consulted that the study design did not require that I pilot the study process. To ensure validity of the instrument used for data collection, I reached out to three doctoral level researchers who have participated in the oversight and engagement of other qualitative studies and asked for feedback on the interview questions, but no pilot study was conducted using the proposed interview questions.

### **Setting**

The setting of each interview was a private room at a community location that was convenient for each participant. These rooms were at a local library or drug and alcohol treatment center. Each room used to conduct the interview contained comfortable chairs to increase participants' comfort level and a table for the recording devices. Participants were asked to sign a consent form for the recording. The selected rooms, I

believe, provided easy access for participants to enter and leave with discretion.

Additionally, rooms were spacious, well-lit, and quiet so that participants would not be distracted or disrupted during the interview.

It is challenging to identify any specific personal or organizational conditions that might have influenced participants and their experience during the interviews. In their interviews, participants seemed to be relaxed, engaged in answering the questions, and open about their experiences. Seven of 15 the participants were enrolled in drug and alcohol treatment programs at the time I recruited them. For their convenience, I met with them in a private room at the center where they were receiving treatment. It is possible that use of this location could have influenced these individuals' participation in the study. If these individuals were not enrolled in treatment at the time I presented, it is likely that they may have not participated in the study. The other participants who engaged in my study had a connection to community members with knowledge of my study who shared information about the research study with their friends or acquaintances. I believe that the setting in which the interviews took place did not affect participant response as further reflection and analysis showed a great deal of similarity in participant responses. Therefore, it does not appear that personal or organizational conditions created any interference or influence in the data collection.

### **Demographics**

The design of this study limited the demographic diversity of study participants. The participants pooled for this study were all men who had served a minimum of 2 consecutive years in a California state prison. The racial composition of the study was



African-American, White, and Latino, with five participants from each racial group. All participants were over the age of 18, with the specific age range from early 30s to early 60s. The income levels varied as some participants were enrolled in a drug and alcohol program at the time of the interview, which limited their ability to work freely in the community while others had well-established jobs which paid well above minimum wage. At the time of the interview, all participants were employed in full-time, blue-collar jobs. As the primary focus of this research was on race and gender, I did not collect other demographic information.

The demographic data collected for this study was very minimal, as there were few data points that were relevant to the study. Therefore the key demographics that I collected were in regard to gender, race, and age. All participants in this study had to identify as male and have served a minimal 2-year prison term. I collected data regarding participants' race because it was required that individuals identify with one of three racial groups: African-American, Latino, or White. I also confirmed that all participants were over the age of 18. The actual age of each participant ranged from early 30s to early 60s. I did not collect data on participants' socioeconomic, marital status, family history, and education level, as those factors were not relevant to the study. I also wanted to obtain limited demographic data in order to maintain participant anonymity. I did not want engagement in this study to compromise participants' current lifestyles in any way; therefore, limiting the data collected on each participant ensured greater a likelihood that they could not be identified.

### **Data Collection**

The phenomenological approach to data collection comes through discovery of a shared social experience (Patton, 2002), which requires a collection method that allows individuals to share their experiences. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were used as the data collection process for this study. Specifically, 15 individual, in-person interviews were conducted over the course of eight months, between March 11, 2017 through November 10, 2017. These interviews consisted of ten open-ended questions that focused on racial interactions pre, during and post incarceration. The length of the interviews ranged from 8 minutes to 30 minutes. Each interview was recorded. The advantage of conducting in-person interviews is that it allowed me to clearly hear each participant but it also provided an opportunity to observe any physical responses to the interview questions. After each interview was conducted, the recordings were sent to a transcriptionist to be transcribed. The transcriptions provided the written data to be analyzed.

Phenomenological studies rely on the expression of individual story telling in relation to a shared phenomenon. Creswell (2013) reported that phenomenology primarily uses individual interviews to collect data. Therefore, I conducted 15 individual interviews to gather data on their shared experiences of racial reintegration post incarceration . I interviewed five male individuals from each major racial group incarcerated in California state prisons, African-American, White and Latino.

The collection instrument used for this study was a set of ten open-ended interview questions. The frequency of use for this instrument was 15; I conducted 15

individual interviews in order to gain equal perspectives from five individuals from each major racial group incarcerated. The location and duration varied for each interview. The design of the questions was open-ended; therefore, it allowed for each participant's response to vary in length. The duration ranged from 8 minutes to 30 minutes. The location also varied based on what was most accessible for each participant. Four participants were interviewed at a drug and alcohol program located in Oakland, CA. One participant met with me at a library in San Jose, CA and the other ten participants were interviewed at a drug and alcohol treatment center in Santa Cruz, CA. As discussed previously, all locations provided a private room with a table and chairs for both the participant and myself.

The data was recorded on three separate voice recorders in each interview. The recorders varied in style and features, one recorder was a small thumb drive, the second a mini recorder and the third was the digital voice recorder on my personal mobile device. The reason for multiple devices was to ensure that each interview could be fully captured in a single meeting time with each participant. The recording devices were placed on the middle of the table between myself and the participant and were turned on at the start of the interview with mention to the participant that I would start the recording. At the end of the interview, I turned all three off while stating to the participant that I was now stopping the recording. Each of the recording devices allowed me to title the interviews so that the data recorded could be organized and easily accessible to me. It also allowed me to easily email each recording to the transcriptionist.

There were no variations made to the data collection, as was presented in chapter three. I conducted 15 total interviews with the ten questions developed to analyze racial reintegration post incarceration. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to analyze each individual response to the questions asked during the interview.

Additionally, there were no unusual circumstances encountered during data collection. All participants reported that they experienced racial segregation during incarceration. However, there was some variation in participants' responses about the degree that it influenced their reentry process. The specific responses are reviewed in detail through each interview summary and anomalies or major discrepancies are discussed below.

### **Interview Summaries**

Participant 1 was a White male in his mid 40s and reported that he identified as “white” during his periods of incarceration. During the interview he appeared comfortable in responding to each of the ten questions asked. He was able to provide a response to each question and clearly recalled and communicated his personal post incarceration experiences. Participant 1 stated that prison is indeed a segregated environment and that interactions with various races are prohibited. He reported that during his last prison sentence he became a Christian and that he started to change his views and interactions with other races. Since his last release from prison he reported that he interacts equally with all races and without hesitation. He also stated that his wife is “Hispanic” so he frequently engages with the Hispanic community. He did state that

prison segregation can change an individual but that he no longer allows that environment to influence his views of the races.

Participant 2 was a Latino male in his early 40s. He stated that he identified as a Latino male during incarceration. He was able to thoroughly respond to each interview question asked. He affirmed the experience of segregation during incarceration but reported that it had very little impact on him post incarceration. He, also, stated that growing up he lived in neighborhoods that were predominately Latino, but as an adult he moved to a predominantly White neighborhood. Throughout the interview participant 2 was thoughtful in his responses, but struggled to clearly articulate his point of view. Overall, participant 2 felt that being incarcerated did not alter his view or ability to interact with various races he noted that he is a bit more aware of his surroundings. Participant 2 also recalled that living in the prison environment required that he comply with segregation and racial structure, but stated that he did not carry this mentality out into the community. He stated that he attributes his stubbornness and church influence to his ability to remain unbiased toward various races.

Participant 3 was a Latino male in his mid 40s and identified as a Latino during incarceration. Participant 3 was easily understood in his responses to all questions asked and he was able to successfully articulate his experience and perspective of racial interactions. He reported that the prison environment has altered his views of other races, specifically Whites. He reported growing up in a primarily Latino neighborhood but that he never had issues with other races. He further stated that prior to prison he interacted with all races with no stated issues. Participant 3 described his incarceration as having a

very big impact on the way that he views and interacts with various races. He stated that he now is very untrusting of all people but specifically feels most reserved with Whites. Based on his interactions during prison, he now feels most uncomfortable with Whites. He clarified to say that their superior attitude makes them disrespectful toward others and goes against his view of how he learned to interact with people, especially during incarceration.

Participant 4 was a White male in his 40s. He did not identify with a specific race during incarceration but rather reported that he identified as a Norteño, which is one of the main Latino prison gangs. Participant 4 was initially very reserved about participating as he stated there are things that he has been a part of he can not discuss. I reassured him that I would only be asking about his perspectives and feelings about racial interactions and additionally that he was welcome to decline to answer any questions that caused him discomfort during the interview. He was able to provide thoughtful feedback for each question asked. He reaffirmed the racial divide that occurs during incarceration and stated that since he has been out for over ten years he does not struggle with interacting with various races. Participant 4 recalled that he did initially have challenges interacting with various races upon initial release from prison and said that he still feels guarded around individuals that he identifies as “southsiders”. Overall, participant 4 was able to engage successfully by responding to all questions asked during the interview and seemed to be a bit less tense by the end of the interview.

Participant 5 was a White male in his early 40s who identified as a Southern, a gang member associated with the gang Surenno, during his incarceration. He reported

being raised in several different areas that allowed him to interact with Latino and African Americans. Participant 5 was very open and provided in-depth information on his experiences during and post incarceration. It was clear that he felt the racism and segregation of the prison environment, but that in the end it was beneficial to him. Due to his specific experiences while incarcerated he was able to interact with various races and develop positive lasting relationships with individuals from all races. He stated that some of his best friends now are individuals from vary different ethnic and racial backgrounds. He did state that the prison environment has given him a strong dislike and distrust of Whites. He reported that he witnessed many behaviors and attitudes from Whites that have led him to feel very guarded. Participant 5 had a very unique outlook on his incarceration experience and reported a very positive post incarceration view of most races.

Participant 6 was a White male in his late 40s. He stated that he identified his race as “white” during incarceration. Participant 6 reported that he grew up in a racially diverse community and was friends with individuals from all races. Participant 6 was highly engaged through out the interview and was able to answer each question. He was very clear that the prison environment is not only segregated but he experienced it as racist. He stated that being white in prison was challenging because there was so much animosity toward whites. The incarceration experience has altered participant 6’s view of races but in a positive way. He feels that he is now more motivated to show kindness to people of other races because of the way he was forced to negatively treat other races while incarcerated. Participant 6 reported that he has made strides to be mindful of

experiences during incarceration and he feels very determined to live his life in a way that demonstrates a focus on humanness and kindness towards others. He said that he has worked hard over the last 10 years to overcome the mindsets and attitudes that he once had due to imprisonment.

Participant 7 was an African-American male in his early 40s. He stated he identified as African-American during incarceration. Participant 7 reported that he grew up in a community of South-Central Los Angeles that was primarily African-American and Mexican. He stated that his neighborhood was segregated by race and gangs but that did not affect him personally until he started to enter the justice system. He reported having friends that were Hispanic and that his best friend was Hispanic. Participant 7 recalled a specific situation when he was in juvenile hall and saw his best friend and how his friend ignored him due to the segregated environment. Participant 7 was very clear that his incarceration experience had changed his views drastically. He reported that due to the things he witnessed and he did in prison, he no longer feels as open to all races. He stated that he is now very reserved in his interactions with Whites because of their actions and attitudes he observed while incarcerated, he did not provide extensive details. He admittedly stated he does his best to not interact with Whites outside of a professional environment. Participant 7 stated that he currently has to interact with a large number of Whites at work and is able to maintain professionalism. In concluding the interview, Participant 7 communicated that due to his incarceration he chooses to guard his time and space and is very cautious of who he allows into his home and his personal life.



Participant 8 was an African-American male in his early 40s and identified as African-American during incarceration. Participant 8 was soft-spoken and answered all questions presented. His responses were thoughtful, but often to the point and brief. Participant 8 grew up in South-Central Los Angeles and reported that it was racially segregated, as did Participant 7. Participant 8 had a very different perspective and outcome from his incarceration experience. He identified that prison was a racially segregated environment but reported that while it changed his view of other races it was in a positive way. He was grateful to be able to leave the prison environment and engage in a diverse community. He reported that he now lives in an environment where he is able to see how different races interact with children and views it as a positive difference. Participant 8 stated that he spends most of his time outside of work by himself but that he is open to interactions with all races. It seemed evident that Participant 8 is doing his best to take the positive from his experiences during incarceration and better himself moving forward.

Participant 9 was an African-American male in his late 40s and reported that he identified his race as African-American during incarceration. Participant 9 reported that the racial composition of the neighborhood he grew up in and lived in before incarceration was primarily Hispanic. He stated that prior to prison he had not experienced or really been exposed to racism, but as soon as he entered incarceration he was exposed to varying levels of racist behavior. The response that Participant 9 found to cope with the stress and tension was to keep to himself. He recalled that a life-altering event occurred for him while he was incarcerated. That event was the loss of his

daughter. That loss changed his outlook on life and the reality of his current situation. He currently engages with many different races professionally and enjoys the opportunity to network and embrace all races. Participant 9 appeared to develop a positive outlook of people and life during his incarceration experience. He reported that he found ways to better himself while he was incarcerated, such as obtaining his GED. Participant 9 reported that the prison environment did not alter his overall views of other races nor did being in a racially segregated environment provide challenges or barriers during his reentry process.

Participant 10 was a White male in his mid 30s. He stated that he identified as a “white” during incarceration. Participant 10 reported that he grew up in a rural area so he did not have a lot of interactions with various races. He reported that there was very little racial diversity in the rural community. He said that he was raised with Latinos and Whites, but that there were very few African-Americans. Participant 10 did not feel that the prison environment changed his views or perceptions of other races in any way. He also reported that he liked the design of the prison regarding racial segregation.

Participant 10 was the only participant that reported he liked and agreed with segregation. In his speech he consistently referred to African-Americans as “them”. He was very clear that he is uncomfortable interacting with African-Americans but was open to interactions with Latinos as long as they were “cool” with things. It was apparent that Participant 10 has some racial bias, but that these were present prior to incarceration and according to him prison did not alter these views in any way.

Participant 11 was an African-American male in his mid 50s and stated that he identified as African-American during incarceration. Participant 11 stated that he grew up in a very diverse community and that he had friends of all different ethnicities. He reported that incarceration has impacted his views of various races, but as time has passed since his release, he is returning to his views prior to incarceration. He stated that the way that African-Americans are viewed in prison made him question what is so wrong with his race. He said the way that White inmates interacted with him and other African-Americans seemed so wrong. He reported that if a White inmate had an African-American girlfriend or mixed children they would get beat up or punished in some way by other White inmates. Participant 9 recalled the same behavior and treatment of White inmates who had African-American significant others. Participant 11 stated that his current living situation is allowing him to interact positively with all races, including “whites”, which he has had the hardest time with during and post incarceration in the past. It was clear that for Participant 11, living in prolonged segregation has had a negative impact on his views and perception of other races, specifically Whites, but he is currently trying to move beyond his negative views and perceptions.

Participant 12 was a Latino male in his early 30s. He stated that during incarceration he identified as Southern Hispanic. During the interview process participant 12 was very thoughtful in his responses and expressed a clear interest in doing what he can to make the correctional system better. Participant 12 was released from prison less than thirty days before the interview. Participant 12 stated that he grew up in a primarily Hispanic community. He reported that the high school he attended was primarily

Hispanic and White with only a few African-Americans. Participant 12 recalled his prison experience regarding racial interactions and reported that it was very segregated. He spoke about the attitudes and rules that each race was expected to follow while incarcerated. He said it did change his views but that he is working on not allowing the attitudes and mindsets developed and followed during incarceration to continue post incarceration. He stated that it has been a challenge to let go of his established views of various races and that there are still some things that he will continue to not do, such as will not literally eat or drink after certain races. Participant 12 was clear that living in segregation and being released to a culturally diverse community has been a barrier for him. He stated that he is working hard to let go of his views and put on “blindness”. Participant 12 reported that he is making the changes necessary to avoid reentry into prison and leave that lifestyle behind.

Participant 13 was a Latino male in his early 30s. He reported that he identified as Southern Hispanic gang member during incarceration. Participant 13 shared that his growing-up experience regarding race was very homogeneous. He stated that he grew up in a primarily Hispanic neighborhood with a few African-Americans in his community as well. Participant 13 reported that his father created an environment that did not encourage interactions with other races. Participant 13’s response to all the questions were very brief. He identified that segregation is an essential part of the prison system and environment. He reported that interactions with other races was very limited and that was for the safety of everyone incarcerated. He said that he is getting better about being able to interact with other races as time passes, but reported that if he was again imprisoned he

would adapt to ceasing interactions with other races. He did report that interactions with Whites is harder than interacting with African-Americans. Participant 13 identified that his biggest barrier is the judgment he faces from others due to the numerous tattoos he has, especially the ones on his face. Overall, participant 13 identified that he is working on interacting with races other than his own and that it is getting easier for him as he lives and works in a racially diverse environment.

Participant 14 was a Latino male in his early 40s. He stated that he identified as a Hispanic while incarcerated. Participant 14 reported that his incarceration experience led him to become a racist during and right after his incarceration. He reported that growing up his mother tried to raise him with Christian values. He stated that his uncles who had been incarcerated were very racist in their views and perceptions of other races and that he used to argue with them about their views. He stated that he did not understand their attitudes until he had spent time in prison and that he too adapted these views. Participant 14 reports that during incarceration he adapted negative views and attitudes towards other races but at present he no longer holds these perceptions of other races. He reported that he felt that being released to a racially diverse community was a benefit for him. He expressed that the ability to overcome the attitudes that were engrained during incarceration have given him a greater ability to appreciate various races and do his best to not share the negative views and attitudes toward other races. In his closing responses Participant 14 explained that engaging in this interview gave him a new perspective on his experiences and that he was grateful for the opportunity to reflect on the changes he has made in his life.

Participant 15 was an African-American male in his early 60s. This interview was brief; the participant concisely answered all ten questions. While he did not answer any question with just a yes or no, he still did not expand on his experiences. He reported that he grew up in a primarily White neighborhood. He identified that the prison environment is segregated and that upon entering prison he knew there were certain interactions with other races that would not be permitted. He also, stated that it initially changed his views of other races but after multiple incarcerations he became aware that certain behaviors and interactions were necessary but did not take these things with him upon release. Participant 15 also reported that he feels he has very good interactions with various races today and works on a work crew where he is the only African-American. One of his closing statements was that he enjoys living in a diverse community and that he is married to a White woman and has children that are “mixed”. This was the only participant to report that living in segregation has had no influence or affect on his views and interactions with other races.

### **Data Analysis**

There were multiple steps taken to fully analyze the collected data. The first step was writing a general summary of each interview. Second, each interview response was entered into an excel spreadsheet. By using a spreadsheet I was able to review each individual response and compare it with the others. Additionally, I grouped and compared responses within the same race to note similarities and differences in responses. The goal of the analysis was to identify similar responses to each question, especially question nine, which specifically addressed potential barriers upon reentry. The ability to identify

synonyms and antonyms across responses allowed me the ability to draw conclusions on the shared or not shared experiences and feelings individuals had in relation to racial interactions.

The process of understanding the major themes present in the data was challenging. Since the sole source of data collection was individual interviews I needed to ensure that I was aware of each individual's response to questions and identify the commonalities that existed between the participants' responses. The initial process was to enter all transcribed responses into an excel spreadsheet separated by each question and individual response. After the transcribed responses were organized on the spreadsheet a summary was written for each interview in order to identify key responses and basic data of each participant. The next step to inductively code the data was to summarize each response into a one or two word response. I was able to assign one to two words to each question's response based on the goal of the question. These summary words allowed me to see the potential similarities or differences in personal experiences to racial re-integration.

### **Coding**

Each interview question was designed to gain an understanding of the potential shared experiences that former inmates have experienced around racial reintegration. The coding system developed to summarize each participant's response was derived from one key response that would answer the question. Through the process of coding central words I could then identify areas of consistencies in participants' responses that lead to the theme of personal experiences around racial interactions post incarceration. For

question one, responses were reduced to either open, minimal, moderate or no interactions with various races pre-incarceration. It was important to understand what level of interactions individuals had with various races before being incarcerated. Question two examined previous neighborhood compilation in regard to race in order to gather understanding of previous exposure to segregation. Responses to question two were ranked as segregated or non-segregated. Questions three through eight examined individual interactions, comfort, and perspectives of various races post incarceration . Each response to these questions was summarized into level of comfort and whether views were altered in any way. Question nine specifically addressed an individual's perspective on whether living in prolonged segregation created any barriers or benefits to reentry. When coding and then categorizing each response, it was revealed that most participants had very similar experiences and responses to all questions. Even though their verbiage may have been different the similarities of their experiences were clear. For example, Participant 3 reported that living in segregation was a barrier because of the negative interactions one has to unlearn while incarcerated versus Participant 4 who reported it was a benefit to learn how others behave and become more aware of those around him. It is clear that all participants had a similar lived experience while incarcerated and that for each of them there was some form of obstacle to overcome as they re-adjusted back to society. There were however, a few anomalies that emerged during the data analysis and these will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.



### **Discrepant Cases**

There were very few discrepancies within the data. Only one individual presented as completely discrepant from all other participants as it pertained to racial integration. The variances were reported and are both noted and addressed as equally important to the full presentation of data collected. It is clear through the data collection that all individuals came with varying levels of experiences when interacting with various races. The goal of this study was to understand how these racial interactions may have changed and lead to post incarceration, reintegration barriers. If participants did not report experiencing barriers, challenges or differences in their reintegration process post incarceration with various races, that data too must be viewed and noted. The data collection relied on personal report; therefore, all reports were discussed and noted through the analysis process. As an objective researcher, it would be inappropriate to place more significance on confirming data than on non-confirming data. Phenomenology is focused on the report of individuals who have shared experiences and then analyzing those reports to gain insight and understanding. Therefore discrepant cases were discussed, reviewed and presented in the findings of the data.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

In Chapter 3, I reported that there would be three key tools used to establish trustworthiness; the tools were peer review, audio recording, and field documentation. Each element of accountability that was built into this study assured that the data collected was reliable. I sent my interview questions to three individuals with earned Doctorates of Philosophy and experience in both overseeing and conducting research.

These individuals completed a rubric that assisted in giving feedback on each question. While I anticipated needing to make necessary changes, the feedback received from each of the individuals was positive and did not contain recommendations that would greatly impact the designed questions. The other two methods mentioned were audio recordings and field notes, both of these tools were used during the study. Each of these tools assisted me with more accurate recall of what took place in each interview and helped to gain an unbiased perspective of the individual experiences during the interviews as well as their racial reintegration experience.

### **Credibility**

The credibility of qualitative research as explained by Patton (2002) is summarized in three elements; rigorous methods, researcher credibility, and a belief in the value of qualitative inquiry (p.552-553). These three elements were addressed in chapter three of this study and were defined as peer-review of the interview questions, audio-recordings of each participant's interview and field notes and each were carried out as detailed. Three doctoral level individuals provided feedback to my proposed interview questions. I had initially stated that I would collect four individuals' feedback on the questions used in the study. Having reached out to 20 individuals, requesting their feedback, only three individuals responded to my request. The consistent feedback from each of these experienced researchers negated the need to have a fourth individual's perspective. After the feedback was collected I read through each response to note any changes that were consistent and made adjustments as necessary. However, I will report that the feedback was very minimal and therefore did not require that I make any major

adjustments. The main concern from the three individuals who provided feedback had to do with the execution of conducting the interview and my personal skill level to engage participants during the interviews. The next two elements of credibility were to audio-record each interview and take field notes. Both of these had to do with the actual interview process. During each interview, I setup three recording devices to ensure that the interviews were recorded and audible in order to properly be transcribed. Additionally, I informed each participant that I would be taking notes while they responded to each question. These notes consisted of participant verbal responses, and any key physical responses as was stated would occur during my chapter three discussion of these areas of credibility. I can confidently say I was able to complete each level of credibility as outlined in Chapter 3, and additionally I have completed multiple courses on research methods and design

### **Transferability**

Transferability, according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), is the ability to generalize a process across populations and contexts. In addressing the transferability in chapter three, I reported that this study would be designed in a manner that would allow others to replicate the data collection process with the use of interview questions proposed and be able to generate similar results. The data collection and now analysis process has been detailed in a clear manner that would allow another individual to recruit and interview participants that would likely yield similar findings. This study could not be replicated across populations outside of the scope of the design, specifically for those in the correctional system and specific to California, the only state that currently practices

racial segregation within its correctional system. The strategies around the implementation of transferability remain the same even after the conduction of data collection.

### **Dependability**

The dependability of the study as discussed in chapter three is closely related to the elements of credibility. Therefore, the areas of dependability were audio recordings of each participant interview and peer-reviewed feedback for the designed interview questions. One other key form of dependability that was discussed in chapter three was the transcript of data as that data was professionally transcribed. I was able to partner with a professional transcriptionist after the conduction of my first interview. She had no previous connection to me or the study according to what was stated in Chapter 3. The transcriptionist was able to transcribe all 15 interviews and sent the transcribed data via email. After she initially signed my confidentiality agreement, I did not have any further face-to-face contact with her and she was paid in full for every transcribed interview. The use of the transcribed interviews allowed me to easily arrange the collected data for thorough analysis as was outlined in Chapter 3 and explained above in Chapter 4. Therefore, I can confidently say that implementation and execution of dependability that was detailed in Chapter 3 occurred as was detailed.

### **Confirmability**

The strategies of consistency that were discussed in Chapter 3 focused on researcher engagement with each participant and consistency within participant responses. Each of these strategies has been successfully completed. There were many

points of consistency that were established throughout the data collection process. The first is that all participants were asked and able to answer all ten interview questions. The second point was in participants' responses. While some participants did answer questions in a slightly different verbiage, the overall review of the responses was consistent. For example, every single participant reported that prison is a highly segregated environment. Participants also reported that there was a mindset change as they reintegrated back to society. Even though it did not distinctly create barriers for all participants, there was an aspect of adjustment that they went through as they transitioned back into society. The exact experiences of individuals were unique but it was clear through their reports that there are truly similarly lived experiences that each participant went through during and post incarceration. Therefore, consistency was evident during data collection based upon similarity of views and perspectives of the prison environment and the process of reentry.

### **Results**

The results of this study did support my hypothesis that living in prolonged segregation would create additional barriers. The results of the data analysis yielded that all participants experienced racial segregation and tension during incarceration and that 14 out of 15 participants expressed a level of change in their interactions with different races. There was only one participant that clearly stated in his interview that serving time in prison had no effect on his view and ability to interact with various races upon reintegration into society. The perspective of how racial segregation influenced each participant varied as some reported that living this way and being released to a racially

diverse community was welcomed while others did not express the same gratitude. However, even those that were grateful to be living in a diverse community still reported that they struggled adapting to an integrated society post incarceration. Throughout each interview it was clear that the prison environment is a life-changing experience and that racial create a lasting impact on the way that individuals view their surroundings and other races.

There were only two individuals whose responses to the interview questions stood out. Participant 15 was the only one that reported feeling no difference in his views or ability to interact with races between pre-incarceration and post incarceration. He identified that the California prison environment is racially segregated and that certain behaviors and attitudes are required while incarcerated. However, Participant 15 felt very confident about his ability to comply with the mandate of segregation while incarcerated and that these things have never interfered with his ability to interact with other races post incarceration. The other discrepant report came from Participant 10, he reported that he liked segregation and wished that it could be practiced outside of incarceration as well. This report was unique and surprised me. He is the only participant that felt more comfortable living in segregation than in an integrated community. Fourteen participants reported that they liked living in a diverse community. Even though they found it challenging, they still were grateful for the opportunity to have the opportunity to interact freely with other races. These two participants were the only ones that reported any notable differences in their responses.

## Tables

I have provided three different tables in this section that will help to summarize the collected data. Table 1 includes a summary of the findings in regard to any change in comfort in interracial interactions before and after incarceration.

Table 1

### *Interaction with Various Races Pre and Post Incarceration*

Stage	Comfortable	Uncomfortable
Pre-incarceration	10	5
Post incarceration	9	6

Table 2 looks at whether inmates view their segregation experience as a benefit or barrier.

Table 2

### *Barrier or Benefit to Living in Prolonged Segregation*

Barrier	Benefit
9	5

*Note.* The table includes responses from 14 of the 15 participants. One participant reported that he did not feel prolonged segregation was either a benefit or a barrier.

Table 3 examines the change in participants' views towards various races.

Table 3

### *Change in Participants' View of Other Races*

Change in view	No change in view
12	3

### **Summary**

The research question posed in this study was, in what ways does living in a California prison, a racially segregated environment, create barriers or challenges to reintegration? Based upon the data collected from each interview it was clear that it did add strain for these individuals. Living in a segregated environment changed the perspectives of 14 of the 15 participants I interviewed and 14 out of 15 reported that it posed some level of challenge during reintegration. However, 14 out of the 15 participants reported that they were grateful to return to a community that offered racial diversity. Forcing individuals to be segregated for a prolonged period of time truly influenced the 15 individuals that I was able to interview. Each participant reported a varying level of influence that prison segregation had for them. While some reported that their views remained the same they still recalled that their initial transition from prison required an adjustment period. Two individuals felt strongly that their behavior and overall views were not strongly influenced by their time in prison but clearly reported seeing and feeling the segregation of the prison environment.

### **Conclusion**

The results of this study have clearly illuminated the level of segregation that occurs in California state prisons and the challenges that individuals face upon reentering society. This study allowed formerly incarcerated individuals an opportunity to share openly about their experiences pre, during and post incarceration, especially focused on interactions with various races. The personal experiences shared during each interview highlighted the many complexities of living in segregation and the transition that occurs



upon release. The initial challenge of the data collection process was identifying participants to engage in the study. There are many people that I come into contact on a daily basis that have personally experienced incarceration or know a loved one who has been incarcerated, but actually appropriately presenting the opportunity to participate in this study proved to be extremely difficult. More clearly stated, finding ways to inform individuals about my study and how to connect with me if they were interested in participating, proved to be the biggest barrier to my data collection. Surprisingly, there were few places that would allow me to post fliers or make a brief presentation. This difficulty was very surprising to me as I had envisioned the ability to interact with well over 15 participants and potentially turn people down when inquiring about the opportunity to engage in the study. However, the conduction of each interview went just as I had detailed in Chapter 3, which allowed me to easily implement my methodology.

The data collection process of interviewing 15 individuals in many ways yielded the exact results that I hypothesized. That is: that living in California prisons for more than 2-years would lead to an additional barrier upon reentry. The participants reported this barrier in different ways, but consistently reported some form of further adjustment to their transition. Participant 10 reported that he preferred to remain in a segregated environment, clarifying by stating that he feels more comfortable with his own race and greatly limits his interactions with other races. While participant 15 reported that prison segregation created no variance for him upon release, he stated that he did what he had to while in prison and then reentered the diversity of society openly. Participant 15 was the only participant that clearly stated the prison environment had zero influence upon him

and his views of other races. Participants 3, 7, and 11 stated that their interactions and observances of White inmates during incarceration had negatively influenced their ability to openly interact with Whites post incarceration.

There were two observations that I made during the data analysis process that caught my attention. The first is that all five Latino participants reported living in segregated, primarily Latino environments prior to incarceration. Participant 13 reported that he did not interact with other races during his childhood. The other two races had varying levels of segregated environments previous to incarceration. The second observation that was a welcomed surprise was the positive attitude individuals had toward entering an integrated community. All but one participant reported that the opportunity to be in an integrated society was positive; this did not negate the challenges that they had or were overcoming at the time of the interviews. At the conclusion of this chapter it is clear that the process of data collection and analysis has allowed me to present the shared experiences of these 15 participants regarding racial reintegration post incarceration.

In this chapter I have clearly detailed the data collection and analysis process. As a result of this data collection I have been able to gain insight and understanding to the racial reintegration process that former California inmates experience upon release from prison. Additionally, I have gained insight and awareness on just how racially segregated California prisons are and how that segregation influences individuals. In turning to the next chapter, Chapter 5, I will provide application of the results of this study and address future areas of study that are needed to support the racial reintegration process.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to understand the potential long-term barriers formerly incarcerated individuals face upon reentry to society, as they relate to racial interactions, increase community awareness and give a voice to those former incarcerated. The phenomenological approach I used allowed participants to share their lived experiences and report in their own words any barriers or challenges they had experienced engaging with various races post incarceration. As was highlighted in the review of the literature presented in Chapter 2, I found no current research on the racial re-integration of individuals exiting incarceration. There are several resources such as Lindsey (2009) and Spiegel (2007) providing evidence of the level of racism experienced by inmates during incarceration. The degree of racism and racial segregation that occurs in the California state prison has long-term consequences which the system seems to be unaware of based on the results of this study. The results of the data analysis for this study revealed the need to start making changes within the system to decrease segregation and assist inmates in reducing barriers they face upon reentry to society.

The research question, in what ways does living in California state prison, a racially segregated environment, for 2 years or more influence African-American, Latino, and White males' abilities to interact with other races in a culturally diverse environment upon release? To answer this question, I conducted 15 individual interviews exploring each participant's racial interactions and views of various races pre-, during, and post incarceration. Five males were interviewed from each racial group, African-American,

Latino and White, to gain insight into their individual and shared experiences. This study was focused on understanding, through personal testimony, the perspective and challenges that former inmates face during reintegration back into racially diverse communities. As discussed in Chapter 1, Donald Clemmer (1940) developed the theory of prisonization, which presented that individuals adapted to the prison environment by taking on its language and cultural views. Prisonization and the observance of individuals transitioning from prison provided ample justification for this study. Therefore, the primary focus of this study was on allowing individuals who were formerly incarcerated to share their lived experiences of transitioning from prison to society.

The phenomenological design was effective for this study because of its focus on the connection between individuals who have lived through similar experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The interviews provided data to analyze and identify potential similarities in participants' racial interactions and perspectives post incarceration. Study results provide the correctional community, organizations that work with former inmates, and society with a clearer understanding of the influence that the prison environment has on racial interactions and perspectives for those released from prison.

Living in a California state prison for 2 or more years resulted in transitional challenges for a majority of the former inmates who participated in the study. Fourteen out of 15 participants reported a transitional period that required adjusting to being in a culturally diverse community post release. Participants reported varying levels of adaptation, and their attitudes toward the transitional challenges ranged from grateful to hesitant. The main challenges that participants reported were letting go of learned prison

behaviors such as developed attitudes toward various races, general engagement with other races, and the ability to relax while in the community at large.

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

#### **Outcomes**

The primary finding of this study is that racial segregation during incarcerations leads to additional stressors, barriers, and periods of adjustment upon release from prison. This study examined the transition from racial segregation to a racially diverse community and ways that this might add barriers or create further difficulties for those in transition. Fourteen out of 15 participants identified some form of added challenge such as a change in their view of other races or a heightened awareness of their surroundings as they engaged in society. Therefore, the outcome of this study has provided sufficient evidence to the fact that the practice of racial segregation for control of the prison environment (Lindsey, 2009 and Roth, 2011) leads to further societal consequences and strain on former inmates as they reenter society.

#### **Data Review**

The data collected for this study primarily concerned the change in view, interactions, and attitudes of former inmates towards varying races after a 2 or more year period of incarceration in a California state prison. I also collected data on whether these changes lead to added stressors or barriers for the former inmates interviewed. The data analysis, as discussed in Chapter 4, revealed that transition to a racially diverse community presented various challenges and that each participant was hindered by the challenges at varying levels. Additionally, data collected on pre-incarceration interactions

and community composition revealed that the Latino participants were more likely to live in a racially segregated community prior to incarceration than White or African-American participants. However, even if participants reported limited racial interactions and living a homogenous community previous to incarceration, they still reported a change in view and interactions with various races post incarceration.

The data collected in this study demonstrated the challenges that each participant faced upon reentry to society. The tool used to collect data was simple and straightforward, I believe, yet it revealed the many complexities of each participant's individual experience as well as the experiences that were shared by participants.

### **Literary Review Based on Data Collection**

In Chapter 2 I provided an extensive literary review of all research articles that have examined prison racism, rehabilitation, and prison culture. Throughout all the research articles reviewed and presented there was not one that focused on the challenges of leaving racial segregation and returning to a diverse community. Therefore, the main focus of this study, the racial re-integration of former inmates, is a huge contribution to the reentry process. The participants' reports on the prison culture and prison racism is a continuance and further support for the degree to how extensively segregation is built into the prison system. While the focus of this study was to better understand the post incarceration experience, it was necessary to have a brief report from each participant about the experience during incarceration and each of their reports aligned with the literary resources that were reviewed in preparation for this study. It was clear from the participants that this area of study is a needed contribution to literature that currently

exists on rehabilitation and prison racism. The research on rehabilitation has examined areas of challenge in employment, housing, relationship and education but has not even begun to look at racial segregation and its influence on adaptation to society. The literature does often acknowledge that there are many challenges faced by former inmates and that it is a challenge to truly know them all thoroughly. Therefore, this study adds another layer of knowledge to just how complex the process of reentry is for former inmates.

### **Theoretical Framework Lens**

There were two theoretical frameworks presented in the beginning of this study, Prisonization and Behaviorism, to support the structure and design of the study. The theory of prisonization supports that individuals will adapt to the unique culture that prison creates; that was in-fact the case for each participant that was interviewed for this study. Every participant reported that they succumbed to the demands of the prison environment to interact and treat other races as they were directed by correctional officers and fellow inmates, despite their personal feelings toward that race. It is clear that participants were able to fully adapt to their prison environment, even Participant 15 who reported there was no change in his view or perception post incarceration noted that he complied with the prison environment's segregation and treatment of other races. The theory of behaviorism, which is that all behavior is learned over time through reinforcements, is similar to the idea of prisonization. It was clear from participants' reports that the way they interacted and viewed other races was a learned response. Several participants stated that throughout their time of incarceration they were

conditioned to respond, view, and interact with various races in a manner deemed appropriate by their race. Participants reported that it has taken time to unlearn these enforced prison behaviors by being out in the community. Even those who have been out of prison for over ten years still find themselves fighting internally to not respond to certain situations as they would have in prison or to even be comfortable with other races based on their incarceration experiences.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations to trustworthiness discussed in chapter one and three focused on the conduction of each interview, transcriptions of the interview and finally the process of intra-coding the transcribed interviews. I was able to successfully conduct each interview in its entirety, meaning that all 15 participants were able to answer all ten questions in one session. Additionally, each interview was successfully recorded and transcribed by a transcriptionist so that all data was accessible for coding. The focus of conducting each interview to be consistent was a very high priority for me and therefore I did my best to ensure interview questions were asked the same way and in the same order. The only additional questions asked of the participant was to clarify their response if their initial response to a question was unclear or did not seem to fully answer the designated interview question. The final aspect of trustworthiness implemented in this study was during the data analysis phase when participant responses were coded for each question to assess for similarities and differences. The process of coding occurred for each question individually as I looked to see what two potential responses a participant might have to each question. Upon reviewing participant responses, I looked for synonymous



words that would align with either pre-identified response. After that review I was able to look at all responses to see how the majority of participants responded to each interview question. During this coding process it was very interesting to note how the individual responses to each question could appear to misrepresent their overall feelings that were presented during the actual interview. I did my best to ensure that each participant's stated response was honored and that I did not translate their intended meaning but that I allowed the data to speak for itself. The process of working within these detailed structures to ensure that the data collected and analyzed was accurate was challenging at times but the reader can be assured that these measures created trustworthiness within this study.

### **Recommendations**

The future recommendations to be made after this study are many, especially since the focus of this study has not previously been conducted. In Chapter 2, I presented an array of varying literary resources on subject matters closely related to this topic because of the lack of literature addressing racial re-integration post incarceration. The literature review focused on prison racism, rehabilitation, and prison culture. There has been extensive research conducted on the process of rehabilitation for former inmates, which have focused on housing, employment, education, and personal relationships (Schnittker, and Massoglia, 2015). However, the conduction of this study has proven an initial glimpse into the racial aspect of re-integration that former inmates go through during their rehabilitation process. It is recommended that the scope of this study be expanded to interview individuals at incremental time frames starting with ones first

prison experience in order to gain insight into at what point views and interactions with various races begin to change. It was clear that all former inmates did experience a shift of interactions during incarceration but they were not asked to identify how long it took during incarceration for the changes to begin. It would be beneficial to conduct a long-term study that followed first time inmates from booking to 2 years post incarceration. This long-term study, focusing on racial interactions, will be helpful in gaining an even fuller understanding of the impact prison segregation has on inmates. This study revealed that it was a challenge not only as former inmates reentered society, but that it was hurtful and difficult to be forced to behave and interact with other races in such a strict manner. There is clearly a need for further investigation of the long-term effects of racial segregation and this study has proposed one measure to gain understanding of this process. I would also recommend group, same-race interviews focused on post incarceration challenges with various races. It is sometimes very helpful and freeing to speak with others who have had similar experiences and this might lead to even further insight into the lived experiences of former inmates. The group interviews should use the same questions as this study and they should be recorded and transcribed.

Another important aspect in making recommendations is in the disbursement of this study to start bringing system awareness to how segregation influences former inmates beyond incarceration. It is important that the general community and professionals supporting former inmates know and be exposed to a full array of the challenges that former inmates have to overcome during their re-integration process. Therefore, this study will be distributed to the California Department of Corrections and

Rehabilitation, local probation and parole offices and to community-based organizations that supported my outreach efforts. The data of this study confirmed that racial interactions post incarceration are a challenge to former inmates during their re-integration process. Therefore, all of these entities need to be informed and encouraged to look at supportive ways to help former inmates with whom they interact professionally.

### **Implications**

Social change is generated by the observation of a flaw in a social system and the need for a change in the current structure or conduction of a system. This study focused upon the needed change in both the correctional system and the local community's response to engagement with former inmates. In Chapter 1 the introduction to the change needed came through the report on the significance and the role that this study will have upon the correctional system, local community, and Community-based Organization (CBO) providing services to former inmates. It is apparent from the previous research studies conducted on reintegration that former inmates have the odds stack against them and that being able to be successful in society is rare. As I have previously reported the rates of recidivism are extremely high and therefore it is clear that the barriers faced upon release make it difficult for former inmates to fully re-integrate into society. An article from the National Justice Institute, *Recidivism*, stated that 67% of formerly incarcerated individuals will recidivate within 3 years of release (Recidivism, 2014). Since the rates of recidivism are so high it is evident that the community and the correctional system need to be as informed as possible about the challenges that arise during reentry. This study brings light to a whole new area of struggle for former inmates. From the inception of

this study it has been my hope that the results would yield fresh insight into the challenges of racial reintegration. This study has successfully done that. Therefore, in light of the results of this study it is clear that the correctional system needs to re-examine the implementation of segregation as a tool of control. Former inmates have identified in this study that racial segregation has had a long-term effect on their view of other races and at times their ability to interact with others. Studies such as this one illuminate the need for intervention both during and post incarceration.

The most beneficial level of social change that I hope to accomplish from this study is awareness of the challenges former inmates face during reentry. The California correctional system is the first population that needs to gain awareness. It is clear that the correctional system has not thought through the long-term consequences for former inmates in their environmental control practices, because studies such as these have not been previously conducted. The California correctional system will benefit greatly from reviewing the results of this study in order to gain a new level of understanding in how their practices affect inmates both during and after incarceration. The system would benefit greatly from small interventions in their control practices that would align more with individual rights to engage with various races and allow activities that are proposed to increase various racial interactions.

The local CBOs that I engaged for this study and many more that serve former inmates have a role to play in making adjustments and changes to better serve this population in light of this study. This study has validated the fact that living in segregation creates challenges for those released to a racially diverse community.

Community-based Organizations are among the first points of contact for former inmates. Therefore, it is pertinent that CBOs look at this study to understand the lived experience of former inmates so that they can better support them in their transition to the community. Change can only come about by the willingness of the CBOs to be informed and engaged in all matters relevant to transition. It is hard for those who have not experienced the challenges of re-integration to relate to exactly how these former inmates feel; this study provides that needed insight to those feelings and their process. This study creates an opportunity for CBOs to even better meet the needs of this special population.

The last aspect of social change that this study will touch upon is community awareness. The local community does not appear to be very engaged with former inmates, which is evident by the social and employment challenges they have upon release and even years later (Lebel, 2012). This study contains personal testimonies from former inmates that portray the difficulties that they endure in their transitions to the community. The opportunity to hear directly from those who have or are living through an experience brings a level of personalization that often motivates individuals to respond with greater compassion. As the community engages with this study they will gain a perspective that will hopefully create an increased level of engagement and tolerance for former inmates. With increased tolerance it will hopefully start to open up opportunities for former inmates to engage more appropriately in their communities and allow them the freedom to worry less about such things as a person's race.

The theoretical implications of this study are focused upon the barriers of re-integration for former California prison inmates. There has been extensive work

conducted on the process of learned prison behavior and adaptation to the prison culture. This study has further built on the theoretical framework of Prisonization (Clemmer, 1940), by exploring racial segregation and the effect it has on societal reintegration. The insight that this study has provided on the added challenges that racial reintegration adds for former inmates gives cause for change in both the correctional system and CBO, who provide services for former inmates. As I have discussed above, there is a great deal of awareness to the flaws in the system that this study brings forth and the need for changes to their practices to be adopted. This study describes and supports the challenges that racial segregation creates additional barriers for former inmates. The theoretical foundation established in this study gives weight to the fact that there are many complexities to reintegration and that the correctional system and other researchers need to think outside of the box when examining reentry barriers. Additionally, the rehabilitation process requires more than just employment, housing, education, and relational issues but comprehensive adaptation to the dynamics of society, such as its racial diversity.

The three specific areas upon which I see this study providing influence are: the correctional system, local communities, and CBO's that provide services to former inmates. There are so many individuals in the community that have no awareness or care about what former inmates experience during or post incarceration. Studies, such as this one, that allow former inmates to express themselves openly and have direct input are important to making changes in the society and the correctional system. This study has created opportunity for 15 inmates to share their personal experiences and challenges as

they have reentered society. It is clear that people both inside and outside of the correctional system can benefit from hearing these testimonies to gain new perspective, tolerance, and develop better approaches to supporting those released from prison. The correctional system, as mentioned previously, needs to stop relying upon segregation to control the environment or at a minimum find therapeutic or recreational measures that allow various races to interact in a safe and productive manner. A simple therapeutic group that is composed of mixed races will at least start the process of racial integration. Additionally, CBOs providing services can look at potential conflict resolution groups that create opportunity for former inmates to interact with various races and openly discuss their learned behaviors and views. The simple act of allowing open communication between various races will likely go a long way. This study is aimed at bringing awareness to the broken system design of racial segregation within the California correctional system. This practice has further hindered former inmates' achievements in the community as demonstrated by the 15 participants during their individual interviews.

### **Conclusion**

My role as researcher was active and required me to personally engage with each participant, as I conducted each interview. The personal stories and experiences that participants shared were often very touching and emotional. I found myself having to restrain from over empathizing with their stories and remain focused on data collection. I was surprised to hear many of the tragic events that individuals witnessed during incarceration specific to racial interactions. I was prepared to hear and frankly expected

many comments that were reported but others took me by surprise and brought dismay to my heart that people can behave in such a way. I started this study based on the hypothesis that living in a segregated environment led to further challenges based on clinical experiences I had with former inmates at several of my professional jobs. Therefore, I was not surprised when the data confirmed that living in segregation led to an additional struggle upon release. But I was surprised to hear the gratitude that most expressed for the ability to live, post incarceration, in a diverse community. While individuals adapted to the prison environment during incarceration, almost all of them expressed a desire to proactively be engaged with all races. The other area of surprise for me was that one participant stated he would like to continue living in a segregated environment. In California most areas have racial diversity so it was very shocking to hear a disdain for the interracial experiences. The specific perspective toward White inmates and their reported attitudes toward African-Americans also astounded me. Along with these reports I was grateful that African-American participants felt comfortable enough to express these occurrences to me as a White female. This study has confirmed my initial hypothesis and has brought even further awareness to me about the fact that the challenge for former inmates is not just within their first 3 years after incarceration but much beyond. I interviewed participants that had been released for 10 years and they still reported being more tense in social situations and they recalled their incarceration experiences like they were yesterday. It was clear that time might heal the wounds of their experience but it does not take away the memory. As the researcher hearing their experience I was touched and humbled that they would be so willing to report openly and



honestly about their views and interactions with other races. It was evident that incarceration has provided a life-long impact on each of these 15 participants that can never be completely undone.

There is a great deal of stress and pressure for individuals who have been incarcerated both during and post incarceration. This study examined the hypothesis that living in a California state prison for 2 or more years in a racially segregated environment will cause additional barriers upon reentry. The conduction and result of 15 individual interviews has provided insight into the change in thinking and behavior that occur for former inmates in regard to racial integration. The participants of this study did not just disclose their challenges during re-integration but also while incarcerated. They each reported their unique experience that in the end supported the fact that the prison environment itself transforms one's behavior and perspective. The previous research conducted on the prison environment and re-integration has provided an honest look at many of the challenges faced by former inmates, but this study is unique in its exclusive examination of the challenges faced due to racial segregation. The findings of this study provide the initial data to draw light on the issues that racial segregation cause for former inmates long-term and that there is reason to address these correctional system practices. The correctional system, the local community, and CBOs providing services to former inmates now have a new level of understanding about the former inmate experience. The conclusion of this study is that long-term and forced segregation leads to long-term challenges for former inmates. This practice creates a change in perspective, inability to interact with various races, and discomfort within settings where they interact with

various races. The additional stress that prolonged segregation has caused for these 15 participants provides enough groundwork to warrant further investigation of this topic and development of policies and procedures in relation to the use of segregation for prison control.

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Can you please describe your interactions with individuals from a race other than your own previous to incarceration?
2. Before being imprisoned describe the neighborhood and community you lived in as it pertains to racial composition?
3. Do you feel that the prison environment has altered or changed your view of various races? If so, please explain.
4. Since your release from prison how would you describe your interactions with others from a race different than your own?
5. Since your release from prison do you feel more comfortable or less comfortable with certain races, please explain.
6. Do you feel that living in a California prison environment has influenced your views various races? Please explain.
7. Please describe your current daily interactions with various races.
8. Please explain how living in a culturally diverse community since your release from prison has been for you.
9. Do you feel that living in a segregated environment and being released to a culturally diverse community has provided any barriers or has been of benefit to you, please explain.
10. Is there anything that you feel you would like to add about your post incarceration experiences specific to racial interactions?

## Appendix C: Rubric Sent to Qualitative Researchers for Feedback

**Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - \*(VREP)©**

By Marilyn K. Simon with input from Jacquelyn White (Adapted by Anna Phillips)

*\*VREP is designed to measure face validity, construct validity, and content validity.*

Criteria	Operational Definitions	Score				Questions NOT meeting standard (list question number) and need to be revised. Please use the comments and suggestions section to recommend revisions.
		1	2	3	4	
		<b>1=Not Acceptable</b> (major modifications needed) <b>2=Below Expectations</b> (some modifications needed) <b>3=Meets Expectations</b> (no modifications needed but could be improved with minor changes) <b>4=Exceeds Expectations</b> (no modifications needed)				
<b>Clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questions are direct and specific.</li> <li>Only one question is asked at a time.</li> <li>The participants can understand what is being asked.</li> <li>There are no <i>double-barreled</i> questions (two questions in one).</li> </ul>					
<b>Wordiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions are concise.</li> <li>There are no unnecessary words</li> </ul>					
<b>Negative Wording</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions are asked using the affirmative (e.g., Instead of asking, "Which methods are not used?", the researcher asks, "Which methods are used?")</li> </ul>					

<b>Overlapping Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response covers more than one choice.</li> <li>• All possibilities are considered.</li> <li>• There are no ambiguous questions.</li> </ul>					
<b>Balance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The questions are unbiased and do not lead the participants to a response. The questions are asked using a neutral tone.</li> </ul>					
<b>Use of Jargon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The terms used are understandable by the target population.</li> <li>• There are no clichés or hyperbole in the wording of the questions.</li> </ul>					
<b>Appropriateness of Responses Listed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The choices listed allow participants to respond appropriately.</li> <li>• The responses apply to all situations or offer a way for those to respond with unique situations.</li> </ul>					
<b>Use of Technical Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of technical language is minimal and appropriate.</li> <li>• All acronyms are defined.</li> </ul>					
<b>Application to Praxis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The questions asked relate to the daily practices or expertise of the potential participants.</li> </ul>					
<b>Relationship to Problem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The questions are sufficient to resolve the problem in the study</li> <li>• The questions are sufficient to answer the research questions.</li> <li>• The questions are sufficient to obtain the</li> </ul>					

	purpose of the study.					
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\* The operational definition should include the domains and constructs that are being investigated. You need to assign meaning to a variable by specifying the activities and operations necessary to measure, categorize, or manipulate the variable. For example, to measure the construct *successful aging* the following domains could be included: degree of physical disability (low number); prevalence of physical performance (high number), and degree of cognitive impairment (low number). If you were to measure creativity, this construct is generally recognized to consist of flexibility, originality, elaboration, and other concepts. Prior studies can be helpful in establishing the domains of a construct.

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## **Feedback: Comments and Suggestions**