

ANNOTATED TRANSCRIPT

“ICE IN THE STOMACH”: REFORMING PRISONS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Steven L. Chanenson, Synøve N. Andersen, Jordan M. Hyatt, Are Høidal, Kenneth Eason, and Patricia Connor-Council*

INTRODUCTION	1775
TRANSCRIPT	1776
CONCLUSION	1789

INTRODUCTION

Correctional culture is notoriously difficult to change.¹ Simply recognizing that there is a problem and wishing for better prisons is not enough to engender meaningful reform. It takes hard work, dedication, and continuous support from multiple stakeholders. At its core, however, improving carceral systems requires a team of people dedicated to change. The Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons put it this way: “Efforts at culture change cannot succeed and bear fruit . . . without recruiting and retaining a highly qualified officer corps and great corrections leaders.”²

Those people exist. Several of them are engaged in an important experiment attempting to make positive change a reality.

In October 2020, the *American Criminal Law Review* partnered with the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers to host a multi-day Symposium entitled *Prison Brake: Rethinking the Sentencing Status Quo*. The Symposium’s initial two panels highlighted the work of the Scandinavian Prison Project (“SPP”), which examines whether variations on Scandinavian penal values and practices can work in Pennsylvania.

* Steven L. Chanenson is a Professor of Law at Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law. Synøve N. Andersen is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Oslo. Jordan M. Hyatt is an Associate Professor in the Department of Criminology and Justice Studies at Drexel University. Are Høidal is the Governor of Halden Prison in Norway. Kenneth Eason is the Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections’s State Correctional Institution at Chester. Patricia Connor-Council is a Unit Manager at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections’s State Correctional Institution at Chester.

1. See, e.g., Brandon Moss, *Dean Williams Pushes for a Culture Change*, 1 INSIDE REP. 1 (2020), <https://tinyurl.com/InsideReportJuly2020>; Michelle Theriault Boots, ‘What We Do Doesn’t Work’: As Warden, He Tried to Radically Change the Culture of Alaska’s Maximum-Security Prison. It Led to His Exit., ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS (Mar. 5, 2020), <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/crime-courts/2020/03/05/what-we-do-doesnt-work-as-warden-he-tried-to-radically-change-the-culture-of-alaskas-maximum-security-prison-it-led-to-his-exit/>; Mike Cason, *Commissioner Says Alabama Prison System Culture Must Change*, AL.COM (May 27, 2019), <https://www.al.com/news/2019/05/commissioner-says-alabama-prison-system-culture-must-change.html>.

2. John J. Gibbons & Nicholas de B. Katzenbach, *Confronting Confinement: A Report of the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons*, 22 WASH. U. J.L. & POL’Y 385, 406 (2006).

The SPP is a collaboration between the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (“PADOC”), particularly a group of staff from the State Correctional Institution (“SCI”) at Chester, and the correctional services in Scandinavia—that is, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.³ As part of the SPP, a delegation from the PADOC spent several weeks during the summer of 2019 in Scandinavia learning about local practices. Furthermore, Pennsylvania correctional officers worked in Norwegian prisons side-by-side with their Norwegian counterparts. The idea was to determine what could be transplanted back to the United States successfully. Upon returning home, the PADOC participants began to craft a plan to adapt and implement select Scandinavian principles and practices in a single revamped residential housing unit at SCI Chester.

The Symposium’s first panel, *Rethinking Prisons: Lessons from Scandinavia*, described the project and featured Professors Steven L. Chanenson, Synøve N. Andersen, and Jordan M. Hyatt, who are part of a team of academics affiliated with the SPP. An Article based on that presentation appears elsewhere in this Issue.⁴ The Symposium’s second panel, *Rethinking Prisons: Implementing Reform at Home and Abroad*, revolved around the experiences of three correctional professionals: Governor Are Høidal from Norway’s Halden Prison, and Superintendent Kenneth Eason and Unit Manager Patricia Connor-Council, both from Pennsylvania’s SCI Chester. Professors Andersen and Hyatt served as moderators. An edited, condensed, and clarified Transcript⁵ follows with occasional commentary in *italics* from Professors Chanenson, Andersen, and Hyatt.⁶

TRANSCRIPT

DR. JORDAN HYATT: We are fortunate to have three individuals who are involved in both corrections and the Scandinavian Prison Project in a variety of different capacities. We’ll begin by talking with Are Høidal. Governor Høidal is the inaugural and current Governor of Halden Prison, which is commonly referred to as the “most humane” prison in the world. We’ll focus first on what’s happening in Norway as the source for our penal transplant project. Could you talk a little bit about what you as a Governor in one of Norway’s largest prisons see as the fundamental principles that underlie your work in corrections?

GOVERNOR ARE HØIDAL: Here in Norway, we work to achieve what we call the “normality principle.” This means that the punishment for committing a crime is a

3. The Authors gratefully acknowledge support for this Article and the broader SPP project from Arnold Ventures, Drexel University, the Norwegian Research Council for Criminology (NSfK), Princeton University’s Program in Law and Public Affairs, the University of Minnesota, the University of Oslo, and Villanova University.

4. Jordan M. Hyatt, Synøve N. Andersen, Steven L. Chanenson, Veronica Horowitz & Christopher Uggen, “We Can Actually Do This”: *Adapting Scandinavian Correctional Culture in Pennsylvania*, 58 AM. CRIM. L. REV. 1715 (2021).

5. A full recording of the panel is available on the *American Criminal Law Review*’s website: <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/american-criminal-law-review/american-criminal-law-review-symposium/>.

6. Some footnotes with citations have also been added throughout for additional context.

restriction of an individual’s liberty. In this way, the inmates do not lose any of their other rights; they have all of the other rights that other citizens in Norway have. That’s a very important principle for how we operate prisons. Inmates can go to school. They can vote. They can go to the shop. Another important principle is what we call “dynamic security.” This means that officers and inmates are together all day, from morning until evening: they are together in the unit, they go down to the workshops together, they eat together, they have leisure activities together. In this way the officers get to know the inmates very well. This is an important part of creating a secure environment in the prisons. This is special and can be challenging, as we understand, for American officers to understand, but it is quite normal here in Norway.

The concept of normality is not unique to Scandinavian countries, but it is central to their approach. As Governor Høidal has written elsewhere, “The principle of normality—the idea that life inside prison should be as close as possible to life in the community—is one of the cornerstones of the modern Norwegian correctional system.”⁷ With loss of liberty as the real punishment, the focus turns to helping incarcerated people return to society and not commit crimes in the future. Governor Høidal put it this way to a reporter: “So we are releasing your neighbour If we treat inmates like animals in prison, then we will release animals on to your street.”⁸

The normality imperative interacts well with the strategy of dynamic security, which has been described as educating and encouraging line correctional officers “to develop good personal relationships with prisoners, to know and understand them as individuals, to provide sympathetic help with personal problems and to engage in meaningful dialogues with them.”⁹ For Scandinavian correctional officers, understanding the incarcerated individuals with whom they work is important for their own safety, the success of the people in their care, and ultimately the safety of society at large.

HYATT: You have spent some time visiting prisons in the United States, including recently touring several in Pennsylvania and California. What do you see as some of the biggest differences between American prisons and Norwegian prisons?

7. Are Høidal, *Normality Behind the Walls: Examples from Halden Prison*, 31 FED. SENT’G REP. 58, 58 (2018).

8. *How Norway Turns Criminals into Good Neighbours*, BBC NEWS (July 7, 2019) (quotations omitted), <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-48885846>; see also Uta-Maria Kuder, *Greetings of the Minister of Justice, Uta-Maria Kuder, on the Occasion of the Dinner with the U.S. American Delegation on 19 February 2013 at the Castle of Schorrsow*, 27 FED. SENT’G REP. 46, 46 (2014) (“Most [incarcerated people] will be released over the short or long term. And then they will be our neighbors again. We want to make our contribution for them living without committing any crimes then.”).

9. U.N. OFF. ON DRUGS AND CRIME, *HANDBOOK ON DYNAMIC SECURITY AND PRISON INTELLIGENCE* 6 (2015) (citation omitted), https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UNODC_Handbook_on_Dynamic_Security_and_Prison_Intelligence.pdf; see also JOHN PRATT & ANNA ERIKSSON, *CONTRASTS IN PUNISHMENT: AN EXPLANATION OF ANGLOPHONE EXCESS AND NORDIC EXCEPTIONALISM* 10–15 (2013) (describing officer and inmate relations and the overall quality of prison life).

HØIDAL: Of course, the biggest difference is the size of the prisons. Halden Prison is one of the largest prisons in Norway and we have 300 inmates. The number of officers is also different in Norway; we are closer to a one-to-one ratio with the inmates. When I saw the prisons in the U.S., there were a lot of inmates, but not many officers. I think that is a very big difference.

HYATT: Given Halden's highly visible, international profile,¹⁰ people might have the sense that the Norwegian system has always been the way that it is today: very progressive and relatively humane. You've written about your time running both Halden Prison and Oslo Prison before that.¹¹ Can you talk a little bit about the reforms that have occurred in the Norwegian system over the past few decades?

HØIDAL: The Norwegian correctional system has changed a lot since I began working in 1984; that's thirty-five years ago. There have been some major changes, beginning in the '80s and '90s and continuing up until today. In the '80s and '90s, we had a high reoffending rate in Norway. It was around sixty or seventy percent. Inside of the prisons, there was rarely interaction between the officers and the inmates. When I started in Oslo Prison as a prison officer in 1984, for example, they told me that I should not talk to the inmates about their problems and should not work on planning anything for them. We were just told to focus on security. And, we had a lot of problems in our prisons, including drugs, psychiatric illness, riots, and violence.

HYATT: This situation should sound very familiar to many of us in the United States. So, what do you think prompted the changes that brought the system in Norway to where it is today?

HØIDAL: The government recognized that there was a problem and required a reform of the correctional services in Norway. So, by the early '90s, they said that we had to change the whole system. Several government agencies wrote a white paper setting out the reformed policies for the correctional services in Norway.¹² And that white paper said that we should focus on four important things: to reduce recidivism, improve the professionalism of the officers, develop new methods for supervising, rehabilitating, and working with inmates, and implement organizational and administrative changes. When that white paper was published in 1995 it was a big paradigm shift for Norway.

10. See, e.g., Amelia Gentleman, *Inside Halden, the Most Humane Prison in the World*, GUARDIAN (May 18, 2012), <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/may/18/halden-most-humane-prison-in-world>.

11. See, e.g., Høidal, *supra* note 7.

12. Cf. Norwegian Ministry of Just. and the Police, *Punishment That Works—Less Crime—A Safe Society: Report to the Storting on the Norwegian Correctional Services (English Summary)*, 31 FED. SENT'G REP. 52 (2018) (Norway's most recent white paper addressing the need to balance punishment with rehabilitation in its corrections system).

HYATT: We often hear that change can be difficult and can take a long time, especially in corrections where some things are similar to the way things were done in the 1800s. Can you talk a little bit about some of the obstacles that you faced in starting to reform the system and how you were able to overcome them?

HØDAL: One of the biggest changes was in the role of the prison officers. It was decided that officers must be able to discuss crime and prevention measures with the inmates. Officers needed to be able to sit down in an office and ask, "How can we change your life? How can we help you so you don't come back to prison?" Officers must now be able to plan for an inmate's release and also monitor the execution of their sentence. They should have knowledge about the opportunities in the correctional system so they can connect the opportunities to the inmates and contribute in general to the professional development of the correctional services. It was a very big change for the Norwegian correctional officers. That of course was quite difficult to implement in the older prisons in Norway. It took multiple efforts at reform to do that. But the prison officers' training was changed. The staff academy changed the way it worked in the late '80s and '90s so that officer candidates could receive full pay while they are taught various subjects like psychology, criminology, law, human rights, and ethics.

HYATT: This Norwegian model that we've been talking about on both this panel and the one that preceded it has become an inspiration for many other prisons and correctional systems across the globe, including in Pennsylvania. And we'll hear from our Pennsylvania colleagues in a moment, but what are your thoughts about the value of these international collaborations, especially in terms of actually making changes for the staff and the individuals who are incarcerated in prisons across the world?

HØDAL: When I started implementing reforms in Oslo Prison, where I was Governor for eleven years, there was a lot of resistance. Some guards said, "We are employed as guards, not social workers. We want long shifts and long free periods. Safety must come first. We had big riots in the '80s; it can happen again." There was a big fear of change. The new reforms required an unknown way to work. And many of them asked me, "Did we do things wrongly before?" It was quite a tough process to change this part of the culture. We had to do a lot of things with the management, with the leaders, because they didn't have personal responsibility over the officers in the '90s. We changed the management role to increase oversight. We had a lot of changes to implement.

HYATT: Let's now turn our attention to Pennsylvania where the staff who participated in the Scandinavian Prison Project are undertaking a reform effort that in many ways is similar to what Governor Høidal and his colleagues undertook in the 1980s. Of course, instead of focusing on an entire system, the SCI Chester staff is focusing on one particular unit. Superintendent Eason, let's start with you. We've heard a lot about some of the changes that had to take place to bring the Norwegian system to where it is today. Oslo Prison, where Governor Høidal previously

worked, in many ways resembles Pennsylvania's old Graterford Prison, which is now closed. You worked at Graterford early in your career. Could you talk a little bit about the changes that you've seen in Pennsylvania over the course of your career in corrections?

SUPERINTENDENT KENNETH EASON: Certainly. There have been quite a few changes. Some have been in the design of the structures, inasmuch as we don't see many facilities built with thirty-foot walls and manned towers anymore, we no longer see cell blocks with upwards of five to six hundred people on them.¹³ The approach at that time didn't allow the staff to get to know the inmates the way they do now on the smaller housing units. As the Governor said, we also endured a great deal of violence inside our facilities back then. It ranged from inmate-on-inmate to inmate-on-staff incidents. Perhaps the most important development has been a huge shift in the way we assess the behaviors of our inmates in an effort to bring about change in a positive way. Several years ago, inmates could be seen idle, mostly idle on the housing units with recreational activities limited to playing cards or sports. Now, we're assessing them. We're looking at their re-entry needs. They spend a great deal of their day, whether in vocation or meeting with counselors or in programming groups, to better prepare themselves for when they leave our facilities.

HYATT: In the summer of 2020, you took over as the Superintendent of SCI Chester. You were the Deputy Superintendent when we traveled to Norway in 2019, and you now oversee the way the SPP is being implemented. As we've heard, the project focuses on adapting Scandinavian values for distinctly American prison contexts. Some people have questioned whether it's really possible to do this, whether it's possible to learn anything from other countries, and whether or not it's possible to make a meaningful change inside of an American prison.¹⁴ After having visited Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, what is your impression of that reaction? What do you think is possible to bring home to Pennsylvania? What seemed to you to be familiar and what seemed to be very distinct?

EASON: Well, you probably can see me smiling. I'm still blown away by the experience. My hats off to the folks there. I'm jealous of what they've been able to accomplish. What was unique to me? I mean, there are many things that are unique within their system, but one thing I want to point out is that much credit for reentry goes to the society. The culture there supports the efforts of their correctional system. For us here in the States, that's a huge challenge for us because it's something that we've not known. It's something we've not done before. I think that over the

13. See, e.g., *About 2,500 Inmates Begin Transferring from Graterford to New Pennsylvania Prison*, DELCO DAILY TIMES (June 11, 2018), https://www.delcotimes.com/news/about-2-500-inmates-begin-transferring-from-graterford-to-new-pennsylvania-prison/article_db27483f-d14a-52fe-a295-913aaa1614d9.html (describing Graterford's thirty-foot stone walls and the smaller living quarters in the new facility).

14. See, e.g., Jordan M. Hyatt & Synøve Nygaard Andersen, *Exploring Norwegian Sentencing and Corrections as a Foundation for Comparative Policy Analysis*, 31 FED. SENT'G REP. 1 (2018).

years, and still now, when you see what prison is portrayed like in cinema and the like, it's hardened, it's dark. But when we visited their system, when I got to see it up close and personal, this is a bright place. I got to see staff engaging with the inmate population unlike I've ever seen before. Consider the physical plant, cell block or housing area, as it's referred to. You've heard the word normality, true normality. These housing areas looking like apartments, studios. And you could see just by the correctional environment and some of the things I just mentioned, the climate was different. It brought about a different behavior from the inmates and staff. There was a peer-type relationship. There was no hierarchy. There was no supervisor to inmate. And again, I applaud that and come away shaking my head, trying to figure out how best to establish that here.

HYATT: Although the project has been delayed by the ongoing pandemic, it has started to creep forward. We've seen in the video documenting some of the changes,¹⁵ and since that was filmed in March 2020, there have been even more changes. The policies are being written and are almost ready to be put in place. Can you talk a little bit about what reactions the project has received from the other officers and the incarcerated men at SCI Chester or in general conversation?

EASON: There are a lot of naysayers on the staff side, naturally. They hadn't visited Scandinavia, heard the stories, shared experiences from our staff who visited, and still don't quite believe it can work. The staff who have visited and are part of the project are still hopeful, excited. Although with the pandemic, it's been challenging because, as you said, it slowed things down and we definitely don't want them to lose steam, so we're working hard with them. But the inmate population, let's talk about them. The inmate population is super excited. Those folks are yearning to be a part of the experience, want to see it play out. Many of our long-term offenders have heard about this new way of corrections, some of whom don't foresee themselves ever leaving due to the sentence they've received. So, they welcome a change such as this because this will be home for them.

HYATT: Now, I'd like to bring us full circle and speak with you, Ms. Connor-Council, about your experience and what's been happening on the housing unit. You traveled with a group of officers and the other members of the management team to Scandinavia. You were in the group that went to Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Did you have any particular experiences that left a lasting impression or have been particularly informative as you've overseen the day-to-day operations of the prison project as it has moved forward?

15. Independent of the research project and exchange, the Swedish public broadcaster (SVT) is creating a documentary about the experience of the American officers in the SPP. See John Stark, *Prison Project: Little Scandinavia (extended trailer)*, YOUTUBE (July 2, 2020), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTC1KI0STIY&feature=emb_logo (promotional trailer for forthcoming SVT documentary film).

UNIT MANAGER PATRICIA CONNOR-COUNCIL: The whole trip and all of what we saw left a lasting impression on me. The whole experience. Some of the things that really stand out are what they do in Scandinavia that we don't do here. One of the main focuses of the trip was the staff education piece. Their staff go to college for two years.¹⁶ Here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, our officers go to training for six weeks. That's big. The officers that are selected to be prison officers in Scandinavia choose that profession. Here, we choose it too, but what we do is, you take a test, you pass or fail, and you get the job. We asked the Scandinavian officers what made them choose the profession of prison officer. They all had the same unanimous answer, which was, "We want to help people." That's all we heard, "We want to help people." So they came in with the mindset of wanting to help these inmates. And you don't hear that often. They had a set of core values that they went by, and that was big too. During the trip, we were told that from the very beginning that when you come to prison in Scandinavia, the only thing that inmates lose is their freedom. A lot of what we saw there confirmed that. They ate with the officers. They went to the cinema with the officers. They gardened with the officers. The officers engage with them. They engage with the officers. They spoke with them as if they were friends or neighbors. That left a lasting impression on me.

HYATT: Thank you. It has been a bit more than a year since you all returned from Norway. Could you talk about what the past year has been like from your perspective as you've tried to radically transform the physical structure and culture of one particular housing unit?

CONNOR-COUNCIL: The past year has been filled with a lot of ups and downs and a lot of anxiety trying to get maintenance on board and trying to get the structural elements the way we wanted. Getting things inside the prison in a timely fashion was always a challenge. But the pandemic came, and it shut everything down. Just before the pandemic, we were able to select six lifers to live on the unit for stability. They will be the mentors and help us to guide the new guys who will come onto the unit. I want to say they lived there for two weeks, and then the pandemic came along. So now since we're in pandemic mode, we still have been able to get the unit to a place where the colors are brighter and the furniture is softer. And we're rewriting policy with the administration. It's a little tough because the officers have a collective bargaining unit. So, some of the things they disagree with have taken time to resolve. We have recently made a plan to allow the inmates to have some influence in how we will penalize other inmates for infractions that they might cause on a unit. And some of the things that we're actually incorporating into the new unit, we're encouraging

16. See, e.g., Sven-Erik Skotte, Assistant Professor, Univ. Coll. of Norwegian Corr. Serv., *Dynamic Security—Perspectives from Norwegian Correctional Service*, Presentation at the European Penitentiary Training Academies Annual Conference (June 13–14, 2018), https://www.epta.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Norway_presentation.pdf.

the inmates to incorporate some of their ideas. That’s strengthening the engagement process between officers and inmates. Though a gift and a curse, it’s allowing us to master some of the things that we want to have in place for the new officers and the new inmates that will eventually come onto the unit.

HYATT: What changes would you say have taken up the most of your time or the officers’ time as you move closer to the full opening date?

CONNOR-COUNCIL: Some of the changes that’ve taken up most of the time are construction issues. We’ve had things put in place, but of course they break or they’re not sturdy enough. Some of the paint is peeling already. So, the construction piece, that’s big. The inmates that live on the unit are helping us correct those things. So, we won’t have to always utilize maintenance. They live there and they do the work there. Some of the policy-writing, while we’re not really having issues with it, we do have to go back and forth with the administration. For example, one of the major pieces is the fraternization policy. To eat with an inmate here, it’s fraternizing. You’re not allowed to do it. Engaging one-on-one, just being in a small area with an inmate talking one-on-one, that was not allowed. So changing that fraternization policy, that is not taking up a major part to write it anymore, but there are a lot of sticking points in there with what you can do and what you can’t do. So those are some of the issues that are taking some of our time, but we get to master them now during this down period.

American anti-fraternization policies encourage distance between officers and incarcerated people. The stated goal may be professionalism, but that has resulted in a wide gulf between the two groups. The Scandinavian approach, including its commitment to dynamic security, views professionalism as consistent with a deeper interpersonal understanding and encourages closer interactions between correctional staff and incarcerated people.¹⁷

Among the various cultural challenges facing American correctional officers interested in this different path is re-examining the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate relationships for staff and residents. For example, it is a standard part of the job in Norway for officers to eat meals regularly with the incarcerated people for whom they are responsible. In most American prisons, that would be sanctionable conduct. Just before the pandemic suspended the SPP at SCI Chester, staff and incarcerated people sat together in the renovated housing unit and shared a meal. Everyone recognized the unusual nature of the experience, with Ms. Connor-Council noting that this was the first time she had ever done so.¹⁸

17. Cf. PRATT & ERIKSSON, *supra* note 9, at 10 (“There seems to be more routine interaction and less social distance between officers and inmates in the Nordic prisons. Inmates and staff might share the same canteen at mealtimes in some institutions, as well as use first name terms when addressing each other.”).

18. See Stark, *supra* note 15, at 13:42.

HYATT: Despite the challenges of the pandemic, as you've rightly pointed out, the SPP housing unit is getting closer and closer to opening every single day. Whether that happens in the next few weeks or the next few months, it's becoming clear that the project is going to move forward. What are your plans and your expectations for the months to come? And what do you think will happen once the unit is up and running with sixty-four instead of the six men currently living on the block?

CONNOR-COUNCIL: My plans and expectations are to work to make the Scandinavian Prison Project a success so that it could be something that we put in every jail as a model way of life for U.S. prison culture. There is a lot we need to do. The biggest hurdle will be to retrain the officers because we recognized that when we went over, the officers there deal with a smaller group of inmates. They might have one or two per officer. So, because that new block will have sixty-four inmates, we have to have enough staff to deal with all sixty-four. So currently now in Chester, we have one officer for 125 inmates. On our new unit we will have eight officers for sixty-four inmates. One officer will be responsible for eight inmates. We need that for every shift. So, we will have to hire other officers to come over to deal with the inmates when the other officers are off. As a result, those new officers will have to be trained in the core value system that we're implementing. They have to be trained in the process of normality and the things that we learned. The experienced officers also are going to need to be retrained so that we won't forget any of the aspects of what we learned over there, especially since the pandemic.

HYATT: Thank you all very much. Questions have been pouring into the chat as we've been talking. So now I'll turn control over to Dr. Andersen, who can hopefully direct the questions to the folks who can best answer them.

DR. SYNØVE ANDERSEN: I would like to start going back to Are Høidal. There have been a couple of questions regarding the changes and the resistance that took place in the Norwegian system in the 1990s. You mentioned that there was primarily pushback from the officers, and that it took some time for change to actually happen. Could you say a little more about what happened? What happened to the staff who objected to these changes? Were they incentivized? Were they penalized? What did you do to those people who said, "I don't want to be a part of this. I don't believe in it." Finally, how much time did it take for change to start?

HØIDAL: It took a long time for us to change the whole culture in Oslo Prison because the officers were employed only as guards. When we hired them in the '80s and the early '90s, the only goal for the officers at that time was to take care of safety and just fully work on security measures. When these big changes came about in the middle of the '90s, it required a totally new role for many of these officers. They then had to sit down and talk to the inmates in a meaningful new way. They had to motivate them. I think many of the officers weren't prepared for that

because they hadn't applied for that type of job. They had applied for a job as a guard, and not what they called a "social worker." They told me, "This is for social workers. It's not for us." So many of the old officers didn't buy into this effort to change things, but I said to them, "You have to join it." Therefore, it took some time to change the whole system, and especially to change the culture and change the way the older officers had been working. But eventually, I was assigned some new officers who had been trained at the new staff academy, and this was very positive. I think it took us ten years to change the whole system. I think it's important to have a long-term goal. As we say in Norway, "Have ice in the stomach." Build stone by stone. That's my advice for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the Chester prison. Build stone by stone. Have a long-term goal, and accept it will take time.

ANDERSEN: It probably will. Could you also say a little bit about the reactions from the incarcerated population? What was the reaction from the people who were incarcerated at Oslo Prison or some of the other prisons during that time? How long did it take for change to emerge when it came to, as you mentioned, the levels of riots and fights, recidivism, and so on?

HØIDAL: I think it was a shock for the inmates when the officers started to talk to them in a nice way. Of course, it took time until every officer did that, but I think the inmates looked very positively on this change in the correctional services in Norway. The riots also stopped. We had riots in the '80s and then there were no riots in the '90s and up to today. No riots in the Norwegian prisons at all. I think another very important change was that we started to train a lot of female officers from the middle of the '90s, and up to today. We now have a fifty/fifty ratio of male and female officers. But in the '80s and early '90s, there were very few female officers. And that contributed to a cultural shift for the Norwegian system, I think.

ANDERSEN: That's interesting. Superintendent Eason, there is a question from the audience: What do you think are the biggest obstacles to implementing the Scandinavian model in the United States, given these pretty significant differences in the number of inmates, the inmate-officer ratio, the architecture, and some of the cultural differences that we were talking about on the first panel? Could you say something about how you see these obstacles? What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge?

EASON: I think the biggest challenge will be buy-in, not just from our folks who are employed inside our facilities, but the politicians and those who support us with resources and funding. That's simply because their eyes haven't seen what we've seen. They've just heard. In moving forward, it's important to understand, at our facility, we've got to use all our energy, the resources we do have, to prove that this can proceed in a positive way. What does that look like? Well, it looks

like less staff calling off. That means staff are not as stressed. So therefore, you have folks coming to work. They're happy to come to work. Inmates keep in contact with their family members. Their attitudes will change. We'll get those public interest groups that'll buy in. Inmates' families will support this, and some politicians. So far in the last year, I think there's been a huge shift in terms of our staff buy-in. When staff are coming to work and feeling safe, they tend to come to work more often when scheduled, and they feel good about themselves. They're putting their best foot forward, and being productive. Inmates aren't being mistreated, but rather being treated fairly. So, some of those challenges we had before are no more, but there are others we face. The project can essentially align with our political folks, again, who will provide the insight and/or those resources to enable us to build on what it is we have here in Chester and move across with the Commonwealth.

ANDERSEN: You mentioned resources. Has it been a challenge to secure the necessary resources and funding to implement this project at Chester?

EASON: Well, sure. To some degree it has been. We weren't planning for a pandemic. We had budget projections outside of the monies put forth to help with this project. Again, no one foresaw this. We planned to do certain things to operate the facility, but there are a number of things that the project requires that we just had to slow down. Instead of buying ten of something at once, we had to get them piecemeal. Instead of having a plethora of staff to come into the facility and do the things that were necessary, no one could come in. So, the burden fell on the maintenance staff, as you heard Unit Manager Connor-Council say, and they're overwhelmed because we are not in a new facility. In some regard we are, but we're an old facility, so things are breaking down. So, there are resources, manpower, dedicated to keep the jail running, in addition to assisting with the project. So, stretching those resources has been a huge challenge for us.

ANDERSEN: Thanks a lot for that. And then to Ms. Connor-Council, you mentioned the process of taking ideas from mere ideas and putting them out in real life. In that process, some things you and the other staff all agreed on and some things you disagreed on. Can you say a bit more about what points you tend to be all in for and where you really had to work more to find a good way forward?

CONNOR-COUNCIL: Some of the things that we agreed on were the architecture of the block. Where we would place the kitchen, the color schemes that we would use. Things of that nature. Some things that we disagreed on were how to adapt parts of the Scandinavian model. Over there, they said that when you go to prison, all you lose is your freedom. That is difficult to implement in Pennsylvania. Just making compromises with each other in writing policies can be a challenge. We each took something different away from the experience in Scandinavia. And in a

sense, when there are some things that we can't compromise on, the majority just rules. That's how the group goes about resolving those issues.

ANDERSEN: Was there anything you really wanted to do that you were just simply unable to make work?

CONNOR-COUNCIL: From a construction perspective, there were some things we couldn't make work. We couldn't put showers in their cells like they are in Scandinavia. We could not do everything we wanted to do in the kitchen. If it won't work one way, it may work another. We wanted vending machines with fresh fruit and fresh vegetables on the unit. That didn't happen, but we were able to secure a contract with the supermarket. Now, we don't need the vending machines any longer. It's about compromise and being creative to reach a goal.

ANDERSEN: Governor Høidal, there are a couple of more questions for you. In a slightly more general nature, one person in the audience asked if we could say some more about this kind of Scandinavian prison setting or prison system. Are there separate prisons for people with mental health issues, pretrial jails, immigration facilities, and so on?

HØIDAL: In Norway, we only have prisons, and in prisons we have both pre-trial custody and sentenced inmates. We mix the two kinds of inmates in the units because we don't have a special prison for pretrial detention. We only have prisons in Norway, not jails. That's a unique system. I think Norway is the only place that has this kind of system. Sweden has their own type of jails, and also Denmark. In Norway, although we mix all the inmates, we do have one specialized prison for inmates who have significant psychiatric problems. That is Ila prison.

ANDERSEN: What are the practices regarding solitary confinement, “isolasjon?” Could you please say something on this topic? Is that a big problem? How is it being used, and so on?

HØIDAL: Isolation is a big problem in Norway because we have a lot of older prison buildings. Not every prison is as modern as Halden Prison. So many of the older prisons in Norway were built in 1850, -60, -70. In the very old prisons, they don't have the capacity to allow for activities as we can in prisons built in recent years. So, inmates spend more time in their cells, alone. So, in these old prisons we have a problem with isolation and so have received criticism from the Norwegian ombudsman who has visited many of our prisons. But we don't have what you call in the United States “segregation units.” We simply don't have that in Norwegian prisons. But we have inmates who are isolated in ordinary units. They're working hard to make and do that better. Our goal in every prison in Norway is to have inmates outside their cell for eight hours a day.

ANDERSEN: So, as Governor Høidal is highlighting, if you want to look to the North for inspiration, don't look North for inspiration when it comes to solitary confinement because there are a lot of people who are isolated in Scandinavian prisons. This is a good opportunity to stress that no system is perfect. There are similar challenges across these systems as well. Then I have another question for Ms. Connor-Council. You talked about the kitchen briefly earlier, and a question came in regarding whether the incarcerated individuals will be able to have a kitchen garden or grow herbs. Can you say a little more about the plans for the green space?

CONNOR-COUNCIL: Currently, we have created a place for pots for plants all around the unit, and we'll have a dedicated green space just outside the unit, as well as outside, like a garden. In the kitchen or outside, we will hopefully be growing our own herbs. The inmates will be allowed to cook and prepare meals for themselves as well as their "contact officer." That's something that they do over there in Scandinavia. That's something that we've planned on incorporating here in Chester.

ANDERSEN: Thank you for providing some more details on it. There have been some questions of a more general nature about the Scandinavian systems and a couple of them have to do with language and the words that we use to refer to people who have been convicted of crimes and are serving sentences in prisons in these systems. One person in the audience points out that in the United States, or in the American system, the term "inmate" is problematic and viewed as demeaning by many in the reform movement. The question is whether in Norway there are multiple terms for prisoners, and if so, what they are and whether there is an equivalent to the American terms.

I would say that, yes, there are multiple terms, very broadly speaking. You could say that we have a word equivalent to "inmate," which is "innsatt." And this is the word more commonly used by people who work in the system. So, we've heard Governor Høidal use it. Officers often use the same word. If you talk to incarcerated individuals and ask them whether they like that or not, you'll hear different answers. Some hate it and find it demeaning. Some don't really care. Another word, which then would be more equivalent to prisoner, that is more commonly used in academic discourse, is "fange." It's a word that better captures this, kind of, the deprivation of liberty. In a way it would translate to a person that is captured or held captive. I would say that there are similar traditions in a way. In Scandinavia, you have similar terms also in the other languages that you will find in the American system. And as you say, those in support of reform or abolition would typically avoid the word "innsatt" or "inmate." One person also asked about what you call offenders. And again, it really depends on who you ask. Some people in the general population would just say criminal, but I'm not aware of any systematic research that really explores what words people in Scandinavia actually use. I

don't know, Governor Høidal, do you know of anything, any research related to what words we use?

HØIDAL: I feel that we commonly use the word "innsatt," and that is "inmate" in Norway. I think most of the employees in the system here use the word "inmate." We don't think that's a negative word.

ANDERSEN: Again, for people who work in the system, that is definitely the most common word to use.

I have one more question for Superintendent Eason about the educational programming at SCI Chester and, in particular, whether there are programs to help prisoners with low literacy. Could you say a bit more about the educational opportunities that you offer?

EASON: Certainly. There are a number of programs, GED programs, reading, and the like, both internally provided as well as community-based programming, whereby we have volunteers that come in and offer a variety of programs to these men. Our men do not leave here without having had an opportunity to get their GED offered to them. Having gotten at least their GED, they can then add to that with other vocational training, whether it be plumbing and trades, carpentry; there's a long list of things. We're adding to that as we speak because we're trying to expand, not just simply because of this project, but the overall sense that it's much needed. The men need more opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Even under the best of circumstances, improving correctional culture is a long process. Maintaining a positive culture requires eternal vigilance. All of it is arduous. As this panel demonstrated, however, durable progress was possible in Norway. That should give hope to American officials participating in projects like the SPP.