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PRISONERS SERVING SENTENCES OF LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AND SURVEY

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Glenn J. Abraham

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

2011

PRISONERS SERVING SENTENCES OF LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY AND SURVEY

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Social Work
at the University of Kentucky

By
Glenn J. Abraham
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. David D. Royse, Professor of Social Work
Lexington, Kentucky
2011

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

PRISONERS SERVING SENTENCES OF LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AND SURVEY

This mixed methods exploratory study examined how adult male prisoners serving sentences of life without parole adapt to the probability that they will be incarcerated for the remainder of their lives. As a second element, state prison wardens were surveyed about their support for the provision of certain amenities to those serving life without parole and the extent to which they believed those prisoners presented a risk of future dangerousness. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 24 inmates serving sentences of life without parole at a high security prison in Ohio. Informants identified factors that made adjustment more difficult or which enhanced the ability to adapt. Some study participants expressed hope that a favorable court decision or a change in sentencing laws would lead to release from prison. A survey sent to 430 state prison wardens asked if they supported providing prisoners serving life without parole amenities involving access to academic and vocational education programs, special housing assignments, and special programs to enhance adaptation. Wardens were asked to rate the extent to which they believed those prisoners presented a risk of future dangerousness. Study hypotheses were tested to determine if factors related to wardens' prior work experience as a correction officer or in a treatment position, opinions about the primary purpose of prison, experience as a warden of a facility that housed prisoners serving life without parole, level of educational attainment, and gender impacted support for amenities and perception of future dangerousness. Three different two-way ANOVA tests were conducted, each of which had a categorical predictor variable and moderating independent variables of educational attainment and gender. Several of the main effects did reach the level of statistical significance. A reported belief that rehabilitation was the primary purpose of prison and level of educational attainment were significant in predicting wardens' support for amenities. Having served as the warden of a prison at which inmates serving life without parole were housed and being female were found to be related to a lower perception of future dangerousness.

KEYWORDS: Life without parole sentence, prisoners, prison wardens, prison amenities, future dangerousness

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PRISONERS SERVING SENTENCES OF LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY AND SURVEY

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

In memory of my mother, Lucette Abraham, and my father, Warren Abraham,
who always emphasized the value of education and the importance of helping others.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Rationale for the Study	1
Social Work’s Position on the Forensic Field of Practice	6
Social Work’s Position on Life Sentences	9
Purpose of the Study	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review	20
Adapting to the Prison Environment	20
The Effects of Prior Incarceration	36
External Support Networks	37
Internal Support Networks	38
Loss and Hopelessness	38
Mental Health Status	40
Aging in the Prison Setting and the Older Inmate	45
Rule Violations and Violent Behaviors in the Prison Setting	49
Public Perceptions	52
Administrative Management of Long-Term Inmates	53
Conducting Interviews and Establishing Rapport in the Prison Setting	56
Wardens’ Attitudes and Beliefs	57
Prison Amenities	58
Future Dangerousness	64
Conceptual Model	64
Chapter 3: Methodology	70
Adaptation of Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole	70
Setting	70
Informants	73
Paradigmatic focus	78
Data collection	80
Data analysis	81
Coding	82
Use of grounded theory	83
Trustworthiness	84
Perspectives of Prison Wardens; Quantitative Portion	87
Sampling frame	87
Dependent variables	90
Instrumentation	90
LWOP Amenities Index	90

LWOP Future Dangerousness Scale	92
Independent variables	95
Analytic plan	96
Hypotheses	97
Summary	98
Chapter 4: Results of Qualitative Study of Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole.....	99
Data Analysis	101
Theme 1: Sources of Dissatisfaction	103
Difficulty adapting to a sentence of life without parole	103
Difficulty adapting to prison in general	104
Fear of dying in prison	105
Overcrowding	106
Fear of other inmates	107
Negative interactions with other inmates	108
Lack of privacy	110
Contacts with staff that are negative in nature	111
Boredom and lack of opportunity to be active	113
Bad food	115
Lack of contact or limited contact with family members and important others outside the institution.....	116
Fear that family members or important others will die while they are incarcerated.....	117
Theme 2: Positive Forces	118
Acceptance of situation.....	118
Successful adaptation to prison in general	120
Good job assignment	122
Good housing assignment	123
Trusted friends and/or associates among inmate population	125
Feelings of safety	127
Adequate opportunity for privacy	127
Treated with respect by others	128
Contacts with staff members that are not negative in nature	129
Interesting and useful programs facilitated by prison staff or by community volunteers.....	120
Enjoyable leisure time activities	131
Contacts with family and important others from the community....	132
Existence of adequate social support system	134
Spirituality	135
Finding purpose for one's life	136
Theme 3: Hope Based on Legal Changes	138
Chapter 5: Results of Study of Attitudes and Opinions of Prison Wardens.....	140
Quantitative Analysis	140
Sample	140

Description of the study sample	141
Study Variable Descriptives	143
Independent variables	143
Prior service as a correction officer or in treatment position	144
Most important mission of prison	144
Service as warden of a facility that housed life without parole inmates.....	145
Gender	145
Highest level of educational attainment	146
Dependent variables	146
Life without Parole (LWOP) Amenities Index	146
Missing data	148
Imputation of missing data	151
Life without Parole (LWOP) Future Dangerousness Scale	152
Hypotheses Testing	155
Hypothesis 1	155
Hypothesis 2	160
Hypothesis 3	167
Qualitative Analysis	171
Question 1: Providing Help for the Life without Parole Population	173
Theme 1: It is Appropriate to Engage in Efforts to Facilitate Positive Adjustment.....	174
Keep inmates serving life without parole active and occupied	174
Provide programs, work, and educational opportunities	174
Programs help life without parole offenders find meaning for their lives.....	175
Provide programs that target the needs of life without parole offenders.....	176
Provide special housing assignments for life without parole offenders.....	176
Support family contact for life without parole offenders	177
Develop and utilize peer mentoring programs	177
Give hope	178
Theme 2: There is No Need to Facilitate Positive Adjustment	178
There is no reason to treat life without parole inmates differently than other prisoners.....	178
Adjustment is a product of time served	179
Question 2: Largest Problem with the Life without Parole Population	180
Theme 1: Problems Experienced by Inmates Serving Life without Parole ..	180
Hopelessness and despair	180
Idleness, boredom, and the lack of meaningful programs	181
Adjusting to the life without parole sentence	181
Loss of contact with family and the outside world and feeling abandoned or forgotten.....	183
Aging and health concerns	183
Anger and frustration	184

Absence of a sense of purpose	184
Theme 2: Problems Experienced by Wardens, Other Prison Staff, or the Correctional System.....	185
Cost factors	185
Increase in number of inmates serving life without parole as a contributing factor to prison overcrowding.....	186
Security issues	186
Life without parole prisoners' adjustment issues	187
Staff training and staff shortage issues	188
Chapter 6: Discussion	191
Qualitative Study of Prison Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole.....	192
Sources of dissatisfaction	193
Difficulty adapting to the prison environment	193
The impact of prison overcrowding	193
Boredom and inactivity	195
Lack of social support	196
Difficulty adapting to a sentence of life without parole	196
Positive forces	197
Adapting to the prison environment	197
Positive interactions with others	200
Enjoyable leisure time activities and the existence of interesting and useful programs facilitated by prison staff or community volunteers.....	200
Social support	200
Spirituality	201
Finding purpose for one's life	201
Hope based on legal changes	202
Issues of concern	204
Relationship of results to prior studies	204
Study of Opinions of State Prison Wardens	205
Quantitative data analysis	205
Hypothesis 1	205
Summary of results of Hypothesis 1	207
Explanation of results and relation to previous studies	207
Hypothesis 2	208
Summary of results of Hypothesis 2	208
Explanation of results and relation to previous studies	209
Hypothesis 3	209
Summary of results of Hypothesis 3	210
Explanation of results and relation to previous studies	210
Relationship of results to prior studies	211
Qualitative data analysis of the warden survey items	211
Study Contributions	212
Study Limitations	214

Qualitative study of adaptation of inmates serving sentences of LWOP.....	214
Quantitative and qualitative study of opinions of state prison Wardens.....	215
Directions for future research	215
List of Appendices	
Appendix A, Contact Letter to Potential Participants	218
Appendix B, Invitation to Participate in Research Study	220
Appendix C, Informed Consent Form	221
Appendix D, Research Interview Guide	225
Appendix E, Cover Letter to Wardens	228
Appendix F, Life without Parole Survey	230
References	234
Vita.....	249

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1, Characteristics of Potential Respondents	74
Table 3.2, Factor Loadings from Principal Axis Factoring Analysis: Communalities, Eigenvalue, and Percentage of Variance for Items Related to Future Dangerousness.....	94
Table 4.1, Comparison of Participants with Those Who Declined to Participate or Who Were Unavailable for Interview.....	100
Table 4.2, Adaptation to Sentences of Life without Parole: Emerging Themes	102
Table 5.1, Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	142
Table 5.2, History of Experience as a Correction Officer or in a Treatment Position.....	144
Table 5.3, Opinions of Wardens Regarding the Most Important Mission of Prison.....	145
Table 5.4, Consolidated Categories of Highest Level of Educational Attainment.....	146
Table 5.5, Wardens' Responses to Survey Items Related to Amenities for LWOP Prisoners.....	148
Table 5.6, Missing Value Analysis: Univariate Statistics	150
Table 5.7, Missing Value Analysis: Separate Variance t Tests	151
Table 5.8, Univariate Statistics for Life without Parole Amenities Index before and After Data Imputation.....	152
Table 5.9, Wardens' Responses to Survey Items Related to Future Dangerousness of LWOP Prisoners.....	154
Table 5.10, Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Correction Officer or Treatment Position, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Only Survey Data.....	157
Table 5.11, Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Correction Officer or Treatment Position, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Survey Data and Values from Data Imputation.....	159
Table 5.12, Comparison of Results from Test 1 and Test 2 of Hypothesis 1.....	160
Table 5.13, Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Primary Mission of Prison, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Only Survey Data.....	163
Table 5.14, Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Primary Mission of Prison, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Survey Data and Values from Data Imputation.....	165
Table 5.15, Comparison of Results from Test 1 and Test 2 of Hypothesis 2.....	166
Table 5.16, Analysis of Variance Results for Statistically Significant Main Effects of Warden of LWOP Facility and Gender on Score on	

the Life without Parole Future Dangerousness Scale after Fourth Root Transformation.....	169
Table 5.17, Estimated Marginal Means of Statistically Significant Main Effects of Warden of LWOP Facility and Gender after Fourth Root Transformation.....	170
Table 5.18, Parameter Estimates of Statistically Significant Main Effects of Warden of LWOP Facility and Gender after Fourth Root Transformation.....	170
Table 5.19, Wardens' Responses to Survey Questions Regarding Adaptation of Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole: Emerging Themes and Patterns.....	172

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1, Conceptual Model Regarding Inmate Adaptation to Life without Parole Sentence.....	66
Figure 2.2, Conceptual Model Regarding Wardens' Beliefs	68

Chapter 1

Introduction

Rationale for the Study

More than 41,000 people were serving sentences of *life without parole* (LWOP) in state or federal prison in 2008 (Nellis & King, 2009). That group represented 29.2% of the over 140,000 inmates serving one of the various forms of life sentences (Nellis & King, 2009). These numbers demonstrate the continuation of a trend that has existed for several decades. In 1992, there were 69,845 inmates serving life sentences with 12,453 (17.8%) serving sentences of life without parole (Mauer, King, & Young, 2004). In 2003, there were 127,677 inmates in state or federal prison serving life sentences of whom 33,633 (26.3%) were serving sentences of life without parole (Mauer et al., 2004). The total number of inmates serving sentences of LWOP in 2008 represents a 22.2% increase from 2003 and a 230% increase from 1992.

Those serving sentences of life without parole in 2008 were mostly male (97%) and were disproportionately African American, with blacks accounting for 48.3% of those serving life sentences but representing 56.4% of those sentenced to LWOP (Nellis & King, 2009). According to U.S. Census Bureau (2009) estimates, blacks made up approximately 12.8% of the total population as of July 1, 2008, yet as of year end 2007, blacks represented 38.2% of the total population of state and federal prisons in the United States (West & Sabol, 2008).

Life sentences can be divided into two categories. The first includes indeterminate sentences that have the remainder of the inmate's life as the maximum term, but also include a minimum term upon which eligibility for parole or other form of planned

release is based. This does not mean that there is any certainty that the offender will be released, but the possibility--and the opportunity to hope--still exists for the inmate. The second category includes determinate sentences of life in which there is no eligibility for parole. Other than through a successful appeal or by an executive pardon or commutation of sentence, offenders in this second category do not have any chance of being legally released from prison. Different terms may be used to describe this type of sentence in different statutes, including *natural life*, *whole life tariff*, *life without possibility of release*, or *life certain* (Allen, Latessa, Ponder, & Simonsen, 2007; Appleton & Grover, 2007). The term life without parole is most commonly used (Appleton & Grover, 2007). Of the 50 states, only Alaska includes a minimum term with all life sentences (Nellis & King, 2009). Life without parole is the only form of life sentence found in 6 states; Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota; and in the federal judicial system. In the other 43 states, life sentences with a minimum term upon which eligibility for release is based and LWOP sentences are available forms of sentencing (Nellis & King, 2009).

A life without parole sentence is unique in that it represents a decrease in severity of sentence for certain offenses and an increase for others. For murder offenses, a life without parole sentence represents a possible alternative to a death sentence. For other, non-capital offenses, it is the most serious sentencing alternative available (Harvard Law Review, 2006).

Gallup Poll results regularly show that Americans are in favor of the death penalty when not offered an alternative option of life imprisonment without possibility of release (Moore, 2004). The Gallup Poll conducted on May 5-7, 2006 found that when

asked if they were in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder, 65% of respondents were in favor, 28% were opposed to the death penalty, and 7% had no opinion. When also asked if they could choose between the death penalty and a sentence of life imprisonment in which there was no chance of parole, 47% of respondents were in favor of the death penalty, 48% favored life imprisonment, and 5% had no opinion. This was the first time that life imprisonment was favored by more respondents than was the death penalty (Newport, 2010). This question was not asked again until the Gallup Poll of October 7-10, 2010 at which time 49% of respondents favored the death penalty, 46% favored life imprisonment, and 6% had no opinion (Newport, 2010). Even though the 2010 results had a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who favored life imprisonment with no chance of parole over the death penalty, it still showed that the public is roughly evenly divided on this issue.

This increased public support for the sentence of LWOP for capital offenses may be seen as an important element of the death penalty abolition movement. In addition to an active emphasis from the *innocence movement*, the availability of an alternative to the death penalty helped to reduce possible prosecutorial efforts to convince juries to recommend the death penalty by making reference to the *future dangerousness* of the offender should that individual ever be released from prison (Harvard Law Review, 2006). However, while these efforts may have contributed to a small reduction in the number of persons sentenced to death and actually executed, it has also resulted in many offenders receiving sentences of LWOP who would not have been eligible for death sentences or who--even if eligible--would have been unlikely to be sentenced to death. In some cases offenders, who would have been given sentences that included eligibility for

parole had a life without parole alternative not been available, are instead incarcerated for the rest of their lives (Harvard Law Review, 2006). Noting that those sentenced to death have a far higher chance of successful appeals as compared to those sentenced for non-capital offenses, the Harvard Law Review stated:

It is unlikely that parole-ineligible prisoners have any reasonable chance of getting their sentences overturned or reduced. Unlike death sentences, which merit a heightened level of appellate review, life without- parole sentences receive no special consideration from appellate Tribunals. (p. 1853)

For other, less serious offenses, LWOP may be imposed as part of sentencing enhancement policies such as the *three strikes* sentencing laws found in California, Louisiana, Virginia, and Washington (Appleton & Grover, 2007). There is concern that by having helped to open the door for LWOP sentencing as an alternative to capital punishment, death penalty abolitionists may have unintentionally made it easier for this type of sentence to be applied to those who committed lesser offenses. The Harvard Law Review (2006) stated:

It is clear that life without parole's purpose of offering an alternative to the death penalty, has far outstripped its proponents' goal. The result is not an abandonment of the death penalty, but an embrace of permanent incarceration for noncapital crimes. (p. 1852)

It appears that given the increased public support for sentences of life without parole and the data that show that such sentences are being imposed more frequently than in the past, the number of inmates serving sentences that will result in incarceration for the remainder of their lives will continue to increase. The manner in which persons who

are serving such sentences adapt to that reality is an important issue to the prisoners serving sentences of life without parole, those who care about them, and those who work for and manage the correctional facilities in which they are incarcerated, yet is one that has been given relatively little attention. The greatest attention in the literature focuses on the aging of the prison population and the need for geriatric services that will result in costly medical care (Appleton & Grover, 2007; Gonring, 1995; Harvard Law Review, 2006; King & Mauer, 2001).

Other concerns which do not appear to be addressed in the literature include prisoners' health, mental health, and the availability of social support networks for them both inside the prison and in the larger community. A focus on physical health could include life-long health care issues, including such questions as whether those serving sentences of life without parole actively pursue a healthy lifestyle while incarcerated or if they make little effort in that regard. Mental health concerns involve such questions as whether the prevalence of mental health problems--particularly those associated with depression and feelings of hopelessness--change as the amount of time served increases, appeals are exhausted, and the support networks that may have existed at earlier points in the offender's sentence break down or no longer exist. This could also involve possible differences in suicide rates compared to those who do have a chance of being released from prison. The availability and utilization of social support networks is another area of possible concern. The social support an offender received from family, friends, and important others prior to being incarcerated may be withdrawn quickly in response to the nature of the crime or may gradually erode as time passes. Faced with various choices when incarcerated, the individual serving a sentence of life without parole may decide to

avoid associating with others or may find new social support systems--whether positive or negative--within the prison.

Social Work's Position on the Forensic Field of Practice

While it might seem reasonable to assume that the situations of those serving long periods of confinement in prison would be of concern to those in the social work profession, this is difficult to document. The relatively low priority placed on the practice of social work in the criminal justice system in general and with this offender population in particular is troubling. The absence of a generic descriptor such as *judicial social worker* that might be comparable to such commonly used titles as *medical social worker*, *psychiatric social worker*, or *school social worker* was noted by Lynch and Brawley (1994). While there has been effort to gain acceptance of the title, *forensic social worker*, there is little to suggest that this has met with any great degree of success. This may be seen in the disparity among definitions. The National Organization of Forensic Social Work (NOFSW) (n.d.) offers the following definition:

Forensic social work is the application of social work to questions and issues relating to law and legal systems. This specialty of our profession goes far beyond clinics and psychiatric hospitals for criminal defendants being evaluated and treated on issues of competency and responsibility. A broader definition includes social work practice which in any way is related to legal issues and litigation, both criminal and civil. Child custody issues, involving separation, divorce, neglect, termination of parental rights, the implications of child and spouse abuse, juvenile and adult justice services, corrections, and mandated treatment all fall under this definition. (Forensic Social Work, What is Forensic Social Work?, para.1)

This bears minimal resemblance to the much narrower description of forensic social work presented by Roberts, Springer, and Brownell (2007), who defined it as “policies, practices, legal issues and remedies, and social work roles with juvenile and adult offenders as well as victims of crimes” (p. 13). O’Neill (2003) stated, “While many practice forensic social work, it has yet to claim a distinct identity among many in the profession” (para. 3).

There is little or no emphasis on this area of specialization in undergraduate or graduate social work education (Lowe & Bohon, 2008; Lynch & Brawley, 1994; O’Neill, 2003; Reamer, 2004; Severson, 1999) and those entering the profession and accepting employment in criminal justice settings may be relatively unprepared for practice (NOFSW, n.d.). In an examination of the functions of social workers associated with police agencies, Roberts (2007) stated:

Social work in criminal justice settings must look to the major professional organizations--NAFSW (National Association of Forensic Social Workers [now known as the National Organization of Forensic Social Work]), SSWR (Society for Social Work and Research), and NASW (National Association of Social Workers)--for renewal of purpose and commitment to advancement of knowledge and skills. NASW has forgotten about the important and unmet social work needs of both crime victims and offenders. (p. 129)

It is not known why Roberts did not also include the Council on Social Work Education in view of the possible impact of expanding content on forensic social work in academic curricula.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has created a number of different *Specialty Practice Sections* that members of the organization are eligible to join (NASW, 2010a). In a description of “Who We Are” (NASW, 2010c) found on the organization’s internet site, it is stated:

The NASW Specialty Practice Sections provide social workers with the latest trends, treatment strategies, policies, and information on social work issues. We give you the edge you need to stay abreast of what's happening in the profession and to be most effective in doing your job. Choose from one (or more) of the *nine* [emphasis added] Specialty Practice Sections, and let the power of your NASW membership work for you. (Who We Are, para.1)

There are actually 11 Specialty Practice Sections listed on the web site (NASW, 2010a). These are Administration/Supervision; Aging; Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs; Child Welfare; Children, Adolescents and Young Adults; Health; Mental Health; Private Practice; School Social Work; Social and Economic Justice & Peace; and Social Work and the Courts (NASW, 2010b). The Specialty Practice Section on Social Work and the Courts has only been in existence for several years. It is described by NASW (2010b) as:

We are social workers who perform community safety or offender assessments; provide forensic evaluations, custody and guardianship recommendations, mediation or parent coordination, or expert testimony in civil or criminal matters; or work in the areas of corrections, law enforcement, or probation/parole.

(Specialty Practice Sections, Social Work and the Courts, para.1)

If one follows the link to Social Work and the Courts in an effort to learn more about what that Specialty Practice Section includes, one is informed that a membership must be

purchased leaving the single sentence cited above as the only description available for review without charge.

Social Work's Position on Life Sentences

The National Association of Social Workers publishes official policy statements on a variety of issues on a regular basis. In *Social Work Speaks: National Association of Social Workers Policy Statements 2006–2009* (NASW, 2006), there are separate sections on “Capital Punishment and the Death Penalty” and “Correctional Social Work.” Those sections are both also found in *Social Work Speaks: National Association of Social Workers Policy Statements 2009–2012* (NASW, 2009).

As would be expected, NASW opposes capital punishment for a variety of reasons related to social justice and the manner in which the capital punishment process violates ethical standards associated with the dignity and worth of all persons (NASW, 2006; NASW 2009). NASW expressed the belief that the death penalty should be abolished for all crimes and that pending abolishment, there should be a moratorium on executions. It was also stated that, “In some cases, NASW supports a life sentence as an alternative sentence to the death sentence” (NASW, 2006, p. 38). That statement neither gives any information about the criteria which would qualify for a life sentence nor does it indicate if NASW includes LWOP as being acceptable or if they would only support life sentences in which there is the possibility of release on parole. The only place this is even partially addressed is found in their discussion of the ethical issue of dignity and worth of the person, where it is stated by NASW (2006) that:

Whereas returning individuals who have committed murder to the community may not serve the best interests of society, life terms served in prison create the

potential for those incarcerated individuals to recognize and heal from the emotional wounds that fueled their addiction, violence, and criminal behavior. (p. 34)

This might suggest that some offenders should not be allowed to return to the community but does not state that this should apply to all.

Additional support of Roberts' (2007) belief that NASW pays little attention to issues related to the criminal justice system is found in *Social Work Speaks: National Association of Social Workers Policy Statements 2009–2012* (NASW, 2009). The section on “Capital Punishment” was not revised from the previous edition and was approved by the NASW Delegate Assembly in 2002 (NASW, 2006). Certain information is completely out of date, most notably the position of NASW that those who had committed crimes while under the age of 18 should not be subject to the death penalty. Four years prior to the 2009 copyright date of that publication, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Roper v. Simmons* (2005) that those who had committed capital offenses when under the age of 18 could not be executed for those offenses. The absence of a revision also means that no attention has been given to the dramatic increase in the number of persons serving sentences of life without parole as an alternative to the use of capital punishment.

The policy statement on “Social Work in the Criminal Justice System” in *Social Work Speaks: National Association of Social Workers Policy Statements 2009–2012* (NASW, 2009) was revised in 2008. Much of this section is relatively general in nature and does not address some of the major issues associated with the *conditions of*

confinement in anything beyond a superficial level. The relative absence of emphasis on the practice of social work in criminal justice settings was noted:

Social workers trained in the corrections field are uniquely qualified to provide services addressing all the problem areas. Yet little has been written about delivery of services in this field, and schools of social work rarely address correctional social work and criminal justice. (p. 329)

Some may wonder why anyone should care how these offenders adapt. Prisoners serving sentences of life without parole may be first-time offenders or may have extensive past criminal histories. They have been convicted of serious offenses that have harmed or endangered others. In some cases, they have preyed upon the weak and the vulnerable and--particularly when their victims are children--have committed acts that evoke intense public outrage. Their criminal behaviors have impacted the lives of their victims physically and emotionally as well as the lives of victims' families, friends, and important others. It is not difficult to understand why some support the "lock them up and throw away the key" perspective with little or no concern for what happens to them once incarcerated. If one believes that prison is a place where punishment is to take place and that the conditions should be as harsh and as unpleasant as possible, it would follow that unsuccessful adaptation could actually be a goal rather than a concern.

Yet these are individuals who are going to be confined in facilities funded and operated by society. If one believes that the incarceration itself is the punishment, the manner in which prisoners adapt to that incarceration may be an important element. From a pragmatic perspective, it might be hoped that prisoners adapt effectively, interact responsibly and safely with staff and other inmates, maintain healthy lifestyles, and have

a minimum of mental health needs simply to reduce the costs of incarceration and to keep those responsible for their care safe. From a humanistic perspective, one might acknowledge the wisdom of the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky, the author of *Crime and Punishment*, who stated, “The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons” (Quote DB, n.d., Authors, Fyodor Dostoevsky). While a sentence of LWOP may be a reasonable consequence for certain behaviors, conditions in prison should not represent the worst of what we are. Members of the public at large as well as family, friends, and important others of those serving life without parole may believe in a societal obligation to care for offenders justly and humanely no matter what offenses resulted in their incarceration. It might be hoped that those serving LWOP may find some way to contribute to common good, even in the restrictive environment of the correctional facility, and may still find meaning for their lives.

Regardless of the reason why they are incarcerated, those serving life without parole are human beings and are the clients of social workers who provide professional services to those in prison and to members of their families. The values of the social work profession and the principles found in the NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical standards that regulate the practice of social work in each state do not allow clients to be labeled as “worthy” or “unworthy.” While personal beliefs may make it difficult to work with clients who have committed horrific offenses, it remains the obligation of the social worker to try to help clients adapt to their situations and to help improve the quality of their lives.

Purpose of the Study

The existing literature provides very little information regarding how those serving sentences of life without parole adapt to the prison environment and to the psychological and emotional stressors that are likely to be experienced in such settings. While some research examining certain aspects of adaptation does exist--most notably several studies that focused on rule-abiding behavior in the prison setting--the topic of adaptation is largely an unexplored area.

A review of the literature also showed a tremendous gap of knowledge regarding the beliefs of prison wardens relative to the proper management of those serving sentences of life without parole. There is no known research regarding the opinions and beliefs of prison wardens relative to the provision of certain amenities that might enhance the adaptation of inmates who will be in prison for the remainder of their lives. Additionally, while the few studies of rule-abiding behavior among those serving life without parole do address the issue of future dangerousness, there is no known research that examined prison wardens' beliefs about the future dangerousness of that population.

This mixed methods exploratory study will examine various factors that may have an impact on the manner in which adult male offenders incarcerated in a state prison adapt to the physical environment and to the knowledge that they are likely to be incarcerated for the remainder of their lives. Greene (2006) and Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) noted that mixed methods research is still evolving and that there continue to be important issues related to how it is defined and formulated. Tashakkori and Creswell stated, "Often writers will say that a mixed methods project is one that includes a qualitative and quantitative substudy. Inconsistencies and disagreements start when one

considers how the two substudies (or strands) are related to each other” (p. 3). R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) described mixed methods research as being the third major research paradigm along with qualitative research and quantitative research. They stated that mixed methods research provided an opportunity to address research questions of interest from a position between qualitative and quantitative research methods. R. B. Johnson et al. emphasized that the value of qualitative and quantitative research methods are still respected and described a model of mixed methods research that could be *qualitative dominant*, *quantitative dominant* or *equal status* in nature.

R. B. Johnson et al. (2007) and Morgan (2007) addressed the relevance of pragmatism to mixed methods research. R. B. Johnson et al. stated, “Today, the primary philosophy of mixed research is that of pragmatism” (p. 113). Morgan advocated a pragmatic approach that is not based on the extremes related to subjectivity and objectivity and the uses of inductive or deductive methods found in qualitative research and quantitative research. Instead, an intersubjective approach that recognizes the improbability of being absolutely subjective or objective is proposed as a more pragmatic way to address research questions. The use of abductive reasoning which was described by Morgan as “reasoning that that moves back and forth between induction and deduction--first converting observations into theories and then assessing those theories through action” (p. 71) is seen as being superior to the use of either inductive or deductive processes alone. Writing about the future of mixed methods inquiry and the possibility of paradigm change that will provide a sound basis for mixed methods

research, Greene (2006) stated that pragmatism might represent an appropriate alternative.

The decision to use a mixed methods model of inquiry was influenced by the relative absence of information about how prisoners adapt to sentences of life without parole and the equally scarce data related to the opinions and attitudes of state prison wardens about those prisoners. Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) identified several major purposes of mixed methods design, three of which have direct application to the current study. The *complementarity* mixed methods design involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods as a means of having the results of one method enhance or further illuminate the results of the other. From a *development* design perspective, one method is used initially with the results influencing the development of the sample, measurement instruments, or as an element of the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the other method. Accordingly, the initial qualitative study of prisoners serving life without parole assisted with the development of the survey of state prison wardens. Lastly, a mixed methods approach allows for an *expansion* of information as qualitative and quantitative methods are used “primarily to extend the scope, breadth, and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components” (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, p. 269). Since this exploratory study sought to gather information and develop beginning knowledge about topics not previously addressed or which had not been given much attention in the literature, a mixed methods methodology consistent with the purposes as outlined above was both appropriate and useful.

The first strand of the present study focused on a sample of adult male inmates serving sentences of life without parole in a state prison. This was done using qualitative methods that included one private face-to-face interview with each study participant utilizing the interview guide approach to data collection. While still including an outline of topics to be addressed, the interview guide approach allowed the interviewer to modify the order and wording of questions to best address the individual dynamics of each interview (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Because respondents met with the interviewer for only one in-person contact, it is felt that the interview guide approach made it easier to establish rapport and obtain data than would have been possible with the more structured standardized open-ended interview format that features questions prepared in advance that are to be asked exactly as worded and in the same sequence in each interview.

Respondents were asked open-ended questions about a variety of topics related to their prison experiences, including how well they get along with staff members, other inmates, and cellmates; their involvement in various types of therapeutic, educational, or recreational programs; the existence or absence of social support networks within the correctional facility; how they occupy their time; and what they do if they experience difficulty coping--whether on a day-to-day basis or as part of adjusting to the reality of their situations. Other questions focused on relationships and contacts with family, friends, and important others who may provide financial or emotional support. There were also questions that addressed beliefs about the possibility that they will be released from prison and the feelings associated with those beliefs.

Through these interviews, information was collected as to how respondents experienced the losses associated with knowing that they will most probably remain in

prison for the rest of their lives and how they manage the grief reactions that may result. Emphasis was given to a variety of topics, including the prospects of aging, the decisions inmates make about healthcare needs, and the presence or absence of incentives to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The feelings inmates may have about dying in prison were also explored. As had been anticipated some respondents were reluctant or unwilling to discuss mental health issues during a one-time interview while others were willing to discuss some matters related to mental health, particularly involving feelings of depression. This study examined how prisoners often tended to report hope for an eventual release from prison and their experience of feelings of hopelessness and despair. Even if some hope of release was reported, the manner in which respondents did--or did not--identify some sense of purpose or meaning for their lives was also addressed.

The second strand of this study focused on the attitudes and beliefs of prison wardens regarding the appropriate management of those serving sentences of life without parole. The manner in which offenders adapt or attempt to cope with their situations may be impacted by the beliefs of those who have the opportunity to influence or make decisions regarding the conditions of confinement that may exist for this population. While in many cases those decisions may be made by legislative bodies or by administrators of the state prison system, those who serve as prison wardens do have the opportunity to influence policy and to determine some of the conditions of confinement that will be found in a particular correctional facility. To further explore that aspect of prison management, a quantitative, mailed survey was conducted to learn more about wardens' beliefs about providing amenities in the areas of academic and vocational training, separate housing, and specialized programming to meet the needs of inmates

serving life without parole. Wardens' beliefs about the future dangerousness of inmates serving life without parole as seen in perceptions about the threat of harm to staff and other inmates, the appropriate security level(s) to which those inmates should be assigned, and the perceived risk of escape were also examined. In addition to quantitative data collected, there was a brief qualitative section on the survey in which wardens were asked to give narrative answers to two questions.

This was qualitative dominant mixed methods research as described by R. B. Johnson et al. (2007) because the experiences and reactions of the prisoners serving sentences of life without parole ultimately were the primary concern of this study. The quantitative data derived from the survey of state prison wardens was narrower in scope and mainly provided information regarding the degree of warden support there may be for certain things that inmates believe would help them to better adapt.

From the perspective of the correctional administrator, the prison social worker and other staff who have contact with those serving sentences of life without parole, the family and friends of those inmates, and the society in which criminal justice policies are made, it would be beneficial to determine if there is a "typical" pattern of adjustment, particularly if it is found that there are certain milestones at which prisoners may be more at risk for experiencing intrapsychic distress, engaging in acts of violence, or displaying other maladaptive behaviors. It may also be beneficial to determine if there is a fairly typical pattern of beliefs among those who manage the facilities in which these prisoners are housed. Studies such as this could be beneficial in enabling prison administrators to develop interventive programs and other services that would address the identified needs

of this unique sub-section of the prison population in relation to specific areas of concern as well as enhancing the general well-being of this group of individuals.

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Chapter 2

Literature Review

Even though life without parole is a sentencing alternative in 49 states and the federal judicial system (Nellis & King, 2009), it has been given very little attention in the professional literature. R. Johnson and McGunigall-Smith (2008) stated that instead of the term, life without parole, this sentence might better be characterized as *death by incarceration* (p. 328) as it is essentially a second form of death penalty.

The number of those serving sentences of life without parole may be viewed as a social problem--one that has attracted very little attention from both the social work profession and the larger society. There has been very little published about this population, either as the focus of empirical research or in the writings of those who described their own experiences in the prison system. Of the studies that have been published, almost nothing can be found that examines the manner in which those serving LWOP adapt to that reality. Because of this gap in the literature, it is necessary--in some cases--to draw inferences from studies that focused on prisoners serving other types of sentences that included the possibility of planned release. Where possible to do so, studies that focused on those serving sentences of life without parole or those who could be considered long-term prisoners are cited.

Adapting to the Prison Environment

Sociologist Donald Clemmer (1940/1958) has described the process through which inmates become assimilated to the prison environment. Referring to this process as *prisonization*, Clemmer stated that it involved, “the taking on in greater or less degree of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary” (p. 299). Clemmer

believed there were seven factors that influenced the degree of prisonization that would occur. Among these was length of sentence, a stable personality that had developed through positive relationships prior to incarceration, and if the offender was able to maintain positive relationships with people who were not incarcerated while in prison. Clemmer further believed that being unwilling or unable to integrate into the prison *primary group* and to not accept without question the common beliefs and codes of conduct of the primary group would lessen the effects of prisonization. He also noted the importance of “a chance placement with a cellmate and workmates who do not possess leadership qualities and who are not completely integrated into the prison culture” (p. 301) and the willingness to be in work and recreational programs instead of engaging in “abnormal sex behavior and excessive gambling” (p. 301). In his formulation, Clemmer has placed some importance on factors that are related to life before incarceration and to the prisoner’s ability to maintain contact with important others outside the prison setting, but the major emphasis appears to be on the circumstances that exist in the prison.

In an exploratory study of the prison as a social system, Sykes (1958) examined the *pains of imprisonment* and the manner in which inmates in a maximum security prison perceived the conditions of their confinement. Focusing on deprivations of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy, and security, he found that the psychological effects of those deprivations could be as painful as the physical punishments that had been used in the past and that these deprivations could damage the inmate’s personality or perception of personal worth. Sykes stated:

The significant hurts lie in the frustrations or deprivations which attend the withdrawal of freedom, such as the lack of heterosexual relationships, isolation

from the free community, the withholding of goods and services, and so on. And however painful these frustrations or deprivations may be in the immediate terms of thwarted goals, discomfort, boredom, and loneliness, they carry a more profound hurt as a set of threats or attacks which are directed against the very foundations of the prisoner's being. The individual's picture of himself as a person of value--as a morally acceptable, adult male who can present some claim to merit in his material achievements and his inner strength--begins to waver and grow dim. (p. 79)

To Sykes, adaptation would center on the inmate's reaction to these deprivations. In a later study, Sykes and Messinger (as cited in Jacobs, 1976) focused on prison adjustment and found that social rejection, material deprivation, and sexual frustration were the three greatest problems experienced by inmates in prison.

Karl Menninger (1969/2007) echoed Sykes' conclusions in his landmark book, *The Crime of Punishment*. While noting that not all prisons would fit this description--although too many would--Menninger stated:

In quarters such as these, the recipient of official punishment languishes in the cheerless company of others equally miserable, hopeless, and resentful. He is herded about by men half afraid and half contemptuous of him, toward whom all offenders early learn to present a steadfast attitude of hostility. An atmosphere of monotony, futility, hate, loneliness, and sexual frustration pervades the dark dungeons and cold hangers like a miasma, while time grounds out weary months and years. (p. 84)

Goffman (1961/2007) focused on the effects of the *total institution*, which he defined as “a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life” (p. xxi). According to Goffman, prisons are included in the category whose purpose is “to protect the community against what are felt to be intentional dangers to it, with the welfare of the persons thus sequestered not the immediate issue” (p. 5).

Goffman described the *mortification* process that begins upon entry to the total institution and the various ways in which it is carried out. Elements of this process may include role dispossession, restriction of contact with important others outside the prison, loss of other valued social roles, demands for rigid compliance to prison rules and instructions given by staff, depersonalization through loss of personal items and issuance of uniform clothing and possessions, structured dependence on staff, invasion of privacy, forced contact with other inmates, and loss of autonomy and self-determination. Goffman identified four ways in which inmates adapt to the total institution and noted that an individual may use different methods at different times. The first method, “situational withdrawal,” involves withdrawing from everything other than the immediate events around the inmate and is likened by Goffman to a mental health condition described as “prison psychosis” (p. 61). The second form is labeled “intransigent line” and is identified as involving intentional refusal by the inmate to cooperate with staff. Goffman noted that this is usually a temporary and early form of adaptation with the inmate generally shifting to some other method if the institution administration decides to break this resistance. “Colonization,” the third adaptive method identified by Goffman, occurs when the inmate accepts what little contact with the outside world is allowed and “a

stable, relatively contented existence is built up out of the maximum satisfactions procurable within the institution” (p. 62). The fourth method, “conversion” is seen when the inmate appears to accept the official view of his or her role and attempts to act like a perfect inmate. Goffman stated that most inmates in total institutions adopt a combination of these methods in an approach that he labeled “playing it cool” (p. 64). Goffman stated, “This involves a somewhat opportunistic combination of secondary adjustments, conversion, colonization, and loyalty to the inmate group, so that the inmate will have a maximum chance, in the particular circumstances, of eventually getting out physically and psychologically undamaged” (pp. 64-65).

The works of Sykes, Sykes and Messinger, and Goffman are most closely associated with the *deprivation model*, which holds that prison-specific factors such as the loss of autonomy and other depersonalizing effects of incarceration, in combination with the use of coercive power by prison officials, become the primary influence on the degree of prisonization that occurs (Thomas, 1977). The deprivation model became subject to criticism because of its narrow focus and its closed-system emphasis (See Flanagan, 1995; Wormith, 1984/1995).

In contrast, adherents of the *importation model* believe that pre-prison or extra-prison factors have great impact on inmate adaptation (Thomas, 1977; Wright, 1991). Irwin and Cressey (1962) stated that an emphasis on the reactions to the conditions of confinement as the basis for adjustment did not allow sufficient attention to the characteristics and pre-prison behavioral patterns that the inmate brings to the correctional setting. They identified three separate subcultures; the convict subculture, the thief subculture, which is associated with the broader criminal world both in prison and

beyond, and the legitimate subculture, which includes those who had no identification with the thief subculture prior to incarceration and who reject both the convict and thief subcultures while in prison. Those who were strongly associated with the convict subculture had reference groups inside the institution while those who identified with the thief subculture had reference groups both inside and outside the prison. Irwin and Cressey noted that those who are part of the legitimate subculture comprise a large percentage of the prison population, that they separate themselves from those in the convict and thief subcultures, and that they generally conform to the behavioral expectations of the prison administration.

In a study of Chicago street gang members incarcerated in a large state prison in Illinois, Jacobs (1974) found support for the conclusions reached by Irwin and Cressey (1962) through observing the importation of the roles and behavioral expectations of the street gangs into the prison environment. Jacobs (1976) also noted that racial, religious, and political stratification among inmates, much of which was related to pre-prison or extra-prison influences, served as important contributors to inmate adaptation.

Noting the inadequacy of both the deprivation model and the importation model to alone account for the manner in which inmates adapt and behave in the prison setting, Thomas (1977) concluded that a third model that integrated prison experiences with the pre-prison and extra-prison factors was needed. In a study examining levels of prisonization, opposition to the prison organization, and inmate self-identification as a criminal, it was found that a model that combined deprivation and importation variables better explained the variance in the three dependent variables than did either the deprivation or importation model alone. Noting the debate about the merits of the

deprivation and importation models, Wormith (1984/1995) stated that an individual's prison experience is complex and can not be adequately explained by a single model. In a study of adaptation among inmates in the Federal prison system, Dhimi, Ayton, and Loewenstein (2007) stated that their findings supported elements of both the deprivation and importation models as influences of prison adaptation. They reported that there was little support in their findings for the idea that the interaction of deprivation and importation factors could explain adaptation patterns and that the interaction effect was only statistically significant relative to prisoners' contacts with friends and family. Noting that their findings were compatible with some studies but in conflict with others, Dhimi et al. stated that this might be partly explained by how variables are defined and suggested that a meta-analysis could possibly help to determine the effects of methodological differences in the various studies.

Wright (1991) stated that the focus on prisonization and the effects of prison dependency as well as the disagreement about the merits of the deprivation and importation models led to criticism from researchers and theorists. He stated that, "Methodologically, the approach has been criticized for using varying and ambiguous measures of unknown reliability" (p. 219). Wright stated that a newer approach focused on three factors that contributed to adjustment: characteristics of the individual, environmental conditions in the correctional institution, and the interaction between the individual and the environment. He credited Hans Toch with the application of this interactional element to explain inmate adjustment.

In his examination of the interactional process, Toch (1977/1992) stated, "We must specify what an individual requires that his environment furnishes, and what he

needs that is absent from his environment” (p. 21). He noted that much research that focused on the environmental aspects of prison, such as lack of privacy, overcrowding, and monotony, do not also show the extent to which such elements are troubling to the inmates and not just assumed to be problematic by the researcher. In a large scale study conducted in the New York prison system, Toch identified seven environmental concerns: (a) privacy, (b) safety, (c) structure, (d) support, (e) emotional feedback, (f) activity, and (g) freedom (pp. 21-22). An eighth dimension, social stimulation, was initially included but was later rejected by Toch. He found that matching inmates with their particular environmental need(s) would enhance prison adjustment. An important element of Toch’s research involved focus on what he termed “subenvironments, sanctuaries, or *niches*” (p. 237). He stated:

A niche is a functional subsetting containing desired objects, space, resources, people, and relationships between people. A niche is perceived as ameliorative; it is seen as a potential instrument for the relaxation of stress and the achievement of psychological equilibrium. It is this quality of niches that stimulates the creative process of niche search and niche identification. Niche search is usually an explorative process in which a person seeks a specific setting because adjustment appears easier there. (p. 237)

While some inmates do find a niche that meets their needs, others do not. It is when there is a lack of congruence between the individual needs of the inmate and the existing environmental conditions that difficulty adjusting is likely to occur. Toch emphasized that this is a dynamic process with inmates constantly reassessing their environmental needs. Wright (1985) used Toch’s work as a foundation when creating the Prison

Environment Inventory, which assesses the environment of a facility rather than the environmental needs of individual inmates. The Prison Environment Inventory addressed all eight dimensions initially identified by Toch.

The concept of a niche has been expanded in other research findings. In a longitudinal study of inmates in the Canadian prison system, Zamble (1992) found that “most of the men in this study created niches for themselves, but their niches were often defined in terms of routines and behaviors, rather than physically” (pp. 421-422).

Noting that there had been little empirical research that addressed the fit between individual characteristics and environmental conditions, Wright (1991) presented this quote from a 1984 study by Porporino and Zamble:

Generally speaking, there are few attitudinal or behavioral dispositions that are so powerful as to totally determine actions in all situations, and few environmental events which can compel identical responses from people with varying dispositions. We would expect that the interaction between the individual and his environment would be at the most powerful determinant of behavior. Yet most previous investigations have ignored this interaction. (p. 222)

Zamble and Porporino (1988) again emphasized that any analysis of behavior must take into account both internal and external factors. They noted that research may tend to focus on characteristics that inmates have in common while failing to give adequate attention to the ways in which their differences contribute to adaptation.

Wright (1991) tested the *interactionist* model in a study of inmate adjustment in the New York prison system. The interactionist model asserts that the individual characteristics of prisoners affect internal decisions about behavior but do so within the

context of the social environment of the prison. This may either enhance or restrict the ability of the prisoner to have personal needs fulfilled. Wright created four independent variables associated with pre-incarceration characteristics, time incarcerated, personality profile derived from MMPI typology, and environmental factors categorized by use of Wright's Prison Environment Inventory. Three dependent variables were drawn from scores on the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ), which measures self-perception of adjustment. The PAQ assesses an "external" dimension that measures if the inmate has more problems relating to people in prison than in the free world, an "internal" dimension that addresses problems coping in prison, and a "physical" dimension that addresses being harmed or taken advantage of by others. Wright also included a fourth dependent variable labeled "disruptive infractions," which related to violent altercations or refusal to obey orders in prison.

Wright (1991) stated that his findings did support the use of the interactionist model but he noted that it did not account for a substantial amount of the variance in adjustment. Wright concluded that inmates who are productive and who have a future orientation will cause fewer problems and that increase in the amount of activity offered to prisoners will have positive effects. It was also found that inmates who feel safe and who have enough to do experience less stress and cause fewer problems than those who do not. Wright also found that congruence between individual need and the environmental elements of the facility will have positive effects on adjustment and suggested that this might be accomplished through *transactional classification* as had been recommended by Toch (1981).

In his description of the use of the term, transaction, as it applied to the offender classification function, Toch (1981) stated:

The word means that classifications are seen as predictions about the way individuals adjust to settings. For instance, some categories in offender classifications imply that offenders thus classified will adjust poorly to most settings or some settings. "Poor" adjustment can mean that the offender is likely to break down, act up, or both. If it is both, jurisdictional disputes tend to arise about whether the offender is a mental health problem misclassified as a custodial one, or a hot potato relegated to mental health care. Such disputes ignore the other side of the classification equation, which consists of hypothetical settings for *optimal* offender adjustment. These are settings that comprise living arrangement, activities, staffing patterns, and social milieus that ameliorate offender problems, which can mean that they help the offender to cope in *the setting itself* or that they build the capacity to cope *elsewhere*. (pp. 7-8)

Written at a time when prison overcrowding was a serious problem--just as it is in the present day--Toch expressed concern about the manner in which classification decisions often tended to match the availability of space regardless of whether that classification action best served the needs of the offender.

The literature thus far reviewed has focused on adjustment or adaptation to prison in a generic sense. Those theories and studies have addressed the adjustment of prisoners serving all types of sentences and did not specifically address the condition of those serving sentences of life without parole. A review of the literature found very few articles

on that particular population, although several studies did examine adjustment patterns of long-term prisoners.

In a small scale study in which the personal writings of seven individuals who had been sentenced to life in prison were analyzed, Unkovic and Albin (1969) stated that most existing literature tends to regard those serving life sentences as a homogeneous group whose experiences and behaviors are seen as being different than those of other inmates serving shorter sentences. They concluded that regarding those inmates as part of the homogenous group resulted in stereotyping and deprived the prisoner of the opportunity to be regarded as a unique individual. Unkovic and Albin have noted that “attitudes toward socialization ranged from never fully accepting the process to an immediate and complete acceptance of it” (p. 161). MacKenzie and Goodstein (1985) also have stated that many studies seemed to regard long-term offenders as a homogeneous group whose reactions to being in prison would have a consistent pattern and do not take into account that persons with different backgrounds may react differently to long-term incarceration. Flanagan (1982) stated:

Available data on the criminal histories of long-term prisoners indicate that diversity is a hallmark of this group. It includes career criminal robbers in whose lives before imprisonment crime was a daily activity and who adapt to incarceration by continuing careers of deceit and violence. In contrast, other long-term prisoners are essentially noncriminal individuals, whose act of violence was unprecedented and is unlikely to be repeated, and whose interest and perspectives within the prison coincide more closely with those of the officers than with those of fellow inmates. (pp. 82-83)

Flanagan (1995) again addressed the diversity among long-term inmates and warned that methods designed to manage that population without accounting for that diversity were likely to be “irrelevant--perhaps even dysfunctional” (p. 109).

Villaume (2005) examined the life without parole sentence in combination with the *virtual life sentence*, which he defined as “a sentence that markedly exceeds the prisoner’s probable expected life span” (p. 267). Basing much of his writing on his own experiences during 25 years as a prisoner in various correctional facilities, Villaume stated that inmates serving virtual life sentences cope in a variety of ways. These include denial of the reality of the sentence with the hope or belief that situations will change and they will be released, engaging in the long process of filing appeals in the hope of success or as a means of being occupied in some productive activity, losing hope and committing suicide, or accepting the reality of the situation and finding ways to keep themselves occupied. From what would appear to be a very pragmatic perspective Villaume stated, “The general point here is that prisoners, including those with virtual death sentences, can make a comparatively comfortable life for themselves. It’s not freedom, but it’s the best that can be done in light of one’s circumstances” (p. 275). This would suggest that an element of adaptation might include the ability to find satisfaction, or at least complacency, in a realm of lowered expectations. Unkovic and Albini (1969) made reference to one individual whose writings they analyzed and that person’s application of what was labeled, “the philosophy of minimum expectations” (p. 159). This was described as a method in which the prisoner fixed his mind on some distant discharge date with the expectation being that nothing in the interim period will make life any easier.

In an examination of theoretical perspectives related to how long-term inmates adapt to incarceration, Flanagan (1995) stated that in the previous two decades there had been a shift in expectations. It had previously been thought that long-term incarceration would have a number of predictable and negative effects on prisoners of a nature and magnitude that most--if not all--would experience major harm or damage (See Clemmer, 1940/1958; Goffman, 1961/2007; Menninger, 1969/2007; Sykes, 1958). Flanagan stated that in more recent research, it had been found that this *deterioration* model is not particularly accurate. This is congruent with the conclusions of Wormith (1984/1995) in a review of beliefs commonly associated with the deprivation model. Wormith stated:

These accounts, which ascribe a wide range of inevitable and debilitating effects, may be referred to as the “myth of prisonization”. In reality, the evidence for a profound and incapacitating influence, that is both commonplace and severe, is scarce, if existent at all. (p. 55)

Wormith (1984/1995) noted the differences between personal accounts of long-term incarceration described in experiential writing or qualitative research and the data that is produced from objective, quantitative studies. The former include descriptions of the severe and negative effects of incarceration while the latter “generally fail to indicate deleterious effects” (p. 60). In a review of the shortcomings associated with each method, Wormith stated that personal accounts can be biased and that anecdotal reports can be used to support virtually any hypothesis. The problems associated with methodological inadequacies and the difficulties in trying to do experimental research in prison were also addressed. Wormith stated, “Important, but hidden effects may be overlooked by crude methodologies, excessive collapsing of data, and a preoccupation with statistical

significance when social significance is staring one in the face” (p. 61). He concluded that there are undoubtedly deleterious effects of incarceration, but emphasized that it would be incorrect to believe that all problems are the direct effect of long-term incarceration.

R. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) studied a convenience sample of 15 male inmates who had been convicted of murder and had been sentenced to life sentences with or without the possibility of parole. They concluded that those in their sample recognized that adjustment would be easier if they accepted the limitations of their current situation and instead exerted control over those areas where some degree of autonomy was possible. Zamble (1992) also found this in his longitudinal study of inmates in the Canadian prison system. Both R. Johnson and Dobrzanska and Zamble found that this exercise of autonomy was seen in choices inmates tended to make that involved withdrawing from the general social networks commonly found in prisons. Consistent with Toch’s (1977/1992) description of niches and their functions, inmates tended to choose to spend large amounts of time in their cells instead of going to the recreation yard or other places where inmates might congregate. This can be seen as a means of avoiding some of the general stresses found in a prison setting (Zamble, 1992; R. Johnson & Dobrzanska, 2005) or as a means of staying away from predatory inmates (R. Johnson & Dobrzanska, 2005).

R. Johnson and McGunigall-Smith (2008) described their findings from analysis of a number of qualitative interviews McGunigall-Smith had conducted with inmates and staff at the Utah State Prison between 1997 and 2002. Respondents included seven of 11 inmates then on death row, an opportunity sample of 22 inmates serving life without

parole, and an opportunity sample of 34 staff members who supervised prisoners on death row as well as those serving LWOP. R. Johnson and McGunigall-Smith appeared to take a deprivation model emphasis as they stated, “It might be better to say they ‘exist’ in prison, as prison life is but a pale shadow of life in the free world. Their lives are steeped in suffering. The prison is their cemetery, a cell their tomb” (p. 329). R. Johnson and McGunigall-Smith identified a number of areas in which those serving sentences of life without parole experienced the pains of imprisonment. These included “a life of unremitting loneliness” (p. 337), the anticipated death of loved ones – particularly parents – and the possibility of eventually being alone with no sources of outside support. Also identified were such environmental factors as loneliness within the prison itself, “a lifetime of endless boredom” (p. 338), repetition and routine, and the deprivations associated with loss of autonomy and freedom.

R. Johnson and McGunigall-Smith (2008) stated that a common coping strategy involved taking things one day at a time and trying to maintain some sense of control in those areas where control is possible. They stated that:

The rhythm of the prison day dulls the pains of loss and regret. This daily routine makes for a repetitive, empty existence, as we have noted, but for most, it is a bearable one. Prisoners put themselves on automatic pilot and try not to think about their lives. Within the structure, lifers typically forge more personal routines that give some meaning to their days. (p. 341)

R. Johnson and McGunigall-Smith stated that those serving sentences of life without parole tend to avoid getting into trouble in prison because it is in their best interests to do so. They noted that prison offers few rewards and that those serving LWOP know how

easily any privileges gained can also be lost. R. Johnson and McGunigall-Smith primarily addressed the pains of imprisonment that impact this segment of the offender population, but did not mention if any of the individuals serving life without parole in their sample were able to still find meaning for their lives in this highly restrictive setting. In their study of life-sentenced inmates, R. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) concluded that those persons often found meaning in their prison lives. They stated that some respondents spoke of wanting to help younger inmates to avoid the types of problems that they themselves had experienced, one sought to help prevent violence in the prison, and others found purpose through involvement in religious activities.

The Effects of Prior Incarceration

The effects associated with prior incarceration experiences appear to be given very little attention in the professional literature. Those studies that do address this factor have had mixed findings. A review of numerous studies shows that the sample size is identified and certain characteristics of that population may be described, but no information is given as to whether it is a homogenous group of first time inmates, a mixture of first timers and others who may have had one or more prior incarcerations, or a group completely made up of recidivists. In their criticism of the deprivation model, Irwin and Cressey (1962) stated:

Many inmates come to any given prison with a record of many terms in correctional institutions. These men, some of whom have institutional records dating back to early childhood, bring with them a ready-made set of patterns which they apply to the new situation. (p. 145)

In their study of psychological adjustment in long-term prisoners, MacKenzie and Goodstein (1985) examined several subgroups from their sample. They differentiated between *traditional lifers*, who had led a highly pro-social lifestyle prior to incarceration and who had no previous criminal history, and *habitual offenders* whose lifestyle had not been highly pro-social and who had a prior history of criminal behavior. MacKenzie and Goodstein found differences in demographic characteristics between these two groups, but did not find significant differences in their patterns of adjustment. However, Zamble and Porporino (1988) found that those with no prior prison experience appeared to cope better than do those who have previously been incarcerated. This was contrary to the common expectation that those who have been in prison before will have developed coping behaviors that will be applied during the current period of incarceration.

External Support Networks

Flanagan (1995) stated that inmates serving long sentences commonly experience fear that relationships with those external to the institution may be permanently lost. He stated, “While relationships with spouses, family members, girlfriends, and others may withstand enforced estrangement for a few years, the prospects for maintaining these relationships over the long term are dim” (p. 112). Flanagan further addressed the unique dichotomy that is found when external relationships are considered. Noting that external relationships may be of great value in helping prisoners to cope with long-term incarceration, they also serve to remind inmates that their roles in those relationships have changed during their enforced separation from important others.

Internal Support Networks

The development of meaningful relationships with others inside the prison is also a difficult matter (Aday, 2003; Flanagan, 1995). Flanagan observed that the long-term inmate, particularly if older, may have little in common with younger inmates or may be reluctant to establish friendships with other inmates who are likely to be released or transferred to other facilities. Aday stated that older male inmates are more likely to have “associates” than to have “deep and long-lasting friendships” (p. 135). He also stated that development of friendships may be related to the length of incarceration and the number of other older prisoners who are housed in the same area.

Loss and Hopelessness

De Beco (2005) examined life sentences from the perspective that they generally violate the basic human dignity of the prisoner. He expressed the belief that once those who are sentenced to life realize that they may not be granted release, they are likely to lose hope. In this process, they lose contact with their families and friends and become increasingly dependent on the prison system. De Beco stated that this results in prisoners having no sense of meaning for their futures and that, in effect; it is simply a death sentence.

Even though there is very little research that focuses on the experiences of those who will remain in prison for the remainder of their lives, it would seem reasonable to predict that one of the most important elements related to the manner in which an offender adapts to a sentence of life without parole is associated with issues of grief and loss. In an examination of disenfranchised grief in the prison setting, Olson and McEwen (2004) stated:

Relationships, losses, and grievers may all be disenfranchised; that is, not recognized or supported by society. Prison inmates and their relationships are not well regarded by others. They may be considered disenfranchised grievers, because they are removed from their natural support systems. The secondary losses resulting from their incarceration, such as loss of freedom, privacy, and family contact, are disenfranchised losses. Very little information can be found in the literature on bereaved prisoners, and it appears that their grief may not be of great concern to others. (p. 226)

Focusing on the grief reactions experienced by female inmates in whom the death of a loved one was involved, Ferszt (2002) concluded that the grief was disenfranchised and that this led to a more difficult bereavement period. Ferszt stated, “Grieving in prison is suspended, felt in isolation, and decontextualized” (p. 251).

In addition to those identified by Olson and McEwen (2004), other losses associated with incarceration include loss of friends, self-esteem and personal identity, social role, professional identity, autonomy, and personal possessions (Schetky, 1998; Stevenson & McCutchen, 2006). This multi-faceted perspective on loss, grief, and mourning takes into account not just those reactions associated with the death of a loved one, but also includes the complex dynamics associated with the multiple losses incarceration brings. When multiple losses occur simultaneously, such as when a loved one dies and the prisoner is not allowed to attend the viewing of the remains or the funeral service, it may further compound negative reactions to loss (Schetky, 1998). Olson and McEwen also noted that mourning loss may be even more difficult for those who are incarcerated.

Mental Health Status

Another area of concern involves the mental health status of those serving sentences of life without parole. Because there are no known studies of psychological adjustment and mental health disorders among the life without parole population, it becomes necessary to examine findings from other research with broader samples or which focus on some other identifiable prisoner sub-group. A review of available research involving prison inmates in general validates the cause for concern for those with LWOP sentences.

Psychological factors can have a profound impact on an inmate's adjustment to the prison environment. In a study of the impact of imported factors and of the effect of deprivations found in prison, Wooldredge (1999) operationalized psychological well-being in the prison setting as "reflecting inmate perceptions of insecurity, stress, depression, anger, low self-esteem, and loneliness felt during incarceration" (p. 238). He concluded that the amount of time to be served until an inmate's next parole hearing was a significant factor influencing adjustment. This research was conducted in three prisons in Ohio, which did not have a life without parole statute at that time.

MacKenzie and Goodstein (1985) studied the effects of incarceration on long-term offenders. A long-term offender was defined as one who had served at least six years or was serving a sentence that would require the prisoner to serve at least six years. Those whose sentences were less than six years were designated short-term offenders. The researchers further subdivided each category of offenders into short-range (having served less than three years), middle-range (having served between three and six years), or long-range (having served more than six years). The short-range long-term offenders

were designated “early long-term offenders” and the long-range long-term offenders were designated “late long-term offenders.” No designation was apparently given to middle-range long-term offenders. MacKenzie and Goodstein found that early long-term offenders reported significantly more anxiety, depression, psychosomatic illnesses, fear of others, and lower self-esteem than the late long-term offenders. They concluded that while the early period of incarceration may be stressful for long-term inmates, there was no evidence of psychological deterioration over time. It was instead found that they tended to develop effective coping strategies as they served their sentences.

Among various theories addressing the causes of depression are several that would likely apply to persons serving sentences of life without parole. Theories associated with life events and environmental stressors are based on beliefs that such factors play a primary or secondary role in the development of depression (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Theories associated with learned helplessness also suggest that depression is associated with uncontrollable events. Sadock and Sadock (2007) stated,

Internal causal explanations are thought to produce a loss of self-esteem after adverse external events. Behaviorists who subscribe to the theory stress that improvement of depression is contingent on the patient’s learning a sense of control and mastery of the environment. (p. 534)

One element of cognitive theory views depression as being associated with beliefs about the self, the environment, and the future. In this formulation, a negative self-concept, a view of a hostile world, and the belief that the future will bring failure and pain contribute to the development of depression among those already susceptible to depression (Sadock & Sadock, 2007).

James and Glaze (2006) found in research conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics that 56% of inmates in state prison and 45% of those in federal prison at mid-year 2005 had a mental health problem. Subjects in this study were interviewed and were asked if they had a recent history--operationalized as being within the prior 12 months--of mental health problems as characterized by having been told by a mental health professional that they had a mental disorder, having been hospitalized overnight due to a mental health problem, having received professional mental health therapy, or having used medication prescribed for a mental health condition (James & Glaze, 2006). The interview process also included a "modified, structured, clinical interview for the DSM IV" (p. 2) which sought to identify those who had experienced symptoms of major depression, mania, or psychotic disorders within the prior 12 months. A positive report in either dimension was sufficient basis to classify the subject as having a mental health problem (James & Glaze, 2006). Differences in rates of mental health problems were related to gender and race, with female inmates having higher rates than males and white inmates being more likely to have mental health problems than inmates who were black, Hispanic, or of another minority. The highest rates of mental health problems were found in those age 24 years or younger with the lowest rates among those 55 or older (James & Glaze, 2006). Among state prisoners, 49% of those identified as having a mental health problem were incarcerated for a violent offense (James & Glaze, 2006). Because the federal prison system holds a much smaller percentage of violent offenders than do state prisons, the prevalence of violent offenders with a mental health problem was lower.

Similarly, Boothby and Durham (1999) found that younger inmates, females, and white prisoners had higher rates of depression as part of an analysis of the use of Beck

Depression Inventory with inmates. In their study of 1494 inmates consecutively admitted to a state prison system over a period of 18 months, Boothby and Durham also found that higher rates of depression were associated with being assigned to higher levels of custody and to being incarcerated for the first time.

Using a sample of 95 male inmates age 50 or older who were confined in a federal prison, Koenig, Johnson, Bellard, Denker, and Fenlon (1995) concluded that inmates did have a higher rate of psychiatric disorders than had been found in community samples in previous research sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health. Koenig et al. had hypothesized that “inmates with a psychiatric disorder would be older, recently incarcerated, serving a longer sentence, and serving their first prison term with no possibility of parole” (p. 399), but instead found that younger inmates in their sample were more likely to have psychiatric disorders. It was also found that how recently the inmate had been incarcerated, the length of sentence, the amount of time left to be served, or whether the inmate had been incarcerated previously were not significant.

Murdoch, Morris, and Holmes (2008) examined depression among a sample of elderly male prisoners aged 55 and older who were serving indeterminate or life sentences at two prisons in the United Kingdom. Through administration of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), they found that almost half of their sample of 121 inmates scored above the minimum score to be considered at least mildly depressed and 3% met the diagnostic criteria for severe depression. Murdoch et al. concluded that higher scores on the GDS were not related to the direct effects of incarceration or to length of sentence but were instead associated with the effects of poor health and chronic medical problems.

Zamble and Porporino (1990) described a longitudinal study in a Canadian prison in which the coping patterns of 133 subjects were followed for a period of approximately 18 months. The authors had a particular interest in the effects of incarceration on those serving long sentences, which they defined as being 10 years or longer. Approximately 37% of the sample had scores on the Beck Depression Inventory that would indicate at least a mild level of depression and almost 10% had scores high enough to be in the severely depressed range at the beginning of their prison terms. Zamble and Porporino stated that there was a significant drop in levels of dysphoria even three months after initial contact with a further reduction after an additional one year period, indicating the importance of providing programs to help inmates adjust very early in their sentence.

Zamble (1992) resumed the study of the long-term inmates who had participated in the longitudinal research reported by Zamble and Porporino (1990) five years after the completion of the original study. Of 41 subjects in the initial sample who were classified as “long-term,” 25 were still incarcerated in the same region and were willing to participate in research activities. Zamble found that scores on the Beck Depression Inventory had dropped significantly from the time of first contact in the Zamble and Porporino study with the mean score falling in the range considered normal. While concluding that there was improvement in the emotional condition of this group, Zamble cautioned that only 3 subjects were serving “extremely long terms” of life with no possibility of parole for 25 years. He concluded that, “If prisoners are subjected to such terms, where release is too far off for it to work as either a goal or an incentive, it is possible that they will suffer damage” (p. 421).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics examined deaths in custody of prison inmates and jail prisoners in 2001 and 2002 with death by suicide being one of the variables studied. Among prison inmates, it was found that violent offenders had a suicide rate double that of those with non-violent offenses (Mumola, 2005). Prison inmates incarcerated for kidnapping had the highest rate followed by those in prison for homicides, sex offenses, and assaults. Race was found to be a factor with white inmates having the highest rate of suicide with lower rates for Hispanic and black inmates. Among inmates 18 years of age or older, age was not found to be a factor (Mumola, 2005). The mental health status of those who committed suicide was not addressed in this study.

Aging in the Prison Setting and the Older Inmate

The effects of aging are another major element of this social problem. One of the outcomes of the dramatic increase in the number of persons sentenced to life without parole is that older inmates are serving much longer sentences, which raises the costs of incarceration as the health care needs of older inmates are much higher than those of younger prisoners (Gonring, 1995; Harvard Law Review, 2006; Snyder, van Wormer, Chadha, & Jagers, 2009; Yates & Gillespie, 2000). As of December 31, 2007, an estimated 148,000 male and 8,600 female prisoners age 50 or older were in the custody of state or federal prison systems (West & Sabol, 2008). Wilbert Rideau and Ron Wikberg served as editors of *The Angolite*, the prison newspaper at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. In *Life Sentences: Rage and Survival Behind Bars*, Rideau and Wikberg (1992) described their observations of the experiences of inmates in that prison with particular emphasis on those sentenced to death or serving life sentences. Among other topics, they addressed the problems of an aging prison population and the associated

issues related to health care needs. While not specifically focusing on those serving sentences of life without parole, Snyder, van Wormer, Chadha, and Jagers (2009) found that older inmates have a variety of special needs ranging from mobility challenges, nutrition, and age-appropriate recreational activities to end-of-life planning and hospice services.

Yates and Gillespie (2000) observed that while there have been societal advances in the provision of palliative care and other end-of-life treatment, this progress has not always been seen in the prison setting. Aday (2006) noted that some prisons now operate formal hospice programs and offer other forms of palliative care. The fear of dying in prison (Aday, 2006; Snyder et al., 2009; Yates & Gillespie, 2000) and the experience of shame associated with dying as a prisoner are also matters of concern. Aday stated, “Dying in an institution such as prison is widely considered the ultimate defeat, the ultimate punishment” (p. 208).

Using a convenience sample of 102 older inmates 50 years of age or older at a maximum security prison in Mississippi, Aday (2006) studied the concerns aging prisoners had about dying in prison. The number of chronic illnesses, the frequency of contact with medical personnel at the prison’s *sickcall*, the number of medications being taken, and the self-reported assessment of poor physical health were all found to be important indicators of death anxiety. Fear of death also increased when there was less social support. Aday concluded that older inmates’ fear of death was higher than that found among older populations in the community, but was still lower than that found in the general population in the community. In examination of a factor unique to the prison setting, Aday also found that “two-thirds of the inmates who indicated they frequently

felt unsafe in their current living environment exhibited significantly higher levels of death anxiety” (p. 206).

Aday (2003) examined the situation of what he termed the “new elderly offender” (p. 114) who is entering prison for the first time. In addition to difficulties associated with the effects of aging, these individuals must also learn how to adapt to the prison environment. Aday stated that most elderly persons entering prison for the first time have been convicted of serious offenses such as murder or sexual crimes and that many have difficulties coping with the shame and stigmatization that results. They also fear victimization by other inmates.

Those older inmates who have aged during a long period of confinement are also more likely to have committed a violent crime such as murder or a sexual crime (Aday, 2003; Allen, Latessa & Ponder, 2010). While some may have served a long-term sentence for a single offense, others may have been incarcerated on previous occasions and are now serving a long sentence for a *third strike* felony conviction.

Kerbs and Jolley (2007) examined victimization that older male inmates experienced from other inmates. Using a randomly selected sample of 65 inmates aged 50 and older, self-reported data of psychological, property, physical, and sexual victimization was collected and analyzed. The sample had a mean age of 58 and consisted of 26 prisoners who had sex offenses, 23 who were incarcerated for violent offenses, with the remainder serving sentences for less serious offenses. It was noted that 88% of the sex offenders in the study had been convicted of offenses involving children. Within each of the four dimensions being examined--psychological, property, physical, and sexual victimization--there were multiple examples of situations that would

characterize that type of victimization. Respondents were asked if they had experienced any of these. For reasons that were not explained, findings were only given relative to each specific example within the four dimensions. It was stated that 84.6% of the sample experienced psychological victimization within the past year by having someone cut in front of them in line and that 40% had been insulted by another inmate during the past year. However, no information was presented as to the aggregate total of the number of inmates who reported *some* form of psychological victimization. Among eight examples of property victimization, responses ranged from 0% to 29.2%. Physical victimization of four types had a low of 1.5% and a high of 10.8% victimization rate as did the reports of three different types of sexual victimization. Kerbs and Jolley stated that older sex offenders tended to be the more likely target of physical victimization in the form of bullying behaviors by younger inmates. They also found that older sex offenders were more likely to experience sexual victimization both in the form of sexual harassment and in the less common occurrences of sexual assault or rape.

As another element of their study, Kerbs and Jolley (2007) examined the concept of age segregation as a means of ensuring the safety of older inmates. Respondents were asked their opinions about age segregation with 80% reporting that they believed they would be safer if assigned to a prison that only held inmates age 50 and older. Seventy-five percent indicated that they would prefer to be assigned to such a facility and 90% believed that older inmates should be given a choice between assignment to a prison for older inmates or to a general population of prisoners of all ages.

Rule Violations and Violent Behaviors in the Prison Setting

Research about prison conditions and offender management has often focused on issues related to rule violations. Written at a time before life without parole sentencing options had become popular, Flanagan (1980) found that younger inmates are more likely to commit rule violations than are older inmates and are more likely to engage in violent behavior in the prison setting. The offense for which the prisoner was sentenced was not found to be significant as an indicator of probable prison misconduct. Flanagan also found that those who had committed the most serious offenses in the community and who were serving the longer sentences tended to adapt more effectively to the prison environment.

Of those empirical studies that focus on issues related to the life without parole sentence, the greatest number appears to address prison rule violations, particularly those that are actually or potentially violent. Much of this is related to the belief held by some that inmates serving life without parole sentences have nothing to lose and may become what Stewart and Lieberman (1982) called a “new breed of superinmates prone to violence and uncontrollable” (as cited in Sorensen & Wrinkle, 1996). This is commonly known as the element of future dangerousness. Emphasis on this element of prisoner behavior may also reflect concerns of correctional administrators for the safety of staff and of those inmates under their supervision.

In a study of disciplinary infractions among 416 inmates sentenced to death ($n = 93$, 22.4%) and to life without parole ($n = 323$, 77.6%) for first degree murder offenses in the custody of the Missouri Department of Corrections, Sorensen and Wrinkle (1996) compared those inmates with 232 prisoners who were convicted of second degree murder

and who were eligible for parole. Focusing both on rule violations in general and specifically on those of a violent nature, Sorensen and Wrinkle found that prisoners sentenced to death or LWOP were no more likely to commit violent offenses than were those serving sentences for which they would be eligible for parole. They also found that those sentenced to death or to LWOP were less likely to commit rule violations than were those who were eligible for parole. Additional research by Sorensen, Wrinkle, and Gutierrez (1998) in the Missouri prison system supported these findings.

Prisoners in Indiana who had been released from a sentence of death and re-sentenced to life in prison as the result of successful appeals or other post-conviction remedies were studied by Reidy, Cunningham, and Sorensen (2001). In a study of 36 male and three female prisoners who had been relocated from death row to the general inmate population, Reidy et al. addressed the issue of future dangerousness by examining violent behavior both prior to and following placement in the general inmate population. It was found that violent behavior that resulted in a charged rule violation decreased after the prisoners were removed from death row. At the time of the study, prisoners in the sample had served an aggregated total of 261.5 years on death row (mean = 6.7 years) and an aggregated total of 363.0 years in the general prison population (mean = 9.3 years). Analysis of the prevalence of violent behavior showed that 10 of the 39 (25.6%) were involved in violent acts while on death row while only eight (20.5%) were involved in violent acts while in the general prison population. Four members of this latter group had also been violent while on death row. Overall figures showed 14 inmates (35.9%) were involved in 24 violent acts (3.8 per 100 inmates per year). Further examination of violent acts that resulted in “serious bodily injury,” which was defined as including

homicide, sexual assault, stabbing, laceration involving sutures, broken bone, concussion, and admission to the hospital, showed that only four of the 14 violent acts committed on death row resulted in serious bodily injury. Reidy et al. found this to be consistent with other studies that showed that there is a low correlation between violent acts committed in the community and violence in the prison setting. They also acknowledged that the effects of aging and having become socialized to the prison setting while on death row may have had impacted the nature of prisoner behavior as has been shown in other studies.

Using a unique approach, the Missouri Department of Corrections houses death-sentenced inmates, those serving life without parole sentences, and term-sentenced inmates in the general prison population at Potosi Correctional Center. Studies conducted by Cunningham, Sorensen, and Reidy (2005) and Cunningham, Reidy, and Sorensen (2005) utilized retrospective analyses of the disciplinary records of all inmates who served at least a part of their sentences there between 1991 and 2002. Being sentenced to death or to life without parole was found to be an indicator of lower risk of violent behavior in the prison setting. Cunningham, Sorensen and Reidy emphasized that there were limitations to these studies due to difficulty generalizing results to other prisons and because only a maximum security setting had been examined.

Cunningham and Sorensen (2006) conducted a retrospective analysis of 9044 inmates who entered Florida Department of Corrections custody between January 1, 1998 and December 31, 2002 to study the prevalence of violent behavior among inmates serving long sentences in high security settings. Of that number, 1897 (20.9%) were serving sentences of life without parole. The sample included all those who remained in

custody on December 31, 2003, who were serving a sentence of at least ten years, and who served their sentences in a close custody facility. It was found that inmates serving life without parole sentences did not pose a serious threat to the safety of staff or inmates, with only 0.6% of the inmates in that group having committed an assault that resulted in serious injury to another person during the study period (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006).

Public Perceptions

Even though the situation of offenders serving sentences of life without parole can be viewed as a social problem, it appears that little concern exists relative to the majority of those serving such sentences. A review of the literature does show that there is much attention currently being given to those who have been sentenced to life without parole for offenses committed while under the age of 18. This has become the emphasis of advocacy efforts of a number of social justice organizations and has become a topic of interest in newspaper editorials and other forms of the popular media. However, when one examines the focus on life without parole for offenses committed by adults, little opposition is found. Outrage over life without parole sentences can be found in the work of social justice organizations such as The Sentencing Project and the Death Penalty Information Center. The Other Death Penalty Project, an organization of inmates serving life without parole sentences, operates a small website and seeks to mobilize persons serving life without parole and those sympathetic to their plight in advocacy efforts aimed at eliminating that sentencing alternative. In their mission statement, The Other Death Penalty Project (2010) stated,

The Other Death Penalty Project's immediate goals are to raise awareness of the basic unfairness of the life without parole sentence and to organize the tens of

thousands of men and women serving “the other death penalty.” Our ultimate goal is to see the permanent end to the use of this form of state-sanctioned execution (along with all other forms), resulting in all life term prisoners having, at least, the possibility of parole. (The Other Death Penalty Project, Our Mission, para. 2)

The relative absence of any strong advocacy movement opposed to that form of sentencing possibly has resulted in little attention being given by proponents of the continuation of life without parole sentencing options. One exception is seen in the writing of Debra J. Saunders in an article originally published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Reacting to the Sentencing Project’s recent release of the report, “No Exit: The Expanding Use of Life Sentences in America” (Nellis & King, 2009), Saunders (2009) expressed the belief that if death penalty abolitionists succeed in eliminating the death penalty, they will next attempt to eliminate sentences of life without parole. She expressed her belief that elimination of life without parole sentencing would place the public at risk and stated, “Given their objections to life sentences, if California or the federal government ever discard the death penalty, all the money that gets sucked into fueling bogus death-penalty appeals simply will move to bankroll anti-LWOP appeals” (p. 2).

Administrative Management of Long-Term Inmates

Toch (1995) addressed the problems experienced by long-term prisoners, noting that, “Long-term inmates are ‘long-term problems’ because they quietly and undramatically suffer and silently permit us to ignore them” (p. 247). Toch described the “end-of-the-road prisons” (p. 247) that had previously existed and where a structured

environment in which the absence of major violence and the increased opportunities for privacy enhanced the “psychological survival” (p. 247) of those serving long sentences. Toch stated that such institutions no longer existed and that new strategies were needed to assist inmates to cope with the effects of long-term incarceration. His suggestions included the establishment of problem-solving groups for those serving long sentences and the development of planned educational and vocational *careers* for long-term prisoners instead of the traditional emphasis on short-term assignments.

Flanagan (1995) stated that the goals of long-term prisoner management should include:

- Maximizing opportunities for choice.
- Creating opportunities for the prisoner to pursue a meaningful life in prison.
- To the extent possible, enhancing the permeability of the institution so that the offender does not lose all contact with the outside world. (p. 114)

Flanagan identified several existing programs in different facilities that served one or more of these purposes. Citing Zamble and Porporino’s (1988) longitudinal study in Canadian prisons, Flanagan stated:

Their findings suggest that such programs for long-term inmates should begin as soon as offenders arrive in prison, and that much of the program content should be focused on enhancing offenders’ coping skills and reinforcing the motivation to change. (p. 115)

Eligibility to enroll in academic or vocational education programs is tied to length of sentence in some states with those inmates who are not within some set number of years of their release date being ineligible. Similar restrictions may also apply regarding

the type of educational programs in which someone serving a sentence of life without parole may enroll. It may be that access to adult basic education and high school equivalency programs is given but there is no opportunity to enroll in college or vocational programs.

Providing those serving sentences of life without parole with separate housing is a possible way to limit the stressors they may experience through their interactions with younger, more aggressive inmates serving shorter sentences. Toch (1990) noted the effects of prison overcrowding and how this made it easier for inmates to “infringe” upon each other. He stated that this was of particular concern for older prisoners as they were more likely to be the targets of aggressive behaviors. Toch further stated that, “Destabilizing attributes of inmates are hard to define, but it is again younger inmates who would possess these attributes to a greater extent than older inmates” (p. 2). In their study of life-sentenced inmates, R. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) concluded that those prisoners “see other inmates, and especially short-term inmates, as impulsive, disruptive, and even dangerous” (p. 36). Toch also addressed problems associated with matches and mismatches that can occur between two groups in the prison setting. Two groups of tough inmates may both remain tough or may become mismatched if one group remains tough while the other does not. In reference to the situation of inmates serving long sentences, Toch stated:

The same mismatch can be created where one group is a succession of toughs or tough cohorts that come and go, while the second is a group that starts tough but mellows and ripens into victimhood. This fate typically befalls our long-term inmates. (p. 4)

Conducting Interviews and Establishing Rapport in the Prison Setting

In a description of the importance of interviews in his own research in the prison setting, Clemmer (1940/1958) stated:

It is evident that much of our material has resulted from interviews with inmates. Space need not be taken here to describe the intricate aspects of the sociological interview. It is sufficient to state that the goal of the interview is to break down distrust and build up rapport. Numerous means and techniques are employed to this end, but fundamental to all is a condition of empathy on the part of the interviewer. (p. 323)

The nature of the relationship between the interviewer and any individual participant is also a matter of concern. At best, the interviewer is perceived as an outsider who is neither a member of the prisoner population nor of the prison staff. Toch (1977/1992) identified emotional feedback as one of seven environmental concerns in the prison setting. He stated:

Persons concerned with Emotional Feedback see their ideal environment as “warm”, responsive to moods and feelings, supportive of psychological change, or interested in the individual’s happiness or personal adjustment. Crucial to this orientation is the availability of truly significant others, of human beings who care. (p. 70)

With reference to the work of Goffman (1961) and his view of the total institution, Toch stated that prisons provide barriers for inmates who wish to communicate with those on the outside. He noted that the extent to which this is important to inmates will vary greatly, but that it is likely to be a matter of concern for those who have a high need for

feedback. Toch stated that in addition to feedback provided by family and friends, those with a high need for feedback are likely to appreciate that which is provided by community volunteers or those associated with programs from outside the institution. Given that some inmates serving sentences of life without parole may no longer have meaningful contact with important others from outside the institution (See De Beco, 2005; Flanagan, 1995; R. Johnson & McGunnigal-Smith, 2008), it is possible that some participants would welcome the opportunity to discuss their situations with a concerned and empathetic outsider. Conversely, the interviewer may be perceived as not just an outsider, but also as one who is allied with or even acting as an informant for the prison administration. While it may seem likely that individuals with this view would not volunteer to participate in research studies, it can not be assumed that this will be the case. Writing about research conducted in a prison for female offenders in Rhode Island, Quina et al. (2007) noted the potential impact of having outsider status:

While we were presumably more believable because we were from outside the institution, we also wore DOC-issued badges and were obligated to inform officials if we learned or suspected that an inmate might be planning to escape or to harm herself or others. Friendly exchanges with administrators or COs could bring increased credibility or mistrust with inmates, depending on the observer. (p. 132)

Wardens' Attitudes and Beliefs

A review of the literature resulted in no studies being found that addressed wardens' attitudes about inmates serving sentences of life without parole. The present study examines prison wardens' attitudes about amenities that could be made available to

those serving life without parole sentences. This study also examines prison wardens' beliefs about the future dangerousness of those serving sentences of life without parole and if those individuals should be managed through assignment to high levels of security and custodial supervision or if they should be eligible to be housed in facilities where there is lower security and less supervision.

Prison Amenities

In a study of staff perceptions of prison amenities, Tewksbury and Mustaine (2005) asked, "Where is the line regarding what should or should not be available for prison inmates" (p. 174)? Even though there is no reported research regarding wardens' attitudes about amenities for those serving sentences of life without parole, there have been several studies that did address prison amenities in a more general nature. There is no standard list of all things that might be considered an amenity, but W. W. Johnson, Bennett, and Flanagan (1997) identified a number of examples, such as:

Ownership of, or access to, televisions, radios, tape recorders, and other personal property; tobacco smoking; the right to privacy; conjugal visits and furloughs; access to therapy for mental health; education programs; martial arts instruction; prison libraries and law libraries with copy privileges; disability benefits; athletic equipment and facilities; dental care; and other major medical treatments such as organ transplants. (p. 29)

The present study uses a narrower perspective and focuses only on amenities related to the opportunity to attend academic and vocational training programs, assignment to housing areas specifically designated for those serving sentences of life without parole,

and the development of programs designed to help prisoners serving these sentences adjust to the reality that they are likely to be incarcerated for the remainder of their lives.

The extent to which amenities are provided or are made available to prisoners is often associated with the *principle of least eligibility* (Applegate, 2001; Hensley, Miller, Tewksbury, & Koscheski, 2003; W. W. Johnson et al., 1997; Sieh, 1989; Sparks, 1996; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2005). According to Sparks (1996), this principle requires that “the level of prison conditions should always compare unfavourably to the material living standards of the labouring poor (p. 74).” In addition to the implications related to distribution of available resources, this principle is also associated with the deterrent effect of incarceration. Sieh (1989) stated, “The principle of less eligibility stipulates that if imprisonment is to act as a deterrent the treatment given a prisoner should not be superior to that provided a member of the lowest significant social class in the free society” (p. 159).

During the latter part of the twentieth century--most notably in the 1990s--a trend developed toward increased prison austerity and the reduction of amenities made available to inmates (Applegate, 2001). In an article in *The New York Times*, Nossiter (1994) described legislative efforts in a number of states to make prison a harsher place and quoted several legislators who stated that these efforts emanated from public demand. Flanagan, Johnson, and Bennett (1996) made reference to public support for more punitive prisons and the reduction of amenities for inmates. They stated:

The public desire for a more punitive correctional environment has placed pressures on corrections to “get tough.” As the “get tough” movement has become a media issue and a hotly debated political topic, prisons have been transformed

from places where offenders are held *as punishment* to places *for punishment*. In reaction to the get-tough political rhetoric, correctional administrators are being “ordered” to purge their facilities of air conditioning, educational programs, weights, drug treatment programs, and “free” medical services. (p. 386)

W. W. Johnson et al. (1997) noted that conditions within prisons had increasingly received greater attention from both the media and from legislative bodies. Noting the impact of the principle of least eligibility when applied in a legislative setting, Clear, Cole, and Reisig (2009) stated:

A good example is provided by what happened to the Pell Grant program in 1994. This program, which provides college loans with beneficial repayment rules, came under attack by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson, a Texas Republican, who argued that paying tuition for college courses for inmates used \$2 million and displaced 100,000 law-abiding students. Even though her facts seemed patently wrong--any student who met Pell eligibility requirements, in prison or in the community, was given funds, and of the four million grants awarded that year only 23,000 went to prisoners--the uproar led Congress to deny eligibility for prisoners. To some, it simply was unfair to allow prisoners access to free-world financial benefits. (p. 346)

W. W. Johnson et al. (1997) examined wardens’ attitudes about amenities in the National Corrections Executive Survey-1995, a national survey of state prison wardens. Amenities were grouped into five categories associated with “education services, legal services, health care services, recreation programs/equipment, and other amenities” (p. 30) and respondents were asked to identify amenities that had been reduced or eliminated

in the previous year. Wardens were also asked to express opinions about those amenities that they believed should or should not be reduced or eliminated. Respondents were also asked to rank order four goals of imprisonment; retribution, incapacitation, rehabilitation, and deterrence. It was found that the amenities in the education services group were least likely to be supported for reduction or elimination, although 41% of respondents favored reduction of college education as compared to only 4% for vocation training/certification, 1% for high school education/GED, and 0% for basic literary education (p. 32). W. W. Johnson et al. concluded that the results were correlated with attitudes about rehabilitation and the purposes of prison. Wardens who ranked rehabilitation as the most important goal of prison were less likely to support reduction or elimination of amenities and those who rated retribution as the most important goal were more likely to support reduction or elimination. They concluded that support for elimination of prison amenities was more related to beliefs about rehabilitation, the goals of incarceration, and political and correctional ideologies than to factors such as gender, race, or education.

Kim, DeValve, DeValve, and Johnson (2003) used data from the National Corrections Executive Survey-1995 to compare opinions of male wardens with those of female wardens. They found that female wardens were less likely to support reduction of the prison amenity involving access to college education while incarcerated than were their male counterparts.

In a study of staff attitudes in the Kentucky prison system, Tewksbury and Mustaine (2005) addressed 26 amenities, including cable television, telephone calls, air conditioning, HIV/AIDS treatment, condoms, and pornography, on a list that had been initially identified by Applegate (2001) in a study of public beliefs about prison amenities

in Florida. That list included four amenities that are examined in the present study; basic literacy programs, GED classes, job training programs, and college education programs. Surveys were distributed to 1590 correctional staff members in six Kentucky prisons with 554 (34.9%) usable surveys being returned (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2005). Results were first examined based on respondents' opinions regarding whether an amenity should be provided, eliminated, or withheld. Among all staff, 96.4% supported basic literacy programs, 95.1% favored GED classes, 91.4% supported job training programs, but only 62.8% were in favor of college education programs. Using cross-tabulations and Pearson's chi-square statistic, support for amenities was examined relative to the positions held by respondents as divided into categories of administrators, security staff, and program staff, job tenure, and level of education. Relative to the four amenities that are included in the present study, Tewksbury and Mustaine found security staff had lower levels of support for all four than did administrators and program staff with the differences being statistically significant for all except basic literacy programs. Differences in levels of support associated with job tenure and level of education were not found to be statistically significant.

Hensley and Tewksbury (2005) stated, "Limited research exists on wardens' attitudes pertaining to the general operations and management of correctional institutions" (p. 186). This relative lack of research about wardens was also noted by Allen, Latessa, Ponder, and Simonsen (2007) and Cullen, Latessa, Kopache, Lombardo, and Burton (1993). Wardens have been surveyed relative to their job satisfaction (Cullen et al., 1993; Flanagan et al., 1996), their opinions about psychosocial needs of incarcerated females (van Wormer & Schneider, 2003), their perceptions of prison sex

(Hensley & Tewksbury, 2005), racial integration in cells used to house prison inmates (Henderson, Cullen, Carroll, & Feinberg, 2000) and their opinions of *supermax* prisons (Mears & Castro, 2006), but there are still many areas about which wardens' opinions are unknown.

A warden's opinion about the amenities that should be made available to inmates may have direct bearing on whether that amenity will be offered. Even though subject to external policy considerations related to demands made by the public, legislatures and higher level prison system officials, wardens have major impact on the daily operation of the prison (Allen et al., 2007; Hensley & Tewksbury, 2005). In studies of prison wardens' job satisfaction, it was found that satisfaction increased when wardens perceived themselves to have greater levels of autonomy over the operation of the facility they managed (Cullen et al., 1993; Flanagan et al., 1996). A major role of the warden involves developing internal policies of the prison that recognize the goals of external influences but which are also reasonable and realistic (Williamson, 1990) even though wardens may not be in agreement with existing formal policies or to practices in the management of the institution (Henderson, Cullen, Carroll, & Feinberg, 2000).

Wardens will generally be more in favor of an amenity that promotes the safe orderly operation of the prison. Activities and programs can keep inmates constructively occupied and such amenities can be used as part of a reward system to encourage inmate compliance with expected standards of behavior to the extent to which those amenities are valued by inmates (W. W. Johnson et al., 1997).

Future Dangerousness

Wardens' beliefs about the degree of danger that inmates serving sentences of life without parole may present to prison staff, other inmates, or the community in general may also impact how that population will be managed. The advent of the LWOP sentence led, early on, to some concern about the possible behavior of those who were perceived as having nothing to lose. However, those concerns seem to have dissipated.

The available literature on the perceived dangerousness of felons with sentences of life without parole is rather limited in both the number of studies and in the scope of the research conducted. However, that which is available does not support the concern that those with nothing to lose will pose a greater danger to others than will those who have the expectation of eventual release from prison.

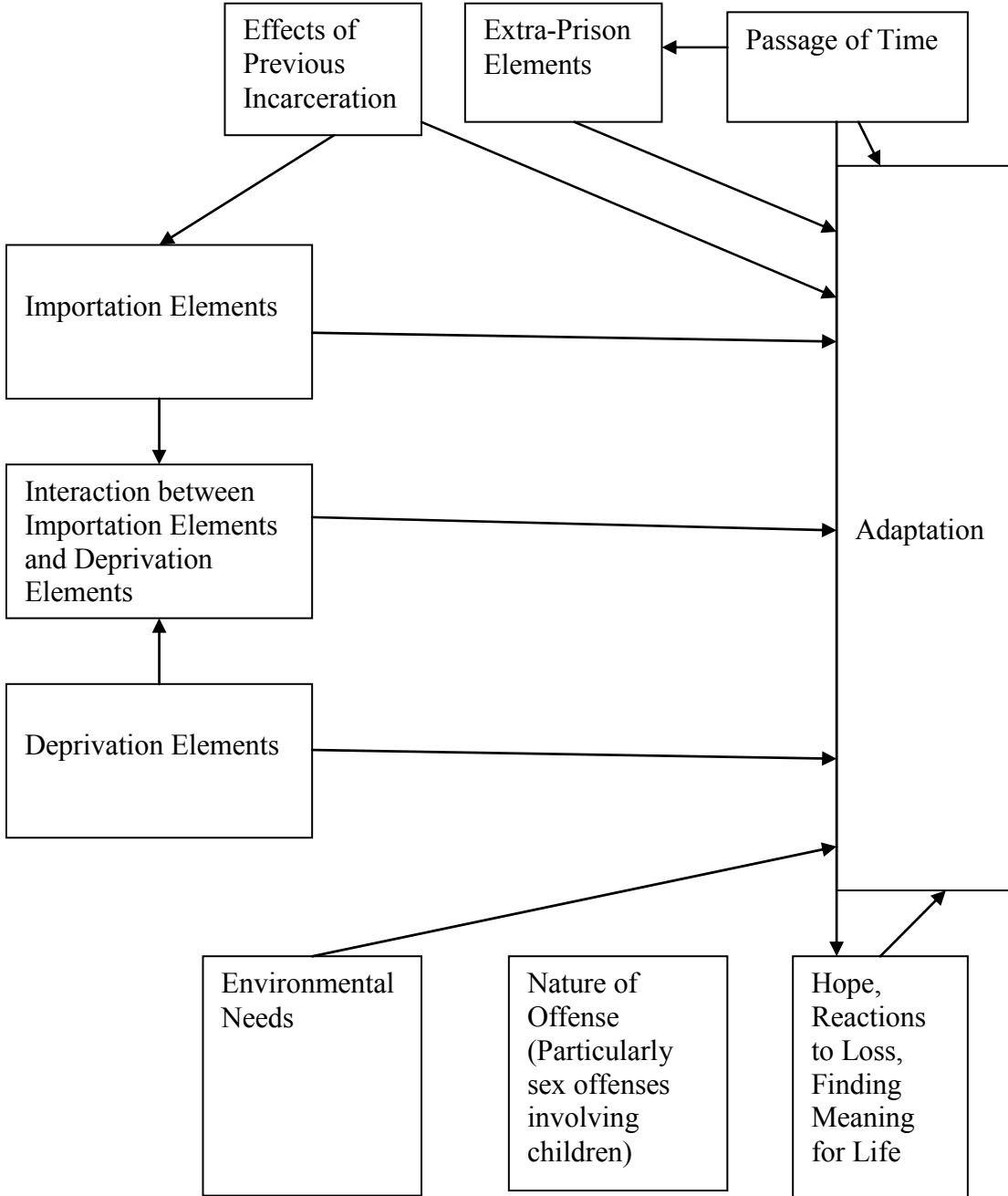
Conceptual Model

Based on the review of the literature, the conceptual model shown in Figure 2.1 regarding the manner in which those serving sentences of life without parole adapt was constructed. It is strongly based on the concepts of importation effects and deprivation effects and the manner in which these two interact to create an individualized response to the prison environment. Although given little attention in the literature, the effects of previous incarceration are believed to have great impact on adaptation and adjustment. The offender who has previously been incarcerated will probably have a better idea of what prison life may be like than will one who is incarcerated for the first time. Those who had adapted effectively in the past may also have a much different view than those whose adjustments were difficult.

The nature of the offense for which the prisoner is incarcerated may also be of importance. The inmate who is in prison for harming a victim considered capable of effective self-defense, such as a police officer, may be viewed differently by staff and other inmates than will the offender who sexually abused children. This may further impact the environmental needs of each. Using those same hypothetical offenders, the prisoner who harmed a police officer may have very different needs for safety and structure than will the individual who victimized children.

The effect of the passage of time is also given little attention in the literature. As time passes, external support networks included among extra-prison elements may deteriorate or end as friends and relatives gradually break off contact or age and die. The passage of time is left to be managed in the limited ways that might be available. Although recommended by some who have studied prison adjustment of long-term inmates, there is little to suggest that planned interventions initiated by prison administrators to help those serving sentences of life without parole to adapt actually exist. Some prisoners may pass time by obstinate refusal to cooperate with prison officials while others will find time passes easier when there is as much comfort and stability as the limited circumstances will allow. During this passage of time, the opportunity to find meaning for the life the prisoner now lives may become an important issue. It is also when the prisoner may find a way to maintain hope or may need to face the emotional horror that occurs when all hope is lost.

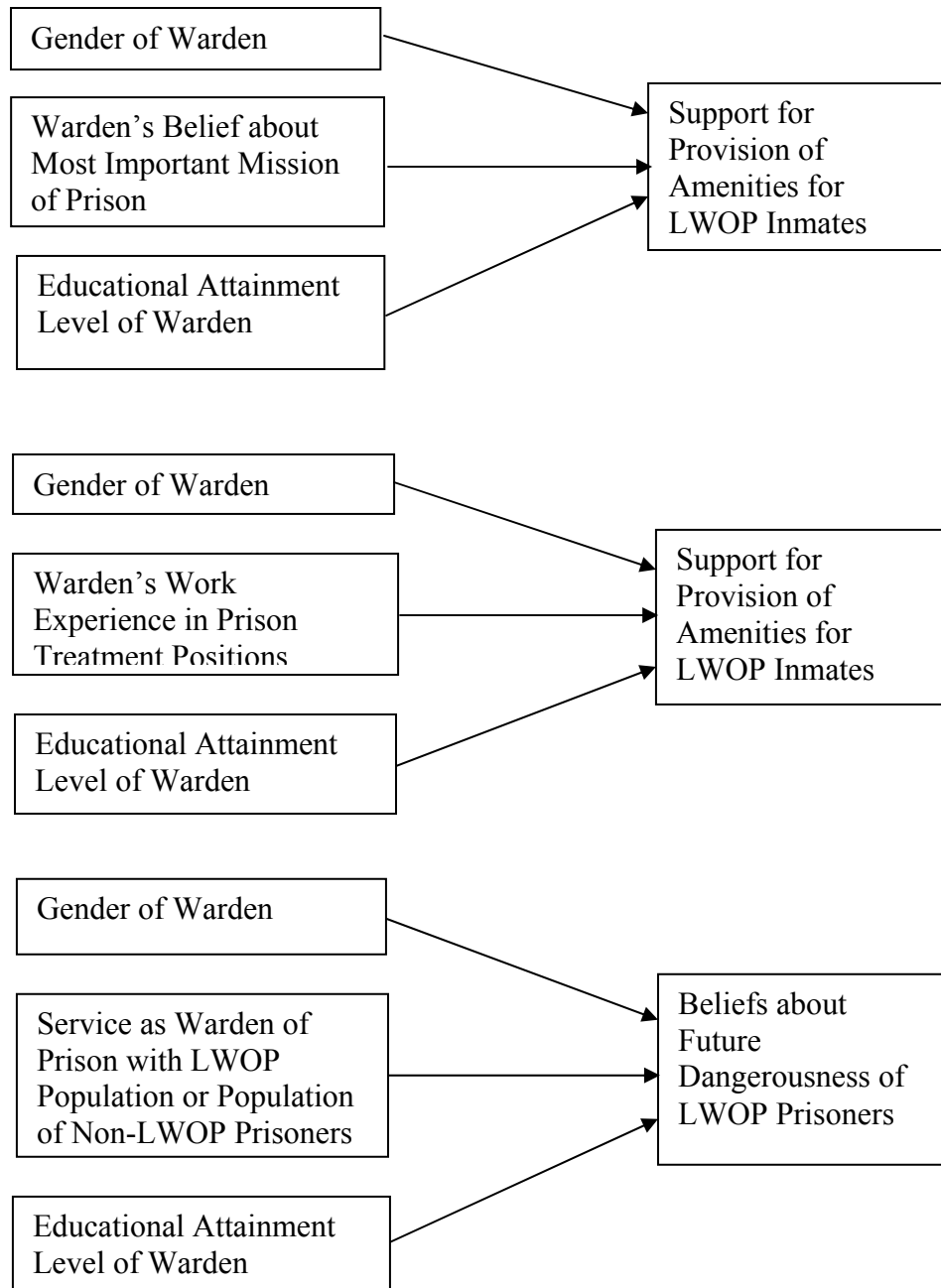
Figure 2.1. Conceptual Model Regarding Inmate Adaptation to Life without Parole Sentence



The conceptual model shown in Figure 2.2 addresses the ways in which wardens' opinions and beliefs about the amenities that should be provided to inmates serving sentences of life without parole and the degree of future dangerousness that group presents are developed. It is expected that beliefs about the most important mission of prison as moderated by gender and educational attainment level of the warden will predict level of support for the provision of amenities. It is also believed that if the warden has or has not served in a treatment position in the prison setting, also as moderated by gender and educational attainment level, will predict the extent to which wardens support the provision of amenities.

It is believed that the warden's experience as a warden of a prison that houses inmates serving life without parole or of a facility that is not used to incarcerate those with LWOP sentences, as moderated by gender and educational attainment level, will predict beliefs about the future dangerousness of the life without parole prisoner population.

Figure 2.2. Conceptual Model Regarding Wardens' Beliefs



This chapter has provided an overview of the salient literature and theoretical perspectives on offenders serving extremely long prison sentences and has examined factors associated with their successful adaptation to prison life. It has also described the relative absence of research related to wardens' views on prison amenities and on the degree of future dangerousness they believe those serving sentences of life without parole may present. The next chapter will draw upon this foundation in describing the methodology for the present study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 indicate that there is very little knowledge about how those serving sentences of life without parole adapt to being incarcerated and the prospect of being in prison for the remainder of their lives. There is also virtually no information about how prison wardens, who may have a great influence in how policies and practices related to the conditions of confinement are developed or applied, believe the LWOP population should best be managed. This exploratory study examined both the manner in which inmates adapt and the attitudes and beliefs of prison wardens about what amenities should be made available to those prisoners and to what extent they believe those serving sentences of life without parole are a danger to others.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology for this study. The manner in which inmates serving LWOP sentences adapt will be examined through qualitative analysis. The attitudes and beliefs of prison wardens will primarily be studied through quantitative methods, but will also include a small amount of qualitative data analysis. Attention will first be given to the qualitative research involving inmates serving sentences of life without parole with description of the study of prison wardens' attitudes and beliefs to follow.

Adaptation of Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole

Setting.

The qualitative study of how inmates adapt to serving sentences of life without parole was conducted at Lebanon Correctional Institution, a Level 3 Security (previously known as Close Security) facility operated by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and

Correction (DR&C). Located in southwestern Ohio, it is an example of a style of prison architecture known as the *telephone pole* plan that was first seen in the 1930s and which remained popular for the next several decades (American Correctional Association, 1983). This design features long central corridors from which housing units, dining rooms, staff offices, recreation areas, and prison industry shops extend in a manner similar to the cross-beams on a telephone pole (American Correctional Association, 1983). It is also characterized by being under one roof, making it possible for inmates to go for extended periods without leaving the building. Also on the prison grounds is a separate Level 1 Security (previously known as Minimum Security) building to which adult male felony offenders are assigned (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2011).

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction designates prisons as Level 1A, Level 1B, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, or Level 5, with Level 1A representing the least restrictive environment and Level 5 the most restrictive setting (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008c; Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008d). DR&C Policy 53-CLS-01 (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008d) states that inmates will be assigned to a specific security level during the reception and admission process based on a number of pre-commitment variables. These include, but are not limited to, history of assaultive behavior, age, escape history, enemies of record, gender, medical status, and mental and emotional stability. Inmates will then be assigned to a correctional facility consistent with their security rating. DR&C Policy 53-CLS-01 requires that each inmate's security level assignment be reviewed on no less than an annual basis by the prison Classification Committee which is

to review and consider “the inmate's needs, including programming needs reflected in the inmate's reentry accountability plan, evaluate placement and progress, security and any other relevant matters” (p. 1). The Classification Committee determines if a change in security level is warranted or if that individual should be continued at the present security level. Both DR&C Administrative Rule 5120-9-53 and DR&C Policy 53-CLS-01 outline the functions of the prison Classification Committee and state that all classification decisions are subject to the approval of the warden of that facility (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2006; Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008c).

The Ohio Revised Code provides an option for LWOP sentences for offenses of Aggravated Murder and, when certain aggravating circumstances are involved, for Murder, Rape, and Kidnapping. DR&C Policy 53-CLS-01 does not specifically designate the security levels to which inmates serving sentences of life without parole may be assigned, but does state that inmates serving sentences for Aggravated Murder or Murder are not eligible for assignment to Level 1B. DR&C Policy 53-CLS-01 states that inmates serving sentences for sex offenses or kidnapping may not be assigned to Level 1A and that any sex offenders assigned to Level 1B are not allowed to live or work outside the perimeter fence of that facility (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008c). At the time interviews for this study were conducted, male inmates serving sentences of life without parole were housed in seven Level 3 institutions, one Level 4 Security facility (previously known as Maximum Security), and one Level 5 Security institution (previously known as Administrative Maximum Security or High Maximum Security) (R. Huggins, personal communication, April 15, 2008).

There were no reasons to believe that those serving sentences of life without parole at Lebanon Correctional Institution were different than those inmates housed at other Level 3 institutions in Ohio with minor exceptions. Lebanon Correctional Institution houses inmates who are ambulatory and who are not currently experiencing serious mental health issues. Inmates whose physical health or mental health status would cause them to need special housing placements are not assigned to Lebanon Correctional Institution or, if already there, are transferred to another institution where those specialized services are available. Inmates incarcerated at other prisons in Ohio were not included in this study as it was decided that differences in the conditions of confinement at various facilities would make it difficult to compare the experiences and perceptions reported by participants. At the time when interviews for this study were conducted, there were 2350 inmates classified as Level 3 Security housed in the main building and 177 Level 1 Security inmates in the satellite facility.

Informants.

A list of all inmates at Lebanon Correctional Institution serving LWOP sentences was obtained from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Any inmates who were serving sentences of life without parole for an offense committed when 17 years of age or younger were excluded. This was because of current advocacy efforts by a number of organizations to bring about the abolishment of LWOP sentences for those who had not reached the age of majority at the time of the offense. An awareness of existing advocacy efforts may cause those individuals to have greater hope that some action will be taken to modify their sentences to something less than life without parole than would those who were 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense. The target

population consisted of 51 inmates at Lebanon Correctional Institution who were serving LWOP sentences and who were 18 years of age or older at the time of the offense for which the sentence was imposed. There were no inmates who were 17 years of age or younger when the offense for which they were incarcerated was committed. At the time of this study, the potential participants ranged from 24 to 68 years of age. Table 3.1 includes the demographic characteristics of that group.

Table 3.1

Characteristics of Potential Respondents

Potential Respondents ($N = 51$)		
Mean age	40.1 years (SD = 11.596)	
Mean length of incarceration	73.9 months (SD = 37.031)	
Characteristic	n	%
LWOP offense		
▪ Aggravated murder	42	82.4
▪ Sex offense	7	13.7
▪ Aggravated murder and sex offense	2	3.9
Race		
▪ Black	25	49.0
▪ White	23	45.1
▪ Other (Hispanic)	2	3.9
▪ Other (Asian)	1	2.0

All potential respondents were mailed a letter giving a brief description of the research study (Appendix A). They were asked to complete and return a form on which they could indicate if they were interested in volunteering for this study, if they did not wish to participate, or if they would like additional information before making a decision (Appendix B). A postage-paid envelope addressed to the Principal Investigator was included in the mailing to potential respondents. All potential respondents who did not return the form indicating their decision about participating were presumed to not be interested in taking part in this study. There was some concern about possible problems associated with literacy level of potential participants. Because the nature of the offenses of potential participants may possibly be unknown to others (even though a matter of public record), it was decided to not try to arrange for a designated staff member of Lebanon Correctional Institution to be a referral point for those who may not comprehend the content of the letter. It was instead believed that those who might have difficulty due to literacy issues would find someone *they* trusted to help them. In accordance with the provisions of approval for this study granted by the University of Kentucky Institutional Review Board, there were no subsequent mailings to those who did not respond.

All 51 letters were mailed on the same day with the first responses being received three days later. Responses were received from 29 individuals, of whom 26 indicated that they were interested or wished to have more information before making a decision and three declined to participate. There were no responses from 22 potential participants. Of the 26 who did indicate possible interest in participating in the study, one could not be interviewed due to being confined in administrative segregation for disciplinary reasons and one did not report for his scheduled interview on two separate occasions. Those

individuals who chose to be part of this study were scheduled for a one-time face-to-face interview at Lebanon Correctional Institution. Those who wished to have additional information before making a decision were also scheduled for a private discussion with the Principal Investigator at which time any questions or concerns were addressed. Those who subsequently decided to participate in the study were scheduled for an interview.

A total of 24 participants were interviewed by the Principal Investigator during a period of four weeks in April 2008. All interviews were conducted in locations at Lebanon Correctional Institution that provided the greatest amount of privacy possible given the nature of the setting. Most interviews were conducted in the room generally used for meetings between inmates and their attorneys. If that room was not available, interviews were conducted in staff offices located in an administrative area of the prison. Only the Principal Investigator and the inmate participant were present in the room and the door to the room was kept closed to maximize privacy. For security reasons, doors have observation windows but there is no way for the conversations that take place in the rooms to be monitored by others outside the room.

Potential participants were informed that an audio recording would be made of each interview and that those recordings would be transcribed by an individual not affiliated in any way with Lebanon Correctional Institution or the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. They were informed that the Principal Investigator would also take notes during the interview to facilitate later recall of nonverbal forms of communication or presentation. Potential participants were informed that audio recordings, transcripts of recordings, and notes made by the Principal Investigator would not be made available to Lebanon Correctional Institution or Department of

Rehabilitation and Correction personnel. The recording device was always in the possession of the Principal Investigator and was never left in the facility. An audio recording was made of all 24 interviews, four of which were inadvertently deleted due to technical problems with the recording device. No Lebanon Correctional Institution or Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections staff members ever asked to listen to that which was recorded or to read the transcripts that were subsequently prepared.

Prior to the start of the interview, each potential participant was presented with an informed consent form (Appendix C) which was discussed in detail. Subjects were informed that disclosure of certain types of information, including intent to harm self or others and information about harm to or endangerment of a child under the age of 18 may be reported to the appropriate authorities. All potential participants were informed that there were no adverse consequences for choosing not to participate in the study and that there was no form of payment or other compensation for choosing to participate.

The Principal Investigator was an employee of Lebanon Correctional Institution from March 1977 to October 1999. There were no inmates serving sentences of life without parole assigned to Lebanon Correctional Institution during that time period. The Warden of Lebanon Correctional Institution was asked to instruct staff to not discuss any element of this research study with members of the inmate population and to neither encourage nor discourage potential participants regarding their decisions to choose to participate or to not participate. In addition, at the beginning of each interview, the potential participant was asked if he had been subjected to any pressure or coercion or if he perceived that choosing not to participate would result in some form of negative consequences. Any prisoner who reported having been subjected to pressure or coercion

or who stated that he perceived negative consequences would occur if he chose not to participate would be eliminated from the study. No participants reported having experienced any coercion or any perceived risk associated with choosing not to participate.

Of the 20 interviews for which an audio recording was available, 19 were subsequently transcribed. One participant had a very pronounced accent that made it extremely difficult to understand his statements. Efforts were made by three different people--including the Principal Investigator--to transcribe that interview with no success. As a result, this study utilized the 19 transcripts that were prepared.

Paradigmatic focus.

In any review of qualitative research, it is important to understand the paradigm used by the researcher. Rubin and Babbie (2008) stated, “A paradigm is a fundamental model or scheme that organizes our view of something. Although it doesn’t necessarily answer important questions, it can tell us where to look for answers” (p. 43). There is a great deal of inconsistency in the manner in which paradigms of qualitative research are named, defined, and operationalized (Bailey, 2007; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

Depending on the sources consulted, one may find often inconsistent or diverse descriptions of major paradigms or paradigmatic categories. Because the numbers vary by source, it is possible to find four paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), five paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), or three paradigms (Bailey, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morrow, 2005; Rubin & Babbie, 2008) although none of those groupings of three is identical to any other like-numbered grouping.

For the purposes of the current research, a constructivist/interpretivist paradigm (Morrow, 2005) will be utilized. Unlike the positivist paradigm which has as its foundation the belief that there is an objective reality that can be found, the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm asserts that there is no single objective reality but rather multiple social realities that reflect the experiences, opinions, and values of subjects and researchers (Bailey, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). The constructivist/interpretivist paradigm recognizes the importance of gaining an empathetic understanding of how people feel, how they interpret the world around them, and of the meanings they ascribe to the problematic events and situations they encounter. There is recognition that characteristics of the researcher may affect what can be learned from subjects and that it is neither possible nor desired for the researcher to attempt to disregard or disown his or her understanding of the world. Rather than striving for the greatest degree of objectivity possible as is found in the positivist paradigm, those who use the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm often interact directly with participants in efforts to better understand how subjective elements influence their interpretations of social reality. The ability of the researcher to be flexible and to develop a subjective awareness of what it is like to be in the subject's life situation is valued as a means of striving to reach that understanding. Use of the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm encourages the researcher to be open to new and different ideas rather than being bound to preset notions. In the present study, it necessitates recognition that many aspects of prison adjustment may be simply related to chance than to design. Above all, it places value on the individual as a source of important knowledge.

Data collection.

An interview guide (Appendix D) was used when conducting interviews with participants at Lebanon Correctional Institution. This method was selected for several reasons. The interview guide approach allows the interviewer to select the order in which questions are asked and to modify the wording of questions to best suit the particular interview (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). It was believed this method provided the opportunity to have better results with a study population who live and work in a highly structured physical and social environment than would a standardized interview format. Use of the interview guide approach may have helped the interviewer to establish some element of rapport or trust with participants by encouraging interaction rather than just asking for answers to very specifically worded questions. It did enhance the opportunity for the interviewer to convey empathy to participants.

Participants were asked a number of questions related to how they adapt to serving a sentence of life without parole. These included questions about their relationships with other inmates, correctional officers and supervisors, work supervisors, and staff from various institution departments or programs. Questions addressed work assignments, participation in formal programs such as those offered by Mental Health Services or other of the “treatment” services departments, involvement in formal religious programs, ways in which leisure time is spent, and the existence or absence of social support networks within the prison. A number of questions focused on the world outside the prison setting and addressed relationships with family and friends, the nature and frequency of contacts with those individuals, and the existence or absence of an external support network. Study participants were asked about their beliefs regarding the

possibility that they might someday be released from prison and were given the opportunity to identify the factors that make adaptation to a sentence of LWOP easier or more difficult.

Because of concerns that a participant might experience an adverse psychological or emotional reaction related to discussion of the prospect of remaining in prison for the remainder of his life, arrangements were made in advance to refer any such individuals to the Licensed Independent Social Worker who served as the Supervisor of Mental Health Services at Lebanon Correctional Institution. While there were no situations in which it appeared that discussion of these topics precipitated a problematic emotional reaction, there were two participants who became disturbed as they described existing emotional distress during the interview process. Both participants were offered the opportunity to conclude the interview at that point, but both chose to continue after a brief break. Neither of those individuals reported being on the active caseload of Mental Health Services so referrals were made while they were still in the office where interviews were conducted. In both cases, they were seen by Mental Health Services staff that same day.

Data analysis.

The analysis and interpretation of data is a critical element of any qualitative research effort. Rubin and Babbie (2008) described qualitative analysis as “the nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (p. 456).

From the beginning of the data collection process, the researcher was immersed in the data being collected. The researcher conducted all interviews, prepared the transcripts of approximately one-third of the interviews, and proofread and corrected all other

transcripts. The benefits of doing so were addressed by Patton (2002) who stated, “Doing all or some of your own interview transcriptions (instead of having them done by a transcriber), for example, provides an opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights” (p. 441). Morrow (2005) noted the importance of immersion, which includes repeated reading of transcripts and review of other sources of data as needed to develop a strong understanding of the data at hand. All transcripts were read multiple times before coding began and at later points to enhance consistency in the coding process. Throughout these reviews, the researcher engaged in the process of memoing to develop and record a body of thoughts, questions, and identified areas for further examination.

Coding.

Patton (2002) described *content analysis* as a term “used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453). Coding is used to classify and categorize the data in a way that allows the researcher to look for patterns and to create a retrieval system for later review of specific pieces of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

In the present study, transcripts of interviews were examined carefully and initial identification and labeling of categories were conducted using the process of open coding (Straus & Corbin, 1990) rather than by using some already existing formulation for the categorization of data. This was done through a manifest coding process (Weisberg, Krosnick, & Bowen, 1996) in which focus is on the content of participants’ responses. Further reduction of the data was accomplished through what is alternately termed

focused coding (Bailey, 2007) or axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). That process involved identifying larger categories that combined multiple codes generated in the earlier stages of the coding process as a means of establishing patterns and themes.

According to Patton (2002) there is no definitive distinction between a pattern and a theme. As with so many descriptive terms used in qualitative analysis, there is great inconsistency in the terminology used to describe these concepts. Patton stated, “The term *pattern* usually refers to a descriptive finding, for example, ‘Almost all participants reported feeling fear when they rappelled down the cliff,’ while a theme takes a more categorical or topical form: *Fear*” (p. 453). In the current research, themes were identified with multiple patterns falling under each.

Use of grounded theory.

Data collected through the interview process were analyzed using the grounded theory approach. This involves an inductive process to generate theory rather than the use of deductive methods in the application of the concepts of existing theory (Patton, 2002; Rubin & Babbie, 2008). The grounded theory method included the use of the *constant comparative method* in its original formulation by Glaser and Strauss (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Glaser and Strauss (1967, as cited in Rubin and Babbie, 2008, pp. 457-458) identified four stages to the constant comparative method:

1. Comparing incidents applicable to each category.
2. Integrating categories and their properties.
3. Delimiting the theory.
4. Writing theory.

The researcher engaged in activities related to each of these stages during the process of data analysis and the interpretation and reporting of findings.

Trustworthiness.

Morrow (2005) stated that qualitative research “embraces multiple standards of quality, known variously as *validity*, *credibility*, *rigor*, or *trustworthiness*” (p. 250). As in other areas of qualitative research, there is no single comprehensive list of criteria for trustworthiness. In an effort to ensure that the current study was rigorous and had a high level of trustworthiness, a number of different methods were utilized.

An important basic element was a prolonged engagement with inmates in prison settings in which they were incarcerated. For a 30 year period that ended two years prior to the start of this study, the Principal Investigator served in a number of direct service, supervisory, and administrative positions with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. While there were no contacts with inmates serving imposed LWOP sentences during that time, there was extensive interaction with inmates serving long sentences including some number whose offenses were so serious that it was unlikely they would ever be released on parole. Morrow (2005) emphasized the importance of having at least a preliminary understanding of “the culture and the context of the participants” (p. 256) even when doing research that is primarily interview based. This prolonged engagement also helped the researcher to be aware of the possibility of respondent bias (Padgett, 2008), in which participants do not provide information about certain subjects. As an example, in the present study no information was disclosed by participants about sexual relationships with staff or with other inmates or about any use of illegal drugs in the prison. Because information was collected at just one face-to-face interview, it was not

surprising that these topics were not discussed even though the Principal Investigator is well aware that both sexual relationships and drug use occur in prison.

In spite of the Principal Investigator's experience, a concerted effort was made at all times to recognize that research participants' subjective reactions to incarceration were unique and that they were not forced to fit into the investigator's preconceived notions and beliefs. Morrow (2005) stated:

Qualitative researchers use a number of strategies as they strive to fairly represent participants' realities, including, within the data-gathering process, asking for clarification and delving even more deeply into the meaning of participants, taking the stance of naïve inquirer. This is particularly important when the interviewer is an "insider" with respect to the culture being investigated or when she or he is very familiar with the phenomenon of inquiry. (p. 254)

While sometimes difficult to do, a constant effort was made to appear to be the naïve inquirer during interviews with participants. This was not only related to knowledge of the system obtained through years of practice experience, but also related to not allowing the information provided by those already interviewed to cause a more limited range of questioning and probing to occur with those interviewed later.

Because follow-up contacts were not included in the research protocol approved by the Institutional Review Board, it was not possible to allow participants to review the findings as a means of triangulation to determine if the researcher adequately interpreted and reported the meanings of those interviewed (Morrow, 2005; Patton, 2002). However, expert reviews (Bailey, 2007) were conducted by two individuals with extensive experience and knowledge about working with the life without parole offender

population. In both cases, it was agreed that the patterns and themes identified by the researcher were consistent with what one might expect to find in analysis of information obtained from interviews with this type of incarcerated individual.

An awareness of reflexivity, described as the degree to which the researcher influenced or affected the research process (Bailey, 2007; Morrow, 2005), was closely monitored. Through the researcher's use of empathetic listening skills, it is believed that some participants were more willing to be candid than might have otherwise been the case. Related to this was the Principal Investigator's awareness of the particular role being played in the interview setting. There were times when participants described experiences or feelings that they clearly found distressing and it became necessary to be very vigilant in preventing a shift from the role of interviewer to that of a social work practitioner.

The possibility of researcher bias (Padgett, 2008) in the selection of subjects and in data collection activities was minimized in at least two different ways. Invitations to participate were mailed to all inmates at Lebanon Correctional Institution who were serving sentences of life without parole. As a second method, the questions asked of participants were from an interview guide that was developed prior to any of the possible participants being identified.

Reactivity refers to the potential that the researcher's presence may alter or distort the information provided by research subjects (Padgett, 2008). This may be a particular concern when face-to-face interviews are being conducted. In the present research, participants volunteered to be interviewed and were not paid to be part of the study. They were promised that their names would not be connected with any report of research

findings and there was no reason given to cause participants to believe that anything would be gained by not being honest.

Through these efforts, it is believed that appropriate regard was given to ensuring the trustworthiness of the data and the manner in which it was interpreted and reported. Morrow (2005) stated that the trustworthiness of a research study is subject to the adequacy of the manner in which data has been analyzed, interpreted, and described with the written word.

Perspectives of Prison Wardens; Quantitative Portion

A review of the literature resulted in no studies being found in which prison wardens were asked their opinions about how to best manage the population of inmates serving sentences of life without parole. This study also examined the opinions and beliefs of state prison wardens about two specific correctional management concerns; their support for the provision of certain amenities which might be made available to prisoners serving LWOP sentences and the perceived degree of future dangerousness those inmates present. This is by no means an exhaustive list of possible concerns about the management of the LWOP population, but it will serve as an opportunity to begin filling in some of the gaps in our knowledge. Data was collected through a written survey in the form of a mailed questionnaire.

Sampling frame.

The American Correctional Association *2008 Directory: Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies, and Probation and Parole Authorities* was used to identify publicly operated state prisons in all 50 states which are used to incarcerate adult offenders. *Privatized* prisons that are operated by private sector

corporations under contract with state or federal government were not included. Facilities operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons were likewise excluded. The decision to exclude privatized prisons and those operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons was made after a review of the relevant literature. It is noted that the only known study in which the opinions of wardens about prison amenities were addressed, the National Corrections Executive Survey, 1995, had only been distributed to wardens of “state adult correctional facilities in the United States” (W. W. Johnson et al., 1997, p. 29). Excluding other types of prisons allowed for a better comparison between this study and the 1995 survey.

Information found in the *2008 Directory: Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies, and Probation and Parole Authorities* identified correctional facilities operated by state agencies and generally included the name of the warden of each facility. The names of correctional facilities and wardens were then cross-referenced with information found on the official website of the state agency that manages the adult correctional system and any necessary changes were made. This allowed a preliminary list of prisons and wardens in all 50 states to be created. In some states, one individual may serve as the warden of several correctional facilities, most commonly when those prisons are in close proximity to one another. When any individual appeared on the preliminary list more than one time, only one entry was kept with all others being deleted. The final list consisted of 863 persons identified as being a warden at a publicly operated state prison. Using a random number table to determine the starting point on the list, every second person was selected to create the sampling frame of 432 state prison wardens. That number was reduced to 431 when it was learned that one prison had closed and was further reduced to 430 when a survey mailed to a prison in

a southern state was returned as undeliverable on two occasions even though the address matched that found in the *2008 Directory: Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies, and Probation and Parole Authorities* and on the state's official website.

All wardens in the sampling frame were sent a letter by regular U.S. Mail explaining the purposes of this study and inviting them to participate (Appendix E). A copy of the survey instrument (Appendix F) and a postage-paid envelope in which to return the survey were included with the letter. It was emphasized that completing the survey was completely voluntary and that the survey was anonymous.

In the several weeks following the initial mailing to wardens, notices were received from correctional agencies in eight states; Colorado, Connecticut, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Virginia indicating that approval must be sought to conduct any research that involved staff or inmates. The appropriate requests were completed and sent to each of those state correctional agencies. It was emphasized that the voluntary nature of the survey was a matter of importance and a request was made that if approval was given, wardens neither be encouraged nor discouraged from participating. In some cases, correctional agency administrators simply notified wardens that it was acceptable to complete and return surveys. Several state correctional agencies required that a new mailing be sent to each warden on the original list. This was done with an explanatory letter asking that they not complete the survey if they had already done so when they initially received it. Only one state agency, the Connecticut Department of Correction, denied permission. In a letter dated October 29, 2009 from the Director of Organizational Development, it was stated that the agency's Research

Advisory Committee had reviewed the request on August 25, 2009. The Director of Organizational Development wrote, "I regret to inform you that we are unable to approve your request." No explanation for the refusal was given.

Because of an initially low response rate, a second mailing was sent to wardens in four of the five states with the largest prisoner populations; California, Texas, Florida, and Georgia. At that time, approval was in process to send a new mailing to wardens in New York, the fifth state among those with the largest inmate populations. A second mailing was also sent to wardens in Alabama, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, the only five states not among those with the largest total prisoner populations which then had 1000 or more inmates serving sentences of life without parole. A total of 181 surveys were returned for a preliminary response rate of 42.1%, although several were subsequently rejected. Details about the surveys that were rejected will be provided in Chapter 5.

Dependent variables.

The two dependent variables of Support for Provision of Amenities and Perceptions of Future Dangerousness were conceptualized through a review of the literature and are also based, in part, on the observations and experiences of the Principal Investigator during a 30 year career in the adult prison system.

Instrumentation.

LWOP Amenities Index.

In the present study, wardens were asked to give their opinions about certain amenities that might be made available to those serving sentences of life without parole. There were three specific forms of amenity that were addressed: (a) opportunity to

participate in academic and vocational education programs, (b) the provision of a separate housing area for those serving sentences of life without parole as a means of making their adjustment easier, and (c) the provision of special programs targeting those serving sentences of life without parole to help them adjust to the prospect of remaining in prison for the remainder of their lives.

It has been suggested that special programs that address the unique needs of offenders serving long periods of incarceration would assist those inmates to adapt (See Flanagan, 1995; Toch, 1995). Inmates serving LWOP sentences may have special needs that go beyond those of prisoners serving long sentences who have the expectation of eventual release. Because of this, wardens were asked if they favor making special programs available to those who are sentenced to life without parole.

The survey included seven items related to the provision of amenities to those serving sentences of life without parole. Five items related to amenities involving academic and vocational education programs. Respondents were asked to indicate if those inmates should be permitted to participate in each of five types of educational program:

- Adult basic education programs
- High school/GED programs
- College courses
- Vocational training in skill areas utilized by the institution
- Vocational training in skill areas not utilized by the institution

The other two items involved respondents' opinions as to whether inmates serving LWOP sentences should be housed in separate areas to make their adjustment easier and

if special programs should be available to help them adapt to the expectation that they will remain in prison for the remainder of their lives.

Because respondents were only asked to indicate if they opposed or favored the provision of each of these seven amenities, the relative strength of their opposition or support can not be determined. Using a score of -1 for responses indicating opposition to providing a particular amenity, a score of 0 when the warden indicated that he or she did not have an opinion about that particular amenity, and a score of 1 when the provision of the amenity is supported, the *LWOP Amenities Index* was created with a possible range of -7 through 7. There is precedent in the literature for the use of index scores as measures of support for prison amenities or austerity. As part of their methodology in the National Corrections Executive Survey, 1995, W. W. Johnson et al. (1997) created the *Support for Reduction in Prison Amenities Index*. Applegate (2001) created an index when studying public support among residents of Florida for reduction of prison amenities. Applegate noted that the index was a count of the number of amenities respondents wished to see eliminated and was not a measurement of the strength of respondents' opinions.

LWOP Future Dangerousness Scale.

The concept of future dangerousness relates to efforts to predict if an individual or a class of individuals is likely to engage in future violent behaviors or other actions that constitute a threat to the safety of the community. For the purposes of this study, the prison itself will be viewed as the community of attention. While clearly not based on a completely objective process, such assessments and predictions are made regularly in the prison system and are commonly seen in the classification procedures through which

inmates are assigned to the security level at which they can best be managed (Fox & Stinchcomb, 1994).

Using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “strongly agree” and 5 representing “strongly disagree”, wardens were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the following five statements. Items labeled “(R)” are reverse scored.

1. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are so dangerous that they should be housed at a facility exclusively used for that population if possible to do so. (R)
2. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are often a positive influence on those inmates serving lesser sentences.
3. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are more likely to be dangerous to *prison staff* than are those inmates serving lesser sentences. (R)
4. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are more likely to be dangerous to *other inmates* than are those inmates serving lesser sentences. (R)
5. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole pose a greater escape risk than those inmates serving lesser sentences. (R)

On four of the five items, a response of “strongly agree” was consistent with a belief that there is a high level of future dangerousness. On the fifth item, a response of “strongly disagree” would be indicative of that same belief. After reverse scoring of Items 1, 3, 4, and 5 a respondent who believed that those serving LWOP sentences presented a very low risk could score a minimum of 5 and the individual who believed there was very high risk of future dangerousness could score the maximum of 25.

An exploratory factor analysis using the principal axis factoring extraction method was performed to determine the extent to which the five items in the *LWOP Future Dangerousness Scale* explain the responses to those variables. All five items loaded on only one factor with factor-loading values ranging from .413 to .868. Results are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Factor Loadings from Principal Axis Factoring Analysis: Communalities, Eigenvalue, and Percentage of Variance for Items Related to Future Dangerousness

Item	Factor loading	Communality
	1	
1	.645	.416
2	.419	.175
3	.822	.676
4	.868	.754
5	.413	.170
Eigenvalue	2.191	
% of variance	43.820	

Reliability testing showed a Cronbach's Alpha of .761. The examination of item-total statistics showed that deletion of any of the five variables would result in minimal change in the Cronbach's Alpha. Deleting the variable about the likelihood of being an escape risk would only change the value to .776. The greatest negative change would

reduce the value to .663 if the variable associated with being more likely to present risk of harm to other inmates was deleted.

The survey also included two open-ended questions which were analyzed using the grounded theory method:

- What could be done to help this population adjust to being in prison with a life without parole sentence?
- What is the largest problem you see with this population of inmates serving sentences of life without parole?

Independent variables.

The survey contained a number of items related to socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Refer to Appendix F). It also asked respondents to rate their own political philosophy and to rank order four different commonly accepted missions of prison (See Fox & Stinchcomb, 1994). Independent variables included:

- Gender
- Race
- Age
- Education as measured by a self-report of highest degree or level of completion
- Total time served as a warden
- Previous experience as a correctional officer and number of years service in that capacity
- Previous experience for a period of one year or longer in a treatment position such as mental health, social services, or case management services

- General political philosophy rated on a 10-point scale with *Conservative* at the low end and *Liberal* at the high end of the scale
- Gender of inmate population at prison where currently assigned
- Security level of prison where currently assigned
- Experience as a warden at a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole and, if so, for how long
- If no experience as a warden at a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole, experience in a position other than warden and, if so, for how long
- Current service as a warden at a prison that houses inmates serving sentences of life without parole
- Opinion regarding the ranking from first to last of the most important mission of prison among (a) retribution, (b) incapacitation, (c) rehabilitation, and (d) deterrence
- Opinion regarding the lowest security level to which inmates serving sentences of life without parole should be eligible to be classified from the options of (a) Minimum, (b) Medium, and (c), Close, Maximum, Super-Maximum.

Analytic plan.

Data collected through interviews with inmates at Lebanon Correctional Institution were analyzed by the grounded theory method. This method was also used to analyze responses to the two open-ended questions on the survey sent to prison wardens.

Descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were used to interpret quantitative data from the survey sent to prison wardens. Descriptive analyses included frequencies and central tendency measurements to gain an understanding of the sample and the variables being studied. Two way analysis of variance using the *LWOP Amenities Index* was used to measure wardens' support for the provision of amenities to inmates serving sentences of life without parole. Two way analysis of variance using the *LWOP Future Dangerousness Scale* was used to examine the predictive effect that having served as a warden in a facility in which offenders serving sentences of life without parole are housed – as moderated by several individual factors – has on beliefs about future dangerousness.

Hypotheses.

Because the component of this study that involves how inmates serving a sentence of life without parole adapt is exploratory in nature and is being done from a qualitative orientation, no hypothesis is stated. Instead, the research is guided by the general question, “How do prisoners serving sentences of life without parole adapt to prison life and to the prospect that they will never be released from prison?”

Hypotheses 1 and 2 relate to the support state prison wardens may have for the provision of amenities to those serving LWOP.

H1: Wardens who served in a treatment position for one year or more will be more likely to support provision of amenities than wardens who did not serve in a treatment position and who did serve as a correctional officer or wardens who served in both a treatment position and as a correctional officer. This will be moderated by level of educational attainment and gender.

H2: Wardens who identified rehabilitation as the most important mission of prison are more likely to support the provision of amenities than wardens who identified deterrence, incapacitation, or retribution as the most important mission. This will be moderated by level of educational attainment and gender.

Beliefs about the future dangerousness of those serving LWOP may have developed through experience working with that population, through exposure to the scant professional literature that exists, or may be based on intuitive reactions. There is no known research from which to draw conclusions. This serves as the rationale for Hypothesis 3.

H3: Wardens who have served as warden of a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole will be less likely to believe those inmates present risk of future dangerousness than will those who have not been the warden at a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole. This will be moderated by level of educational achievement and gender.

Summary.

Chapter 3 described the research design for this study. It also described the sampling frame, recruitment procedures, the instrumentation used for both the qualitative and quantitative elements of this study, the analytic approach that was used and the study hypotheses.

Chapter 4

Results of Qualitative Study of Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole

The first strand of this mixed methods study focused on adult male inmates serving sentences of life without parole in a state prison. In any research in which potential informants have the opportunity to choose to participate or to decline, it is important to ensure that there are no statistically significant differences between those who chose to volunteer for the study and those who do not. Prisoners who chose to participate in this study were compared with those individuals who declined to participate or who were unavailable for an interview. Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to test the null hypothesis as it applied to the mean age and mean length of incarceration of the two groups. Relative to mean age, those who were interviewed ($M = 41.08$, $SD = 11.967$) and those who were not interviewed ($M = 39.19$, $SD = 11.409$) were not significantly different ($t(49) = -0.580$, $p = .565$). The difference in the mean number of months of incarceration for those who were interviewed ($M = 78.42$, $SD = 37.442$) and for those who were not ($M = 69.89$, $SD = 36.897$) was also found to not be statistically significant ($t(49) = -0.818$, $p = .417$).

Crosstabulations and independent-samples chi-square tests were used to compare the group of participants who were interviewed with the group of individuals who were not interviewed in terms of race and of the nature of the offense for which they were sentenced to LWOP. Chi-square analysis of the distribution of offenses did not show a significant difference ($\chi^2[df = 2] = 0.349$, $p = .840$). Because of the small number of persons serving LWOP for sexual offenses and for both aggravated murder and a sexual offense, four cells had an expected count of less than 5. Data regarding race was recoded

into categories of “White” and “Non-White” to reduce the number of cells with an expected count of less than 5 caused by the relatively small number of persons who identified as Other (Hispanic) and Other (Asian). Chi-square analysis showed no significant differences between the two groups ($\chi^2[df = 1] = 0.01, p = .921$). Table 4.1 presents a comparison of demographic characteristics of those who chose to be interviewed for this study and those who declined the opportunity to participate.

Table 4.1

Comparison of Participants with Those Who Declined to Participate or Who Were Unavailable for Interview

Characteristic	Interviewed ($n = 24$)	Not Interviewed ($n = 27$)
Mean age	41.08 ($SD = 11.967$)	39.19 ($SD = 11.409$)
Mean length of incarceration	78.42 months ($SD = 37.442$)	69.89 months ($SD = 36.897$)
Life without parole offense		
▪ Aggravated murder	19	23
▪ Sexual offense	4	3
▪ Aggravated murder and sexual offense	1	1
Race		
▪ Black	10	15
▪ White	11	12
▪ Other (Hispanic)	2	0
▪ Other (Asian)	1	0

Data Analysis

This was an exploratory study to examine factors that are potentially related to participants' abilities to adapt to a sentence of life without parole. Some informants presented as being very successful in those efforts and others reported a myriad of problems that they were experiencing. Following completion of all interviews and the transcription of audio recordings, coding of data was performed by the Principal Investigator using an open coding process.

Three major themes emerged: *Sources of Dissatisfaction*, *Positive Forces*, and *Hope Based on Legal Changes*. Within the themes of Sources of Dissatisfaction and Positive Forces, a number of patterns (Patton, 2002) were identified. The third theme, Hope Based on Legal Changes, essentially had a single pattern. A more detailed description of these three themes and the patterns associated with each is found in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Adaptation to Sentences of Life without Parole: Emerging Themes

Theme 1: Sources of Dissatisfaction

- Difficulty adapting to a sentence of life without parole
- Difficulty adapting to prison in general
- Fear of dying in prison
- Overcrowding
- Fear of other inmates
- Negative interactions with other inmates
- Lack of privacy
- Contacts with staff that are negative in nature
- Boredom and lack of opportunity to be active
- Bad food
- Lack of contact or limited contact with family members and important others outside the institution
- Fear that family members or important others will die while they are incarcerated

Theme 2: Positive Forces

- Acceptance of situation
- Successful adaptation to prison in general
- Good job assignment
- Good housing assignment
- Trusted friends and/or associates among inmate population
- Feelings of safety
- Adequate opportunity for privacy
- Treated with respect by others
- Contacts with staff members that are not negative in nature
- Interesting and useful programs facilitated by prison staff or by community volunteers
- Enjoyable leisure time activities
- Contacts with family and important others from the community
- Existence of adequate social support system
- Spirituality
- Finding purpose for one's life

Theme 3: Hope Based on Legal Changes

Theme 1: Sources of Dissatisfaction

The theme Sources of Dissatisfaction emerged as participants identified a number of factors that made coping difficult or problematic. In addition to issues directly associated with the dynamics of the sentence for which the offender was incarcerated, these ranged from factors such as overcrowding and the boredom inherent in the prison setting to issues involving the nature and frequency of contacts with family and friends.

Difficulty adapting to a sentence of life without parole.

There was a fairly wide range of responses when discussion focused on adaptation to having a sentence of LWOP. Difficulty accepting the reality of that sentence came slowly to some. One inmate described the process he was experiencing:

I guess I haven't really coped with it all the way yet. I've only been down three (years) altogether so I don't think it's hit me as hard as people doing ten but I know I'm not going home anytime soon or anytime at all. It might just be a gradual process because I'm understanding now that I'm not going home but when I first got here, I figured there might be a chance for me to get out somehow but I don't think that's happening anymore.

Other informants said that they tried to avoid thinking about the full reality of their situations and would instead try to focus on other things. As one inmate stated:

Well, it's not looking at it as the whole issue, like I'm going to die here. It's like; what am I going to do this year? It's like farmers, when it's spring you plant seeds, when it's summer you water and weed your crops, when it's fall you harvest, when it's winter you store up and

get things together and then get ready for the next cycle.

Because many of the participants reported having appeals in process, it was also common to be told that they were not going to really think about their sentences until such time as all possible opportunities for release were exhausted.

Difficulty adapting to prison in general.

The ability to adapt to prison in general was mentioned by several respondents as a problematic element. Individuals who had never been incarcerated before commonly described difficulties--particularly during the initial years of confinement--developing an understanding of the often confusing workings of the prison system. Several inmates incarcerated for sex offenses stated that these difficulties were compounded by the negative reactions of prison staff and other inmates to the specific nature of their offenses. One of the older participants who reported no prior history of incarceration stated:

It was just hard to adapt to it for the first time being locked up after not being locked up.

When asked if the staff had been of any assistance in helping him to adapt, he said:

No, the staff didn't do anything. Most of the inmates that gave me any info, you know, how to adapt here and then I learned from that and then I adapted to it myself.

Another inmate who had no prior incarceration and who was admitted for his current offense at a relatively young age spoke of the difficulties he initially experienced:

I was 21 when I first got locked up and when you first come in, you

always got to prove yourself and you know you going to have guys that try you or whatever. You know, I'm a little guy and you got guys that want to talk down and see where your heart at for real. You going to fight and you know, I was beat up and beat people up and it's just part of prison.

Fear of dying in prison.

Only a few informants spoke of this issue. As was the case when questions focused on adapting to a sentence of life without parole, many stated that they expected to be released from prison eventually. Several acknowledged the fear but did not choose to discuss it. Only two addressed their fears in any detail. One individual stated:

My thing is like, life without parole, that's like every time I, like when I be in class or something--different classes--people would talk about that. It's a sensitive spot because they be talking about me but not actually about me. And that's really made me think, like, if nothing change, you are going to die in here, you know? And that's a really touchy thing with me. I don't never like talking about it. I don't never talk to nobody about it.

The second stated:

The real possibility of me dying here is something that I would like to talk about. Because I think...I don't know how to say it...I mean the reality...it's...it's more of a probability than not because appeals are really hard. I...I have a little something going right now and it's good but next year the laws could change and they could shut it all down. Then again ten years later the laws could change again and open it all back up

so ...but I don't want to die in here. I do think... I don't think about dying old, again, but I do think about dying and I don't want to die in here. And it's scary.

Overcrowding.

During the past several years, there has been a major increase in the number of inmates housed at Lebanon Correctional Institution. Records from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction indicate that in the first week of April 2005, the inmate population in the main facility was 1767 (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008a). Interviews for this study began during the first week of April 2008, by which time the inmate population had reached 2365, a 34% increase (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008b). Participants reported a number of problems associated with overcrowding, although they often did not identify overcrowding as a problem in itself. Instead, several inmates spoke of problems related to being able to go to the library because that area can only accommodate a limited number at any one time. A major concern for several involved a continuing reduction in the number of single occupancy cells. A number of prisoners interviewed were living in single occupancy cells and spoke of the expectation that they would soon have to share cells with other inmates. Others spoke about having less access to recreation opportunities, increasingly longer waiting lists for programs, and of the general tension caused by having so many people in a facility designed for a smaller number. In the words of one participant:

It's overcrowded. It causes a lot of conflict. They're gonna have to do something.

Other indirect effects of overcrowding were mentioned by informants. Several spoke of how long it takes to serve meals in the inmate dining rooms and how that affects the opportunity to participate in other activities. During discussions of medical care, two inmates stated that they were happy with the quality of care but that the increase in the number of inmates had not been matched by increase in staff resources. As a result, it reportedly took longer to secure appointments for non-emergency medical or dental care.

Fear of other inmates.

Almost one-third of the participants reported current or past fears for their physical safety. Individuals of relatively slight physical stature, those who were elderly, individuals serving their first prison sentence, and those who were incarcerated for sex offenses involving children discussed situations in which they had been the target of aggressive or threatening actions by other inmates. When asked if he was ever afraid of other inmates, one individual responded:

Absolutely. Think about it all the time.

Of those who did talk about being afraid of other inmates, the fear was often described as having diminished with the passage of time and with increased familiarity with the experience of incarceration. This was related to learning about the possible sources of danger and of how one should carry oneself in the prison environment. One inmate who had been incarcerated for over five years stated:

I'm not afraid no more. I used to be though. Because I didn't know...I didn't know how to act around these people but now that I know...I know I can get hurt but I'm not afraid no more.

In other cases, fear was addressed from a contextual perspective. Two informants stated that they did not experience any fear in their day-to-day existence, but during later discussion of the use of leisure time, both indicated that they did not go outside to the recreation yard--where there are lesser levels of staff supervision--due to concerns about what problems might be encountered there.

Negative interactions with other inmates.

A number of participants commented on several different forms of negative interactions with other inmates as issues that made adjustment more difficult. One area related to concerns that younger inmates serving relatively short sentences for which they do not have to appear before the parole board are frequently disrespectful and aggressive toward others. Some participants described making concerted efforts to avoid interacting with younger inmates to the extent possible. One individual described his actions to avoid the younger prisoners:

There's a bunch of young guys in here. I try to stay away from them because they just want to impress they friends and impress this person. I don't got time for that. I went through that when I first got locked up, even though I'm in here, I matured a little bit so I try, like I said, to stay out the way and stay out of trouble with them.

Another described his view of the problems of having a mixture of inmates of different ages serving much different sentences:

We have guys doing big time, we have young kids that are doing a couple years but they just don't care. They act up and they have no respect and, you know, there's robbing, there's stealing.

Several informants expressed the belief that there should be some form of separation between the older inmates and those who are younger. In the words of one inmate:

I think that they should have a cell, I mean, that they should have a block for guys that are 50 and older. Instead of being in a block with all these kids playing this loud music. That's crazy.

This perspective was shared by another individual serving a life without parole sentence:

I think they should just have a place for just lifers, whatever. We got to put up with some of these, you know; guys who are here for four or five years and think they're like, tough. No, just leave us alone.

A second issue involved topics of conversation among inmates. A common area of dissatisfaction for many participants involved having to hear other inmates talk about being released at the expiration of sentence or about pending parole hearings. Several participants described their emotional reactions to this reinforcement of their awareness that they, themselves, were not going to be released. As explained by one participant:

I'm pretty sociable with anybody but here again; I don't want to hear about so-and-so getting a visit or having so many days 'til the board. Or how so-and-so is going back for sentence modification and he might be back to trial. I don't want to hear all this.

Yet another source of dissatisfaction related to the nature of the offense for which other inmates were incarcerated. Several persons stated that they would refuse to share a cell or to knowingly associate with any inmate--commonly described as a "baby raper"--who was incarcerated for a sex offense involving children. This issue was most

frequently discussed in the context of religious programs in the prison chapel. One prisoner expressed dissatisfaction about those who attended religious services or who participated in other chapel programs:

I am of religious belief. And so far the only people I see going down there are the child molesters and the fags.

Another individual stated that he stopped attending religious study discussion groups when it seemed that most of the participants were pedophiles or gay men and yet another reported stopping attending religious services because of the number of homosexual inmates who were present.

Lack of privacy.

By the very nature of the design of the prison, inmates are exposed to frequent observation by staff and other inmates and are afforded very little opportunity for privacy. Those with high needs for privacy spoke of the difficulty this caused them. Added to the physical environment itself, lack of privacy concerns also related to the shared occupancy of cells. The cells at Lebanon Correctional Institution are approximately 70 square feet and were designed with the intention of having only one occupant per cell. The cells contain a bunk bed, two storage cabinets and foot lockers, a sink, and a toilet. Privacy concerns included issues related to toilet use in the presence of the other occupant and about cellmates who do not work out effective arrangements to give one another some degree of private time in the cell. Even a participant who described himself as able to get along well with other inmates described the situation as being problematic. He stated:

I don't know if you've ever been in one of those cells, but they

are extremely small. And being in such close proximity to another man is, to me, is cruel and unusual punishment.

This opinion was shared by another informant, who also expressed concern about related issues of personal safety:

Every cell is shared here. Which is another problem that I see.... You know, its like, probably the hardest problem you're taking the worst people to get along with society and you're shoving two of them together in a cell. It's a wonder more guys aren't murdered while they are in here because they're put in such tight surroundings.

An important privacy issue for some of those interviewed, particularly those who were sentenced for sex offenses, related to how much others know of the specific offense(s) for which they are incarcerated. Even though this information is legally a matter of public record, many inmates wish to limit the extent to which this information is known and distributed. This is most notably the case with prisoners who are serving LWOP sentences for sex offenses in which the victims were children. Several informants expressed belief that staff members had divulged this information to other inmates. Another prisoner spoke of trying to sign up for some programs where screening was done in groups. He stated that the staff member conducting the screening asked him to identify the offense for which he was incarcerated in the presence of those other inmates being interviewed.

Contacts with staff that are negative in nature.

Prison staff was often characterized by participants as being hostile, disrespectful, or punitive toward inmates. Several informants characterized staff as being of two

general types. The first included those who came to work, did their jobs competently and fairly, and then went home. The second included those who were perceived as wanting to personally add to the pains of imprisonment. This was most commonly discussed in reference to correction officers, who have the greatest amount of contact with inmates on a daily basis. One informant with a history of prior incarceration stated:

Because staff down here has a very; what would be a good word for it? A bad attitude. They're trained--because this is the type of prison that it is--they're almost trained to disrespect you. And maybe hope you even go off or disrespect them so they can put you in the hole. But the staff here--I've been to quite a few prisons; I've been to 14 prisons in Ohio--and I've never met, I've never seen a prison like this. I've never seen the attitudes that the guards have for us.

Another informant who had also been incarcerated in several other prisons stated:

It seems to be a trend of training that they give the COs here. Now, when I was in (name of facility deleted), they were respectful when they shook you down and kept things pretty much where they were. In (name of facility deleted) and here, as well, they have a tendency to go overboard and tear personal, private property up--well, we don't have private property here--but private letters and things like that. And the way they talk to you down the hallway, screaming in your ear, excessive behavior, disrespectful behavior towards you.

Reported difficulties with staff members were by no means exclusively related to correction officers. When speaking of his job assignment and the work supervisors in that area, one inmate stated:

We've got a guy that works in the (name of department deleted) Department that goes absolutely out of his way to make you miserable.

A related issue involved those staff members who appeared to be unconcerned about the needs of inmates. Some individuals were seen as simply being lazy while others were perceived as being deliberately indifferent. In all, the majority of informants described some degree of negative interactions with staff.

Boredom and lack of opportunity to be active.

Several participants made reference to the routine nature of life in an institutional setting and how one day is the same as the next. Boredom issues related to an absence or relative lack of interesting things to do, the lack of opportunity to do what one does finds interesting, and the relative absence of new things to do or experience. More than one-third of the informants reported adaptation problems that were associated with boredom.

Due to the nature of their sentences, participants are not eligible to attend the college program at the prison. A number of informants stated that they would be interested in attending college if it was an option but that one must be within five years of parole eligibility to be able to enroll. There are also waiting lists for some of the programs that do exist. One participant described having been on the waiting list for the art program for three years. Several spoke of how difficult it is to get to go to the library because of the limited number of people who can be in that area at any one time. One

individual, who reported that he had been unable to go to the library for approximately six weeks, stated:

They call library; they might just take 12 people from the block and for some odd reason, I could never be in that first 12. I'm always number 13, so I don't get to go.

As a point of reference, a cell block may house more than 240 inmates. The size of the library is the same as when there were 600 fewer inmates. This problem is among several that are further exacerbated by the effects of overcrowding. The same is true of the areas for recreation, dining, and work.

The issue of having the opportunity to do things in which he was interested was described by one individual who recognized that the limits set by environmental factors were having an impact:

I was getting bored but then it turned into being restless. Like I would be bored...I would have stuff to do actually do but I would be bored. Then I got to thinking. Well I'm not really bored, I'm just restless. I mean I had a lot of energy. And I've been locked up for about 12 years and the only places I've been are (name of facility deleted) and here and these are pretty locked down places. So I haven't been getting the chance where I can get out and run all day or get out, you know, exercise half the day and then I'm done. Real restless, but it's like I got a ball of energy in me but I can't do nothing with it.

Inmates are permitted to have privately purchased televisions in their cells and many of those who participated in this study did possess a television set. Many described

watching television as among their major ways of combating boredom, even with only limited success:

I find myself bored most of the time. Read a book, go to sleep. Sometimes gets boring reading and I can't sleep so there's really nothing to do but just sit there and watch TV. I know I've already seen this episode before; there's not a whole lot to do.

Some informants stated that they chose not to own a television, but others did not have a television due to being unable to afford to purchase one.

Bad food.

The use of the interview guide format allows the researcher to modify the order in which questions are asked. After several other opening questions were tried, the quality of the food served at the prison became the initial topic of discussion. Most informants were dissatisfied about the quality and/or the quantity of the food although a number of them saw it as a minor issue. One participant viewed issues of food quality as being related to the level of concern shown by the civilian staff members who work in the Food Services Department:

It depends on, ah, the coordinators there and how, how should I say, how caring they are. Some coordinators don't seem to really care and sometimes, when you have a coordinator like that, the food can be sometimes be almost inedible. Then if you get another coordinator he might care a little more and he will add some spices to it and make sure everything is done and you can definitely tell whether the coordinator cares or not.

Several stated that they either liked the food or that it is what one should expect if incarcerated. Those who did not have the financial resources to purchase food items from the prison commissary were generally most dissatisfied with food issues.

Lack of contact or limited contact with family members and important others outside the institution.

It was not uncommon for participants to report having little or no contact with family and friends from outside the prison. Several participants described how the number of contacts with family and/or friends has gradually decreased as their time in prison increased and one individual stated that his family has seemed to take the “out of sight, out of mind” perspective. Some reported no contact in five years or more with one informant stating that it had been over 10 years since he had spoken to or seen any members of his family. Others reported that the family member who had been most supportive had died while the informant was incarcerated.

As another element, six of the informants are incarcerated for offenses in which the victim or victims were their own children, grandchildren, former spouses, or relatives of a former spouse or fiancé. Several reported still having contact with some family members, but one stated that he has had no visits from family in the almost five years he has been at Lebanon Correctional Institution and another reported receiving one visit in a period of over six years.

The high cost of making collect telephone calls to family or friends was also identified as a problem that limits or prevents contact. In a description of the payment plan required for collect telephone calls, one individual stated:

My family has to pay the phone company up front \$100.00 or

\$50.00 or whatever. For like \$50.00, I get 2 calls.

For some, written correspondence was the only source of contact and even that was limited. Several noted that in an age of cellular telephones and computer email, written correspondence is something that family members may be less likely to do.

In some cases the lack of contact was voluntary. Several of those interviewed stated that adjustment becomes more difficult if one does have direct contact with family or friends. As described by one prisoner, going to the visiting room can be a very negative experience:

I don't want to go out there and be reminded of what I'm never going to have again. And then it makes coming back in here twice as bad because when you're out there in an environment where people are halfway normal, but where there is no madness, violence, or homosexuality and where it's halfway normal and I would come back in and it makes this place seem all that much worse.

Fear that family members or important others will die while they are incarcerated.

One participant spoke of his feelings when several members of his family died in a fire and he was not allowed to attend the funeral services. Another individual expressed concern about how he will react when his mother, who is over 80 years old and in poor health, passes away. When asked about his fear of family and important others dying while he was incarcerated, one participant stated:

Fear of dying in here and fear of my family and my close friends dying before I get out? Absolutely.

While not always addressed directly, several other informants described concerns about the health of elderly relatives.

None of the inmates participating in this study reported experiencing difficulties in all of these areas. Several reported having very few problems adjusting to their situations. There was no attempt made to quantify the extent to which these issues were problematic and from the subjective descriptions, it was apparent that what may have been causing major dissatisfaction for one individual may have been perceived as a relatively minor problem to another. It also seemed that the expectations of informants had some impact in their perspectives. Those who identified a certain experience or situation as part of the reasonably expected pains of imprisonment seemed to consider them to be less of a negative element or source of dissatisfaction than did those informants with different expectations.

Theme 2: Positive Forces

The second theme, Positive Forces, was identified as participants described factors that mitigated the negative effects of incarceration in general and of the life without parole sentence in particular. These included elements such as work or housing assignments, the availability of enjoyable activities in which to participate, and the existence of positive support networks as well as the extent to which the individual had accepted the reality of the LWOP sentence.

Acceptance of situation.

Less than one-third of those interviewed stated that they had fully accepted the reality that it was probable that they would spend the remainder of their lives in prison. With some who said they had not been able to reach a level of acceptance, it seemed as if

there was still an element of disbelief that this was really happening. Several stated that while they knew that this was the reality, they did not like to think or talk about it. One individual stated:

That's one thing I never do even back in my cell. I never talk about my case.

With others, there commonly was a focus on pending appeals and other ideas and beliefs about ways in which they might still be legally released from prison without having to serve the full term of their sentences.

Those who did indicate that they had accepted their situation tended to take a very pragmatic perspective. In the words of one prisoner:

You do your time. Some people they don't adjust to that time. You either adjust to your time or you go bone crazy. I've adjusted to my time. You gotta smile and say, "Man, I gotta do it." There is nothing I can do about it.

As described by another:

Some people make it harder than what it really is. It's like you see something, you know you have to do it, so do it.

One individual noted that acceptance was a gradual process that had taken a number of years:

It's, okay, some days it's easy, basically life without parole, when you think you're spending prison the rest of your life, you have no chance of getting out, it's kind of relieving. Relieving...you know the theory that the guilty prisoner always sleeps when they put him in the holding cell, goes to sleep because finally justice has been served or he is not nervous

any longer. In that sense, it's relieving because it's a simple life; you know there is nothing you can do about it. Took about 5 years. Like I said, it comes with the acceptance that you're going to be here the rest of your life, they will all go home and you're still going to be here.

While some did view acceptance as something that happened gradually, at least one informant believed that his acceptance was virtually immediate. He stated:

I know I'm not getting out. An appeal is not going to happen, so this is my life. I look at it that we're in a tunnel and there's a light bulb at the end of the tunnel. I believe that people really believe that that light bulb is there for them and it's on. They have a chance of going home; that they're going to get their appeal. Their lawyer says, "Don't worry about it; I've got it taken care of", just like they hear, well, you hear that from a lot of inmates. "Don't worry about it; you'll be going home in a couple of years". Twenty years later they're still hearing the same thing. Now their light bulb isn't burning; it's real dim, it's almost out. I realized as soon as I come in here that there was no light bulb even in the socket. So I was able to maintain the reality that I'm never going home. I'm going to die in here.

Successful adaptation to prison in general.

Not all informants reported having difficulties adapting to prison. With some individuals, the experience of having been incarcerated on previous occasions reportedly made adaptation easier. Of those interviewed, approximately one-third had previously been confined in state prison with several having been incarcerated on multiple

occasions. Those who had previously been incarcerated commonly stated that an existing understanding of how to function effectively in the prison setting made their current incarceration easier. The importance of developing that understanding was also identified by several participants who had not been previously incarcerated as something they were able to learn within the first several years after their admission to the prison system. Those individuals stated that they came to recognize that serving their sentences would be easier if they could successfully adapt to the prison environment. One participant, who had no prior history of incarceration, described the problems he initially experienced and how others helped him learn to adapt:

It was kind of rough but then as it went on, I started to adapt to it. And then guys started telling me--a lot of guys who had been here longer, been here fifteen-eighteen-twenty years. He said as long as you don't disrespect the COs, you stay out of their way, you know, you don't cause any problem, go running around and up and down, you know, the block and that they won't bother you. Well, I found that out.

There were also those who reported no particular problems due to having had other difficult life experiences. One informant stated that it did not affect him as it might others because of the nature of his living situation prior to being incarcerated.

Actually, by being a strong individual in here from the ghetto, this is...this wasn't nothin' like fearful for me like the way it might affect another man. It don't affect me like that 'cause it's nothin'. There ain't nothin' in here that I ain't seen in the ghetto.

Good job assignment.

An important element associated with work assignments is the rate of pay for any particular job. Higher pay is related to the ability to purchase personal items like televisions, clothing, or shoes and to obtain food, personal hygiene items, and tobacco products from the prison commissary.

The Department of Rehabilitation and Correction classifies jobs into seven categories, with Categories 1 through 5 involving no work or a part-time assignment. Rate of pay ranges from none at Category 1 to \$12.00 per month in Category 5. The majority of full-time prison jobs at Lebanon Correctional Institution are in Category 6 and pay between \$17.00 and \$19.00 per month depending on if they are classified as General Labor, Semi-Skilled, or Skilled. Less than 3% of the inmate population can be classified in a Category 7 job, which pays \$24.00 per month (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2001). Inmates assigned to jobs operated by Ohio Penal Industries (OPI) are paid at a much higher rate ranging from \$30.00 to over \$100.00 per month (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2008e). There is also a small number of highly paid jobs through a private employer that operates a data entry center within the prison. Those jobs are particularly coveted because of the rate of pay--one participant reported making an average of over \$100.00 per month--and because the work area is air-conditioned due to the number of computers in use.

In addition to those jobs that pay well, there is a higher status associated with certain work assignments. This may be related to working conditions--such as those in relatively quiet areas or which put the inmate in proximity of staff who are known to treat prisoners with respect--or that may offer the opportunity to use some aspect of the job for

one's own personal benefit. Study participants who had full-time assignments were very likely to work in Ohio Penal Industries, for the private employer, or on a high status job among the regular prison work assignments. One informant who worked in an Ohio Penal Industries job stated:

As far as staff are concerned, somebody works at OPI for a considerable amount of years, if someone works in there, it's a certain...I'm not going to say I'm better, I'm not better than anybody else but there is a certain amount of more respect that you get from staff because you're responsible.

Good housing assignment.

Due to overcrowding issues, the majority of cells are now occupied by two individuals. At the time when interviews were conducted, there was a particular cellblock to which inmates on *Super Merit Status*, a status primarily based on a positive behavior record, were assigned. A limited number of cells in that block were single occupancy. In addition, there were *Merit Status* cells on the third level of several other cellblocks, with a waiting list for inmates who wish to move from one of the Merit Status cells to the Super Merit Status cellblock. Those on Merit Status or Super Merit Status are afforded several privileges not available to other inmates. One privilege that seemed to be highly valued by informants was that of "cell visiting," which means that during certain times, they are allowed to enter cells of other inmates when the occupant of that cell is present. Those inmates who are not on Merit Status or Super Merit Status are not allowed to be in any cell other than the one to which they are assigned.

The majority of the inmates who participated in this study were on Merit Status or Super Merit Status. Being on Merit Status or Super Merit Status was frequently

mentioned as beneficial to adjustment. One participant, who is on Super Merit Status and who previously has a single occupancy cell until the increase in the size of the prison population led to a reduction in the number of such cells, stated:

Couple more months, I'll be back in a single man cell. Which is, like I said, a highlight--my predicament--it's a highlight because it's a time where, you know, sometimes I just don't feel like dealing with people. I can go into my cell at 6:30 and slam the door and say, "leave me alone." Tell people, "Leave me alone. I don't want to be talked to or talk to anybody." Whatever, if I choose to go to bed early or lay there and watch TV or practice songs on my bass or write a letter in privacy; semi-private, you know, there is a window on the door. For the most part, that's my little abode.

For those who do have to share a cell with another inmate, compatibility, the willingness to maintain a collaborative arrangement in regards to keeping the cell clean, and a cooperative arrangement in giving one another some level of privacy were described by participants as factors that made their housing assignments a positive element. One participant described each of those elements.

I like everything to be in a certain way. I like my cell to be clean and I can go through and clean my cell four times a day. If I see some dust, I got to get it, you know, I got to. I'm just the cleaning type of person. I don't like dirt but when you got another person in there, you got to compromise. Like I don't smoke but my cellie smokes, so I got to compromise with that. But what I can say about him is, he don't have a job right now, like I work from 8:30 to 10:30, soon as count clears at 11:30, I go back to work. I'm gone

between work and aerobics from, 'til about 2:00 everyday, from about 8:30 to 2:00. I ain't even in the cell and that's his time. So when I come back 9 times out of 10 and he gone and he don't come back 'til count time. I can say he do show me that respect and my time. We got a good arrangement. But, yeah, I think I'd rather be by myself. That's why I'm ready to get my single man cell by myself.

Another informant who currently shared a cell with another inmate described the importance of having a good cellmate:

Actually, it's kind of like the whole fulcrum point of doing your bit or your time, is getting a good cellie. You've got, like, six little square feet of space of walking around so you've kind of got to take turns. "Your turn to clean today and my turn's tomorrow; I'll do laundry tonight and you do laundry tomorrow afternoon; while you're at work I'll do this and while I'm at work you'll do that." That kind of thing.

Trusted friends and/or associates among inmate population.

Over one-third of the informants stated that they had other inmates as trusted friends or associates. That being said, it must first be emphasized that "trust" is being used on a relative basis. During interviews, a number of individuals stated that they did not fully trust other inmates for various reasons. This may have been based on a generalized lack of trust or may have resulted from negative past experiences. As put very simply by one informant:

I learned a long time ago you don't trust nobody in here.

Several participants described themselves as “loners” and stated that they had no desire to have other inmates as friends or associates. One stated:

I’m like a loner type person, even when I was out there. You know, I had my friends but I don’t want to be with them all the time. Sometimes, used to just hop in my car and just ride by myself and think. I didn’t want to be bothered. And here, I’m the same way; sometimes I just put my music on and don’t want to be bothered.

A number of informants made very clear distinctions between friends and associates. The majority of those interviewed either stated that they did not have any friends in prison or that they didn’t believe it was possible or advisable to make friends while incarcerated. For some, the trust required to classify a relationship as friendship would need to have emanated from life before incarceration. However, other participants reported having friends who they had met at the prison, often through some group activity such as a religious program or a work assignment. When asked to describe how he conceptualized the difference between a friend and an associate, one individual said:

An associate would be someone like, you know, you know, okay, a friend would be somebody I would kick it with out in the streets. I’d invite them over to my house. You know, go over to their house, you know, and an associate is somebody that I know, I talk to, I hang out with, but, you know. Outside here I wouldn’t have nothing to do with.

One participant described his preference for having a number of associates with whom he would interact for specific purposes such as to play basketball, discuss sports, or play chess. One participant who, because of his age and the nature of his offenses, might be

particularly vulnerable to aggressive action by others reported having friends and associates who ensured his continued safety. In virtually every description, the concept of trust was addressed within the context of the prison setting with the common thread being that there is generally no one who can be trusted completely.

Feelings of safety.

Study participants were asked if they ever were concerned for their physical safety. Over half stated that they were not concerned and identified factors such as their own reputation as being dangerous, effective interpersonal skills that made them unconcerned about becoming involved in violent situations, self-defense skills they possessed, and the effects of group defense as described earlier. One participant spoke of his experiences and how they differed from those of an acquaintance who arrived at the prison at the same time.

When we first got here he was like, “Man, I wish I could just be big like you ’cause nobody bothers you.” And I’m like, “Well, who’s botherin’ you?” And he said, “Everybody bothers,” so maybe because of my size people don’t mess with...nobody’s ever messed with me. Maybe it did help that when I got here, they sent me down here because my case was high profile.

Adequate opportunity for privacy.

Positive elements associated with privacy issues seemed to be of two different types. Some participants described being less in need of privacy than others whether as their natural level or as a learned adaptation to the prison setting. Several seemed to view this from a very pragmatic perspective that took into account the increase in the prison

population and the probability that the amount of privacy available was likely to decrease in the near future.

I enjoy the alone time but it's not necessary. You understand what I'm sayin'? It's cool because I want to get away but at the same time, like I said, it's not necessary. Because if I have a cellie, and I need some alone time, "Okay can you leave for a minute?" Do I need 10 hours in a cell by myself? No. I wouldn't give it up. I wouldn't volunteer to cell with a cellie. But at the same time, uh, and I do believe they'll double us up sooner or later, uh, then that will be cool.

Others described adequate opportunities for privacy being found at work assignments, through being housed in the single occupancy cells that were still available, or through cooperation with a cellmate to ensure that each had sufficient time alone in the cell. One participant described the importance of privacy to him:

Considering we don't get much of it, it's absolutely high priority. So when you do get a little private time, it's awesome, it's wonderful.

Treated with respect by others.

Several participants described the importance of being treated respectfully by staff and other inmates as a major element of their adaptation. This was generally characterized as a reciprocal response to the respect that they gave to others, which can be seen as an effort to normalize the environment to one that more closely approximates that found outside of the prison setting. After describing staff that are not respectful to inmates, one participant emphasized that not all staff are that way. He stated:

But then you have some come in, show you respect, talk to you nicely

because we are humans. We locked up or whatever but we still human beings.

Another respondent who had generally spoken negatively about prison staff made positive comments about the employee who supervised the area in which he worked:

Actually my work supervisor is pretty good. Pretty good guy, I like him. You know, basically he's got one rule, you know, actually he's got two rules. One of them is don't steal from me. You steal from me, you steal from the state and there's gonna be a problem. And the other one is you give me my respect and I'll give you your respect. And that's the way he's been since I been there.

In regards to interactions with other inmates, one older participant described the role that respect plays in preventing problems with younger, more aggressive prisoners:

I'm not feeling threatened at all. Like I said I gotten, got a lot of respect but if you get these younger guys that say, well, they're gonna come in there, they're going to do this thing or do that ... well right away there's about fifty to a hundred of them say, "We leave the old man alone. He does not bother us. He respects us. We respect him and you leave him alone."

Contacts with staff members that are not negative in nature.

Contrary to one stereotype often shown in the popular media, there is not always an adversarial and hostile relationship between prisoners and those who work at the prison. The participant who had experienced the death of several family members stated that he had been referred to the Mental Health Services Department when that occurred. He stated that one of the staff members was very helpful to him during several different

contacts. Another participant also spoke of a different staff member from that department who had been of assistance with some adjustment issues. Other participants identified work supervisors, chaplains, case managers, correction officers, and others as having treated them respectfully and with compassion. As one participant stated when asked about the nature of the interactions he has with staff:

There again, it's according to which staff you're talking about. Okay, the guys I work with, they're not corrections officers, they're shop supervisors. Get along great with all of them. No problems whatsoever. They're very respectful, I'm respectful in return.

Interesting and useful programs facilitated by prison staff or by community volunteers.

Participants identified a number of programs of an educational, therapeutic, religious, or self-help focus in which they participated. In some cases, these were described as areas of specific interest for participants, but in others, the greatest attraction appeared to be as something to fill up time and combat boredom. One participant described his interest in participating in a special college class taught at the prison that does allow those serving life without parole to enroll:

They just had this one program from Xavier University. It's called the, it's an exchange program, "In and Out", where you have students from Xavier University, 12 students and 12 inmates and they basically do the same thing like we doing [referring to this interview]. Coming to see what you doing and how can you improve your life and things out there. I didn't get in that because there's so many people that signed up for it, there's only 12 that

was picked. So, but she (the program coordinator) said, they're going to be offering it like once a year.

Another interviewee was currently involved in that same program and reported it as being a positive experience although he found it difficult to do in addition to his regular work assignment at the prison.

Several informants spoke very positively about their participation in religious or spiritual programs that utilized volunteers from the community. Another described his involvement in the Narcotics Anonymous program that also is facilitated by a volunteer from the community. The involvement of people from the community seemed to be valued at several different levels. In one sense, the opportunity to interact with persons not from the staff of Lebanon Correctional Institution was something different and offered a change in routine. At another level, some informants expressed appreciation that those from outside the prison would still be interested in their welfare. Several of those who were interviewed for this study thanked this investigator for allowing them to participate and for being interested in what they had to say.

Enjoyable leisure time activities.

A variety of enjoyable leisure time activities were reported by some, but by no means all, participants. One stated that he wrote poetry, another was learning how to play an electronic keyboard instrument as part of a music program, and one individual played bass guitar in a musical group that performed during religious programs in the prison chapel. Others spoke of being avid readers or of regularly watching sports or news programs on television. Several were involved in organized sports programs and other recreation activities or regularly went to the recreation yard just to have the chance to

walk around in a somewhat less crowded area. Participants described interest in current affairs and several stated that they have regular discussions with other inmates about events taking place outside the prison setting. When asked if he experienced problems with boredom or if he had enough to keep himself occupied, one participant stated:

I do stuff as far as the sports program, the dog program, work, and, and my piano. I got the piano really for winter because rec's (the outdoor recreation area) pretty much closed. I wanted stuff to occupy my time that I enjoy, so yes; those are all ones that are enjoyable. It's stuff to kill time but obviously to enjoy the time.

During discussion of this area, an effort was made to differentiate between that which was done to alleviate boredom and those activities that one might do even if no longer incarcerated. Some informants said that they mainly engaged in these activities to deal with boredom or, very commonly, to give them an opportunity to be out of their assigned cell block when they otherwise would have to be in their cells. Others stated that they were simply continuing to pursue interests that they already had when they came to prison or which had developed while they were incarcerated.

Contacts with family and important others from the community.

Some participants reported having little or no contact with family and important others from the community while others reported greater amounts. Contacts were in the form of visits, telephone calls, and/or written correspondence. The distance relatives and friends lived from the prison and the costs of travel were common reasons cited why participants did not receive more visits. Financial issues related to the high cost of making collect telephone calls were also described as limiting how frequently contact

was made by telephone. Other participants stated that the frequency with which they had contact with family or friends was little different than prior to incarceration. One participant stated:

I probably see my mom six times a year, and my dad. And I don't know if I see them six times a year on the streets.

Another inmate whose family lived a considerable distance away contrasted his situation with that of other inmates who had family living close by. He stated:

Some guys that live right in this area, like Dayton, Cincinnati, Middletown, or whatever don't get no visits, don't get no mail. So, I feel like I'm a fortunate one and my family, even though they live so far, they still show me a little love and show me some support and look out for me.

Several participants described both a positive and a negative element associated with receiving visits. The feelings associated with having to stay when the visitors leave and of seeing the emotional reactions of their visitors were described as the central feature of that negative aspect:

It is the most exciting time because you look so forward to going out there and it's the worst of time 'cause especially my, my daughter's better now, but like when she was 4 and 5 and she would...time to go and she would scream and, oh man, it just rips your heart. Still you never turn 'em down but yeah, they, they hurt ya. You need your little cryin' time for a half hour, an hour afterwards. But definitely worth it.

Existence of adequate social support system.

In addition to questions about friends and associates within the prison and about the nature and frequency of contact with family members and important others, participants were asked if they had someone to talk to if they were having a bad day or were experiencing problems. Several informants answered this very quickly but others appeared to have to think about the question before replying. There was a wide range of responses. It was fairly common for informants to state that they did not want or need to talk to others if or when they experienced difficulties. Several said that they wished they did have someone to talk to but either did not or were reluctant to share personal information with others. One individual stated:

I know it helps when you talk to somebody, you know. Like when sometimes I have a like...like I have a conversation with somebody and something that person says about his experiences and stuff, you know, might help me, you know, but, you know. I don't know. I prefer not to, you know. I prefer not to, you know, because I've had too many bad experiences where...where I talked too much and give information to some guys and then...and then they want to use it against me later on. So I prefer just to sit back and observe and learn from seeing others go through stuff if possible, you know, and...and, you know, you... you...I...I do whatever I got to do try to survive in here, you know.

One prisoner stated that he never has bad days and was unable to answer. Others stated that they would pray and possibly talk with friends or associates they know from the religious programs coordinated by the chaplains. Another individual identified friends

he has made since being at Lebanon Correctional Institution and several stated that they would speak to one of the staff members in the Mental Health Services Department.

Some prisoners identified family members as being the only ones they would trust with mothers being mentioned as the main source of support more than any other person to whom the informants were related. In one case, a prisoner described a very good support system that included his mother and other family members, but also expressed hesitancy to let them know about problems he was having because he did not want to cause them to worry.

Spirituality.

Spirituality or religious beliefs were identified by several participants as being important elements of the ability to cope in the prison setting in general and with the specific realities of their sentences. Some reported regular participation in formal religious programs in the institution chapel and others described themselves as being spiritual but with no interest in organized religious activities. One participant, who had been incarcerated at a high security facility before being transferred to Lebanon Correctional Institution, described the importance of his involvement in formally organized religious activities:

Absolutely important because since I been incarcerated...first time in my life, when I was down at (name of facility deleted) because I was living on \$10.00 a month, I wasn't able to have TV or radio. I was sitting in the cell with nothing. So it's the first time in my life I read the Bible from cover to cover. I really learned a lot. The Lord taught me a lot and I am Christian and I choose to play the bass (guitar) for Him as a service. I want

to be the hands for Him, to help lead others to Him. I want to be a volunteer in my time, my services. We have a prison ministry called Kairos and they come in a lot of times, there'll be a dozen or some of them and there'll only be one guy playing guitar. Sometimes there's nobody playing an instrument and if nothing else, I can get up there and play bass. So it's a way, not only to pass time, but it's kind of a service to the Lord in my heart.

Another individual spoke of the importance of spirituality, but did not have any interest in being involved in structured religious programs. He stated:

Spirituality has always been a big part of my life and it's even more so now. But now, it's like...to me now it's like individual experience. I'm at the, at the point now where I don't need a group guidance or anything like that. Matter of fact, I consider it like a hindrance...doctrines and ah, unnecessary rules that would hinder you from where you really need to be.

A prisoner who is incarcerated for a sex offense commented on the nonjudgmental perspective of the prison chaplains:

They (the chaplains) are real good guys. They don't ask what you're in here for. They just guide you when you try to change yourself and stay good. I appreciate that.

Finding purpose for one's life.

A small number of those interviewed did indicate that as part of their acceptance of the reality of their situations, they had found or were trying to find some sense of

purpose. One prisoner who said that he wanted to find a way to contribute to others but had not yet found a means to do so stated:

I want to do something that's recognizable.

Several stated that they were interested in trying to help younger men who would be getting out at some point and who might be in need of good advice about different life choices. Those persons also expressed interest in helping other inmates to adjust to prison or to keep their faith and not give up hope. A few spoke of matters that were spiritual or religious in nature. One indicated that he had become very committed to serving God in any way that he could. He stated:

As long as I can serve the Lord in here, I'm going to. There's rewards to be had in Heaven for doing that.

One individual, who took a very pragmatic perspective throughout the interview, stated:

When you have life without parole and you come to terms with it, it's uselessness of your existence. That's why OPI job offsets a lot of it because I know I'm doing something productive and useful.

He also stated that he did not think he would find any other meaningful purpose.

Each inmate who volunteered to be interviewed identified issues that either made adaptation easier than it might otherwise have been or which at least did not make it any worse. As was the case with the sources of dissatisfaction, some informants identified only one or two positive forces while others identified many.

Theme 3: Hope Based on Legal Changes

The third theme, Hope Based on Legal Changes, emerged as participants described reasons why they believed they might eventually be released from prison. The majority of those prisoners interviewed reported varying degrees of hope or belief that they would be legally released from prison at some point.

It was common for participants to report that they had appeals in process or in the planning stage. Due to concerns relative to these interviews not being considered privileged communication, no discussion of any specifics about those appeals took place.

It was also very common for participants to state that they hoped that the law in Ohio might change to eliminate life without parole sentences completely and make those currently serving such sentences eligible for parole after some number of years. Factors related to the growth of the prison population and the accompanying problems of overcrowding as well as issues associated with budget deficits in Ohio caused some to believe--or at least to hope--that it would be economically advantageous for the state to abolish life without parole sentences. When asked if he thought he would ever be released from prison, one participant answered:

I ask myself that a lot and the way things look; no, for real, but you never know what could happen down the line. You never know what law might change.

A number of the participants in this study stated that they have accepted that they *probably* will never be released from prison. Even with that being said, those individuals tended to still make reference to not giving up hope. One participant stated that he had initially believed that he would not remain in prison for long, which he described as

having been a “stupid” belief. When asked when he accepted that he was going to be in prison for the remainder of his life, he stated:

When the last appeal was gone. And I still haven't totally accepted it.

Another individual described having hope even though there may seem to be no basis for such:

Right now for the past two years I haven't had anything to give me that hope. No appeals, no nothin' but I still have that hope. One day I'm getting out. I don't know if it's installed in me because I've been sayin' it for so long. I don't know if it's just imbedded in my brain just to have that hope or is it something else I don't know about that's givin' me hope. I don't know but I still have it.

The individuals who volunteered for this study described a wide range of factors that have some impact on the ability to adapt to a sentence of life without parole and of the impact this sentence has on the way in which they experience incarceration. While none described the adjustment as being easy or portrayed the prison as a pleasant environment, even those who were having difficulties still spoke of their efforts to try to be successful in the setting.

Chapter 5

Results of Study of Attitudes and Opinions of Prison Wardens

The second strand of this mixed methods exploratory study involved a survey of state prison wardens to examine their attitudes and beliefs about issues related to the management of the life without parole prisoner population. Of particular concern was the amenities to which the prisoners should have access and the wardens' views of the degree of future dangerousness presented by the LWOP inmates. The survey primarily sought quantitative data, but did also include two brief questions of a qualitative nature. This section will first address the quantitative data and will include descriptive statistics, univariate analyses, and testing of the three hypotheses identified in Chapter 3 through multivariate analysis. Qualitative data gathered with this survey will then be analyzed.

Quantitative Analysis

Sample.

Surveys were sent to 430 state prison wardens in all 50 states with a total of 181 (42.1%) surveys returned. In an effort to facilitate a high response rate, a cover letter explaining that all surveys were anonymous and a postage-paid "Business Reply Mail" envelope addressed to the University of Kentucky College of Social Work and directed to the Principal Investigator's attention were included in the mailing sent to prison wardens. Business Reply Mail envelopes are not routinely postmarked at the U.S. Post Office where mailed and a large number were delivered with no postmark of any kind. Other envelopes were stamped with the names of major cities or geographic regions within states where this mail was apparently processed. As a result, it is impossible to determine from how many different states surveys were returned.

After all surveys were received, a review was conducted to examine missing data. Two surveys were eliminated from the sample due to the number of items to which no response had been given and, in one of those cases, the pattern of missing answers. One respondent did not answer seven (39%) of the 18 items that related to the independent and dependent variables in this study. The other warden did not respond to eight (44%) of the variables, including all seven items that are used for the LWOP Amenities Index. With those exclusions, the number of usable surveys was reduced to 179 (41.6%).

Description of the study sample.

The prison wardens who responded were mostly white (69%) with 24% identifying themselves as black. Less than 7% of the sample identified themselves as Hispanic, Native American, or multiracial. Ages ranged from a low of 35 to a high of 69 years. Reported levels of educational attainment also covered a wide range from several who had a high school diploma/GED or less to some who had a Doctorate or JD. The total months served as a prison warden had an extremely wide range with one respondent reporting being in that position for less than one month while another reported 415 months (34 years) of service in that capacity. Based on a self-report of political philosophy using a scale where 1 was *Conservative* and 9 was *Liberal*, the sample was relatively moderate. The major demographic characteristics of the sample are displayed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=179)

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	144	80.4
Female	34	19.0
Did not respond	1	.6
Race		
White	123	68.7
Black	43	24.0
Hispanic	6	3.4
Native American	4	2.2
Multi-Racial	1	.6
Other – not specified	1	.6
Highest level of educational attainment		
High school diploma or GED or less	3	1.7
Some college but no degree	39	21.8
Bachelor's Degree	66	36.9
Some graduate work but no degree	28	15.6
Master's Degree	38	21.2
Doctorate or JD	4	2.2
Did not respond	1	.6

Table 5.1 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=179)

Characteristic	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age in years	52.17	52.00	5.962
Months as warden	87.94	70.50	75.418
Political philosophy	4.77	5.00	1.774

Almost 75% ($n = 131$) of the respondents had served as the warden at a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole. Of those who had not been a warden at a life without parole facility, over half ($n = 24$, 54.5%) had prior experience in positions other than warden at prisons where LWOP inmates were confined.

Approximately 64% ($n = 109$) of those providing valid responses currently served as warden at a prison that housed inmates serving life without parole.

Almost 85% of respondents reported currently being the warden at a facility that housed male inmates. Slightly over half indicated that they were assigned to prisons that were close, maximum, or super-maximum security, approximately one-third were wardens of medium security facilities, with the remainder at minimum security prisons.

Study Variable Descriptives

Independent variables.

This study included five independent variables that were used to test the three hypotheses.

Prior service as a correction officer or in treatment position.

This variable addressed prior work history in a correctional setting to determine the warden’s previous responsibilities and if he or she had been employed as a correction officer but not in a treatment position, employed both as a correction officer and in a treatment position, or served in a treatment position but not as a correction officer. Table 5.2 summarizes the prior work history of respondents. There is no data available regarding the prior work history of the seven respondents who had neither been a correction officer nor had served in a treatment position.

Table 5.2

History of Experience as a Correction Officer or in a Treatment Position

Position	<i>n</i>	%
Correction officer but not in a treatment position	71	39.7
Correction officer and in a treatment position	50	27.9
Treatment position but not as a correction officer	46	25.7
Never a correction officer or in a treatment position	7	3.9
Did not respond	5	2.8

Most important mission of prison.

Wardens were presented with the question, “Which of the following is, in your opinion, the most important mission of prison?” and were asked to rank a list of statements from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most important. The options were: (a) “Retribution (to punish offenders for the harm they have caused society)”, (b) “Incapacitation (to protect society by putting criminals behind bars)”, (c) “Rehabilitation

(to reform offenders so that they return to society able to work and contribute)”, and (d) “Deterrence (to teach criminals as well as other people contemplating breaking the law that crime does not pay).” Responses to this variable are summarized in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Opinions of Wardens Regarding the Most Important Mission of Prison

Prison Mission	<i>n</i>	%
Incapacitation	102	57.0
Rehabilitation	64	35.8
Deterrence	5	2.8
Retribution	2	1.1
Did not respond	6	3.4

Service as warden of a facility that housed life without parole inmates.

Because prison wardens are often transferred from one facility to another, this item addressed not just current assignment but rather any service as the warden of a prison at which inmates serving life without parole were housed. Nearly 75% ($n = 131$) reported having served as warden at a facility where inmates with LWOP sentences were incarcerated. Four respondents did not answer this item.

Gender.

The sample included 144 male wardens (80.9%) and 34 female wardens (19.1%). One respondent did not answer this item.

Highest level of educational attainment.

This variable examined the highest degree or level of educational attainment for the wardens who responded to the survey and is reported in Table 5.1. Because only three wardens reported having a high school diploma or GED or less and only four reported having a Doctorate or JD, the six original categories were compressed into three. These categories are displayed in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

Consolidated Categories of Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Category	<i>n</i>	%
Some college with no degree or high school diploma or GED or less	42	23.5
Bachelor’s degree or graduate work with no degree	94	52.5
Master’s degree, doctorate, or JD	42	23.5
Did not respond	1	0.6

Note: GED = General Educational Development test.

Dependent variables.

Two dependent variables were used in the testing of the three hypotheses in this study. These are the Life without Parole Amenities Index and the Life without Parole Future Dangerousness Scale.

Life without Parole (LWOP) Amenities Index.

As described in Chapter 3, an index was created to measure wardens’ support for seven amenities that might be made available to those serving sentences of life without

parole. Wardens were asked to give their opinions about allowing those prisoners access to five types of academic or vocational training programs. These were (a) adult basic education programs (ABE), (b) high school (HS) courses or GED programs, (c) college courses, (d) vocational education (VE) in skill areas utilized by the institution, and (e) vocational education in skill areas not utilized by the institution. Wardens were also asked about their support for housing areas specifically designated for those serving life without parole as a means of facilitating positive adjustment and about efforts to help that population adjust to the prospect of remaining in prison for the remainder of their lives by offering special programs that addressed their unique needs. A score of -1 indicates opposition to a particular amenity, a score of 0 indicates that the respondent reported being undecided, and a score of 1 indicates support for the provision of that amenity. Index scores can range from -7, indicating opposition to all amenities, to 7, indicating support for all. The LWOP Amenities Index does not attempt to measure the relative strength of the opinions given by respondents. Table 5.5 shows the pattern of responses to each of the seven items.

Table 5.5

Wardens' Responses to Survey Items Related to Amenities for LWOP Prisoners

Amenity	Approve	Undecided	Disapprove	No Response
ABE	171 (95.5%)	2 (1.1%)	5 (2.8%)	1 (0.6%)
HS/GED	164 (91.6%)	3 (1.7%)	10 (5.6%)	2 (1.1%)
College	108 (60.3%)	15 (8.4%)	51 (28.5%)	5 (2.8%)
VE skill used by prison	161 (89.9%)	2 (1.1%)	15 (8.4%)	1 (0.6%)
VE skill not used	58 (32.4%)	12 (7.3%)	100 (55.9%)	8 (4.5%)
Separate housing	25 (14.0%)	5 (2.8%)	148 (82.7%)	1 (0.6%)
Special programs	127 (70.9%)	13 (7.3%)	39 (21.8%)	0

Note: ABE = Adult Basic Education. HS/GED = High School/General Educational Development test. VE = Vocation Education.

There were 12 surveys on which the respondent did not answer one or more of the seven items that make up the LWOP Amenities Index. On the 167 surveys on which responses were provided for all seven items, the mean was 2.54 ($SD = 2.481$) and the median was 3. The mean of 2.54 would indicate that when viewed collectively, respondents would be moderately in favor of the provision of amenities.

Missing data.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) stated that if 5% or less of the data is missing from a large data set, problems are less serious than if the data set is small or of medium size. Some researchers may choose to assume that data is missing randomly and proceed without testing that assumption, but Tabachnick and Fidell recommend that it is best to

test the missing data to determine if it is missing completely at random (MCAR), missing at random (MAR) or missing not at random (MNAR).

Because 12 respondents (6.7%) had not answered one or more of the seven items that make up the LWOP Amenities Index, a Missing Value Analysis was conducted to determine if that data was missing randomly. Table 5.6 displays the univariate statistics from that analysis. The analysis included demographic independent variables of gender, race, age, level of educational attainment, number of months as a warden, history of service as a correction officer, history of service in a treatment position, and political philosophy.

Table 5.6

Missing Value Analysis: Univariate Statistics

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<u>Missing</u>	
				Count	%
Amenity total	167	2.54	2.481	12	6.7
Gender	178	1.19	.394	1	.6
Race	178	1.44	.856	1	.6
Age	172	52.17	5.962	7	3.9
Educational attainment	178	2.00	.689	1	.6
Months as warden	172	87.94	75.418	7	3.9
Service as correction officer	178	1.30	.461	1	.6
Service in treatment position	175	1.45	.498	4	2.2
Political philosophy	172	4.77	1.774	7	3.9

Separate Variance *t* Tests conducted as part of the Missing Value Analysis showed no significant relationship between missing data on the Amenity Total variable and the independent variables of race, age, level of educational attainment, number of months as a warden, history of service as a correction officer, history of service in a treatment position, and political philosophy. There was a significant difference with the independent variable of gender ($p = < .001$), which would indicate that MAR can be inferred because missing data is predictable based on a variable other than the dependent variable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The results are shown in Table 5.7. A

crosstabulation procedure showed that of the 12 respondents who had not answered one or more items that make up the LWOP Amenities Index, all were male.

Table 5.7

Missing Value Analysis: Separate Variance t Tests

Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2-tail)	Number Present	Number Missing	<i>M</i> (Present)	<i>M</i> (Missing)
Amenity Total	-	-	-	167	0	2.54	-
Gender	6.5	165	.000***	166	12	1.20	1.00
Race	-.2	12.5	.810	166	12	1.43	1.50
Age	-.1	12.7	.923	160	12	52.16	52.33
Educational attainment	.0	12.4	1.000	166	12	2.00	2.00
Months as warden	.2	12.4	.850	161	11	88.17	84.55
Service as correction officer	.4	12.7	.680	166	12	1.31	1.25
Service in treatment position	-.4	12.5	.714	163	12	1.44	1.50
Political philosophy	.6	12.8	.581	160	12	4.79	4.50

Note: ****p* < .001.

Imputation of missing data.

Because the number of missing values for the dependent variable of the Life without Parole Amenities Index was too great to justify simply dropping those cases from the analysis, replacement of missing values was conducted using the sequential hot deck imputation method (Garson, 2010; Newton & Rudestam, 1999). The Missing Value

Analysis had shown that only gender was significantly related to the data that was missing and that all respondents who had not provided responses were male. Missing data in each of the seven items that make up the Life without Parole Amenities Index were replaced by the existing values of the male respondents in the data set immediately prior to the cases where values were missing. Following imputation of missing data, the mean was 2.51 ($SD = 2.462$) and the median was 3. Table 5.8 compares the univariate statistics from both before and after missing data replacement.

Table 5.8

Univariate Statistics for Life without Parole Index before and After Data Imputation

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Original data ($N = 167$)	2.54	2.481	3
After data imputation ($N = 179$)	2.51	2.462	3

While there is great similarity between the results, it is recognized that the use of data imputation only presents an estimate of values if all respondents had provided answers to the relevant survey questions.

Life without Parole (LWOP) Future Dangerousness Scale.

As was described in Chapter 3, wardens were asked to rate the degree of future dangerousness presented by prisoners serving sentences of life without parole. Wardens were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following five statements:

1. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are so dangerous that they should be housed at a facility exclusively used for that population if possible to do so.
2. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are often a positive influence on those inmates serving lesser sentences.
3. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are more likely to be dangerous to *prison staff* than are those inmates serving lesser sentences.
4. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are more likely to be dangerous to *other inmates* than are those inmates serving lesser sentences.
5. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole pose a greater escape risk than those inmates serving lesser sentences.

Table 5.9 shows the composite ratings given by wardens.

Table 5.9

Wardens' Responses to Survey Items Related to Future Dangerousness of LWOP Prisoners

Variable	SA	A	NO	D	SD	NR
Housed separately due to dangerousness	7 3.9%	19 10.6%	3 1.7%	105 56.7%	45 25.1%	0
Positive influence on other inmates	23 12.8%	79 44.1%	32 17.9%	41 22.9%	2 1.1%	2 1.1%
More likely to be danger to staff	4 2.2%	41 22.9%	7 3.9%	110 61.5%	15 8.4%	2 1.1%
More likely to be danger to other inmates	3 1.7%	40 22.3%	11 6.1%	117 65.4%	7 3.9%	1 0.6%
More likely to be escape risk	23 12.8%	99 55.3%	13 7.3%	41 22.9%	3 1.7%	0

Note. SA = strongly agree. A = agree. NO = no opinion. D = disagree. SD = strongly disagree. NR = no response.

Items were recoded so that the belief that prisoners serving sentences of life without parole presented a very high risk of future dangerousness would correspond to a value of 5 on each item. The scores from all five items were totaled to create an aggregate score that ranged from 5, indicating a belief that those serving a sentence of life without parole presented a very low risk of future dangerousness as measured by the five items on this scale, to a maximum score of 25, which is associated with the belief that a very high risk of future dangerousness exists. Responses to all five items were given on 176 surveys resulting in a mean of 13.22 ($SD = 3.611$) with a median score of 12. The numerical midpoint between the possible scale low of 5 and the possible high of 25 is a

score of 15. The mean score of 13.22 indicates that respondents view LWOP inmates' risk of future dangerousness as being in the slightly lower part of the moderate level.

Hypotheses Testing

A series of multivariate analyses were conducted to measure the relationships between individual characteristics of the sample population and their beliefs about support for provision of certain amenities to LWOP prisoners and the extent to which those prisoners are perceived to be a danger to others within the prison setting.

Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1 stated that those prison wardens who had served in a treatment position for one year or more will have more support for the provision of amenities to LWOP prisoners than will those who had served in both treatment and correction officer positions, or as a correction officer but not in a treatment position. This will be moderated by gender and level of educational attainment. This hypothesis was first tested using a three-way between-groups ANOVA with a listwise deletion of missing values ($N = 154$).

The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was not statistically significant, $F(14, 139) = .839, p = .626$ and the interaction effect among service in treatment and correction officer positions, gender, and level of educational attainment was not statistically significant, $F(2, 139) = 2.062, p = .131$. The interaction effect between service in treatment and correction officer positions and gender was not significant, $F(2, 139) = .977, p = .379$, as was likewise true of the interaction effect between service in treatment and correction officer positions and level of educational attainment, $F(3, 139) = 1.972, p = .121$. There was no statistical significance to the interaction effect of gender and level of educational attainment, $F(2, 139) = .830, p = .438$.

There was a statistically significant main effect for level of educational attainment, $F(2, 139) = 3.397, p = .036$. Even though this was statistically significant, the effect size is considered to be small (partial eta squared = .047) based on guidelines for effect size developed by Cohen (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Post-hoc comparisons among the three categories of educational attainment were conducted using the Tukey HSD test. The mean score for those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree ($M = 2.09, SD = 2.398$) was significantly different than those with a Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD ($M = 3.40, SD = 2.569$). The mean score for those with some college with no degree or a high school diploma or GED ($M = 2.36, SD = 2.465$) was not significantly different than for those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree or those with a Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD.

Examination of the main effect for gender shows that although female wardens had a higher mean score ($M = 3.31, SD = 2.468$) than males ($M = 2.23, SD = 2.462$), it did not reach the level of statistical significance $F(1, 139) = 1.824, p = .179$. Review of the main effect of service in treatment and correction officer positions indicates that wardens who had only served in treatment positions had the highest mean score ($M = 3.12, SD = 2.206$) followed by those who had served in both treatment and correction officer positions ($M = 2.36, SD = 2.354$), or as a correction officer but not in a treatment position ($M = 2.08, SD = 2.716$). However, these differences were not statistically significant, $F(2, 139) = .387, p = .680$. Table 5.10 shows the results of the three-way between-groups ANOVA used to test Hypothesis 1.

Table 5.10

Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Correction Officer or Treatment Position, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Only Survey Data

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Main effect of correction officer or treatment position (COT)	2	2.296	.387	.680	.006
Main effect of gender (G)	1	10.813	1.824	.179	.013
Main effect of educational attainment (EA)	2	20.146	3.397	.036	.047
COT x G	2	5.792	.977	.379	.014
COT x EA	3	11.692	1.972	.121	.041
G x EA	2	4.921	.830	.438	.012
COT x G x EA	2	12.229	2.062	.131	.029
Error	139	5.930			

Hypothesis 1 was tested a second time using the revised data set that included the imputation of missing values for the items that make up the dependent variable, the Life without Parole Amenities Index. This was also done with a two-way between groups ANOVA with a listwise deletion of missing values ($N = 166$).

The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was not statistically significant, $F(14, 151) = .765, p = .705$. As had been the case in the first test of Hypothesis 1, all interaction effects were not statistically significant. The interaction effect among service in treatment and correction officer positions, gender, and level of educational attainment was not statistically significant, $F(2, 151) = 1.883, p = .156$. The interaction effect

between service in treatment and correction officer positions and gender was not significant, $F(2, 151) = .942, p = .392$. The interaction effect between service in treatment and correction officer positions and level of educational attainment, $F(3, 151) = 2.348, p = .075$ was also not significant. There was no statistical significance to the interaction effect of gender and level of educational attainment, $F(2, 151) = .981, p = .377$.

There was a statistically significant main effect for level of educational attainment, $F(2, 151) = 3.352, p = .038$, but again the effect size is considered to be small (partial eta squared = .043) based on guidelines for effect size developed by Cohen (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Post-hoc comparisons among the three categories of educational attainment were conducted using the Tukey HSD test. The mean score for those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree ($M = 2.10, SD = 2.326$) was significantly different than those with a Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD ($M = 3.32, SD = 2.580$). The mean score for those with some college with no degree or a high school diploma or GED ($M = 2.40, SD = 2.390$) was again not significantly different than for those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree or those with a Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD.

The results of the second test of Hypothesis 1 were very similar to those of the first test when the other main effects were examined. The main effect for gender again showed that female wardens had a higher mean score ($M = 3.31, SD = 2.468$) than males ($M = 2.25, SD = 2.393$), but it still did not reach the level of statistical significance $F(1, 151) = 1.981, p = .161$. As before, examination of the main effect of service in treatment and correction officer positions showed that wardens who had only served in treatment positions had the highest mean score ($M = 3.02, SD = 2.216$) followed by those who had

served in both treatment and correction officer positions ($M = 2.40, SD = 2.321$), or as a correction officer but not in a treatment position ($M = 2.13, SD = 2.615$). These differences were not statistically significant, $F(2, 151) = .302, p = .740$. The results of the second test of Hypothesis 1 are displayed in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11

Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Correction Officer or Treatment Position, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Survey Data and Values from Data Imputation

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Main effect of correction officer or treatment position (COT)	2	1.713	.302	.740	.004
Main effect of gender (G)	1	11.256	1.981	.161	.013
Main effect of educational attainment (EA)	2	19.040	3.352	.038	.043
COT x G	2	5.352	.942	.392	.012
COT x EA	3	13.337	2.348	.075	.045
G x EA	2	5.572	.981	.377	.013
COT x G x EA	2	10.696	1.883	.156	.024
Error	151	5.681			

A comparison of the results from the first and second tests of Hypothesis 1 is displayed in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12

Comparison of Results from Test 1 and Test 2 of Hypothesis 1

Effect	Test 1	Test 2
Treatment and CO positions	$F = .387, p = .680$	$F = .302, p = .740$
Gender	$F = 1.824, p = .179$	$F = 1.981, p = .161$
Educational attainment	$F = 3.397, p = .036^*$	$F = 3.352, p = .038^*$
Treatment and CO positions x gender	$F = .997, p = .379$	$F = .942, p = .392$
Treatment and CO positions x educational attainment	$F = 1.972, p = .121$	$F = 2.348, p = .075$
Gender x educational attainment	$F = .830, p = .438$	$F = .981, p = .377$
Treatment and CO positions x gender x educational attainment	$F = 2.062, p = .131$	$F = 1.883, p = .156$

Note. $*p \leq .05$.

In summary, Hypothesis 1 was not supported by either test. In both tests, the only statistically significant variable was educational attainment, which had a small effect size. Additionally, level of educational attainment had been hypothesized as a moderating variable rather than as a predictor variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2 stated that those wardens who identified rehabilitation as the most important mission of prison will be more likely to support the provision of amenities than will those who identified retribution, incapacitation, or deterrence as the main mission. This will be moderated by gender and by level of educational attainment. Because only five respondents had identified deterrence and only two named retribution as the major

mission of prison, there was insufficient data to enable a comparison of rehabilitation with each of the other three missions. As a result, incapacitation, deterrence, and retribution were combined in a single category. This hypothesis was first tested using a three-way between-groups ANOVA with a listwise deletion of missing values ($N = 160$).

The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was not statistically significant, $F(10, 149) = 1.138, p = .338$. The interaction effect among the identified primary mission of prison, gender, and level of educational attainment was not statistically significant, $F(1, 149) = .660, p = .418$. The interaction effect between the identified primary mission of prison and gender was not significant, $F(1, 149) = .928, p = .337$. There was no statistical significance to the interaction effect of the identified primary mission of prison and level of educational attainment, $F(2, 149) = .275, p = .760$. The interaction effect between gender and level of educational attainment was also not significant, $F(2, 149) = .040, p = .961$.

There was a statistically significant main effect for the identified main mission of prison, $F(1, 149) = 4.525, p = .035$. The mean score for those who identified rehabilitation as the main mission of prison ($M = 3.40, SD = 2.294$) was significantly different than that of those who identified incapacitation, deterrence, and retribution as the main mission ($M = 2.0, SD = 2.490$). While statistically significant, the guidelines for effect size developed by Cohen (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) suggest that this is a small effect (partial eta squared = .029).

A statistically significant main effect for level of educational attainment, $F(2, 149) = 3.836, p = .024$, was also found. Based on guidelines for effect size developed by Cohen (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) the effect size is also

considered small (partial eta squared = .049). The Tukey HSD test was used to conduct post-hoc comparisons among the three categories of educational attainment. The mean score for those with a Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 2.604$) was significantly different than those with some college with no degree or a high school diploma or GED ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 2.484$) and those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 2.346$). The difference in mean scores for those with some college with no degree or a high school diploma or GED and those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree was not statistically significant.

Female wardens had a higher mean score ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 2.468$) than males ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 2.485$), but it did not reach the level of statistical significance, $F(1, 149) = .257$, $p = .613$, when the main effect for gender was examined. The results of this test are summarized in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13

Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Primary Mission of Prison, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Only Survey Data

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Main effect of primary mission of prison (PM)	1	25.743	4.525	.035	.029
Main effect of gender (G)	1	1.461	.257	.613	.002
Main effect of educational attainment (EA)	2	21.826	3.836	.024	.049
PM x G	1	5.280	.928	.337	.006
PM x EA	2	1.566	.275	.760	.004
G x EA	2	.228	.040	.961	.001
PM x G x EA	1	3.752	.660	.418	.004
Error	149	5.689			

Hypothesis 2 was also tested a second time using a two-way between groups ANOVA with a listwise deletion of missing values ($N = 171$). The revised data set that included the imputation of missing values for the seven items that make up the Life without Parole Amenities Index, the dependent variable, was used.

The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was not statistically significant, $F(10, 160) = 1.214, p = .286$. None of the interaction effects were statistically significant just as had been the case when Hypothesis 2 was first tested. The interaction effect among the identified primary mission of prison, gender, and level of educational attainment was not significant, $F(1, 160) = 1.257, p = .264$. The interaction effect

between the identified primary mission of prison and gender was not significant, $F(1, 160) = .792, p = .375$ and there was again no statistical significance to the interaction effect of the identified primary mission of prison and level of educational attainment, $F(2, 160) = .373, p = .689$. As with the first test, the interaction effect between gender and level of educational attainment was also not statistically significant, $F(2, 160) = .062, p = .940$.

As had been the case during the first test of Hypothesis 2, there was a statistically significant main effect for the identified main mission of prison, $F(1, 160) = 4.090, p = .045$. The mean score for those who identified rehabilitation as the main mission of prison ($M = 3.30, SD = 2.382$) was significantly different than that of those who identified incapacitation, deterrence, and retribution as the main mission ($M = 2.03, SD = 2.440$). While statistically significant, the guidelines for effect size developed by Cohen (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) would show this as being small (partial eta squared = .025).

The main effect of level of educational attainment was statistically significant in a different way than had been the case in the first test, $F(2, 160) = 4.107, p = .018$. The Tukey HSD test was used to conduct post-hoc comparisons among the three categories of educational attainment. The mean score for those with a Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD ($M = 3.54, SD = 2.618$) was significantly different than from those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree ($M = 2.09, SD = 2.353$) as was true in the first test of Hypothesis 2. The effect size is considered to be small (partial eta squared = .049) based on guidelines for effect size developed by Cohen (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). However, the difference between the mean score for those with a Master's Degree,

Doctorate, or JD and those with some college with no degree or a high school diploma or GED ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 2.406$) was not statistically significant as was previously the case. The difference in mean scores for those with some college with no degree or a high school diploma or GED and those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree was not statistically significant.

The main effect for gender was again not significant, $F(1, 160) = .375$, $p = .541$. Although not statistically significant, female wardens had a higher mean score ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 2.468$) than males ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 2.464$). Table 5.14 displays the data from the second test of Hypothesis 2.

Table 5.14

Analysis of Variance Results for Main Effects and Interaction Effects of Primary Mission of Prison, Gender, and Educational Attainment on Life without Parole Amenities Index Score Using Survey Data and Values from Data Imputation

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Main effect of primary mission of prison (PM)	1	23.076	4.090	.045	.025
Main effect of gender (G)	1	2.113	.375	.541	.002
Main effect of educational attainment (EA)	2	23.174	4.107	.018	.049
PM x G	1	4.469	.792	.375	.005
PM x EA	2	2.104	.373	.689	.005
G x EA	2	.349	.062	.940	.001
PM x G x EA	1	7.093	1.257	.264	.008
Error	160	5.642			

A comparison of the results from the first and second tests of Hypothesis 2 is shown in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15

Comparison of Results from Test 1 and Test 2 of Hypothesis 2

<u>Effect</u>	<u>Test 1</u>	<u>Test 2</u>
Primary mission of prison	$F = 4.525, p = .035^*$	$F = 4.090, p = .045^*$
Gender	$F = .257, p = .613$	$F = .375, p = .541$
Educational attainment	$F = 3.836, p = .024^{*a}$	$F = 4.107, p = .018^{*b}$
Primary mission of prison x gender	$F = .928, p = .337$	$F = .792, p = .375$
Primary mission of prison x educational attainment	$F = .275, p = .760$	$F = .373, p = .689$
Gender x educational attainment	$F = .040, p = .961$	$F = .062, p = .940$
Primary mission of prison x gender x educational attainment	$F = .660, p = .418$	$F = 1.257, p = .264$

Note. $*p \leq .05$.

^a Post hoc tests showed significantly different means between subjects with Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD and both those with some college with no degree or HS/GED and those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree.

^b Post hoc tests showed significantly different means between subjects with Master's Degree, Doctorate, or JD and those with a Bachelor's Degree or graduate work with no degree.

In summary, Hypothesis 2 was supported relative to the main effect of the belief that rehabilitation is the primary mission of prison. The effects of the moderating variables were not supported--although the main effect of the hypothesized moderating variable of level of educational attainment was found to be significant--and no interaction effects as had been hypothesized were found. There were statistically significant main

effects for the identified main mission of prison and for level of educational attainment, but the effect sizes were small

Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3 stated that those wardens who have served as warden of a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole will be less likely to believe those inmates present a risk of future dangerousness than will those who have not been the warden at a prison housing inmates serving sentences of life without parole. This will be moderated by level of educational achievement and gender. This hypothesis was tested using a three-way between-groups ANOVA with a listwise deletion of missing values ($N = 170$).

The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was statistically significant, $F(10, 159) = 2.884, p = .002$. Examination of the histogram showed the data to be positively skewed and the descriptives section of the PASW output showed the skewness to be .611, which is more than three times greater than the Standard Error of .183. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) stated that data transformations may be helpful but are not always recommended. Transformation may not be appropriate if the scale by which the data is being measured is well-known and might become confusing if values are changed through transformation. As the Life without Parole Future Dangerousness Scale is neither widely known nor used, transformation would not create major difficulties in data interpretation. As described by Tabachnick and Fidell:

If you decide to transform, it is important to check that the variable is normally or near-normally distributed after transformation. Often you need to try first one transformation and then another until you find the transformation that produces

the skewness and kurtosis values nearest zero, the prettiest picture, and/or the fewest outliers. (p. 86)

Several transformations were conducted to attempt to reduce the degree of non-normality in the data (Huck, 2008). A log transformation overcompensated for the non-normality of the data (skewness = $-.182$, $SE = .183$) and was replaced by a square root transformation which offered some improvement from the original analysis (skewness = $.249$, $SE = .183$). A cube transformation further increased the normality of the data (skewness = $.114$, $SE = .183$) but it was a fourth root transformation that brought the skewness and kurtosis values closest to zero (skewness = $.044$, $SE = .183$; kurtosis = $.082$, $SE = .364$).

Using the data from the fourth root transformation, a three-way between-groups ANOVA with a listwise deletion of missing values ($N = 170$) was conducted to test Hypothesis 3. The Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was not significant, $F(10, 159) = 1.860$, $p = .055$. A stepwise analysis with backward elimination was used to remove, in the following order, the non-significant interaction effects of Warden of LWOP Facility x Gender x Educational Attainment, Warden of LWOP Facility x Gender, Gender x Educational Attainment, and Warden of LWOP Facility x Gender. The main effect of Educational Attainment was removed as it was also not statistically significant. After all non-significant effects were removed by backwards elimination another Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances was performed. Results were significant, $F(3, 167) = 2.806$, $p = .041$, but linear models tend to be robust when large sample sizes are used.

The main effect of having been a warden of a LWOP facility was statistically significant, $F(1, 168) = 15.326, p = < .001$. The effect size is considered to be small (partial eta squared = .084) based on guidelines for effect size developed by Cohen (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Using mean scores from before data transformation, those who had not been the warden of a facility at which LWOP inmates were housed had a higher mean score on the LWOP Future Dangerousness Scale ($M = 15.12, SD = 4.227$) than did those who had been the warden of a LWOP facility ($M = 12.65, SD = 3.087$)

The main effect of gender was also statistically significant, $F(1, 168) = 5.058, p = < .001$. The effect size was also considered to be small (partial eta squared = .029). Again using mean scores from before data transformation, male wardens had a higher mean score on the LWOP Future Dangerousness Scale ($M = 13.50, SD = 3.420$) than did female wardens ($M = 12.28, SD = 4.042$). The results are displayed in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16

Analysis of Variance Results for Statistically Significant Main Effects of Warden of LWOP Facility and Gender on Score on the Life without Parole Future Dangerousness Scale after Fourth Root Transformation

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Main effect of warden of LWOP facility	1	.220	15.326	.000	.084
Main effect of gender	1	.072	5.058	.026	.029
Error	168	.014			

The estimated marginal means and parameter estimates resulting from the fourth root transformation of the data are shown in Table 5.17 and Table 5.18.

Table 5.17

Estimated Marginal Means of Statistically Significant Main Effects of Warden of LWOP Facility and Gender after Fourth Root Transformation

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>
Warden of LWOP facility = yes	1.859	.013
Warden of LWOP facility = no	1.941	.019
Gender = male	1.926	.011
Gender = female	1.873	.022

Table 5.18

Parameter Estimates of Statistically Significant Main Effects of Warden of LWOP Facility and Gender after Fourth Root Transformation

Parameter	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Intercept	1.914	.026	73.711	.000	.970
Warden of LWOP facility = yes	-.082	.021	-3.015	.000	.084
Gender = male	.053	.023	2.249	.026	.029

In summary Hypothesis 3 was supported relative to the independent variable of having been a warden at a facility where LWOP prisoners were incarcerated but the effects of the moderating variables were not supported as had been hypothesized. The main effect of history as a warden at a facility where LWOP prisoners were housed was found to be statistically significant as was the main effect of gender. In both cases, effect size was small. The results of a three-way between-groups ANOVA test showed no

significant interaction effects between or among any combination of the independent variables. The main effect of educational attainment was also not statistically significant.

Qualitative Analysis

As part of the survey, wardens were asked to respond to two open-ended questions related to the adjustment of inmates serving sentences of life without parole.

These were:

1. What could be done to help this population adjust to being in prison with a life without parole sentence?
2. What is the largest problem you see with this population of inmates serving sentences of life without parole?

Because there is no known research that examined prison wardens' opinions about management of the life without parole offender population, this aspect of the study was exploratory and did not seek to test any hypotheses. The responses to these questions were analyzed using the grounded theory method. Because many of the wardens responded using sentence fragments and as little as one word in their responses, the ability to present descriptive quotes is somewhat limited.

Analysis of the responses resulted in two themes being identified for the responses to each question. Within each theme two or more patterns were identified. A summary of these themes and the patterns associated with each are found in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19

Wardens' Responses to Survey Questions Regarding Adaptation of Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole: Emerging Themes and Patterns

Question 1: What could be done to help this population adjust to being in prison with a life without parole sentence?

Theme 1: It is Appropriate to Engage in Efforts to Facilitate Positive Adjustment

- Keep inmates serving life without parole active and occupied
- Provide programs, work, and educational opportunities
- Programs help life without parole offenders find meaning for their lives
- Provide programs that target the needs of life without parole offenders
- Provide special housing assignments for life without parole offenders
- Support family contact for life without parole offenders
- Develop and utilize peer mentoring programs
- Give hope

Theme 2: There is No Need to Facilitate Positive Adjustment

- There is no reason to treat life without parole inmates differently than other prisoners
- Adjustment is a product of time served

Question 2: What is the largest problem you see with this population of inmates serving sentences of life without parole?

Theme 1: Problems Experienced by Inmates Serving Life without Parole

- Hopelessness and despair
- Idleness, boredom, and the lack of meaningful programs
- Adjusting to the life without parole sentence
- Loss of contact with family and the outside world and feeling abandoned or forgotten

Table 5.19 (continued)

- Aging and health concerns
- Anger and frustration
- Absence of a sense of purpose

Theme 2: Problems Experienced by Wardens, Other Prison Staff, or the Correctional System

- Cost Factors
 - Increase in number of inmates serving life without parole as a contributing factor to prison overcrowding
 - Security issues
 - Life without parole prisoners' adjustment issues
 - Staff training and staff shortage issues
-

Question 1: Providing Help for the Life without Parole Population

The most central issue involved whether wardens did or did not believe that the offender population needed and should receive help adjusting to serving a life without parole sentence. Two major themes were identified: (1) It is appropriate to engage in efforts to facilitate positive adjustment, and (2) There is no need to facilitate positive adjustment. Within each theme, a number of patterns were observed.

Almost 20% of the surveys had no response to this question and just over 5% had responses that were sufficiently vague or nebulous to cause the researcher to exclude the response from the analysis in order to avoid speculating about what the respondent actually meant. Of those with usable responses, over three-fourths did express opinions that supported efforts to provide assistance to those serving life without parole.

Theme 1: It is Appropriate to Engage in Efforts to Facilitate Positive Adjustment

The majority of wardens gave responses that supported the importance of helping those serving life without parole to make a positive adjustment. The reasons for doing so included concern for the welfare of individuals but also addressed the pragmatic consideration that those who do adjust well are easier to manage. Eight major patterns emerged during data analysis.

Keep inmates serving life without parole active and occupied.

By far the most common responses were those that related to keeping inmates serving sentences of life without parole active. More than 70 wardens addressed this either in generic terms or through specific references to particular areas of potential activity. The general notion was that inmates need something to occupy their time or alleviate boredom and can also be engaged in pursuits which might benefit the individual in tangible or intangible ways. Several wardens noted that idleness increases the probability that inmates will find things to do that would not be sanctioned by the prison administration. While some respondents only addressed this area in general terms, other responses about keeping inmates active and occupied were associated with more specific suggestions.

Provide programs, work, and educational opportunities.

Involvement in various programs, ranging from group or individual counseling, self-help groups, education programs, and job assignments, were identified as important elements of adjustment by a group of wardens. In addition to keeping inmates occupied, the benefits from involvement include enhanced coping mechanisms, the development of new knowledge, and the acquisition of income from work assignments which could help

decrease the need for financial assistance from family members and others outside the prison. One warden stated:

Be sure to assimilate them into the positive aspects of the institutional environment: for example: ensure they too have access to work assignments, school assignments, self-help programs, etc.

As was briefly stated by another warden:

Keep them busy with work, activities and programs.

Programs help life without parole offenders find meaning for their lives.

Participation in programs, educational opportunities, and work assignments was also identified as an element of helping offenders find meaning for their lives while incarcerated. One warden wrote:

Programs, both formal and informal, need to be provided that will address the quality of life issues for those who will never leave the prison environment. Both staff and inmates need to realize the value of these programs that aim to make the time spent in prison meaningful.

The fact that the inmate is never going to leave the prison does not mean that the life he/she leads inside shouldn't be meaningful.

Another warden stated:

Programming should be provided to include educational, vocational and therapeutic which would enable them to be productive citizens within the prison community.

Provide programs that target the needs of life without parole offenders.

Other respondents emphasized the importance of developing and providing programs and activities that are specifically targeted to the unique needs of the life without parole population. An example of this is seen in the following:

Orientation to incarceration which includes a realistic assessment of limitations and opportunities open to inmates in their sentencing cohort and, if possible, provided with input from more senior inmates in similar circumstances.

Another warden stated:

Create realistic programs that address the questions that are inevitable for this population. Address concerns at reception, during incarceration and for the aging population.

Provide special housing assignments for life without parole offenders.

Several wardens emphasized the importance of special housing assignments for this population which included such things as a single occupancy cell or sharing a cell with someone serving a similar sentence. One warden suggested:

Create an area for long term offenders where housing is seen as a positive area.

Another respondent appears to be addressing unique housing assignment practices where he or she is the warden:

Start the incarceration with single-cell assignment. After a period of observation, step to double cell assignment or open bay assignments.

This comment was interesting in that single-cell assignments are commonly used as a reward or privilege for those with extended periods of positive behavior rather than as an initial placement.

Support family contact for life without parole offenders.

The importance of helping offenders to maintain contact with family was another area identified by almost 10% of respondents. One warden specifically addressed the importance of trying to assign those serving life without parole to facilities that will make continued family contact more possible.

Develop and utilize peer mentoring programs.

Almost 20 wardens suggested some sort of peer mentoring program. Most of their responses addressed the idea of having those already serving life without parole become mentors for those who are in the early part of their sentences. This form of activity was identified as potentially being beneficial for both the inmate who had adapted successfully and for those who have not yet reached that point. One respondent suggested:

Working these inmates toward a mentor role for other inmate(s) to ensure their time is productive. This will help minimize their sense of “nothing to lose, nothing to live for.”

The benefit of this for the more recently admitted life without parole inmates was addressed by another warden:

Structural orientation program early in the sentence. Possibly utilizing other, older, “adjusted” lifers to assist in the training.

Other wardens focused on also having those serving life without parole acting in a mentoring role with younger inmates who are going to be released from prison and with at-risk youth from the community.

Give hope.

Several wardens commented on the importance of instilling or preserving hope. Their responses covered a broad range, from the general:

You have to give an individual hope.

to the more specific:

They should be given a date at which their case would be reviewed for possible recommendation of a parole date being set.

Several wardens gave responses indicating opposition to the concept of life without parole as a legitimate sentence. As stated by one:

Stop using life without (parole) and give them hope.

Theme 2: There is No Need to Facilitate Positive Adjustment

More than 10 wardens responded that there is no need to make any specific effort to facilitate the adjustment of the life without parole prisoner group. Analysis of those responses resulted in two patterns being identified.

There is no reason to treat life without parole inmates differently than other prisoners.

This perspective was based on several different reasons why wardens did not believe that there was a need to treat those serving life without parole differently than any other inmate. One warden directed a comment about this issue to the Principal Investigator:

No adjustment needed. Your question is biased and assumes LWOP inmates have different needs than others.

Other wardens believed that the programs already available to assist all inmates are sufficient and that there is no reason to have life without parole inmates as a special concern.

Routine offender programming offerings would seem to me to be sufficient. Placing special emphasis on them or programs established especially for them would tend to result in “self-fulfilling prophecy” Keep them in maximum/close custody institutions with the rest of the “predators” to serve their sentences.

Another warden stated:

I have not seen any unusual adjustment issues with these men.

One warden expressed the belief that inmates serving sentences of life without parole experience fewer problems with adjustment than do other inmates:

Inmates with these type sentences adjust better than any of the other population. They usually accept prison is their home and take pride in making the conditions the best for themselves and others.

Adjustment is a product of time served.

Several respondents expressed the belief that the passage of time is the critical issue in adjustment.

Time its self (sic) assist them in the acceptance of the reality of their circumstances.

My experience is after a few years and after around age 30 or 35

they naturally adjust. They must adjust their attitude and move to acceptance of their sentence.

Question 2: Largest Problem with the Life without Parole Population

There was no answer provided to this question on over 15% of the surveys. Responses that were sufficiently vague to warrant removing them from the analysis accounted for another 9% and on almost 4% of the surveys, respondents stated that there were no problem issues. Among the approximately 70% of the surveys that did have usable answers, two major themes emerged that were related to who actually experienced the problem referenced in the question itself. Roughly half of the respondents identified problems experienced by the inmates serving sentences of life without parole. The others focused on problems experienced by wardens, other prison staff, or the correctional system in general. Even though the question asked respondents to identify the largest problem, more than a few respondents identified multiple problem areas and in some cases, a single respondent identified inmate focused problem areas and problems that related to prison staff or the system itself. All responses were included in the analysis. As had been the case with the first question, many of the responses were of only a single word or consisted of a very short answer.

Theme 1: Problems Experienced by Inmates Serving Life without Parole

Through use of the grounded theory method of data analysis, seven patterns emerged from the responses of those wardens who focused on the problems experienced by prisoners serving sentences of life without parole.

Hopelessness and despair.

Over 20 wardens identified issues related to hopelessness and despair as the major problem area experienced by inmates serving sentences of life without parole. These

were generally very brief responses with little specific detail. Several wardens did give a somewhat more extensive description that included reference to the probability that the offender will die while incarcerated:

They become desperate, with a feeling of hopelessness, as reality sets in that they will likely die in prison.

The lack of hope and despair, knowing that they will never get out.

Their fear of dying in prison.

Idleness, boredom, and the lack of meaningful programs.

Responses in this pattern related to LWOP prisoners not having enough to do and having too much idle time. They commonly addressed the absence of meaningful programs, but there was not enough detail provided to indicate if there are simply no programs, if programs exist but are not available to all who might benefit, or if LWOP prisoners are specifically not eligible. The similarity of responses was notable:

No meaningful programs, work or educational opportunity.

Lack of quality programs to meet needs.

Lack of programming and meaningful work

One warden's response does seem to indicate that those serving life without parole are not eligible to participate:

Exclusion – no allowance for programs or vocational trades

Adjusting to the life without parole sentence.

The difficulties involved in adjusting to a life without parole sentence were of concern to a number of wardens. In some ways, this pattern overlapped with the pattern involving feelings of hopelessness and despair. Several respondents noted the problems

associated with prisoners having unrealistic hope that something will change. As one respondent stated:

Most come into the system very young and don't seem to grasp "forever" behind bars as they hold onto the hope of favorable court actions.

Other wardens' responses focused on the early years of the sentence as being the time when adjustment is most difficult. Several examples illustrate that concern:

Getting over the hurdle of the first few months/years. This would be the most likely time for thoughts of escape, harming others, or harming themselves. Once the inmate has accepted the sentence, they can begin to focus on what they can gain & contribute.

The initial period of adjustment for inmates serving life sentences is the most difficult.

Several wardens addressed issues associated with the probability that the inmates will die in prison and the difficulties associated with adjusting to that reality. Some relevant examples of that concern as it relates to adjustment:

Seeing their fellow inmates grow old, sick, and dying, leaving them behind.

Coming to grips with the reality that they will be in prison until they die.

Loss of contact with family and the outside world and feeling abandoned or forgotten.

The problems associated with the expectation that inmates serving sentences of life without parole will lose or have diminished contact with their families were identified by more than 10 wardens. Some responses addressed this as particularly being related to the passage of time:

These inmates typically slowly but surely lose support from family and friends in the free world.

Diminishing family contact through correspondence, telephone, and visitation as time passes.

One respondent indicated that systemic issues related to the inmate classification process have an impact on this problem.

The inability to get transfers closer to home.

Others focused on the emotional reaction associated with loss of contact. One warden stated that these prisoners experience a “sense of abandonment”. Another respondent observed:

They believe they are forgotten.

Aging and health concerns.

Relatively brief references to aging and the associated decline in health were made by several respondents. Two wardens combined these concerns with those associated with the pattern related to loss of contact with family and others from outside the prison. They described this problem:

Growing old and not having the needed support from outside.

Loss of family ties, trusted care givers to assist as they age.

Anger and frustration.

Five wardens made specific reference to anger and frustration as a problem area of concern. As has been the case elsewhere in this analysis, the descriptions in this pattern overlap with elements of other patterns. One respondent addressed this in the context of the pattern related to idleness, boredom, and the lack of meaningful programs:

Frustration at times with work assignments or the ability to only be considered for certain work assignments or classes.

Another warden tied this to the pattern associated with hopelessness and despair:

Anger and depression over knowing that regardless of their accomplishments in prison, they will never be released.

Absence of a sense of purpose.

Issues related to a sense of purpose were included by six of the respondents. In addressing the relative meaninglessness of the situation of the inmate serving life without parole, one warden described the problem as:

Not feeling useful, no sense of purpose to their life.

One warden included an emphasis on the part the prison and its staff plays in perpetuating this absence of purpose:

Commitment to institutions that confirm worthlessness of the individual, that crushes the human spirit, and reinforces the concept that this inmate is scum and unworthy of any respect or worthwhile consideration.

Theme 2: Problems Experienced by Wardens, Other Prison Staff, or the Correctional System

Analysis of the responses of wardens who focused on problems experienced by wardens, other prison staff and the correctional system resulted in the identification of five major patterns. Some respondents gave only very brief responses while others described their opinions in greater detail.

Cost factors.

Over 30 wardens identified cost factors either in a generic sense or as specifically related to a particular element of prison operations. Speaking in general terms, one respondent focused on concerns associated with systemic issues:

Increasing population which cost money the state does not want to allocate for their care.

Another mentioned problems associated with those who control the budget:

Convincing legislators to adequately fund state prisons.

When viewed as a matter of cost in a specific context, over 20 wardens identified healthcare as the greatest problem. This particularly related to the costs of healthcare as the life without parole prisoner population ages and experiences declines in health.

Several examples of those concerns:

It gets expensive to house older offenders who have abused their bodies for number of years.

The medical costs associated with caring for an elderly population and our inability to provide care that is better offered in the community.

The largest and most costly issue is healthcare. As this population

ages, there are increased needs for long term care. Hospice is a consideration as well. Generally, the prison population is in lesser health than society and this fact presents more challenges to us in term of the availability of care.

Increase in number of inmates serving life without parole as a contributing factor to prison overcrowding.

Associated to some degree with cost issues, the increase in the life without parole offender population and how much this impacts allocation of resources was also identified as a major problem by seven wardens. Without giving specific detail, some simply identified the overcrowding as an area of concern. As described by several respondents, the prison bed that remains assigned throughout the remainder of the offender's life is not available to be assigned to others:

There is no movement for the LWOP inmates as it relates to "bed space." It leads to overcrowding at various stages of the LWOP inmate's life.

Currently because of so much violence outside of prison, the numbers of "Lifers" is growing which causes a need for more expenditures, and new institutions.

As was very concisely stated by one respondent:

They don't go home and they have to have bed space.

Security issues.

Not surprisingly, security issues were a matter of concern for a large number of wardens with almost 30 respondents identifying general or specific concerns related to

this aspect of prison management. Several viewed the absence of serious consequences for rule-violating behavior committed by those serving life without parole as a major problem in a general context:

They have nothing to lose.

Those who do act out believe they have nothing to lose. If we give them nothing to lose we increase negative or dangerous behavior.

Other respondents applied the “nothing to lose” perspective or the sense of hopelessness directly to issues of escape and risk of danger to staff and others.

They have little to nothing to lose by trying to escape.

Sometimes prove to commit very violent acts because they have nothing to lose.

Thoughts of hopelessness could possibly lead to dangerous behaviors and thereby pose serious risks to staff and other inmates.

Several wardens connected the problems associated with inmate idleness to a possible risk of harm to others:

If you don't have programs available for them to channel their energy in positive ways, they will channel it in negative ways.

Without something constructive they will prey upon each other and turn the hostility against the staff.

Life without parole prisoners' adjustment issues.

More than 20 wardens made some reference to potential problems that relate to the manner in which those serving life without parole adjust. The descriptions of problems associated with the adjustment of the life without parole offender were

somewhat varied. Some wardens identified problems with the ability and opportunity to provide assistance to that population. As one warden noted:

Inmates with life sentences feel they should be contributing more inside and we as administrators while being creative at times can only utilize them in limited roles.

Several others identified issues associated with keeping this population of prisoners occupied:

Most programs not designed for this population.

At this point we begin to warehouse these individuals. If they are idle there becomes a point where there is no incentive for positive behavior.

Other respondents emphasized the problems associated with the behavior of those serving life without parole who had not fully adjusted to the reality of their situations:

The period of anger, rebellion, and violence that most lifers go through in the early years of their sentence; especially w/ young offenders.

The several year long initial adjustment to the reality of a life without parole sentence. Prior to true acceptance, the inmate is a greater escape risk and threat to staff and other inmates.

Staff training and staff shortage issues.

Only five respondents identified staff issues as a problem area. One expressed concerns with staffing shortages that would somewhat overlap with the pattern of

responses related to cost factors and overcrowding issues. Another focused on the need to have staff regard the offenders as individuals:

The culture of management must classify each inmate individually and not group them based on sentence, but behavior, and observed adjustment.

Two respondents made reference to the importance of staff training issues when managing inmates serving LWOP sentences:

Training staff to deal with this type of offender.

Staff training. Staff play an important role in the inmates adjustment to this sentence. The culture of the institution must operate in such a manner that the inmate population must stay focused on positive outlooks of the sentence.

In identifying an area of concern that would overlap with security issues, one warden addressed the problems associated with the unique dynamics of the relationships that can develop between staff and those serving very long sentences:

Staff tend to look at some of these offenders as different (most trustworthy) than other offenders. They often get jobs where they have been “on the job” longer than the staff member – so staff look to the offender for info.

The wide range of responses to these two questions underscores the potential importance a warden’s beliefs and opinions may have on how those inmates serving sentences of life without parole are managed at any particular institution. Even though other factors, such as the policies of the state agency that is responsible for the

administration of the prison system and relevant court decisions will have some impact on the conditions of confinement, the ability of wardens to make classification decisions and to decide if certain programs will or will not be offered can be extremely important factors.

As an example, the importance of a warden's perspective is clearly seen in the pattern of responses to issues related to the hopelessness inmates serving sentences of life without parole may experience. Some wardens focused on that as a problem which should be addressed through methods that provide assistance to the inmate in an effort to help him or her adapt more effectively. Other wardens' major concern seemed to be with the possible security and safety problem that results from inmate hopelessness. Does the warden with the former perspective emphasize the development of quality programs to help the individual inmate? Does the warden with the latter perspective emphasize the creation of an environment in which that individual is monitored, supervised, and closely controlled? While these questions are beyond the scope of this study, they would seem to address important issues and should be explored in future research.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The purpose of this exploratory study was to perform a preliminary examination of how prisoners serving sentences of life without parole adapt to the prison setting and to the knowledge that barring judicial reversals or executive commutation, they will be incarcerated for the remainder of their lives. This choice of study focus was driven by the great increase in the number of inmates serving LWOP sentences in recent years, the very limited availability of other research involving this offender population, and the relative lack of concern the social work profession has had for the welfare of adult prisoners in general and those serving lengthy sentences for seriously violent crimes in particular.

Inmate adaptation will be associated with the prison environment, a place where the application of formal correctional policy and the actions of those who manage correctional facilities are important factors. Accordingly, the opinions of state prison wardens about amenities that might be given to those serving LWOP sentences and the extent to which they believe these inmates might present danger to others were also important elements of this mixed methods study. Similarly, an extensive search found little about prisoner adaptation and surprisingly meager attention given to the opinions of prison wardens in the literature.

Because of this relative absence of existing literature, a qualitative research plan was developed to obtain and analyze information about prisoner adaptation from adult male inmates serving sentences of life without parole in one state prison in Ohio. Research plans were also formulated to gather and analyze data about the opinions and beliefs of state prison wardens through a national survey. Quantitative methods were used

to develop and test hypotheses and qualitative methods were employed using a grounded theory approach to analyze wardens' responses to two open-ended questions that were included on the survey. Through these actions, an effort was made to develop a preliminary understanding of the beliefs and opinions of prison wardens about how to best manage the LWOP population.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of study findings and an examination of how this data relates to the little information that does already exist. Possible explanations for various elements of the outcomes of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis will also be addressed. In addition, the limitations of this study and the implications for future research will be examined.

Qualitative Study of Prison Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole

An initial thought when one considers the probable reactions of those serving sentences of life without parole is hopelessness. As was written by Dante in *The Divine Comedy*, the inscription at the gates of hell read "Abandon every hope, ye who enter" (Dante, Canto III, trans. 1948). This theme of hopelessness appears in the relatively few studies about those serving LWOP that are available in the literature (De Beco, 2005; Johnson & McGunigall-Smith, 2008) and *conventional wisdom* might assume that without question hopelessness is to be expected in the LWOP population. The findings of this study, although admittedly limited in scope, would suggest otherwise. While there were definitely some indications of hopelessness among the informants in this study, it was by no means the most common reaction found.

The informants described a wide range of factors, both positive and negative, that impacted their adaptation to the prison setting in general and to the life without parole

sentence being served. This led to the identification of three major themes that were labeled Sources of Dissatisfaction, Positive Forces, and Hope Based on Legal Changes.

Sources of dissatisfaction.

There were a number of patterns that were seen among those discussing sources of dissatisfaction. No informant reported experiencing all of them and each study participant identified at least one area of dissatisfaction.

Difficulty adapting to the prison environment.

Many of the factors associated with the first identified theme, Sources of Dissatisfaction, related to difficulty adapting to prison. A number of informants, particularly those who had never been incarcerated before or who were at a fairly early point in their present sentence, described problems adapting to the frequently confusing and often indifferent prison environment. Clemmer (1940/1958) introduced the term prisonization to describe the process through which one assimilates to the prison environment. During this process, the inmates are made aware of their new status as relatively anonymous members of a subordinate group, the roles played by those with whom they have contact, the organization and culture of the facility, and of the inferior position from which they now must operate. In his description of the total institution, of which prison is a prime example, Goffman (1961) stated that outside the institutional setting individuals tend to sleep, play and work in different places, with different people, under different forms of authority, and with no rational plan connecting them. He described the major feature of the total institution as being the elimination of the barriers separating these three areas, resulting in a large group of inmates being supervised by a

relatively small staff. The skills that were effective in adaptation in the community do not necessarily carry over to the institution setting and often must be learned.

Many of the issues described by Clemmer (1940/1958) and Goffman (1961) were seen among the sources of dissatisfaction identified by informants. Difficult interactions with other inmates and with staff, fear of other inmates, and the limited opportunity to avoid the nuisances, aggravations, and dangers that are present in a high security facility made adaptation to the prison environment itself difficult for some who participated in the study.

The impact of prison overcrowding.

Many of the identified sources of dissatisfaction were either directly or indirectly related to issues of overcrowding. Like most prisons in the United States, Lebanon Correctional Institution housed more inmates at the time when interviews for this study were conducted than it had been designed to hold. This impacted the manner in which cell assignments were made with there being two men assigned to the majority of the cells. Issues associated with crowding and privacy needs were described by Toch (1992). He stated:

One objects to being constantly exposed to the senses of others--to the difficulty of escaping perennial observation. The person here feels invaded, because there are no opportunities for the unobserved discharge of activities defined as intimate, personal, or "private," particularly of activities that are status-degrading, not part of the public image a man wishes to convey. (p. 41)

Informants spoke of long waiting lists for programs and of problems in having access to good job assignments. Overcrowding was associated with less opportunity to

make use of basic prison services that are intended to facilitate positive adaptation such as the prison library or recreation areas. Allen, Latessa, Ponder, and Simonsen (2007) stated that prison overcrowding has its greatest impact in areas involving health and safety and that this holds true regardless of the security level at which an inmate is incarcerated. Rates of assault and other forms of interpersonal violence increase and the negative impact on the availability of activities to keep prisoners occupied contributes to an even greater problem with boredom.

Boredom and inactivity.

Many of the informants reported being bored, whether occasionally or on a frequent basis. Boredom was associated with both the repetitiveness of the prison routine and with the lack of opportunity to be active due to overcrowding, security issues, or restrictions on program access based on having a sentence of life without parole. Toch (1992) focused on the problems of boredom in the prison setting and related this to the under-stimulation that may occur in such facilities. He stated that individuals will try to alleviate the *eventlessness* in their environments by engaging in new forms of non-routine action. This may lead to involvement in socially proscribed activities such as education programs or learning a musical instrument, but may also result in actions that are in violation of prison rules and which are offensive or dangerous to others. Several informants did speak of the socially proscribed activities in which they had become involved or for which they encountered barriers when they did try to participate. In a number of these cases, the individual seemed to be trying to *find* something to do rather than doing something already considered interesting. To a lesser extent, several also spoke of involvement in rule violations to alleviate boredom, although none described

activities involving violence. These were more commonly related to gambling activities, particularly involving sporting events on television.

Lack of social support.

The absence of social support from within the prison was described as being voluntary by several prisoners. This was commonly related to issues of trust and the belief that one should not trust someone that one did not know prior to being incarcerated. Other informants seemed to be desirous of a support network but had not found one. Several of those were sex offenders who described the need for caution when interacting with other inmates out of concern that the nature of their offenses will become known.

The role that family and friends from outside the institution play as social support providers was found to be mixed. Some participants reported having little or no contact with those not directly associated with daily life in the prison setting. The support of family and friends may never have been extensive or it may have started as a positive element but diminished as time passed. For some informants, this absence of support may be a consequence of past relationships in which they may have taken advantage of or manipulated family and friends or situations in which family members were victims of the offenses for which participants were incarcerated.

Difficulty adapting to a sentence of life without parole.

Informants spoke of various ways in which they were having difficulty adapting to having a LWOP sentence. Some spoke of their own fears of dying in prison. Others addressed this issue through talking about fears of family members or important others dying while the informant was incarcerated. Several described the sense of loss that came

with no longer being able to do those things they had previously enjoyed. Goldsworthy (2005) addressed the relative absence of grief and loss theory in areas other than death and dying in the social work literature:

Generally, most people associate loss with encounters with death. However, grief as a response to loss, permeates all facets of our lives as well as those of our clients. We experience loss not only through death, but also through changes that we encounter throughout the rich tapestry of life. (p. 167)

While the informants may not view their lives as a rich tapestry, it is appropriate to validate the sense of loss they have experienced as the result of their current situations even though those losses are associated with the choices they made. These may include, among others, the losses of freedom, opportunity to make choices, association with family and friends, identity, career, social role, self esteem, hope, and eventually life itself. Several informants reported having contacts with staff of the Mental Health Services Department, but there were otherwise no programs addressing grief and loss issues reported by study participants.

Positive forces.

The second major theme involved positive forces that helped prisoners serving LWOP to adapt. Through examination of these positive forces, a belief that hopelessness is inevitable comes into question.

Adapting to the prison environment.

A number of informants reported having little or no difficulty adapting to the prison environment itself. These were commonly individuals who had been incarcerated before and who had reportedly made a successful adaptation during previous periods of

confinement. They also tended to be physically larger and less likely to be the targets of aggressive actions by others or they presented themselves as having a reputation for dangerous behavior that caused others to treat them with respect, fear, or caution. Others reported adapting successfully by carefully following the rules and avoiding those places and situations where difficulties were likely to occur.

While personal characteristics and interpersonal skills clearly can impact the degree of success a prisoner experiences in efforts to adapt to the institutional environment, the element of chance can also be of great importance. Several informants made some reference to this when interviewed. Clemmer (1940/1958) noted the importance of “chance placement” in cell or work assignments and how this can impact how that prisoner may adjust. Several informants spoke of the problems associated with having to share a cell with another prisoner based on a chance assignment over which they had no influence or control. Feelings of personal safety are greatly enhanced when one can share a cell with another prisoner who is not deemed a potential threat. Those who had cellmates with whom they had worked out reasonable accommodation to give one another adequate private time in the cell also tended to view their assignments with greater satisfaction.

The importance of having a good job assignment, whether that was identified as such due to the ease of work, the working conditions, the rate of pay, or some other factor was also identified as a positive force. In his description of the prisonization experience, Clemmer (1940/1958) stated that at some point, inmates will develop an interest in getting a good prison work assignment. He stated, “A good job usually means a

comfortable job of a more or less isolated kind in which conflicts with other men are not likely to develop” (p. 299).

The element of chance in the classification system was addressed by Toch (1981). In addition to his discussion of the relative absence of emphasis on conducting classification activities in a manner that led to optimal prisoner adjustment and enhanced coping in the prison setting, Toch spoke of resistance problems that can occur when inmates are not involved in the classification system. Toch stated:

It matters to me as an inmate whether I am told that my assignment considers my expressed need for privacy, or that it is based on a collage of nonsense items that diagnose me as hedonistic and impulsive. The issue is not only comprehensibility and pejorativeness, but the contrast between my role as a person-participant or an information-object. (p. 11)

A number of those who reported a positive adjustment also spoke of fortunate outcomes when they had received apparently random cell and work assignments. Others described positive situations in which staff involved in making classification decisions had taken their requests into consideration.

Toch (1977/1992) spoke of the importance of finding niches as a means of trying to make adjustment easier. A niche may include people, the relationships among people, objects, conditions, or other valued resources. In general, those informants who reported making a positive adjustment to the prison setting had found a niche or were in the active process of trying to do so.

Positive interactions with others.

Whether it was with other inmates or with prison staff, the existence of a pattern of positive relationships with others was seen as an important element to many informants. Some did choose to have friends or close acquaintances among the prisoner population and others spoke of being treated with respect by correction officers, work supervisors, and other members of the prison staff. Other placed a high value on their interactions with community volunteers who were associated with various programs offered at the facility.

Enjoyable leisure time activities and the existence of interesting and useful programs facilitated by prison staff or community volunteers.

As described earlier, Toch (1992) stated that prisoners will try to compensate for the eventlessness that is a common element of prison life. Some informants had developed new interests, such as learning musical instruments, while others had continued with or resumed involvement in activities already considered enjoyable.

In general, most informants did not participate in formal programs or activities at the prison, but some number did find that involvement in religious programs, organized recreation, and other activities were beneficial. Others described their work assignments as being interesting or enjoyable.

Social support.

Relationships with friends and associates can help meet the social and esteem needs of participants and, as was pointed out by Toch (1992), can also lead to an element of group defense. Social support networks within the institution primarily consisted of other inmates, although some participants reported getting support from staff or from

community volunteers who come to the institution for self-help based drug and alcohol groups and/or those who are involved in religious activities.

The role that family and friends from outside the institution play as social support providers was found to be a positive force to some who participated in this study. Some informants spoke of the importance of the support they received from family and friends in the forms of visits, mail, and provision of financial assistance. A number of individuals stated that family members are still their most important source of social support.

Spirituality.

Discussions of spirituality took many forms. Some informants described themselves as being very religious or spiritual but stated that they did not like to participate in organized religious activities. Others emphasized the positive effects that having a religious community with which to interact and the presence of chaplains employed by the prison provided. While not necessarily clearly articulated, the descriptions of informants gave some indication that the relative importance of religious or spiritual issues may be different for different people. In some cases, inmates' spirituality appeared to be of a deep and sincere nature. Spirituality is part of what enables them to cope on a long-term basis with prison and with having a life without parole sentence. With others, it seemed that religious program participation was more of a short-term coping strategy in that it provided something to do *now*.

Finding purpose for one's life.

The minority of those interviewed identified a focus of finding purpose for one's life, but those who did seemed to place a fairly high level of importance on doing so. Those who discussed an identified purpose usually spoke of activities related to helping

others or to matters associated with religious or spiritual issues. Several others stated that they had not found something yet, but that they were still looking. This constitutes another example of an attempt by some participants to reject the acceptance of hopelessness.

Hope based on legal changes.

Some, perhaps most, participants may not believe they will spend the remainder of their lives in prison. This may be particularly true of those who have histories of being rescued from situations of stress or discomfort by family members or important others or who have successfully lived by their wits and *made* things happen when necessary. Some prisoners may not be overtly in some sort of denial stage, but may choose to just not think about the ramifications of their situations. Expressions of hope for eventual release from prison were commonly associated with appeals that were in process or with the possibility that sentencing laws might change in the future. Because there is no certainty that these won't happen there is some basis for hope. Given the current problems with overcrowding and economic conditions that have put many state budgets in difficulty, hoping for change in existing law is not necessarily unrealistic.

R. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) stated that hope is essential to the psychological survival of those serving life without parole. Maintaining some degree of hope may enhance the ability to cope, but if based on unrealistic expectations, it might inhibit the development of coping skills that are beneficial in adapting to long-term incarceration and the prospect of dying in prison. If the loss of hope eventually leads to resolution and acceptance, it may be a beneficial process. However, if individuals who lose hope become fixated at a stage characterized by depression, a range of other issues

related to mental health problems, self-destructive behavior, or possibly aggressive actions emanating from that hopelessness may occur. Villaume (2005) stated that some prisoners serving life without parole or another form of a virtual life sentence give up hope and commit suicide. According to De Beco (2005):

Once convicted criminals realize that they may not be granted release through the national channels, they are likely to lose hope. Absence of hope of release is difficult to handle not only for the prisoners themselves but also for the prison staff, since relations between the detainees and their guardians might be further exacerbated (p. 415).

It is because of concerns such as this that some experts advocate for the provision of programs specifically designed to address the unique issues of those prisoners who are serving long sentences, a population that would include those serving LWOP. Toch (1990) stated:

A longterm inmate when he first arrives in prison must invariably deal with the prospect of his term. He may do so by appealing his case, expressing rage, immersing himself in day-by-day living, denial (pretending his sentence does not exist) or by becoming depressed. These adjustment strategies each have different implications for the programming of the inmates (p. 6).

Toch proposed the development of a planned system of classification that would address the specific needs of prisoners throughout their careers in the correctional facility. Toch believed that rather than only looking at classification assignments as short-term decisions--which he equated to baking a pie one slice at a time--a long-term emphasis should be employed.

Issues of concern.

The existing conditions at Lebanon Correctional Institution have changed since the time when interviews for this study were conducted (E. M. Myers, personal communication, April 19, 2011). The inmate population has increased in size and the overcrowding problem has worsened. The availability of single occupancy cells, which a number of informants had or were on a waiting list to receive, has now been eliminated. As a result, this feature of prison life as an aspirational goal has been taken away as a potential coping mechanism. Those whose privacy or safety needs were being met by having a single occupancy cell no longer have that resource as a means of facilitating positive adjustment.

There are more prisoners than ever who have to use the limited space available in such places as the library and the recreation areas. As more LWOP inmates are received, their opportunities to work their way into good job assignments will be diminished by the number of inmates serving long sentences already holding the better assignments.

Good cell and work assignments are often used as a form of reward for positive behavior in the prison setting. When these become scarcer, prison life will become even more difficult. Future researchers should examine what happens when all of the single occupancy cells and the good jobs are taken or what results when niches that previously helped individuals cope no longer exist.

Relationship of results to prior studies.

Because this population has been given minimal attention in the professional literature, there is little literature available for comparison. The findings from this study show that informants identified aspects of their situations that enhanced the ability to

adapt successfully and this has not been described in the few other sources of information available. Prisoners discussed sources of hope rather than only feelings of hopelessness. The qualitative nature of the current study makes it difficult to generalize these findings and the few previous studies found had a different focus--making it extremely challenging to find validation of other studies of the LWOP population.

Study of Opinions of State Prison Wardens

The opinions and beliefs of prison wardens are given almost no attention in the professional literature. The purpose of the second strand of the mixed methods study was to perform exploratory research about issues related to wardens' opinions about the management of the LWOP offender population. This exploratory study addressed issues related to the provision of amenities and the extent to which those serving LWOP constituted a danger to others. This research included both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data collected from wardens through a national survey.

Quantitative data analysis.

Three different hypotheses were developed following a review of the available literature. These were tested using data from the surveys completed by respondents.

Hypothesis 1.

H1: Wardens who served in a treatment position for one year or more will be more likely to support provision of amenities than wardens who did not serve in a treatment position and who did serve as a correctional officer or wardens who served in both a treatment position and as a correctional officer. This will be moderated by level of educational attainment and gender.

Hypothesis 1 was developed through review of the limited research that exists about opinions of prison wardens and other prison staff regarding amenities for prison inmates in general. There was no research found regarding support for amenities for inmates serving life without parole sentences. In research that involved a more generic mix of prisoners, Tewksbury and Mustaine (2005) found that program staff had significantly higher levels of support for prison amenities than did security staff. Kim, DeValve, DeValve, and Johnson (2003) determined that female prison wardens opposed reduction of amenities regarding access to college education in prison more than male wardens. Even though no studies identified educational attainment as being a statistically significant indicator of support for amenities, this was also added as a moderating variable because the minimum educational qualifications for correctional officer positions are generally lower than for treatment positions. An extensive review of the literature found no studies that addressed educational requirements for correctional officers as compared to other prison staff.

The route by which correctional employees become prison wardens may take several different paths. In general, wardens have worked their way up from subordinate positions within the prison system; commonly those associated with either custody or treatment functions. Because the goals of custody are not always compatible with the goals of treatment, the orientation of prison wardens may reflect their commitment to beliefs associated with positions held during their career trajectory (Allen, Latessa, & Ponder, 2010; Fox & Stinchcomb, 1994). A complicating factor is the recognition that just because someone has been placed in a treatment position does not necessarily mean

that he or she is adequately qualified to provide treatment services to the client population or that he or she truly supports the goals of correctional treatment.

Summary of results of Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1 was not supported as specified. The results of a three-way between-groups ANOVA test showed no significant interaction effects between or among any combination of the independent variables. The main effect of previous work history in a correctional officer position, both a correctional officer and treatment position, or a treatment position was also found not to be statistically significant. The main effect of gender was also not significant. Level of educational attainment was found to be statistically significant with a small effect size but this had been hypothesized as a moderating variable rather than a predictor variable.

Explanation of results and relation to previous studies.

Because this study was exploratory in nature, it cannot be said that the results were surprising. The hypothesis was developed using outcomes from a very small number of studies, none of which specifically addressed prisoners serving sentences of life without parole. The significant main effect of level of educational attainment was somewhat unexpected as those few existing studies had not found any correlation between education levels and support for prison amenities.

Wardens' opinions about the provision of amenities may be both philosophical and functional. W. W. Johnson et al. (1997) addressed the demands placed on wardens to operate safe and orderly prisons. The provision of amenities, even if not philosophically supported by the warden, may contribute to orderly operation as it may provide opportunities to keep inmates productively occupied or provide incentives for pro-social

behavior. It is also noted that wardens' opinions about assigning inmates serving sentences of life without parole to separate housing might be impacted by their level of support for the use of age heterogeneity (Mabli, Holley, Patrick, & Walls, 1979) as a management function. This relates to the practice of assigning older and more mature inmates to areas where they might serve as a positive and stabilizing influence on younger, more aggressive prisoners.

Hypothesis 2.

H2: Wardens who identified rehabilitation as the most important mission of prison are more likely to support the provision of amenities than wardens who identified deterrence, incapacitation, or retribution as the most important mission. This will be moderated by level of educational attainment and gender.

Hypothesis 2 was also developed through review of the limited research that exists about opinions of prison wardens regarding amenities for prison inmates in general. W. W. Johnson, Bennett, and Flanagan (1997) found in a 1995 survey of state prison wardens that those wardens who ranked rehabilitation as the most important goal of prison were less likely to support reduction or elimination of amenities than were those who rated incapacitation, deterrence, or retribution as the most important goal. The moderating variables were derived from the same sources as in Hypothesis 1.

Summary of results of Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2 was supported relative to the main effect of the belief that rehabilitation is the primary mission of prison. The effects of the moderating variables were not supported as specified. The results of a three-way between-groups ANOVA test

showed no significant interaction effects between or among any combination of the independent variables. The main effect of gender was also not statistically significant.

The main effects of rehabilitation as the primary mission of prison and educational attainment were both statistically significant, although in both cases, the effect sizes were small.

Explanation of results and relation to previous studies.

The main effect of rehabilitation as the primary mission of prison did support the findings of W. W. Johnson et al. (1997). The significant main effect of level of educational attainment was somewhat unexpected as W. W. Johnson et al. had not found wardens' education level to be significant in their study. Again, because this was an exploratory study, the absence of significant interaction effects can not be described as surprising.

Hypothesis 3.

H3: Wardens who have served as warden of a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole will be less likely to believe those inmates present risk of future dangerousness than will those who have not been the warden at a prison that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole. This will be moderated by level of educational achievement and gender.

Hypothesis 3 was developed purely from an exploratory question examining whether those wardens who currently or had previously managed facilities with LWOP inmates would believe that those prisoners are a lower risk of being of danger to others in the future than wardens who had not managed that population. A review of the literature resulted in no studies that addressed this issue; it was a matter of conjecture as to whether

the familiarity gained through directly managing a prison where LWOP inmates were incarcerated would be of importance in developing opinions about their future dangerousness. The moderating variables of gender and educational attainment were also based on conjecture and were not derived from existing research.

Summary of results of Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3 was supported but the effects of the moderating variables were not supported as specified. The results of a three-way between-groups ANOVA test showed no significant interaction effects between or among any combination of the independent variables. The main effect of educational attainment was also not statistically significant.

The main effect of history as a warden at a facility where LWOP prisoners were housed was found to be statistically significant as was the main effect of gender. In both cases, effect size was small.

Explanation of results.

Wardens develop a greater understanding of the LWOP offender population through having direct contact with them as individuals and through experiences with managing facilities where those prisoners are held. It is also possible that wardens of those facilities may be familiar with research that prisoners serving LWOP sentences are less likely to be dangerous in the prison setting than other inmates (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Cunningham, Reidy, & Sorensen, 2005; Cunningham, Sorensen, & Reidy, 2005; Reidy, Cunningham, & Sorensen, 2001; Sorensen & Wrinkle, 1996; Sorensen, Wrinkle, & Gutierrez, 1998).

Relation to previous studies.

Because there are no known prior studies about this research question, no relationship to prior studies can be identified.

Qualitative data analysis of the warden survey items.

Most wardens provided responses to the two brief open-ended questions included on the survey. Generally responses were relatively short and did not address issues in a great deal of depth. With an emphasis on the grounded theory method of analysis, two themes were identified for each question.

In response to the question, “What could be done to help this population adjust to being in prison with a life without parole sentence?” the themes that emerged were primarily related to whether there was sufficient reason to make specific efforts to facilitate positive adjustment among the LWOP population. Those wardens who believed that it was appropriate to do so focused on a number of ways in which this might be done. Some were very concrete in nature and included such ideas as keeping LWOP inmates active and occupied and providing them with program, work, and educational opportunities. Other responses related to problems experienced by or specific issues of concern to LWOP prisoners such as the possible benefits of special program and housing assignments. Of a more abstract nature, some wardens identified the need to give members of this population hope and to help them find meaning for their lives.

Those wardens who felt that there was no need to do anything to facilitate positive adjustment tended to view LWOP prisoners as being no different than others or to have the belief that the passage of time was the primary element of concern. Those who took this latter perspective seemed to believe that as time passes, those serving life without

parole will accept the reality of their situation and will likely choose to adapt. Positive adaptation seemed to be conceptualized as a choice rather than as a complex issue influenced by multiple factors.

Regarding the question, “What is the largest problem you see with this population of inmates serving sentences of life without parole?” the responses were somewhat surprising. It had been anticipated that wardens would reply with descriptions of problems experienced by the inmates who were serving life without parole sentences, which is how approximately half of the respondent did respond. With a focus that was not expected, the others addressed problems that wardens, other correctional employees, or the criminal justice system experienced as their main concern. The problems identified that related directly to inmates serving LWOP were fairly generic in nature and included such things as hopelessness, boredom, difficulty adjusting, losing contact with family and important others outside the institution, aging and health concerns, and absence of a sense of purpose.

Problems identified that were more related to wardens and other correctional system employees included cost factors, staff shortages, prison overcrowding as the number of inmates serving life without parole increased, and security issues. The responses to this question yielded less useful information than did the quantitative element or the responses to the first open-ended qualitative question.

Study Contributions

This study makes several contributions. It provides focus on a group that for the most part is ignored and for which not many people seem to care. There tends to be very little public attention given to the welfare of those serving sentences of life without parole

and it can be reasonably asserted that the social work profession appears to have little concern for their situations. This study contributes to the literature by providing an exploratory analysis of those prisoners' situations and of how different aspects of their lives either do or do not help them adapt to their sentences. In doing so, this study also provides some balance to the few existing studies that mostly take a very pessimistic view of this population's adaptive abilities.

The study also contributes by exploring variables that might become factors that wardens use when making decisions about how an individual prisoner is treated or how those serving life without parole are managed as a group. Even though only certain elements of the hypotheses were found to be statistically significant, it was shown that factors such as work experience as a warden at a facility with a population of LWOP prisoners, educational attainment, and belief about the primary purpose of prison are correlated with possible support for amenities that could be provided to those with LWOP sentences or beliefs about the degree of future dangerousness they present. It also contributes to the professional literature through examination of a previously unexplored area of wardens' opinions and beliefs.

This study has implications for the social work profession. Are those serving sentences of life without parole unworthy of the concern that the profession claims to have for all people? As this study brings attention to the needs of an underserved population, the profession itself may benefit. If more attention is given to the needs of the LWOP offender population, perhaps the social work profession may assign a higher priority to directly providing services to meet those needs from a micro practice perspective or through a macro practice approach that utilizes class advocacy or social

action efforts. Such activities would be consistent with the cardinal values of the social work profession. At a minimum, this research may “legitimize” the inquiry into prison life for future social work students and researchers or at least give some exposure to the problems of the incarcerated population in the United States.

Study Limitations

Qualitative study of adaptation of inmates serving sentences of LWOP.

There are clearly a number of limitations of this study. The study only included a small number of inmates incarcerated at one state prison in Ohio, making it impossible to generalize the results. Those who participated did so on a voluntary basis and it is not possible to develop a sense of how closely their experiences, thoughts, and concerns mirror those of the prisoners who chose to not participate. Sentences of life without parole had only existed in Ohio for approximately 11 years at the time when interviews were conducted. Thus, the participants in this study were only able to describe adaptation to LWOP sentences and related activities and behaviors for a period of incarceration of 11 years or less. No information is available relative to how adaptation continues beyond that time frame. Because no male offenders were under the age of 18 when their offenses were committed and no female offenders were included in the sampling frame, no information was obtained as to how females and younger members of the LWOP population adapt.

Because interviews were conducted during a one-time contact with informants, the opportunity to establish rapport with those who volunteered may have been less than if multiple contacts had been possible. Issues related to trust factors and respondent bias may also present a limitation. Respondents may have been less than fully candid when

describing coping behaviors that involve violations of prison rules, such as use of alcohol or drugs or engaging in consensual or forced sexual activity with others. Several informants chose to disclose contacts with mental health staff, but declined to comment further about the nature of those contacts. This may have been because trust had not yet been established or it was possibly associated with concerns that despite all assurances to the contrary, information disclosed would be shared with employees of Lebanon Correctional Institution.

Quantitative and qualitative study of opinions of state prison wardens.

Several limitations are noted in regards to the study of the opinions of state prison wardens. The response rate was somewhat lower than had originally been hoped. In all, 179 useable surveys were received from respondents resulting in a 41.6% response rate that fell short of the initial goal of reaching at least a 51% rate. The need to keep the survey relatively short to increase the chances that wardens would respond resulted in fewer items being included than might have been preferred. Including additional choices on the items that provided data for the Life without Parole Amenities Index could have made it possible to develop that instrument as a scale rather than an index and both the Life without Parole Amenities Index and the Life without Parole Future Dangerousness Scale might have benefitted from the inclusion of additional items.

Directions for future research

Despite limitations, the results of this study will primarily serve as the basis for further research about the population of offenders serving life without parole in an effort to determine if there are special concerns about health and wellness, psychological and emotional adjustment, physical safety, social support networks, and other areas where

adjustment may be adaptive, difficult, or maladaptive. It is hoped that this will help social workers employed or volunteering in prison settings to better understand the experiences of clients who are serving sentences of life without parole. The results may also assist practitioners to help educate clients who are serving LWOP sentences as to what they possibly may experience, particularly as this relates to problem areas frequently encountered, important milestones that may be identified, or adaptive behaviors that have seemed to work well for others. Prison administrators may also benefit from the knowledge gained from this study. Those who manage prisons are responsible for the safety of prisoners, staff, visitors, and the general public. By developing an increased understanding of the situations of those serving LWOP, it may result in that population being managed in the least restrictive manner needed to ensure safety while still maximizing the opportunity to provide for the well-being of those offenders who will never be released from prison.

Further research regarding how certain identifiable groups among the life without parole population adapt is also warranted. Potential areas of focus could include older prisoners, those serving LWOP for sex offenses, prisoners with mental health problems, or those with chronic health concerns. Measuring the extent of hopelessness and depression with standardized instruments might provide valuable information for prison advocates that could perhaps result in more amenities provided in prisons where conditions supporting positive mental health are the worst.

The study of the attitudes and opinions of state prison wardens adds a new element to the knowledge of wardens' perspectives and their views about managing the LWOP offender population. This gap in our knowledge about wardens had not been

addressed previously and this study serves as a starting point upon which to build. Future research could take the form of expanded analysis of the factors examined in this study or the identification of other possible contributing variables not included in this research. An area of particular importance could involve determining what knowledge wardens actually have about the life without parole offender population. Are their opinions derived from empirical knowledge or have they been influenced by anecdotal information about the situations of particular individuals who somehow came to their attention? Research into how wardens actually do make decisions that affect those serving life without parole sentences would also be of potential benefit. For example, are their actions reasoned or intuitive? Do wardens impose discretionary restrictions on LWOP prisoners' work or cell assignments? Are prisoners serving LWOP less likely to be approved for a reduction in security than others serving long sentences? Are LWOP prisoners more likely to be approved for a security increase than others who will be incarcerated for lengthy periods? More studies are needed to examine how those serving life without parole sentences are *actually* managed.

Appendix A
Contact Letter to Potential Participants

(Insert date)

(Insert name and number of inmate)
Lebanon Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 56
Lebanon, OH 45036

Dear (Insert name):

My name is Glenn Abraham and I am a doctoral student at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky. I am conducting a research study at Lebanon Correctional Institution about how adult male inmates sentenced to life in prison without the chance of parole adapt to being in prison. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are serving a sentence of that type.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You will not be paid and you will not receive any other kind of reward if you decide to volunteer. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 30 people to do so. If you decide that you do not want to volunteer, there will be no negative consequences of any kind.

The research procedures will be done at Lebanon Correctional Institution. If you volunteer to participate, you will be interviewed one time during the study. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is the 60 to 75 minutes you spend at that interview.

The information you provide will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When I write about the study to share it with other researchers, I will write about the combined information I have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. I may publish the results of this study; however, I will keep your name and other identifying information private.

You will be asked to answer a number of questions that relate to how you adapt to being in prison. This may include questions about how you get along with prison staff and other inmates. You may be asked what you do in your free time. There will be questions about how often you receive visits or mail from family or friends. You may be asked about prison programs in which you have been involved. There will be questions about how you feel about your work or school assignment. You will also be asked about other things that may make it easier or more difficult for you to adjust to being in prison.

Appendix A
Contact Letter to Potential Participants (page 2)

(Insert name and number of inmate)

Page 2

(Insert date)

A tape recording will be done at the interview. Persons who do not wish to be tape recorded will not be interviewed. The following process will be used:

- All interviews will be conducted in a private room with no other people present. The room that will be used will be one in which a discussion in a normal tone of voice can be conducted without someone outside the room being able to hear.
- The interviewer will assign each person who participates a code number (for example, LeCI-001, LeCI-002, etc.).
- When the tape recording begins, the interviewer will identify himself by name, the date, and the code number which you have been assigned. Your name will not be spoken while the tape recorder is on.
- The tape recorder and all tapes used will remain in the possession of the interviewer at all times. They will not be stored at Lebanon Correctional Institution and no member of the prison staff will be permitted to listen to them.
- All tape recordings will be stored by Glenn Abraham in a secure location away from Lebanon Correctional Institution. They will remain in his possession except when being converted to a written record. The person who will convert the tape recordings to a written record is not an employee of Lebanon Correctional Institution or the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. That person will have no connection with anyone employed at Lebanon Correctional Institution and will not have any access to the list of names that goes with the code numbers on the tape recordings.

Tape recordings will be kept for 30 days after a written record has been made so they can be checked for accuracy. The tape recordings will then be destroyed.

Please complete the enclosed form and return it to me in the envelope provided. This form will tell me if you are interested in volunteering to participate in this research study or if you would like to discuss the research study further before making a decision. You may also mail me the form if you do not wish to volunteer. If I do not hear from you, I will assume that you are not interested in participating and I will not contact you again. If you indicate that you wish to volunteer or that you would like to discuss this further, I will schedule you for an interview in the near future.

Sincerely,

Glenn J. Abraham, M.S.W.

Enclosures (2)

Appendix B
Invitation to Participate in Research Study

(Insert date)

Title of Research Study: Adaptation Patterns of Adult Male Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole

You have been invited to participate in a research study about how adult male inmates sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole adapt to being in prison.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You will not be given any payment or rewards for participating and there are no negative consequences if you choose not to participate.

Please return this form in the envelope that was provided.

Thank you for your assistance.

Glenn J. Abraham, M.S.W.
University of Kentucky College of Social Work

Name: _____

Institution Number: _____

Please check one of the following boxes:

- Yes, I am interested in volunteering to participate in this research study.
- No, I am not interested in volunteering to participate in this research study.
- I am uncertain if I wish to volunteer to participate in this research study. Please schedule an appointment so that I may discuss this further before making a decision.

Appendix C
Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

University of Kentucky

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

TITLE OF STUDY

Adaptation Patterns of Adult Male Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

My name is Glenn Abraham and I am a doctoral student at the University of Kentucky College of Social Work in Lexington, Kentucky. I am conducting a research study about how adult male inmates sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole adapt to incarceration. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are serving a sentence of that type. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 30 people to do so.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

The person in charge of this study is Glenn Abraham, M.S.W., of the University of Kentucky College of Social Work. He is being guided in this research by David Royse, Ph.D. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

By doing this study, we hope to learn more about how adult male inmates who are serving sentences of Life without Parole adapt to being incarcerated.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

The only people who are eligible to take part in this study are male inmates who are serving sentences of Life without Parole. Your participation is completely voluntary.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The research procedures will be conducted at Lebanon Correctional Institution. If you volunteer to participate, you will be issued a pass to come to the room where interviews are conducted one time during the study. This interview will take about 60 to 75 minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is the 60 to 75 minutes you spend at that interview.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to answer a number of questions that relate to how you adapt to being incarcerated. This may include questions about how you get along with prison staff and other inmates, what you do in your free time, how frequently you receive visits from family or friends, your participation in prison programs, your feelings about your work assignment or school participation, and other issues that may make it easier or more difficult for you to adjust to being incarcerated.

An audio recording will be done at the interview. Persons who do not wish to be audio recorded will not be interviewed. The following process will be used:

- All interviews will be conducted in a private room with no other people present. The only rooms that will be used will be those in which a discussion in a normal tone of voice can be conducted without someone outside the room being able to hear.
- The interviewer will assign each person who participates a code number (for example, LeCI-001, LeCI-002, etc.).
- When the audio recording begins, the interviewer will identify himself by name and will indicate the date and the code number which you have been assigned. Your name will not be spoken on the audio recording.
- The recording device and any tapes or digital memory cards used will remain in the possession of the interviewer at all times. They will not be stored at Lebanon Correctional Institution and no member of the prison staff will be permitted to listen to them.
- All audio recordings will be stored by Glenn Abraham in a secure location away from Lebanon Correctional Institution. They will remain in his possession except when being transcribed for a written record. The person who will transcribe the audio recordings is not an employee of Lebanon Correctional Institution or the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. That person will have no connection with anyone employed at Lebanon Correctional Institution and will not have any access to the list of names that goes with the code numbers on the audio recordings.
- Audio recordings will be kept for 30 days after they have been transcribed in order to allow the written record to be checked for accuracy. After accuracy has been determined, the audio recordings will be destroyed.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. Choosing to participate or to not participate will not affect your status in any way. You will not gain any benefits if you choose to volunteer and you will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. Your decision to participate or to not participate will not be reported to any court or other governmental entity that has the authority to modify your sentence.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. All records, both written and in audio recorded form, will be kept in a secure location by Glenn Abraham. None of those records will be stored at Lebanon Correctional Institution or at any other facility operated by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

We will keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if you report information about a child being abused or if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Also, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. The individuals conducting the study may need to withdraw you from the study. This may occur if you are not able to follow the directions they give you or if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you. You may withdraw at any time simply by saying that you no longer wish to participate. The interview will end at that point and any information already collected during that interview will not be used.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact Glenn Abraham at the following address: Glenn Abraham; University of Kentucky College of Social Work; 615 Patterson Office Tower; Lexington, KY 40506-0027.

If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

There are no other institutions or companies involved in the study through funding, cooperative research, or by providing supplies or equipment.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent

Date

Appendix D
Research Interview Guide

Data Collection Instrument

Adaptation Patterns of Adult Male Inmates Serving
Sentences of Life without Parole

Qualitative Research Interview Guide
Glenn J. Abraham, Principal Investigator

■ Demographic Information

- Name and institution number
- Offense(s)
- Date of incarceration
- Length of time at Lebanon Correctional Institution
- Race
- Age
- Marital/other relationship status
- Children
- Prison disciplinary record
- Prior adult incarcerations

■ Within Institution Factors

- Interactions with staff (Positive, Neutral, Negative)
 - Corrections Officers/Supervisors
 - Work Supervisors
 - Unit Management Staff
 - Other Staff Members
- Interactions with inmates (Positive, Neutral, Negative)
 - Cellmates
 - Friends and associates (Note if any are family members)
 - Other inmates encountered in cell block, recreation areas, work area, etc.
- Thoughts and feelings about:
 - Housing assignment
 - Work assignment
 - Academic or vocational education assignment
 - Institutional environment/quality of life factors

- Contacts with professional services within the institution
 - Mental Health Services
 - Recovery Services
 - Inmate Health Care Services
 - Religion Services
 - Education Department
 - Other
- Contacts with volunteers or representatives of community organizations/agencies providing services at the institution
- Use of leisure time
 - Desire for solitude
 - Desire to be part of group activities or interactions
- Social support network within institution (Positive or Negative)
 - Characteristics of support system members
- Outside Institution Factors
- Relationships with family
 - Quality of current relationship with family
 - Quality of relationship with family prior to incarceration
- Relationships with friends and important others
 - Quality of current relationships with friends and important others outside the institution
 - Quality of relationships with friends and important others prior to incarceration
- Contacts through visits, mail, and telephone calls
 - Does subject desire contact with family, friends, and important others?
 - Frequency of contacts
 - Barriers to contacts (Distance, financial resources, etc.)
 - Reaction to contacts with others
 - Does contact cause the subject to feel more connected with those outside the institution or make him feel worse because he is separated from them?
- Social support network outside of institution (Positive or Negative)
- General Issues
- What does the subject miss most? Is it something that he would have expected to miss?
- Does the subject believe he will have any chance of an early release?

- Perspective on religion or spirituality
- Feelings about a social support network (Is he wanting to “make it on his own” or is there a desire to have a support network? If a support network is desired but is not currently in place, what efforts are being made to find/create a support network?)
- What factors enhance the ability to cope?
- What factors make coping more difficult?

Appendix E
Cover Letter to Wardens

(Insert name and address of correctional facility here)

(Insert date)

Dear Warden (Insert name here):

The enclosed survey was sent to you as part of a research study I am conducting on beliefs and opinions of prison wardens. My name is Glenn Abraham, M.S.W., and I am a student in the doctoral program in the College of Social Work at the University of Kentucky. The name of this study is "Attitudes of State Prison Wardens Regarding Inmates Serving Sentences of Life without Parole: Beliefs about Amenities and Future Dangerousness". The correctional facility at which you serve was randomly selected - along with approximately 400 other institutions housing adult felony offenders - from *The American Correctional Association 2008 Directory: Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies, and Probation and Parole Authorities*.

Although you will not get personal benefit from taking part in this research study, your responses may help me understand more about opinions prison wardens have about certain amenities that could be made available to those serving sentences of life without parole. Your responses may also help me better understand prison wardens' beliefs about the future dangerousness of those serving sentences of life without parole and if those individuals should be managed through assignment to high levels of security and custodial supervision or if they should be eligible to be housed in facilities where there is lower security and less supervision.

I hope to receive completed questionnaires from about 250 people, so your answers are important. Of course, you have a choice about whether or not to complete the survey, but if you do participate, you are free to skip any questions or discontinue at any time.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Your response to the survey is anonymous which means no names will appear or be used on research documents, or be used in presentations or publications. The research team will not know that any information you provided came from you, nor even whether you participated in the study.

If you have questions about the study, please feel free to ask; my contact information is given below. If you have complaints, suggestions, or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the University of Kentucky Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9426.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important project.

To ensure your responses/opinions will be included, please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return your completed survey by (Insert date).

Sincerely,

Glenn J. Abraham, M.S.W.
College of Social Work, University of
Kentucky
PHONE: 859-257-6659
E-MAIL: gjalisw@att.net

Appendix F
Life without Parole Survey

Life without Parole Survey

The first set of questions seek your opinions about the amenities that might be available to inmates serving sentences of life without parole.

1. In your opinion, should inmates serving sentences of life without parole be permitted to participate in the following?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult basic education programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	High school/GED programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	College courses
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vocational training in skill areas utilized by the institution
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vocational training in skill areas not utilized by the institution

2. Do you believe inmates serving sentences of life without parole should be housed in areas separate from other inmates as a means of making their adjustment to prison easier?
- Yes
 No
 Undecided
3. Do you believe special programs should be provided to assist inmates serving sentences of life without parole to adapt to the reality that they are likely to remain in prison until the time of their death?
- Yes
 No
 Undecided

Next, I would like to ask about your opinions regarding the degree of dangerousness to others that inmates serving sentences of life without parole possibly present.

4. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are so dangerous that they should be housed at a facility exclusively used for that population if possible to do so.
-
- Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are often a positive influence on those inmates serving lesser sentences.
-
- Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are more likely to be dangerous to *prison staff* than are those inmates serving lesser sentences.
- Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole are more likely to be dangerous to *other inmates* than are those inmates serving lesser sentences.
- Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. Inmates serving sentences of life without parole pose a greater escape risk than those inmates serving lesser sentences.
- Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. What is the lowest security level at which inmates serving sentences of life without parole should be eligible to be classified?
- Minimum
 Medium
 Close, Maximum, Super-Maximum

The final set of questions will help us to understand some general characteristics of our respondents and to analyze the data we collect. Please also complete these questions.

10. Gender:
- Male
 Female
11. Race:
- White
 Black
 Asian
 Other -- Specify: _____
12. Age: _____
13. Education:
- High school diploma/GED or less
 Some college but no degree
 Bachelor's Degree
 Some graduate work but no degree
 Master's Degree
 Doctorate or J.D.
14. Total of all time served as a warden:
 Years _____ Months _____

15. Have you ever served as a correctional officer?
 Yes -- Number of years _____
 No
16. Have you worked 1 year or longer in a treatment position (e.g., mental health, social services, case management services)?
 Yes
 No
17. How would you describe your general political philosophy?
 Conservative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Liberal
18. Inmate population at current institution:
 Male
 Female
 Both Male and Female
19. Security level of current institution. If multiple level, please mark the highest.
 Minimum
 Medium
 Close, Maximum, Super-Maximum
20. Have you served as the warden at any facility that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole?
 Yes -- Number of years _____
 No
21. If you answered "No" to Question 20, have you served in a capacity other than warden at any facility that housed inmates serving sentences of life without parole?
 Yes -- Number of years _____
 No
22. Are there inmates serving sentences of life without parole at your current institution?
 Yes
 No
23. Which of the following is, in your opinion, the most important mission of prison?
 Rank these statements from 1 to 4.
 _____ Retribution (to punish offenders for the harm they have caused society)
 _____ Incapacitation (to protect society by putting criminals behind bars)
 _____ Rehabilitation (to reform offenders so that they return to society able to work and contribute)
 _____ Deterrence (to teach criminals as well as other people contemplating breaking the law that crime does not pay)

24. What could be done to help this population adjust to being in prison with a life without parole sentence?

25. What is the largest problem you see with this population of inmates serving sentences of life without parole?

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