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Narratives of Adjustment and Adaptation of older males with Life Sentences

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John Taglianetti

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Abstract

Narratives of Adjustment and Adaptation Among Older Men With Life Sentences

by

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MPhL, Walden University

MA, Villanova University

BA, La Salle University

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The United States holds over 40% of the world's population of men serving life in prison. There are far more men serving life today than the total prison population just decades ago. Scholarly debate research on the adaptation and adjustment of men serving life without the possibility of parole is sparse, and very little literature was available from the inmates' perspective. Most scholarly literature addressed stakeholders' views on how the prison environment influenced adaptation. This research was designed to answer the LWOPs' perspective on adaptation and adjustment while imprisoned and how they described their present and ongoing adaptation and adjustment experiences. A narrative approach was used to develop a semi-structured interview instrument to collect data from 10 inmate participants for this qualitative research. Each participant was assigned an alpha-numeric identified to protect the identity. The interview transcripts' narrative, thematic analysis were hand-coded to determine the eight categories/themes. I found the meaning of the themes was sufficient because the small size was conducive to rich, in-depth exploration that would have been impossible with larger groups. The findings indicated common themes in the men's accounts, demonstrating from their perspective positive adaptation, adjustment, finding new meaning in life, and most importantly, the hope for release and the ability to achieve a second chance. This study provided insight into the positive psychological and social effects of the adaptive processes and supplemented past studies with qualitative data on experiences. Results may contribute to positive social change by providing prison administrators with a better understanding of LWOPs' perspectives.

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Dedication

This dedication is to my wife, Julie, the most fantastic human being in the universe. Without her, I would accomplish nothing. I also dedicate this to my children and grandchildren, who motivate me to strive for perfection-seeking to make the world a better place.

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Moreover, to the gentlemen serving life sentences (LWOP) worldwide, you are a symbol of hope demonstrated through your unending resilience; this too shall pass.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

There are more than 2,185,008 inmates in American prisons. Of those, 161,957 older men serve a sentence of life or life without the possibility of parole. A review of existing literature revealed that researchers' descriptions vary and that they refer to this sentence by one of several names: life without the possibility of parole (LWOP), death in prison (DIP), death by incarceration (DBI), the other death penalty (ODP) and virtual life sentences. There are three primary types of sentences: (a) LWOP sentences, (b) life sentences with restrictive parole practices in certain jurisdictions, and (c) virtual life sentences (Henry, 2012). The terminology of men serving life sentences is meant to identify men who have been sentenced to LWOP, DBI, virtual life, or life in prison (Crewe, 2015). This study focused on older men serving a life sentence in a maximum-security prison in Eastern Pennsylvania. Death sentences by any other name using all the various acronyms and descriptions add up to the same outcome: the man will die in prison without ever finishing his sentence (Nellis, 2013).

While scholars have highlighted the negative consequences of mass incarceration, research has not documented the social, psychological, and behavioral changes among older male inmates with sentences throughout their imprisonment and their lived experiences with adjustment and adaptation (Sliva, 2015). Kazemian and Travis (2015) identified a gap in research on the adjustment and adaptation processes during long periods of incarceration. This phenomenon is significant to consider among a population of those serving life and sentences, given that they spend a substantial number of years incarcerated and therefore have more opportunities for adaptation and adjustment. For

most of these inmates, significant changes may occur in their lives as they develop as human beings as they focus on developing and exhibiting a prosocial attitude.

To provide new insight into this marginalized population, the purpose of this study explores the perspectives of older men with life sentences and correct the fact that researchers, policymakers, and the public have, according to Crewe (2015), overlooked this segment of the prison population. In doing so, they have ignored the potential benefits of addressing this population's needs and did not attempt to understand the relevant ethical issues. As Tonry (2011) suggested, this issue primarily pertains to human rights and social justice. These inmates can make valuable contributions and can contribute to the development of a healthier prison climate.

As Kazemian and Travis (2015) have suggested, not all research has identified psychological deterioration in prisoners' adjustment processes across their time incarcerated. MacKenzie and Goodstein (1985) found that those with life and sentences, who have spent long years in prison, develop coping mechanisms to adapt to the incarceration experience. This chapter offers an expanded review of the study's purpose, relevant background, a problem statement, and the research questions I used to guide the inquiry.

Background

There is a lack of qualitative research on older male inmates' incarceration experiences from their perspectives. This lacuna limits the ability of prison administrators to implement interventions that meet the needs of this population. This study addressed this gap in existing knowledge by exploring older male inmates' perspectives on life

sentences concerning adaptation and adjustment. It provided novel insight into a frequently overlooked population's experience while imprisoned. The number of older people incarcerated has increased exponentially over the past two decades (Luallen & Cutler, 2017). Smoyer et al. (2019) noted that the United States incarcerates men at a higher rate than any other nation in the world. Most studies on disproportionately affected populations have focused on young men, ignoring that approximately 42% of the nearly 2 million incarcerated men are over 50. The current number of lifers incarcerated is 161,957 (Carson, 2016; Carson & Sabol, 2016).

Research has shown that because of the effects of experiences encountered while serving life sentences, the older men appear 15 years older than their actual chronological age in mental health and physical health (Hayes et al., 2012). Compared to men who are not incarcerated, this severe and accelerated aging occurs due to stress, adversity, general poor health, and other stressors (Maschi & Aday, 2010). While a handful of studies addressed the incarcerated older male population, they have focused solely on mental health and relied on data collected from prison records, guards, administrators, and various other stakeholders or custodial staff, neglecting the prisoners' subjectivity Vollm & Deming, 2017).

Current research includes minimal data on how older male inmates cope with incarceration and achieve positive adjustment and adaptation processes. In psychology, Dhimi (2017) stated that adaptation is defined as a process by which individuals or groups make necessary or desired changes—cognitive, behavioral, and affective—in response to new environmental conditions or demands to meet basic needs, function, and

maintain a good quality of life. The process of adaptation to imprisonment is almost always painful and, at times, creates habits of thinking and acting that can be dysfunctional (Dhami, 2015). Understanding this topic regarding older men serving life sentences is relatively limited, and there are still several gaps in knowledge that necessitated further inquiry. While Kazemian (2015) identified many correlations of adjustment to prison, outcomes are still understudied, and inconsistent. Kazemian also that learning more about how prisoners experience and cope with prison life is essential to understanding and improving inmate adjustment to the practices to enhance prisons' efficiency. Therefore, this narrative exploration centered on the perspectives of older LWOPs. It presents data on how older adapt to and adjust to experience their lives while incarcerated.

While managing a life of incarceration can deteriorate as prisoners age, aspects of the prison life become increasingly beneficial throughout the adaptation process, such as education, anger management, drug, and alcohol abuse prevention (Aday, 2014). However, most long-term prisoners are excluded from educational and reentry programs in the current correctional system because basic rehabilitative programs are offered to prisoners with shorter sentences. Research studies about older LWOPs have addressed and documented mental and physical health needs and the lack of prisons' resources to address these needs (Flatt et al., 2017). Therefore, an increased understanding of LWOPs' experiences would encourage prisons to improve access to rehabilitative programs for this population to help meet their adaptive needs.

Problem Statement

The primary research problem addressed in this dissertation is that the most recent literature concerning men serving life sentences overlooks the importance of the inmates' perspectives on their adjustment and adaptation experience, which has resulted in their positive behavior and social change. Roque et al. (2014) noted that future research should investigate more determinants of the inmates' social changes. Nellis (2017) indicated that thousands of life sentences are being ignored: they are not considered for commutation and are assumed to be incapable of changing their ways. Di Lorito et al. (2018) conducted a review and found only 25 studies on incarcerated older adults, and only 16 included qualitative data. Among the 16 qualitative documents, just two were peer-reviewed and about older male inmates. Di Lorito et al. noted that this illustrates the need for future research incorporating incarcerated individuals' perspectives to encourage effective interventions (Haugebrook et al., 2010).

Smoyer (2019) reported that the qualitative analysis would inspire action by adding voice to quantitative data in policy and programs. According to Dhami et al. (2007), most individuals with long-term sentences are likely to die in prison. While adaptation and adjustment are critical psychological concepts to advance an understanding of the rehabilitation process, existing research has not sufficiently addressed individuals' adaptation and adjustment experiences with sentences (Crank, 2014). According to Leigy (2015), current studies have addressed prison administrators' views on adaptation and adjustment among the population rather than providing the incarcerated individuals' perspectives. According to advocates, these sentences are less

expensive than imposing the death penalty and provide an appropriate protection level to the public from dangerous criminals (Nellis, 2013). However, opponents argued that sentences disregard the value of the remainder of the prisoner's natural life and eliminate the possibility of that person reforming and becoming a functioning member of society (Mauer & Nellis, 2018). This narrative exploration will focus on older male inmates' adaptation and adjustment experiences serving life sentences to address this gap in the existing literature.

Purpose of the Study

This study's primary objective was to understand perspectives and experiences regarding adaptation and adjustment among older men with life sentences in the United States. Further, the purpose of this study was also to provide insight into the positive psychological and social effects of adaptive processes. This study supplemented past studies with qualitative data on lived experiences and first-person narratives of how older men serving life sentences adjust and adapt during their prison experience. The current lack of attention to the older men's LWOP incarceration experience in most studies muted their voices, prevented understanding of how to meet their needs better, and inhibited the development of potential interventions (Haugebrook et al., 2010).

While the ability to positively cope with a life of incarceration can deteriorate with aging, aspects of the prison life also improved based on this long-term adaptation process (Aday, 2014). The improvement in adaptation entailed coping mechanisms like educational programs, helping other younger inmates, religiosity, artistic expressions, and eventual commutation. Compared to nonincarcerated men, those with life sentences

exhibit much poorer health and accelerated decline due to stress, adversity, and general poor health (Maschi and Aday, 2014).

This study's results inform both practice and theory about the imprisonment of older men in the United States and help instigate changes to prison policy, programming, and research. The narrative method utilized will also rely on the scholarly literature available with similar phenomena providing my framework in reviewing the dialogue with my participants. The literature substantiated the research problem, but it did not constrain reporting my participants' views.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the narratives of adaptation and adjustment in older men with life sentences?

RQ2: How do older males with life sentences describe their present and ongoing adaptation and adjustment experience?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

In this study, I employed the adaptation theory as the theoretical framework. I used a theoretical lens to explore the lifers' perspectives and to understand their experiences. Older men with LWOP sentences realize they must change their ways, and engaging factors (like religion, education, and socialization) help facilitate adaptation and adjustment. This study was based on Clemmer's (1940) adaptation theory, used in various fields, including psychology and criminology. Clemmer's research suggested that prisonization thwarted attempts to rehabilitate convicts and inspired behavior contrary to accepted social conduct standards.

Clemmer was neither the first nor the last to describe this philosophical flaw in legal incarceration. Indeed, his assessment of the problem has been a recurring theme in the literature of criminal corrections. Taylor (1983), who expanded the Clemmer hypothesis, suggested that severe personal setbacks can recover from adversity wholly and quickly through adaptation. Adaptation requires adaptation and adjustment by examining the lived experience of older, long-term prisoners. According to Taylor's theory, all human beings are extraordinarily resilient. When faced with major threatening life events such as life in prison, men will adapt to their environment in a way that fosters their well-being. Taylor's suggests that humans cope with threats in their lives by creating a set of positive concepts or illusions, which serve to protect their psychological health. According to Taylor, these positively slanted cognitions create space for hope, personal growth, and flexibility. This adaptation involves changing cognitions in three domains: searching for deeper meaning in the experience, increasing individual control, and restoring positive self-views.

For this study, adaptation theory as a framework facilitated insight into adaptation's practical function and adjustment to positive change among long-term inmates. The knowledge obtained supported adjustment and adaptation as necessary elements in exploring the mechanism that leads to behavior change and positive outcomes among long-term inmates.

Definition of Terms

Accommodation: When people encounter information that is entirely new or challenges their existing ideas, they achieve accommodation by changing their mental

representations to fit the latest information. They form a new schema to accommodate the data and alter their existing mental categories (Crank, 2014).

Adaptation: In psychology, adaptation is a process by which individuals or groups make necessary or desired changes—cognitive, behavioral, and affective—in response to new environmental conditions or demands to meet basic needs, function, and maintain a good quality of life.

Adjustment: The processes of decision-making and value judgments. For this study, the emphasis of adjustment will be on understanding practical methods for handling relationships, using coping devices for inmates, and enhancing the psychological resources for personal change and growth.

Assimilation: This occurs when people take in new ideas and convert them to fit their current views. People possess concepts or schemas that they use to understand the world surrounding them.

Cognitive theories: Cognitive theories of psychology focus on internal states, such as motivation, problem-solving, decision-making, thinking, and attention. Such approaches strive to explain different mental processes, including how the mind processes information.

Coping: Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed as coping strategies or coping skills. The term coping generally refers to adaptive (constructive) coping strategies: strategies that reduce stress. In contrast, other coping strategies may be understood as maladaptive if they increase stress.

(<https://psychologydictionary.org/coping>)

Humanistic theories: Humanistic psychology theories began to grow in popularity during the 1950s. While earlier theories often focused on abnormal behavior and psychological problems, humanist ideas instead emphasized human beings' essential goodness. Some of the significant humanist theorists included Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow

Institutionalization: The phenomenon that arises from existing within a prison environment with structured days, reduced freedoms, and a complete lifestyle change that the inmate was previously accustomed. "Institutionalization refers to the process by which inmates are shaped and transformed by the institutional environments in which they live...it is the shorthand expression for the adverse psychological effects of imprisonment" (Mound, 2017, p. 122).

Life without the possibility of parole (LWOP): Also termed *death by incarceration* (DBI), these acronyms are used interchangeably in this study to describe the experience of without the possibility of parole.

Narrative research: A strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies individuals' lives and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their experiences. The researcher often retold or restored this information into a narrative chronology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Prisonization: The process of accepting the culture and social life of prison society. It can be described as a process whereby newly institutionalized offenders accept prison lifestyles and criminal values. Prisonization forms an informal inmate code

Assumptions

Throughout my knowledge and work experience in corrections, I have developed several philosophical assumptions. Relevant assumptions included that adaptation and adjustment are positive experiences for older men with LWOP sentences. Interview subjects will accurately relate their experiences during the interview, and I must continue to be mindful of the need for objectivity. It was necessary to be aware of assumptions, identify them, and understand their potential influence on research validity and transferability. As the data was based on open-ended interviews, I relied on the participants' quotes and remarks as evidence. While analyzing the data from the subjective interviews and interpretation, I assumed the participants' comments and explanations to be truthful.

Scope and Delimitations

This study was designed to explore, observe, and understand older men's narratives serving life sentences in maximum-security prisons. The data included observations during interviews as inmates respond to semi structured interview questions. Simultaneously, I noted context, language, behavior, an interviewee's appearance, and demeanor. The participants were all over 50 years of age and had served a minimum of twenty-five years of maximum-security incarceration. Because this study was focused on a small group of inmates, it may not be possible to transfer results to any specific inmates' sub-populations. Specifically, this study's findings did not apply to female LWOPs or prisoners on other types of sentences. This research was presented in such a manner as to enhance the possibility of transferability. This research focused on the

inmate population's perspectives rather than those of correction officials, legislators, politicians, guards, and other stakeholders. I remained mindful of the possible influence of my experience and views and observe this in the interpretation.

Limitations

I hoped to mitigate the possibility of participants' false statements by stressing the importance of honest and detailed explanations from the participants. Researchers seek to avoid this possibility in their participant selection and reiterating the examples found in the letters of intent, confidentiality documents, and verbal assertions before the interview.

I remained aware of the possible limitations stated by Creswell (2015) that potential for research bias and credibility issues are inherent in a qualitative study because the data analysis is interpreted through subjective interpretations. The interviews examined the adjustments and adaptations which occurred from the viewpoints of the incarcerated. As a former member of the Prison Society, I had to be constantly aware of potential bias. This situation was also reviewed by my peers and dissertation chair to avoid any evidence of bias. At all times, as the researcher, I had to be mindful of the possibility of credibility issues because of the subjectivity involved in historical research. Reflexivity is relevant to this study because I am involved in prison society by performing pro-bono instructions on the commutation process. Therefore, I must strive for objectivity, remain mindful of potential bias, stay true to the interview plan, and distance myself to remain objective (Georgi, 2009).

The major weakness or limitation in this study is that of what is known as soft data. The research and data were interpreted by me and could be subject to any bias or inaccuracy. Also, because I utilized open-ended interview questions, the participants have control over what data I collect. I was also unable to verify the results objectively. Finally, the entire process of one-on-one interviews several months and was very time-consuming.

Significance

This study addressed a gap in existing knowledge by exploring the perspectives of older men serving LWOP sentences concerning adaptation and adjustment and provide novel insight into a frequently overlooked population's experience while imprisoned. Laub and Sampson (2016) stated that adaptation and adjustment experiences are important psychological concepts concerning crime and rehabilitation over time and are best understood through qualitative data. Decisions to award parole or commute sentences are based on the extent to which an incarcerated individual has been "rehabilitated" during their experience in prison, and adaptation and adjustment are vital psychological concepts for understanding this process. Laub and Sampson have suggested that prison administrators accept this type of additional knowledge and consider using it to reduce offending behaviors, diminish the detrimental impacts of prison sentences, and foster positive behavioral change.

Therefore, this study's results may provide insights that can explain the population's experiences and rehabilitation among prison administrators and other stakeholders in the corrections context. An increased account of adaptation and

adjustment experiences among individuals serving sentences can encourage the public, prison administrators, and legislators to realize that positive social change is possible and does occur among this population. Further, this insight might help remove barriers to applying for commutation and encourage relevant stakeholders to grant permission for these applications, reducing the number of individuals with sentences who die in prison. This study might inspire new programs to be implemented, which could help remove parole barriers and increase commutation rates. The results of this study may enlighten prison officials regarding effective ways to develop an environment that stimulates transformation. Such programming could help ensure the welfare of inmates and shift prisons' focus from punishment to rehabilitation. Overall, gaining an improved understanding of these experiences will advance knowledge of a necessary and understudied adaptation and adjustment phenomenon.

Summary and Conclusions

This narrative research study uses a prison environment setting to advance researchers' and prison administrators' recognition of adaptation and adjustment as essential factors in demonstrating long-term inmates' rehabilitation. The existing studies are predominately quantitative, outdated, and conducted in the European rather than the American context. Further, previous qualitative studies predominately addressed prison administrators' perspectives, rather than those of inmates. To address this gap, the purpose of this study was to provide first-person perspectives on adaptation and adjustment among long-term inmates gathered from face-to-face interviews. The next

chapter will review extant literature relevant to adjustment and adaptation to the long-term imprisonment of inmates.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study's objective was to explore and explain the necessity, catalysts, adaptation process, and adjustment of incarcerated men serving life sentences in maximum-security prisons and illustrate their relevant perspectives. Addressing the incarcerated individuals' perspectives facilitated collecting information about positive and negative aspects of this population's adjustment and adaptation during the incarceration experience. In researching this vulnerable population in a maximum-security prison, it is essential to understand the consequences of imprisonment, an immediate result of which is the loss of personal control and the right to make choices (Singer, 2011). This chapter provides a literature review of existing research related to older serving LWOP sentences in maximum-security prisons.

Literature Search Strategy

In some instances, it was necessary to utilize existing literature to develop a theoretical framework. According to Bonfield et al. (2018), it is essential to ensure articles are peer-reviewed, current, and relevant to the problem, purpose, and theoretical concept of the study; and indicate a knowledge gap. I conducted a literature review of material pertinent to the adaptation theory theoretical framework. Phrases searched included: *aging out, prisoners' concern with dying, old age behind bars, elder incarceration, criminal identity, criminal behavior, criminal persistence, criminal desistance, living a healthy life in prison, personality changes, prisoner making good, identity change during imprisonment, contribution to self and identity, identity change while imprisoned, prosocial prisoners, long-term inmates' identity, seeking redemption,*

the turning point in prisoners, coping style and self-efficacy, relationship, desistance, resilience and coping, life-span differences in inmates, maturation of long-term inmates, the effect of time served, peer-support in prison, criminal identity insights, the impact of time served, offender characteristics, life without parole, death penalty opposition, identity through time, the meaning of life, predicting recidivism, doing life, negotiated identities of prisoners, prisoners' social needs, adaptation theory, lifers and death, and death.

I performed a digital keyword search of the Library of Congress, using the expert search function to combine search terms using guided menus. I then reserved relevant research material for in-person review in the Adams library reading room. I also searched PsycArticles, Google Scholar, Criminal Justice Database, Thoreau Database, Sage Journal, EBSCO Host, Walden University Library, Villanova University Library, Free Library of Philadelphia, and ProQuest to obtain relevant peer-reviewed literature published between 2015 and 2020. I used the following keywords: *prison experience lived experiences, adaptation, adjustment, offending, transition, long-term prisoners, death by incarceration (DBI), imprisonment, life story interviews, and life-course criminology.*

Theoretical Framework

I used the adaptation theory in this study as a theoretical lens to explore the lifers' perspectives and understand participants' experiences. Older men with LWOP sentences realize they must change their ways, and engaging factors (e.g., religion, education, and socialization) help facilitate adaptation and adjustment. The inmates' positive

perspectives are also ignored in favor of other prison stakeholders' views, and only negative aspects are prioritized (Miszewski, 2017).

Clemmer (1940) provided the initial study utilizing adaptation as a theory. Adaptation theory is a fitting theoretical framework for this study because it facilitates understanding participants' experiences adapting and adjusting to prison over time. Adaptation theory is used in a variety of fields, including both psychology and criminology. As stated earlier, Clemmer's research suggested that prisonization thwarted attempts to rehabilitate convicts and inspired behavior contrary to accepted standards of social conduct. Clemmer was neither the first nor the last to describe this philosophical flaw in legal incarceration. Indeed, his assessment of the problem has been a recurring theme in the literature of criminal corrections. Followed by Harry Nelson (1984), an American psychologist and professor of psychology who is best known for his adaptation-level theory. He described adaptation as the ability to adjust to new experiences and information. According to Crewe (2017), frameworks for making sense of the processes by which prisoners adapt and react to imprisonment experience tend to be sociological or psychological.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

According to Webster (2015), Benjamin Franklin was the catalyst for prisons in the United States. In 1776, Franklin invited key men in Philadelphia to his home, and they decided to start the first prison in America: Eastern State Penitentiary. The prison did not separate people by gender, age, or other demographic factors in its early days. In some cases, men were in the same cell as women, and juveniles lived alongside older

people. The prison, designed like a Gothic castle, opened in 1829, becoming one of America's most expensive buildings. The first seven cellblocks were modern by American standards. The prison assigned inmates to individual cells, centrally heated, with running water and a flushing toilet. Interestingly, even the White House did not have running water until Andrew Jackson became president in 1829. In this first prison, incarcerated prisoners had skylights in their cells; the light from the skylight was intended to demonstrate to the inmates that they can still adapt and see good in their life (Webster, 2015).

Current Situation

Today, some 191 years later, the American criminal justice system holds 2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 109 federal prisons, 1,772 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,163 local jails, and 80 Indian Country jails, as well as in military prisons, immigration detention facilities, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the U.S. territories (Prison Policy Initiative, 2019). These numbers are large and have grown exponentially over the past three decades since incarceration rates are higher than rates of release and parole. According to the Sentencing Project (2020) report, the United States now holds an estimated 40% of the world population serving life imprisonment and 83% of those without parole. The expansion of life imprisonment in the United States has been a vital component of the exponential growth and development of mass incarceration life sentences in the United States.

According to Nellis (2017), the national life-serving population is 207,000 (10.9% of prison populations), exceeding the size of the entire prison population in 1970. In 24

states, there are far more people serving life sentences than were in prison overall in 1970; in an additional nine states, the life imprisonment total is within 100 people of the 1970 prison population. Today, over 207,000 men serve life sentences when, in 1970, the total prison population was only 197,000. The accelerated aging of the prison population (Maschi & Aday, 2014) is due to severe trauma, poor health management, and the population's stressors. They suggested that the U.S. prison system cannot handle the high costs and is unprepared to care for these prisoners.

Scarcity of Extant Data

According to Smoyer et al. (2019), extant research on how those serving sentences achieve positive adjustment and adaptation during incarceration is minimal. Increasing knowledge of inmate adjustment to prison practices is a viable way to improve prisons' efficiency. Understanding this topic is relatively limited, and there are still several gaps that warrant further inquiry. Most previous research relied on stakeholder groups' perspectives other than prisoners, which neglects inmates' subjectivity. More specifically, Smoyer et al. reported that only two were peer-reviewed and decades-old, of 16 qualitative studies related to this subject.

Although researchers have identified many aspects of prison adjustment, many predictors and outcomes are still understudied, and the results of existing studies have been inconsistent (Smoyer et al., 2019). Learning more about how older male prisoners serving life sentences adjust to and cope with prison life is essential to understanding how programs to enhance their ability to adapt can be implemented (Leigey, 2015). Inmate adjustment to prison is also necessary concerning several essential correctional practices:

explaining institutional infractions, health care utilization, and coping strategies (Goncalves, 2014).

Adaptation Mechanisms

According to Willis and Zaitlow (2015), surviving imprisonment is complicated and challenging for most who serve long sentences. LWOPs are individuals, and each man can have different adaptation mechanisms. Further, while persons serving life sentences include those sentenced to capital offenses, they also include those whose sentence length is questionable. LWOP sentences for nonviolent crimes misuse correctional resources and discounts the capacity for personal growth that results from time passage. Macchio (1994) reported that lifers experience tremendous tension at the commencement of their sentences. They must attempt to neutralize stress by learning prison subcultural norms during this initial period of incarceration. As a result of this effort, they bond with the prison world and adapt a prison code of behavior. This adaptation of a set attitude helps survive in the prison environment. Through a slow, cautious, and strategic process, they develop friendships with others also sentenced to life in prison. However, existing research has not accorded sufficient attention to this phenomenon of induction into the prison environment and the manifestation of a criminal or convict identity and that most lifers reject identifying as convicts, preferring to adopt the identity of a “lifer” (Macchio, 1994, p. x).

Flanagan (1995) noted that early studies suggested that the effects of extended prison stays were predictable. His study results were predicted to be negative, including personality deterioration, dependence on institutional life, and ever-increasing levels of

prisonization: also called an oppositional inmate value system. Flanagan stated that the changes that occur are, in contrast, observable but in an unexpectedly positive direction. He suggested that scholars' thinking about long-term incarceration's effect had come full circle from the early deterioration model. Flanagan's study demonstrated that many long termers successfully adapt and adjust, but the strategies they use to do so are not easy to deduce and even more difficult to classify.

How Prison Changes People

The effects of incarceration on inmates have not been sufficiently understood. Mackenzie and Goodstein (1985) stated that long-term confinement's adverse effects had not been demonstrated satisfactorily in any existing empirical research. They also indicated that they found no evidence of psychological deterioration over time, even though some transitional issues during the initial period of incarceration; ultimately, Mackenzie and Goodstein (1985) argued that lifers adapt successfully to life in prison. Haney (2001) noted that how the inmate adapts to the demands of being incarcerated contributes to what he calls prisonization. Wormith (1984), in reviewing sociological literature, claimed the prison experience is very complex and interactive. Wormith also stated that researchers should not embrace the practice of using terms like institutionalization or prisonization, nor should the researchers use any single model such as importation and deprivation. Porporino and Zamble (1984) said there is a need to expand our understanding of adaptation to the prison environment. They felt that literature focusing on the prison experience is deficient in advancing an understanding of adaptation or adjustment processes and change that occurs to the long-term inmate during

incarceration. Porporino and Zamble also stated that many other researchers have suggested that, while the prison experience contributes to prisoners' criminal self-identification, there is no explanation of how criminal or convict identity emerges.

Further, it is unclear why researchers fail to successfully adapt to the prison environment as a form of identity transformation. They also stated that further research is required that addresses transformation or behavioral change in the existing study and the effects of long-term incarceration. According to Porporino and Zamble (1984), the reason is that there is a variation of individual perspectives and coping strategies that affect how criminal self-identification emerges in prison.

Flanagan (1981) stated that living in prison for a prolonged period significantly affects long-term inmates. Adaptation to the prison environment occurs when prisoners adopt new behaviors, coping strategies, and attitudes. Smit et al. (2019) noted that adjustment becomes even more difficult because living with uncertainty about being released in the future exacerbates the difficulties of imprisonment. Smit et al. suggested that lifers tend to experience homelessness due to their sentences. However, Porporino and Zamble (1984) are critical of Flanagan, stating that researchers have failed to prove that individuals change due to lengthy incarceration. This research study might demonstrate the changes that occur during the imprisonment of long-term inmates.

As Miszewski (2017) suggested, most of the literature on LWOPs is dated (decades old) and deals with countries other than the United States. The inmates' positive perspectives are also ignored in favor of other prison stakeholders' views, and only negative aspects are prioritized. Miszewski (2017) also noted that the penitentiary policy

has always placed long-term prisoners at the very bottom of their priorities list. Long-term prisoners are usually excluded from educational programs, reentry programs, and basic rehabilitative programs afforded shorter sentences. Approximately 42% of the nearly 2 million men currently incarcerated are over age 50, and the current number of imprisoned individuals serving life sentences is 161,957 (Carson, 2016; Carson & Sabol, 2016). Though attention to the older male incarcerated population has increased somewhat, extant research has primarily addressed mental health and relied on data collected from stakeholders other than the inmates themselves (Kreager et al., 2017; Vollm and Deming, 2017).

Pains of Imprisonment

Most lifers face a lonely death while incarcerated, usually in their declining years when they are a minimal threat to society. According to Johnson and Tabriz (2011), a disturbing number of them will commit suicide as their means of escape. Johnson and Tabriz suggested that individuals serving life sentences, with rare exceptions, are a class of living dead. They are sentenced to lonely and untimely deaths due to traumatic stress and anxiety while incarcerated. However, Zamble (1992) studied lifers for 7 years and found that they did not exhibit negative adaptation in ways that would inhibit or make it more challenging to cope outside. They did not sink into despair, depression, or rebellion. They improved their emotional states, health, and conduct, and, most importantly, their ability to cope with adversities. However, the study commenced with inmates very close to the beginning of the sentence with follow-up interviews 16 months later, when the inmate is still in the adjustment period. I believe that such a severe deviation between

early time sentenced and long-term prisoners that the Zamble study is not transferable to this research project.

Measuring Change

According to Flanagan (1981), prisons and correction departments have little insight or empirical evidence about how best to manage the long-term prisoner population in America today. According to Smoyer et al. (2019), there is minimal research on how those serving sentences achieve positive adjustment and adaptation during incarceration. Increasing knowledge of inmate adjustment to prison practices is a viable way to improve prisons' efficiency. Understanding this topic is relatively limited, and there are still several gaps that warrant further inquiry. According to Smoyer et al., most research has relied on data collected through the perspectives of stakeholder groups other than prisoners, which neglects the subjectivity. Smoyer et al.'s examination has shown that of the 16 qualitative studies found, only two were peer-reviewed and were decades old.

According to Sliva (2015), researchers have identified many aspects of prison adjustment, many predictors and outcomes are still understudied, and the results of existing studies have been inconsistent. Similarly, Goncalves (2014) argued that learning more about how older male prisoners serving sentences adjust to and cope with prison life is essential to understanding how programs to enhance their ability to adapt can be implemented. Inmate adjustment to prison is also necessary to consider several vital correctional practices: explaining institutional infractions, health care utilization, and coping strategies (Goncalves, 2014).

Long-Term Experiences and Adaptation

Macchio (1994), in her ethnographic study as a former lifer in a Canadian prison, said lifers experience tremendous tension at the commencement of their sentences. The lifer will need to neutralize stress by learning prison subcultural norms during this initial incarceration period. As a result of this effort, they bond with the prison world and adapt a prison code of behavior. This adaptation of a set attitude helps them survive in the prison environment. Through a slow, cautious, and strategic process, they develop friendships with others also sentenced to life in prison. However, this phenomenon of induction into the prison environment and the manifestation of a criminal or convict identity has not been proven by research. Macchio said lifers reject identification as a convict and lifer as an identity prevails. Mackenzie and Goodstein (1985) also stated that long-term confinement's adverse effects had not been demonstrated satisfactorily in any existing empirical research. They also indicated that they found no evidence of psychological deterioration over time. Even though there are some transitional issues during the initial period of incarceration, lifers do adapt successfully to life in prison.

Wormith (1984), in reviewing specific sociological literature, claimed the prison experience is very complex and interactive. Researchers should not embrace the practice of using terms like institutionalization or prisonization, nor should the researchers use any single model such as importation and deprivation (Dhami, 2007). Porporino and Zamble (1984) said there is a need to expand our understanding of adaptation to the prison environment. They felt that literature focusing on the prison experience is deficient in advancing an understanding of adaptation or adjustment processes and change that

occurs to the long-term inmate during incarceration. They also stated that researchers reference the prison experience as the catalyst contributing to a prisoners' criminal self-identification. However, they do not explain how criminal, or convict identity emerges. Moreover, they also stated that further research is required to address efficiencies in the existing study of the effects of long-term incarceration. According to Porporino and Zamble (1984), the reason is that there is a variation of individual perspectives and coping strategies that affect how criminal self-identification emerges in prison.

Flanagan (1981) said adaptation to the prison environment occurs while prisoners adopt certain behaviors, coping strategies, and attitudes. However, Porporino and Zamble (1984) are critical of Flanagan, stating that researchers have failed to prove that individuals change due to lengthy incarceration. The current study will demonstrate from the point of view and descriptions of the effects of lengthy incarcerations.

Kazemian and Travis (2015) stressed the importance of including long-termers and lifers in research and policy; however, numerous studies have failed to do so. Therefore, very little knowledge of interventions or how to gauge any effective measures for this population. Though those serving sentences spend a significant amount of their lives in prison, policies and programs are rarely tailored to their needs. However, Miszewski (2017) has reported that the long-termers social needs, especially the older ones, are different from those of the young inmates. Therefore, little is known about their adaptation, practical interventions, or how to measure programs' effectiveness from this population's perspective.

Clemmer (1958) noted that a primary determinant of how a prisoner becomes prisonized is the length of the sentence he serves. Toch (1975) suggested that adaptation to prison varies based on the prisoner's personality and other factors like the type of prison and staff perspectives. Singer (2015) stated that incarcerated men have psychological responses to the environment in which they live. The physically and emotionally aggressive atmosphere of prison requires heightened protection for the self. She argues that it is necessary to shift perceptions away from seeing these psychological adaptations in prison as disturbances and instead realize that they are unique survival achievements towards maintaining one's mind, spirit, and body in prison.

Taylor (1961) reported that the long-term prisoner responds to imprisonment physically but not psychologically because of the restrictions and deprivations of imprisonment. Pickering (1966) noted that long confinement results in damage to the personality. Flanagan (1981) contended that deterioration among long-term inmates is accepted *a priori*, both intellectually and emotionally. Goffman (1961) found that long-term imprisonment causes dependence upon the institutional regime, and prisoners lose interest in the outside world during prisonization. Carlson (2013) reported that that adaptation is essential and that conducting a qualitative inquiry on this subject enables researchers to explore, understand, and analyze the adaption processes in depth. Herbert (2019) stated that individual participants are best placed to describe situations and feelings in their own words. Complementing Herbert's study of this current study, the research data may understand how inmates can adapt in a constrained environment when applied. Also, LWOPs can be encouraged to cultivate and influence shareholders to

regard the rehabilitation of LWOPs as essential to motivate correctional officials and society to instigate social change.

Lifers' Adaptation

Adaptation to the prison environment has been a matter of scholarly debate. Most such discussions have addressed the extent to which adaptation is influenced by the prison environment itself (indigenous) or by the prisoners' pre-prison character (imported experiences). Lifers are low-maintenance prisoners. They cause minor confrontations and keep to themselves. Sliva (2015) stressed that, for inmates, acceptance of the self correlates with varying levels of hope. The conceptual model that emerged indicated that long-term lifers experience imprisonment with feelings of profound loss, much like the feelings one might feel in response to losing a loved one. She describes the initial shock the inmate will pass through various emotional stages, for example, denial, anger, possibly depression, and in the end, acceptance. They find a way to exercise personal choice. They find ways to forge meaning from their pain and suffering. She states that the process draws close parallels with Frankl's (1969) theory of human resilience and survival.

The feelings of hope motivate positive adaptation, which requires further research. Nelson (1983) suggested that individuals serving sentences tend to come to what could be called a realistic assessment of their situation. While facing life in prison, early on, they experience a period of being unsettled. The time frame could be months or even years. During this uncertain time, they may suffer from depression and feel suicidal. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) have suggested that those serving life sentences

grudgingly accept that, while prison is not the life they want or desire, it is all they have, and they must adapt to survive. However, adaptive choices offer only an illusion of control; making choices is a fundamental human need, which counters institutional dependency (Toch, 1998). Individuals serving life sentences typically come to a realistic assessment of the grim situation they face. While this may take weeks, months, and possibly years, they must adapt (Paulich, 2004). Caceral (2004) suggested that many individuals serving sentences opt to make the best of the limited work opportunities and avoid trouble. While taking advantage of all education and rehabilitative programs, they eventually accept prison as their home and the other inmates as their adopted family (Johnson 2002).

Imperative for Inclusion of LWOP Inmates in Research and Policy

The research on the adaptation and adjustment of LWOPs and how they experience their imprisonment is limited. Therefore, they mute their voices and inhibit prison administrators' and legislators' efforts to intervene and meet their needs (Haugebrook et al. (2010). Frisch (2018), who studied framing imprisonment as a catalyst for behavior modification, suggested that focusing on older inmates is essential. Older inmates are more likely to exhibit a positive change than younger offenders, who are more likely to show negative changes. The younger prisoners are generally focused on getting out of prison with little interest in any offered programs. While the older prisoners sentenced to life are looking to improving themselves in the hope of one day being released from prison. Sliva (2015) conducted a qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis examining the experiences of men who are subject to life without parole through open-

ended interviews. Sliva (2015) synthesized research by incorporating four existing studies—which contained interviews with 86 men serving sentences—to build a more extensive understanding of the phenomenon of adaptation and adjustment to life in prison.

Adaptation and Autonomy

The question is: how do these inmates achieve autonomy? Adaptation would mean accepting that they, as lifers, have a limited situation with nothing coming to them. As stated by Zamble 1992, They must accept deprivation and the fact that they have very little control over their situation (Zamble, 1992). Paulich (2004) suggested that those serving life sentences often make incarceration their own by living routines and choosing to consent to things they cannot change or avoid. Sorensen and Wrinkle (1998) noted that those serving life sentences often stay out of trouble because it would jeopardize the life, they have achieved with the prison culture.

While younger prisoners are impulsive, disruptive, and usually dangerous, those serving life sentences generally mature while imprisoned, developing self-control. They also become much more thoughtful as they mature and age. Individuals serving sentences usually attempt to mentor young inmates to avoid making the mistakes they made with them. Paulich (2004) suggested that groups of inmates serving life sentences can provide a source of companionship and a productive activity. The groups mentor young prisoners and give back to the next generation. Therefore, as Paulich has suggested, the myth that inmates serving life terms lived out their lives in a state of passivity and simply atrophied in prison is untrue.

While prison routines shape this population, they also typically develop personal habits. Even though adaptation is an ongoing and arduous process, most are not worn down and adapt to their environment. Accordingly, they not only survive but often do so with little or no psychological damage, and most express a tremendous increase in prosocial values and attitudes and favorable psychological profiles (Wormith, 1984; Zamble, 1984; Zamble & Porporino, 1984).

Positive Adaptation Experiences

Maruna (2004) noted that most people, not incarcerated, believe in changing their own lives. Nevertheless, these same people refuse to accept the potential for change among inmates serving life sentences. Similarly, most existing research has overlooked positive experiences while incarcerated and personality adaptations among this group. Hope is crucial for psychological survival; however, this hope is difficult to achieve and requires a sense of purpose. Despite surviving adversity, members of this population care less about the views of society than about their adaptation and rehabilitation processes (Herbert, 2020).

Notably, most studies included in Sliva's (2015) meta-synthesis only highlighted incarceration's negative aspects. Kazemian and Travis (2015) suggested that this oversight is noteworthy given that previous research failed to document the social, behavioral, and psychological changes that occur during long incarceration periods. Therefore, scholars have not developed a sufficient understanding of this population to facilitate effective interventions. They are also unable to measure the effectiveness of adaptation among the people. As Willis and Zaitlow (2015) noted, prisoners, adopt

specific coping methods and adjusting to the pressures of life in confinement. They also must balance the risks associated with quietly standing out. Willis and Zaitlow (2015) also stated that a long-term prisoner who aspires to accomplish goals during incarceration might be viewed as offensive to the administration because such a prisoner is not truly a prisoner. After all, his or her mind is free. Most correctional administrations demand prisoners limit themselves to their functions as prisoners, doing time without attracting attention or disrupting the system. It is an environment where such seemingly effortless activities as holding onto one's identity and sanity take on a significance of paramount importance (Willis & Zaitlow, 2015).

Crewe et al. (2017) examined how those serving sentences adapted over time to their circumstances. They discussed experiences through the subsequent stages of sentences, significantly how the prisoners changed concerning time management, shifting conceptions of control, making their sentence constructive, and, most importantly, moving from reactive to productive adjustments in behavior. In his address at the center for Criminology in 2016, he outlined the shift from a reactive agency to a productive agency at last sentences. He found that this was accomplished in four transitional stages:

1. adapting to the sentence
2. achieving an accurate perception of time
3. practicing control and self-control
4. finally coming to terms with the offense

In the end, he felt they finally achieve a purpose. They were able to view education and another way of betterment to give something back, which gave them something positive

to accomplish with the harm they had caused. Crewe (2020) noted that too little attention had been accorded to the life experiences and effects of adjustment and adaptation associated with sentences. This study will grant the neglected study of the life experiences and outcomes of adjustment and adaptation by face-to-face interviews and observations.

Motivations for Adaptation

To address the gaps in current research through a theoretical investigation of what causes desistance from crime, Rocque et al. (2016) reported positive behavior among male inmates' changes over time. They also questioned whether these adjustments could predict actual behavior. Rocque et al. (2016) suggested that their study contributes to understanding desistance from crime and demonstrates that future qualitative studies should thoroughly examine adaptation determinants. They stated that they could not find any existing quantitative research that examined positive adaptation throughout life experience. Siennick and Osgood (2008) discussed people who become attached to conventional roles. They found that those who adapt will be reluctant to jeopardize these roles by offending. They will be further restrained from crime by the sense of obligation and responsibility that accompanies these roles. Laub and Sampson (2003) stated that under this framework, whether holding a role reduces crime depends on the strength and quality of the social bonds engendered by the position. This means that any individuals who adopt adult roles without increasing their attachment to conventional society should not show decreases in

According to Jarman (2017), most criminologists have developed only conceptual accounts of change in the criminal agency. Most importantly, Jarman (2017) noted, researchers have not used these tools to consider adaptation or change among prisoners with long sentences. Jarman (2017) expanded his understanding of the known styles of adaptation and clarified some conclusions about the kinds of conditions that can support prisoner change. For example, he said the prison's social life was the main feature of the corrective agency and its development of practices that demonstrated a dedication to 'positive' norms and self-betterment to peers. These can be seen as 'desistance signals' (see Maruna 2012), and they reinforced changed identity at the cost of subcultural credibility.

Frisch (2018) framed a study of imprisonment by investigating the extent to which prison serves as a positive or negative influence in the criminal career, precisely behavior before and after confinement, including the process of adaptation in criminal behavior. Further, Frisch (2018) discussed timing, considering age-graded transitions, and how prison serves as a positive or negative influence. Lattimore et al. (2018) conducted interviews with 174 male prisoners of various ethnicities in Great Britain regarding how they experienced prison. The authors discussed the need for more studies focusing on the dynamic process of desisting from criminal thought and activity. They emphasized the working self and individuals' self-description of committing to the active illegal self until they realized that the costs outweighed the benefits.

How Prison Changes People

Lattimore et al. (2018) found that it was not until the criminal identity weakens a chance for a positive identity change. The perceived sense of a future or possible self as a non-offender—coupled with the fear that one faces a bleak and highly undesirable future—motivates inmates to break from crime without change. Paternoster et al. (2016) collected qualitative interview data. They found that offenders who desist undergo an identity transformation motivated by realizing that they need to adapt and change to avoid the hopelessness associated with dying in prison. However, Paternoster et al. (2016) suggested that further research is required to substantiate that lack of social identity and agency cause hopelessness among those with sentences. Leban et al. (2015) studied 40 inmates in a maximum-security prison. They found that older inmates were less prone to criminality due to their long experience with incarceration and the fact that they had achieved a diverse repertoire of perspectives about their adaptation to newly acquired larger life goals. The researchers stated that their findings shed light on effective coping strategies and psychological factors that require further critical attention.

Crank (2010) stated that many studies have focused on the relationship between prison adjustment and inmate age and found that the more experience prisoners have with incarceration, the less difficulty they have in coping with younger prisoners. Previous research stated that experienced inmates could adjust to prison life with less anxiety as older inmates develop and learn systems for dealing physically and mentally with incarceration (Shover, 1985). Jarrett (2018) stated that prisonization could lead to post-incarceration syndrome upon release and suggested that if prisoners are hardened in the

beginning stages of incarceration, they are likely to become even more challenging, colder, and more distrustful while incarcerated. Meijers et al. (2017) noted that traits such as self-discipline, ambition, and orderliness deteriorate during incarceration due to the harsh environment. Crewe (2015) challenged this pessimistic outlook, suggesting that some prisoners try to make a good impression and reflect a positive personality adjustment to prison life. The argument is proffered that criminals can be equally pro-socially motivated just as the general population's members. However, as Jarrett (2018) stated, there is a dearth of existing research on positive adaptation and coping. As awareness regarding the malleability of personality grows, it will lead to further studies about how the prison environment can shape the inmates' positive character.

Flanagan (1982) stated that the foundations that created their deterioration were from earlier research. He reasoned that his rigorous study results indicate that no systematic or predictable long-term incarceration effects exist.

Age and Adaptation

Shover (1985) noted that the importance of time in the incarceration experience. Specifically, as they have aged, those older inmates feel time passed more quickly than it did when they were young; she stated that older inmates often consider time being wasted, and older inmates valued their remaining years. Crank (2015) found that older inmates find prison challenging because of their changed perception of time. However, she also stated that older inmates are more experienced and have less difficulty coping with imprisonment than younger inmates. Crank (2015) suggested that older inmates adjust with less stress because they develop and learn systems and means to adapt and

cope physically and mentally throughout the incarceration experience. Her finding is like Shover 1985, who said inmates grow tired of being hardened and weary of the possibility of re-arrest and a lengthy prison sentence.

The relationship between age and the perceived difficulty of prison life can explain older prisoners' positive adaptation. Older LWOP inmates are affected by the aging process and encounter many medical conditions that are still more likely to suffer DBI. According to Cornelius et al. (2017), the relationship between age and crime is the most vital and tested element studied in criminology. According to Farrington (1986), criminality increases in adolescence, peaking at age 17 and decreases as individual ages. He notes that involvement and belief that prison norms are essential and that a violation of these norms will lead to consequences.

In contrast, Santos (2003) suggested that the long-term prisoner grows accustomed to prison and no longer feels like a prison to them. Prison becomes a way of life: inmates' lives are routine and predictable, even though they are harshly restricted and sometimes inhumane. As stated by Shover 1985, even though some inmates perceive themselves as adapting well to incarceration and prison life, the correctional officers and prison officials may regard the same inmates as adapting poorly. Therefore, it is essential to examine inmate perceptions of the difficulty or incarceration to understand the inmates' adjustment to prison life fully.

Adjustment, Adaptation, and Acceptance

According to Jarrett, 2018, there is little hope. He stated that if the prisoner is hardened initially, he will become even more demanding and colder by imprisonment,

and reintegration will become more complex, if not impossible. Dhimi et al. (2007) addressed similar issues regarding adaptation and prison outcomes. They focused on the longevity of imprisonment and life quality before prison to examine both influences' relative effect. The indigenous approach, or deprivation model, addresses pains or deprivations; at the same time, prison is the primary catalyst for inmates' responses to imprisonment.

According to the importation approach, prison outcomes can be examined through the association between adaptation and prisoners' pre-prison character (e.g., previous imprisonment, drug use, relationships, employment, and education). Based on survey results, Camp et al. 2003 found that features of inmates' lives before imprisonment may combine to affect their adaptation to captivity. Concerning the possibility of synthesizing the validity of the indigenous and importation approaches in a single study, Camp et al. (2003) stated that the importation approach was a better predictor of prison violations than the indigenous method. However, they discounted several importation approaches (e.g., education, employment, drug use, mental illness, and prior offenses) and suggested that these were not significant predictors. On the other hand, as noted, the traditional theories are incomplete. They ignore contact with the outside world during imprisonment, which may influence prison life quality before prison and deprivation on prison adaptation while incarcerated.

Though scholars seem to acknowledge the importance of inmates' perspectives, Crank (2010) noted that very little existing research had done so. More recent qualitative studies on inmate perceptions have been based on small samples. Crank began her

research with Beccaria (1764) and Bentham (1789) and agreed with their initial assertion that individuals commit criminal acts when the benefits outweigh the potential costs or consequences of offending. However, Crouch (1993) found that many inmates prefer prison to the streets because it provides a comparatively comfortable setting. Many quantitative researchers identify the relationship between adaptation and inmate age concerning the experiences of incarceration. Shover's (1985) longitudinal study demonstrated that older inmates have more experience with incarceration than younger individuals and usually have been offended throughout their life course. Crank (2014) stated that younger prisoners are less likely to find confinement brutal, while older inmates are more likely to find prison time. Older inmates can adapt with less difficulty than younger inmates because older individuals are more likely to have learned the systems and means to adjust physically and mentally to prison, mostly avoiding potential trouble by identifying dangerous situations (Shover, 2018). Former inmates may have been exposed to similar rules and ways of life in other contexts, and therefore adapt to prison with ease (May et al., 2008). Shover (2018) stated that older prisoners begin to wonder if their remaining years of life are wasted at varying incarceration stages. Therefore, they value the remaining years more highly than they did previously. At certain junctures, they may begin to accept that significant changes in their views and lifestyle must be made. The results demonstrate the non-linear relationship between age and adaptation.

Crank (2015) found that age and experience have specific links to inmates' ability to adapt. Shover's (2018) results indicate that age and experience positively influence

prison adjustment among older men serving sentences. Shover (2018) stressed that scholars could not rely on public or official perceptions of adaptation to prison life because they seem to lead to misguided correctional policies. It is more important to consider the offenders' opinions and research findings regarding the criminal justice system. The importance of offenders' perspective on adaptation and intention to avoid criminal behavior to date remains understudied.

Life in prison is a punishing, painful existence (Sykes, 1958). Despite this, inmates can use their time constructively through mature adaptation and coping strategies (Johnson, 2002; Irwin (2009) suggested that prison adaptation is flexible. He noted that every form of adaptation has some strategy elements, and the strategy is mutually exclusive. Irving also suggested that prisoners employ different adaptation techniques during various stages of their imprisonment; further, they may select some aspects of varying adaptation styles and apply them simultaneously.

Lambregts, 2020 in a review of an address by Ben Crewe, described Dr. Crewe as a critical figure in penology. Dr. Ben Crewe delivered a lecture on October 27, 2020, at the All-Souls Criminology Seminar in Cambridge on long-term imprisonment and raised a broad range of humanistic issues. Crewe (2020) focused on which challenges are unique to sentence lengths of 15 years or longer and how prisoners adapt to those. Crewe (2020) suggested that surveys and in-depth interviews are needed for prisoners to describe their experiences. Crewe (2020) found that the results differed for male and female prisoners and, most importantly, prisoners during different incarceration stages. Crewe (2020) reported that early stages of imprisonment were characterized by higher

severity issues than those prisoners experienced in the mid-stage, and those at later stages included lower commitments to early stages of incarceration and fewer mental health issues, along with more moderate problem severity in general (Crewe, 2020). He stated that prisoners develop ways of adapting to their circumstances and the challenges of isolation from the outside world. This stage is what Johnson (2002) termed mature coping. Crewe (2020) explained that the results of in-depth interviews provided more detail regarding prisoners' transitional phases during incarceration.

Archer (2003) discussed prisoners' transition from the initial states of shame, grief, and shame to inner conversations that reflect how inmates should act with their self-designed end goals in mind. Crewe (2020) suggested that (Archer's 2003) work provides a valuable framework for understanding how long-term prisoners deal with the shock of their new circumstances and how they adopt a sense of self and explore life with possibilities. Archer (2003) stated five critical stages of adaptation, defined as transitional stages: adapting to the sentence, a perception of time, control, and self-control, coming to terms with the offense, and finding purpose. Crewe (2017) also explained the transitional stages as shifting from reactive agency to a productive phase in the early stages. Crewe (2017) used a metaphor of swimming with the tide, in which the long-term prisoners move from initial backward-looking swimming against the tide to productive future-oriented use of the tidal water. Crewe (2017) noted that, unlike previous research, which was not informed by United States sentencing policies that embrace long sentences, his study introduced a novel humanistic approach.

Smoyer et al. (2019) stated that most existing research on long-term sentences addressed prison stakeholders' rather than inmates' perspectives. Di Lorito et al. (2018) analyzed data collected directly from prisoners and formerly incarcerated older adults rather than stakeholders (p. 253). They identified 25 papers, of which 16 were qualitative; only two of these concerned older adults' lived experiences, and those articles were not peer-reviewed. As a result of this gap in existing knowledge, members of this population's voices and perspectives are muted, inhibiting efforts to create interventions to meet their specific needs (Haugebrook et al., 2010). As Kazemian and Travis (2015) stated, not all existing research has suggested deterioration in prisoners' adjustment over the length of time incarcerated. MacKenzie and Goodstein (1985) indicated that long-termers and lifers who have spent long years in prison develop coping mechanisms to adapt to the incarceration experience. Leigey (2010), Zamble (1992), and Zamble and Porporino (1998) all reported that prisoners employ different adaptation techniques. Inmates serving long-term sentences are characterized by attitudes and behavior designed to facilitate survival in prison.

Similarly, Taylor (1983) expanded Nelson's theory and suggested that severe personal setbacks can recover from adversity wholly and quickly through adaptation. Adaptation involves understanding an event and its impact through a search for meaning. Taylor's study demonstrates Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy's validity and usefulness and man's search for meaning (1970). Adjustment is the process by which individuals adopt new behaviors that facilitate their ability to cope with change. Long-termers will adjust or

shift their adaptive strategies while seeking a plan until they find the most functional to their prison environment (Taylor, 1983).

Miszewski (2017) reported that there are two famous typologies of adaptation to incarceration, identified by Goffman (1961) and Irwin (1997). Goffman noted that there are five strategies of adaptation: playing it cool, which is an indication of acceptance without action: to join in without revealing any insecurities; situational withdrawal, meaning reaction will depend on the situation and can vary; conversion, which is acceptance of the problem and the following suit; intransigent line, meaning not to agree and not accept change; and colonization, which means taking charge of the environment in the situation at hand and asserting your dominance. Irwin believed that prison adaptation is flexible. He said that every form of adaptation has various strategies, and strategies are mutually exclusive. Irwin contended that many prisoners utilize different adaptation techniques during the various stages of their imprisonment, or they may select some aspects of varying adaptation styles and apply them simultaneously.

On a more practical level, the advice from a welcome card given to new members of the Gray Panthers Organization at a maximum-security prison provides examples of some conventional adaptation techniques: Say less. When in doubt, say nothing at all. Look, but do not stare...Choose your words wisely...Blend in with your clothes...Stay off the gate when you are locked in your cell; agree with correction officers. For the proposed study, using adaptation theory as a theoretical framework will facilitate a narrative exploration of how older men with sentences adapt and adjust to prison life and the catalysts and outcomes of these decision points.

Summary and Conclusions

For this study, adaptation theory as a framework facilitates insight into adaptation's practical function and adjustment to positive change among long-term inmates. The knowledge obtained may support adjustment and adaptation as necessary elements in exploring the mechanism that leads to behavior change and positive outcomes among long-term inmates. Most existing literature has explored the adjustment and adaptation of long-term inmates from the perspective of non-inmate stakeholders. To address this phenomenon, the purpose of this study will provide first-person perspectives on adaptation and adjustment among long-term inmates gathered from face-to-face interviews.

This chapter included reviews of findings from existing studies concerning adjustment and adaptation. The studies highlighted internal and external factors but generally overlooked the inmates' perspectives. However, from an external perspective, these adjustments and adaptations ignore positive identity change, influencing what others think about the inmate and how they behave towards that person (Swan & Bosson, 2010).

Understanding positive adjustment and adaptation of long-term inmates through face-to-face interviews will enable a researcher to identify significant determinants and behavioral supports. Adaptation and adjustment are vital factors in understanding the prosocial changes long-term inmates often undergo. The following chapter will provide an in-depth review of the research design and the methodology for this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This study explored the views of older men sentenced to life in prison and gained insight into inmates' perspectives on adjustment and adaptation while incarcerated. The results of this study portrayed the narratives of incarcerated older men, explaining their adjustment, adaptation, or maladaptation during their lengthy incarceration in a maximum-security prison. This study explored the perspectives of those serving life. As Tonry (2011) stated, these are primarily issues of human rights and social justice. These inmates made valuable contributions and have the potential to contribute to a healthier prison climate. In Chapter 3, I describe this qualitative study's research design and illustrated the methodology, data collection plan, research questions, and data analysis procedures. To achieve rigor, validity, and credibility, this study was structured so that the data matches the research questions' contexts and is aligned with the overall project. Other areas of concern were trustworthiness, bias, and ethical considerations (Patton, 2010).

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

- RQ1: What are the narratives of adaptation and adjustment in older men with Life sentences?
- RQ2: How do older men with life sentences describe their present and ongoing adaptation and adjustment experience?

The rationale for this qualitative study's research design was that I believed that more pertinent information and data would be discovered by exploring the inmates'

perspectives on long-term imprisonment, as stated by Di Lorito et al. (2018). This was accomplished by conducting face-to-face interviews involving semi structured and open-ended questions designed to elicit views and opinions from the participants. As stated by Crank (2010), existing literature has consisted mainly of other stakeholders' perspectives. According to Patton (2002), it was vital to ensure reflexivity in the data collection process. To accomplish this goal, I used interviews in alignment with the research questions. Using a qualitative research method, this study provided an understanding of the phenomena of adjustment and adaptation through the participants' life stories. Because those serving LWOP sentences have rarely been considered, it was essential to add their perspectives to compare or contrast the stakeholders' opinions that appeared in most research. The results provided rich, detailed descriptions and may hopefully be transferable to future research endeavors.

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher was to function as an observer, interviewer, and prominent instrument in this qualitative research study. First, I was physically present with the participants; in qualitative research, it is necessary to hold interviews in a comfortable, private, and convenient location and observe and record the perspectives and behaviors (Glense 2016). Second, for the results to be stable and ensure that they produce meaning concerning inmates' experiences, the research was analytic and descriptive. As qualitative research is inductive, theories emerged from concepts and methods from the contextualized data (Cannella & Lincoln, 2012). There was no power over the participants as instruction was not graded and was a voluntary instructional self-

improvement class for the inmates. My association was more formal as a member of the prison society. As the researcher, I did not influence inmates' participation or nonparticipation in the research process. Third, I made deliberate choices to account for potential bias. In this study, it was essential to recognize that collaboration, rigor, criticality, and reflexivity were vital to establishing ethical and valid reviews after reviewing the archival records of over 900 older male inmates serving LWOP. I was given access to the lifer's history as part of their commutation applications, containing data to formulate my interview questions. I eliminated those with educational, literacy, and language deficiencies to ensure credibility. Fourth, I ensured ethical considerations; I did not select participants until after receiving a list of potential participants from the Department of Corrections for reference.

Methodology

Population and Sampling

The Department of Corrections prepared a recommended list and referred it to the prison's primary old-timers' organization, for review. The Graterford Gray Panthers is an organization granted a charter by Maggie Kuhn she visited the prison in 1980. She tasked the members to continue in her goal of achieving representation for seniors in need. The resultant participant list included 25 older male inmates who fit the interview criteria for engagement in the research. No incentives are permitted within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, so none were necessary for this research. I remained nonbiased and therefore assigned an alphanumeric designator to each name to assure confidentiality. As this was a purposeful random sample, I then placed each of the 25

balls marked with the designator into a metal bingo ball drawing tumbler. The first 10 numbers selected from the bingo cage became the participants selected for the study. I remained aware of the possible limitations stated by Creswell (2015) that research bias and credibility issues are inherent in a qualitative study because the data analysis was interpreted through subjective interpretations. The interviews and observations were used to examine the adjustments and adaptations which occurred from the viewpoints of the incarcerated.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The selected 10 older male participants, all over age 50 and all confined for more than 25 years, provided their perspectives. This focused the inmates' perspectives more accurately and reflected the actual adjustments and adaptations as encountered. Women inmates were excluded due to the inability to gain permission to enter the women's facility and the relatively small numbers of women incarcerated in Pennsylvania compared to the male inmates. There was also the question of the transferability and dependability of data when combining male and female participants. The existing literature's transferability was limited due to the sparseness of research in the United States, as most studies have been conducted in Great Britain. Very few have been published on women serving life sentences.

Instrumentation

The study encompassed a review of inmate commutation proposals. The commutation proposal includes pre-incarceration information and current information on the proposed participants' activities and eliminated the need for extensive questioning

about the participants' mindset early on in their imprisonment. This required a series of initial interviews, letters, coding, theming, and data, as well as a second interview and in some cases a third interview to assure truthfulness, validity, ethics, and approval by the participants (see Appendix for interview guide). The maximum-security prison environment prohibited audio or video recording of inmates. However, due to the COVID-19 virus epidemic, Prison Society members, such as me, were permitted to utilize video visitation.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Data collection commenced upon receipt of Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. As stated earlier, the interviews followed this format. A list of candidates was provided and vetted, and an additional effort, if needed, at a snowball sampling method, was utilized within the approved list of candidates. The data collection instruments were as follows: archival records of the inmates' application for commutation provided the pre-incarceration history and descriptions of previous crimes and current offenses leading to incarceration. The review of the commutation application or request for clemency was essential to provide me with a pre-imprisonment background, which aided in the preparation of interview questions. The Department of Correction granted my permission to review and research in January 2020, which allowed me to review the commutation applications with background on all participants. Utilizing this archival material eliminated hours of interview time by having pertinent data in advance of the interview process and aided in my design of the interview's semi structured questions. Each participant was contacted via email and General Telephone

(GTL) phone system and given an overview of what was expected of them and what they could expect from me as the sole researcher. This initial process filtered down the number of potential participants. According to the DOC regulations and viewpoints, those names were then cleared with the Department of Corrections (DOC) for suitability. After the DOC approvals and rejections, the remaining list was sent to the Graterford Gray Panthers Organization, responsible for managing and protecting the senior inmates.

I then commenced with initial written letter interviews with 10 separate participants, selected for data collection inclusion. I then emailed items that require clarification to the inmate to prepare for the second interview. A final interview, if needed, was scheduled 2 weeks after the second interview to review the initial two interview conclusions and enable the participant to edit and make any necessary additions or deletions. As a result, my first interview with the participants was via a letter containing the seven interview questions. Afterward, I used inmates' answers and notes to accurately portray the inmates' perspectives. During the initial meeting, I encouraged the participants to remain involved, to email, or send letters to me, the researcher, to add to or delete any of their thoughts before the closing interview. In the closing interviews, the participants reviewed the research data and conclusions. It is believed that the extensive communications with the participants increased the trustworthiness and reliability of the data collected. The study went far beyond the response to the research question due to the use of the open-ended semi structured question format.

Qualitative Data Analysis Plan

I used a narrative analysis to record, observe, and analyze the stories that emerged. The goal was to understand the meaning of the experiences the participant revealed in his report. The data collected from this narrative study yielded information in the research notes, emails, and letters combined with the personal data and information available from the commutation application and the inmates' records. I endeavored to describe and identify specific patterns and themes from the participants' perspective. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding and explanation of designs and themes emerged. The data were organized and coded. The videotaped interviews, if any, were transcribed verbatim and combined with the field notes and diary entries. The data were inputted into the qualitative computer program called HyperQual for contrast or comparison. With this analysis software, the necessary categories and code names were organized into categories, words, phrases, and themes.

Trustworthiness

It was essential to understand that truthfulness and objectivity are the keys to the study. It was crucial to illustrate the research's believability and trustworthiness through verification rather than traditional reliability and validity measures (Creswell, 2015). I considered participant anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. I focused on avoiding harm, ethical reflexivity, and avoiding bias. I focused on ethics regarding informed consent and participants' ability to withdraw from the voluntary study with no consequences. The essential aspect was to address all the ethical considerations. When discussing sensitive information, I respected the participants' values and desires whose

lives we are researching and invading. This is particularly relevant when dealing with individuals in this population because of the participant's status as a lifer, and his actions are evident within the Department of Corrections. While objectivity and truthfulness were critical, I sought believability and trustworthiness, which I facilitated through verification processes instead of the traditional textbook validity and reliability measures.

Credibility

The key to credibility is neutrality. According to Patton (2002), the researcher must not have a predetermined or vested interest or prejudice. A good strategy for credibility was to seek honest and empirically supported finds while adopting a neutral stance. Patton (2002) also explained the importance of triangulation, which increased credibility and quality, so the study findings are not just the result of a single method. He also discussed reflexivity, which I found relevant in dealing with minority and vulnerable participants who might find it suspicious that a member of another culture (i.e., the dominant culture) researched people of an oppressed group. Probst and Berenson (2014) explained that reflexivity was usually understood as an awareness of the researcher's influence and how the process affects the researcher. They said that reflexivity was both a state of mind and a set of actions. The researcher must not manipulate data to prove a particular perspective. The researcher must strive to understand the data as it unfolds and remain balanced in reporting positive and negative evidence regarding the conclusion.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research has to do with generalizability and external validation. According to Merriam (2016), transferability is concerned with the extent and

way a research study can be applicable or applied to other studies or situations. Because of the qualitative nature of this study, generalizability cannot occur in a statistical sense. However, the methodology is certainly transferable. The researcher's job is to provide a thick description and enough detail in my context to enable a reader to compare a fit for their situations, as stated by Merriam, 2016 how the reader applies and must decide whether the findings can apply to their specific situation.

Dependability

According to Patton (2015), alternative sets of criteria are offered when discussing the issue of reliability in qualitative research. Depending upon the type of research, he suggested criteria for (a) traditional scientific, (b) constructivist, (c) artistic, (d) complexity, (e) participatory, (f) critical, and (g) pragmatic/utilization-focused research. To affect, the research study must have rigor, present insights, and be something a reader can believe. As this research goal was to understand, I discovered my trust criteria differed from if those needed for testing a hypothesis.

Confirmability

Whether or not the research I was observing and measuring what it has been designed to measure became an issue. What is being studied, and how did I assess the validity of my observations? Because it was the primary instrument of my data collection and analysis, it was necessary to access them directly. The research must contain thick and rich descriptions. Patton (2015) described a thick story as being detailed and highly descriptive. It is presented describing the setting and the interview process's findings and supporting evidence presented as a participant's narrative quotation. If the study was

viewed in this research type, it became vigor, providing the qualitative analysis's strength. Confirmability was needed to understand and the complexity of their behavior. Therefore, I presented the study as a holistic interpretation of what is occurring.

Intra and Intercoder Reliability

For this research project I relied solely on intra-coding. Inter-coding was not utilized because of this vulnerable population's confidentiality, privacy, and ethical considerations. I performed line-by-line hand-coding while paying particular attention to covert meanings that resided within my transcribed interview.

However, I also utilized a secondary coding source for a comparative purpose, which was computer coding from one of the prominent providers of the software; software programs: *ATLAS-ti*; *Ethnography*; *HyperRESEARCH*; *NVivo*; *SuperHyperQual*; *Transana*; and these other entries: *Axial Coding*; *Codes and Coding*; *Computer-Assisted Data Analysis*; *Content Analysis*; *Document Analysis*; *Ethnographic Content Analysis*; *In Vivo Coding*; *Open Coding*; *Selective Coding*; *Thematic Coding and Analysis*. Computer coding assisted the research effort in that it achieved a higher stage and refinement of coding.

Ethical Procedures

Agreements

All participants and the researcher signed agreements to maintain the highest respect for people's rights and dignity. The documents and agreements can be found in Appendix A. Most materials were acquired from the American Psychological Society. The contracts include but are not limited to the following: All pertinent copies of the

APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct directly from the APA Order department and were edited to fit this research's needs.

Treatment of Human Participants

The participants of this study are considered a vulnerable population. Aldridge, 2014 described vulnerable people in research with human participants, including groups or individuals susceptible to harm or risk. The inmates who volunteered for this study were stigmatized groups and feared being charged with being critical of guards or the prison operations in general. As a result, I did not disclose what the inmates said or did during the research study without their consent. The most critical factor in dealing with these participants was to assure and maintain confidentiality. To achieve this, my interviews and notes remained confidential. The main issue is never to disclose the identity of the participants.

Treatment of Data

The research and I, as researcher, respected the dignity and, more importantly, the privacy of vulnerable participants. Therefore, information collected during the research process was protected. I utilized reasonable precautions to maintain confidentiality. All data was stored on a computer hard drive and backup thumb drives and encrypted with designed security. The encrypted data was password-protected, and firewall secured. None of the data was subject to emails, fax, or electronically transmitted. All data was kept in the researcher's private office, secured by alarms and motion detectors, and has fire-proof locking files.

The steps to protect the data collected consist of utilizing participant codes on all collected material and data analysis. Any records linking the participant codes to any personal identifiers are in a secure file that the researcher can destroy when no longer needed. Also, separate consent forms of collected material will avoid participant identification. I remained aware of the disclosures permitted by law and even my obligation regarding the duty-to-protect laws in this jurisdiction.

This qualitative research relied on unstructured data. A study may utilize different methods such as interviews and questionnaires, field notes, observation, audio, or video recordings carried out in natural settings, and archival documents used in psychology. This research builds on existing literature and extends the existing knowledge which utilized handwritten interviews and realized threats to validity when dealing with vulnerable populations. I focused on confidentiality in this research among this vulnerable group.

Another critical issue considered is the final draft, and the analysis of the research presented to each participant for review. They more than likely, made stylistic comments and corrections to their statements and requested certain deletions of what I consider exciting text segments. They have the right to make such additions, corrections, and deletions. However, I also considered the research transcripts and how such changes affect the text's authenticity and result in data loss. However, this issue was discussed with participants before their volunteering for the project. Most stated they would not edit the content and would like the research to be truthful and reliable.

Summary

Chapter 3 consisted of the methods used to explain the research design and rationale, the methodology used, recruitment, participation, and data collection procedures. The chapter also included essential elements, such as the various trustworthiness issues, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, along with a detailed data analysis plan.

The chapter concluded with the summary and a thorough examination of ethical procedures: institutional permission, including IRB approvals and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections institutional approval. The last element with ethical concerns dealt with the vulnerable population and the program's participation or withdrawal.

Chapter 4: Results

This research utilized qualitative methods of research designs. Patton (2007) said that to understand what something means to a participant; you should pursue a qualitative research study to gather their experiences and stories. This qualitative analysis explored the adaptation and adjustment of older men serving life in a maximum-security prison. The data described the men's lived experiences from their perspectives. Because most of the past research relied on stakeholders' data and neglected the necessary subjectivity, which can only be achieved by revealing the views of the men incarcerated, it is essential and relevant to note that extant literature described experiences of loss, abuse, the dangers of prison, and lack of medical concern. Therefore, the existing research is deficient in that positive aspects of inmates' adaptation and adjustment have been overlooked or ignored.

This research centered on the voices of older male prisoners serving life sentences and tells their stories. It will also inform stakeholders of possible interventions supporting this vulnerable population. Chapter 4 includes the demographics, research setting, data analysis, data collection, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a detailed summary.

Setting

I know of no personal or disclosed organizational conditions that influenced participants or their experience at the time of study that may affect the interpretation of the study results. This research setting within a maximum-security prison in Pennsylvania required written permission from the Department of Corrections Bureau of Planning, Research, and Statistics' written permission. The location was altered from the earlier

proposal of the face-to-face interview due to the COVID-19 restriction, which prevented face-to-face meetings. The institution ended all visitations and predicted the close-down might exceed one year. However, the institution permitted me to proceed with the study using email and U.S. mail correspondence. The COVID-19 was deemed a pandemic and anticipated to last over a year, which forced me to get approval from the Department of Corrections to modify my methodology, and all data were collected through the U.S. mail and emails.

Demographics

The participants are all men between ages 55 and 85 and are currently incarcerated at a maximum-security prison. They were imprisoned for virtual life sentences or LWOP and have been confined for a minimum period of 25 consecutive years. However, the majority have been incarcerated for over 35 years. The participants' offenses included drug offenses, burglary, robbery, assault, gun violations, and murder. To protect the identity and confidentiality of the participants, each was assigned an alias alphanumeric code.

Table 1*Demographics*

Participant	Age	Education	Years in prison
1 TR 111	57	PhD	27
2 SM 112	70	BA	40
3 ER 113	67	GED	41
4 SB 114	85	BA	47
5 BB 115	65	BA	41
6 CR 116	70	GED	40
7 LS 117	72	AB	48
8 BR 118	68	BA	46
9 KL119	65	GED	42
10DG 110	76	HS	38

Data Collection

The study began after receiving Walden University IRB approval (Approval no. 04-30-21-0584753) in June 2021. The data collection was completed in July 2021. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections provided a list (filtered to meet my criteria) of male inmates who met the study's initial requirements. Female inmates were excluded from the project due to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections policy. I then sent a flyer to each of the potential participants explaining the research. After receiving positive acceptance signatures, I requested their willingness to participate in the study, sent to me via U. S. Mail. I began to receive correspondence from my flyer almost immediately (within one week), and after receiving the first 25, I determined that I had received enough response so I decided to proceed. To ensure that I remained nonbiased, I assigned an alphanumeric designator to each name to assure confidentiality. I then placed each of the 25 balls marked with the designator into a metal bingo ball drawing tumbler wire

cage. The first 10 numbers selected from the bingo cage became the participants selected for the study.

Ten names were drawn from the bingo cage, and I then sent the willing participants the documentation required by Walden IRB, which included the necessary letter of intent stressing privacy and confidentiality. My primary collection method was through U.S. mail with each of the 10 participants. I wrote a letter to each participant. The letter contained seven semi structured open-ended questions. A second letter with follow-up was sent as required when further information was needed. Due to confidentiality issues, I performed data collection myself.

Once responses to the interview questions were received, with the limitations placed on all visitations due to the COVID-19 virus, I calculated that time to secure the letter-writing would require only 5 weeks, and therefore the letter-writing process became an effective alternative. This change from interview to letter-writing methodology was discussed and agreed to by my committee members. All respondents' (the first 25 to respond) names were placed in a hat, and I selected 10 participants. My committee chairperson agreed that 10 participants would be adequate for saturation and obtaining data. The smaller sample size was conducive to getting a richer exploration than I would otherwise achieve by a larger sample within the time allotted for analysis.

There were no time constraints with letter writing, and the participant could take as much or as little time as desired or required. Unlike face-to-face interview, the participants had time to reflect on the questions and to consider their responses without any pressure to offer an immediate response. As a result, this change, organizational

conditions, and existing incarceration trauma had no adverse influence on the study results or interpretation.

Qualitative methods allowed me to explore various issues in-depth, with data collection permitting me to view my participants' points of view without bias, preconceived concepts, or predetermining their perspectives. This methodology provided a wealth of detailed information. Moreover, it led me to a deep understanding of the long-term prisoners' life experiences. As Creswell (2013) stated, qualitative studies have an arcane number of choices of methods; thus, I felt qualitative was the best method to achieve my goals.

Data Analysis

I used a narrative method for this study. Participant response letters usually included three to 10 text pages and totaled over 120 pages for all 10 inmates. The coding became an arduous yet vital task. Initially, I had difficulty making sense of the data. Table 2 illustrates categories/themes that each of the respondents enumerated by alphanumeric designation to the interview questions listed in the seven columns.

Under each interview question is the number designating the theme extracted. Each participant was asked identical questions in the same order. The response to each research question led to the coding by described phrases and words into the 8 subthemes derived from the codes found.

As I arrived at a category or theme, I sent the second letter out to the inmates to further explain responses that were unclear, vague, or required more explanation. To do this, I immersed myself in the data and consolidated the data on Excel spreadsheets. Hand

coding was tedious, and I had to compare segments looking for categories/themes in the data. This was more difficult because I needed to understand what was written and the meaning of the pattern/themes. These meanings or understandings become the findings within my study. Various themes emerged; 10 participants were sufficient because the size was conducive to rich, in-depth exploration than would have been possible with larger groups.

Table 2

Categories and Themes

Category/theme 1	Adaptation to prison for LWOPs
Subtheme 1 A	Fear
Subtheme 1 B	Isolation
Subtheme 1 C	Survival
Category/theme 2	Strategies of Adaptation and adjustment to prison for LWOPs
Subtheme 2 A	Religiosity
Subtheme 2 B	Aging/Maturity
Subtheme 2 C	Education
Subtheme 2 D	Family
Subtheme 2 E	Hope

Evidence of Trustworthiness

This report unmasked how prisoners in a maximum-security prison adapt and adjust to their sentences. It disclosed the perceptions of the actual inmates with data collected from 10 older men serving life or life-without parole as they disclosed from their perspectives how they adapted and adjusted to the trauma and deprivations while serving life and life without parole sentences.

Research showed that most of the relevant literature completed by psychologists or sociologists is decades old. I look to the work of Clemmer over 80 years ago (1940), where he stated,

An adult is primarily the result of what he has learned through childhood and youth. Then, as adults, they are the aggregate of their experiences. Consequently, we may assume that any environment and every social experience will contribute to changes in people appropriate, then, to examine prisoners' attitudes before their incarceration as a tool for understanding their coping skills in prison. (p. 1)

This study shed light on the truth of prison and how the lifers see this life and how they evolved into a person with values and interests, and why their growth ought to trigger a positive response from society in general.

Credibility

According to (Emerson, 1995) on the issue of credibility, stating that it is an excellent example of the concept of inseparability. In the initial letter to the inmates, I encouraged the participants to remain involved, email, or send letters to me of any additions or deletions to their thoughts. They implemented the triangulation attempt to establish credibility by sending the second letter to review the research data and conclusions. A letter-writing or correspondence inquiry is a form of qualitative research in which the stories themselves become the raw data. The correspondence approach involves investigation directed at the disclosure of human experience or questions that produce written data. There was a collaboration with the researcher as storytelling engaged the reader. These stories told of individual experiences that often exposed me to

the psychological identities of that individual. Narratives are usually collected through audio interviews, but other qualitative forms of data collection, such as my written inquiry and the study of primary historical documents, were adequate. Even after the interview, I also received unsolicited emails from several participants before responding to my second letter, which gave me valuable information on their mindsets.

Transferability

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), transferability is how this qualitative report can be considered applicable to other studies yet maintain its content-specific richness. This external validity is difficult to determine because of its uniqueness and the small number of participants; however, transferability does not necessarily apply findings directly to other methods. As women inmates were excluded, there is a question of transferability when combining male and female participants. The transferability is also limited due to the sparseness of research in the United States. There are very few published, peer-reviewed studies on women in the United States: most have been published in Great Britain. Because of the qualitative nature of this study, the data will be difficult to generalize in a statistical sense. However, the methodology will be transferable. This study can be transferable in that readers can understand the ability to consider contextual factors rather than make comparisons to the study design and detailed descriptions of data.

Dependability

According to Miles et al. (2014), the data is dependable if it answers the research questions. It must be consistent and stable over time, and a researcher must have a

reasoned argument of how you are collecting data. The research is dependable because of the rich textual responses in responding to the research and interview questions. The solid research design utilizing the inmate participants' actual words confirms that the correct data collection plan was used.

Confirmability

Guba (1981) noted that the key is that qualitative researchers do not seek objectivity, but the findings should be confirmed. The confirmability in quantitative research is somewhat easier to define. For qualitative research, a researcher must be aware of confirming how bias and prejudices affect the interpretations. This I accomplished through triangulation and ongoing audit. This is essential because, as the researcher, I am the primary instrument, and it is essential.

Results

The study results are presented in the following section, where I addressed two research questions:

- **RQ1:** What are the narratives of adaptation and adjustment in older men with life sentences?
- **RQ2:** How do older men with life sentences describe their present and ongoing adaptation and adjustment experience?

In this study, I presented two themes that emerged from the participants' responses. One theme and three subthemes respond to RQ1, and one theme and five subthemes respond to RQ 2. The interview instrument (Appendix) consisted of seven interview questions that addressed the two research questions.

Category/Theme 1: Adaptation to Prison for LWOPs

The one theme that emerged for RQ1 was adaptation to prison for LWOPs. The three subthemes were (a) Subtheme 1A: Fear; (b) Subtheme 2: Isolation; and (c) Subtheme 7: Survival.

The inmates all adjust and adapt to the new, violent environment of prison to survive. They live in constant fear. The adjustment takes time some in a matter of weeks, some in months many in years. They have only two choices: (a) Continue a criminal path and associated with others who remain criminological inclined, or (b) change their way and seek rehabilitation, redemption, and growth as a member of society. The adaptation of the inmate is the common goal of survival. They must adapt to life as demonstrated in subthemes 1A, 1B and 1C.

Sharing commonality with Theme 1 were three subthemes. Subtheme 1A Fear; Subtheme 1B Isolation; and Subtheme 1C Survival. The participants told their stories. These subthemes are part of Theme 1 because it is not entirely clear the sequence of the themes: survival, isolation, fear. The one narrative response common among all 10 participants was surviving in prison while living in a state of fear of being assaulted and killed that required them to isolate themselves from others.

Subtheme 1A: Fear

Fear was inevitable, even for the hard-core criminal. The environment of the max-security prison breeds fear for everyone. It seems to be always with the men no matter how long they are incarcerated. As they age in prison, they learn to control their fear by

knowing the behavior necessary to negate potential problems which alleviates the fears.

LS 117 expressed it clearly when he stated,

I think it is impossible to be anything but scared to death in a max facility. I sure as hell was scared and still am today. Even though I have friends now, which we watch out for each other, I can sleep at night, but we still must worry about the yard and chow time. ... For the last 47 years I have prayed to God to get me out of here alive that is my only motivation nothing else matters.

Of course, the main issue of fear is not only being mugged, but survival is the main theme.

SM 112, who described his crime as heinous, described his feelings of fear upon being incarcerated, stating "Once in prison, I felt fear and was afraid because I did not know what to expect from other prisoners because I committed a needless and heinous crime. It was violent without provocation." He responded by email almost immediately, stating that

The turning point or process of changing my ways began early in my incarceration. As soon as my cell door closed, I knew I did not ever want to repeat my crime ever. As the doors closed shut, I made a change. I was locked in, scared to death, and my conscience was my guide. No one seems to care or even ask, but I made up my mind to make corrections in my life. Regardless of my life sentence, I refused to languish in a moment of a wrong decision.

Even the tough street guys begin to realize death is very possible, so he isolates and adapts.

Subtheme 1B: Isolation

In the beginning of the incarceration the men isolated for protection. They felt it was necessary to survive. Later when they adjusted in a matter of weeks in most cases, they only isolated to read and study, because they had acclimated themselves to the prison environment. SB 14 stated,

never realizing there were guys tougher than me. I remained as much of a hermit as possible, as I learned to survive and overcome all the prison required of me. I had an inkling of what I needed to do to stay alive and how to act to gain as much benefit as possible in prison. Though Graterford prison is another dog-eat-dog environment, I learned enough to get by and survive. Thankfully, I got single-celled and made my way successfully through the years. ... Anxiety was only a factor for me for the first couple of years.

In some cases, anxiety overcomes the inmate, and he remains in the cell as much as possible. The study results found this theme as an unstated undercurrent running through most narratives.

Subtheme 1C: Survival

This theme had to do with survival and the fear of getting killed while an inmate and it was constant and always on the minds of the inmates from day one to time of death. BR 118 described himself as

a tough guy, a former army ranger and I thought I was prepared to protect myself, but it was different, it was weird, I was afraid and didn't want guys to mess with me, so I stayed alone and just stayed in my cell did my

thing and hoped for the best.

DG 110 also described an intense desire to survive:

I learned to appreciate the loss of freedom and loss of family and friends and not to take what blessing I have for granted. I am taking every program I can get so they notice I want to change and want to come out of here and not die in a prison.

SB 114 said, "I hope to go home one day that is what I pray for along with my daughter.

The worst thing is that I never see my family again and die in this forsaken hole." BB 115

shared, "I have no choice but to stay alive for my daughter who knows I am innocent. I

stay alive for her and take it one day at a time." LS 117 summed it up when he stated that

it is impossible to be anything but scared to death and to worry who is going to get to you in a max facility everyone is dangerous and a threat, so I was always ready to protect myself. I was scared from day one and I still live-in fear.

Category/Theme 2: Strategies of Adaptation and Adjustment to Prison for LWOPs

The remaining Category/theme 2 and the five subthemes aligned with **RQ2:**

RQ 2: How do older men with life sentences describe their present and ongoing experience of adaptation and adjustment? The Category/Theme 2 was strategies of adaptation and adjustment for LWOPS. The subthemes for this theme were Subtheme2A: Religiosity, Subtheme 2B: Aging/Maturity; Subtheme 2C: Education; Subtheme 2D: Family; and Subtheme 2E: Hope.

The strategies of adaptation and adjustment to prison for LWOPs is evident from reading the account of these inmates who exist in a sparse and violent environment insight into their obtaining resiliency. Maturing and aging have made them patient, aware

of themselves and obtaining self-growth. Adaptation and hope are found in all the participants' writings. They have adapted and found a need for purpose in life and provide a service to the prison and to younger inmates. These participants avoid trouble and are always searching for a means to self-improve and the hope for freedom greatly shapes their adaptation. SB 114 found adaptation nonexistent he stated,

One day at a time ... you don't adapt, you just deal with it because you can't let it take over your mind. Some things you can move on from ... others you live with the rest of your life. Prison made me grow up. I have been here since I was 22 and now, I am 64. I learned to live in peace within this madness."

Similarly, SM 112 stated,

You can't let life in prison dictate your thinking and behavior. So, I use my time in prison as therapy, made all the major changes to correct my thinking. Because, I knew, somehow, I had the solution within me. I accepted the adjustments for my life. Yes, I did kill, and I ask for forgiveness every day with integrity determined to give everyone respect.

Subtheme 2A: Religiosity

Is multi-denominational consists of many religious accounts of life types and beliefs. The acceptance of higher authority was prevalent in many of the responses; however, none described their newfound religion as the hook for transformation. One participant, LS 110, explained,

The years have been difficult, and all I can do is ask God to help me work through this terrible sentence. I am an innocent man, so I remain angry and confused. I ask God every day to help me through this terrible ordeal.

BB 115 stated, "I was God-fearing and believed God would help me. I was angry and frustrated and began to stutter, but a priest hypnotized me and cured me. I hope God will let me get out of here alive." Another participant, BR 118, has become a dedicated Catholic and daily churchgoer and volunteers with the various pastors. He said,

My primary source of motivation has been the church. I believe miracles can happen. I have hope. No one wants to stay in prison you know even though I go to church I still needed to get drunk to survive the only goal is to get out of here. Other guys who had no family raised on the streets or foster care take prison easy, but I had a normal life so even being a tough guy prison takes a toll my religion and getting old made me feel a little safer, but God doesn't save everybody.

According to ER 113,

Only God knows what the future holds. As a result, I look towards a future with optimism that things will change for the better. Just thank God who has kept me alive this long and keep praying he doesn't forget me.

TR111 said,

When you hit rock bottom you get sick and tired of being stuck in your own mess. I was tired of not being in control of even my own thoughts and emotions. I

learned to meditate on God's word and how to deal with my anger learning about love, peace and how to treat others.

SM 112 said that prison was terrifying to him, explaining,

No matter how long you are here it gets worse rather than better. My reality didn't come into focus for three or four years and I regained my senses but all I can think about is how to survive in prison and what is going to happen to be ahead. Fear of the unknown and visions of what happens to murderers has prolonged my anxiety as I languish in prison for decade after decade. I just can't accept this existence when I think of prison being my final residence on earth, only God can save me I can think of no other solution.

KL 119 explained,

I thought I could start to help others but that didn't fix the mistakes I made on the outside and all can think is how time has passed me by. I have been very sick and as I lay think about dying in prison, I realize prison don't make you a person only God does. I try to believe we all had good and bad in use. Some guys never try to change, and I try to show them the way. I have been in here over forty years, and I still have something worthwhile to give. God will show me the way and maybe even help me a little before I die.

Subtheme 2B: Aging/Maturity

In some cases, aging did not bring maturity which is evidenced by inmates with bad behavior. This was not the case with our participants. They all satisfied the participant criteria because they were over 50 and had no instances of bad behavior in

decades of imprisonment. Aging/maturity, missed family, or death of family or friends' theme is interesting because aging is thought of as a hook by many researchers, as is the death of a family member; however, this research does not reinforce this phenomenon as a hook concept. There is no doubt that both themes are of interest, but the themes seem to be more reinforcements than catalysts or hooks.

Aging and maturity were certainly relevant to six of the 10 participants. The reality is that aging over time yields maturity in most cases. Aging is also responsible for reflective thinking and self-evaluation. SM 112 summed-up aging and maturity concisely; his comments are a sign of maturity:

SM 112 said

As growth and maturity settled into my life, correlated actions and attitudes representing new thinking followed. The thought that I could remain imprisoned for life gave me the incentive to refute the label LWOP. The thrill of living precedes any discomfort a life in confinement imposes. I anticipated improving my life through hope, a willingness to transform this earthly bondage, and hope was significant to improving conditions in my environment. However, I make every effort to do the right thing now, whatever the circumstances.

BR 118 wrote,

I made up my mind to go straight in 1984 thirty-eight years ago. I got some classes and programs done and realized what a waste I was making of my life. I was out of control with addictions and behavior. My dad dies that day in 84 and that was my starting point. I want to do what it takes to get out of here and make

something of myself. I want my kids to respect me for my change and I vow to never, never get involved in any crime of any kind.

LS117 reinforced these sentiments. He spends his days researching prisonization and statistics:

Brother John Here is my answer to the “Opinion” conversation. Several studies with supporting facts and statistics show that usually that after the age of 40, individuals are on the downside of criminal behavior. Much of this is due to the maturing of these individuals and the assumptions of adult responsibilities, stable relationships, Education, employment, or just being worn out by the criminal culture. I hope this adds some substance to the conversation. Peace Be with You and all that’s important to you.

Subtheme 2C: Education

Programs in prison are helping give the state of knowledge to inmates. With this power, overcoming the past and enjoying a better quality of life are very achievable goals. Education in prison helps to give inmates a second chance. Inmates who participated in educational programs were less likely to commit a crime and return to incarceration within 3 years than those who did not participate in education. LS 117 credits education as paramount in his adaptation. He said,

For the past 47 years, my prime motivation was to survive. I want to be a positive example for my children. I have changed my unruly behavior and I got my associates and my bachelor’s degree in sociology and my change will always be a continuing work in progress.

BR 118 said,

[I] found constant work on my education from GED to BA kept me busy and surrounded me with others who were positive thinkers. That along with my catholic religion kept me so busy and my mind occupied I had no time nor the mind for trouble.

The lifers I interviewed found meaning and adapted to incarceration. Yes, prisonization does shape their routine. Dhami (2017) explained prisonization as a process of behavior shaped by the environment in which you exist. I found that the lifers seemed to create their routines and shape the prison world to meet their basic needs. Moreover, many of the participants credited belief in a higher authority as a primary factor. For example, TR 111, an inmate sentenced to LWOP for murder, who reached an education level of PhD in Theology while incarcerated, expressed the sequence of his adaptation. He started as did others with a really difficult time. It was his first and only arrest and it involved the murder of his wife during a domestic dispute where he attempted to claim self-defense which was not successful. So, after 3 years or so of incarceration, he went to the Bible and religion for emotional relief. He also became a man who instigated the love of God in others while incarcerated and enabled his students to become better men.

TR111 said,

My path to adaptation was difficult. and I changed through a learned belief due to the Bible for answers. I became baptized Christian and have dedicated me to growing spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

SM 112 explained,

In this situation, the hook for me was the pain and sadness I caused my family. I need to restore the trust I have destroyed by committing murder. I want to rebuild the relationship, let my actions, and character show, and do my speaking by witnessing how I am today. As growth and maturity has settled into my life correlated actions and attitudes representing new thinking followed for sure. The thoughts that I will remain imprisoned for life give me the incentive to refute the label LWOP have lost my family and most of my friends so the only thing giving me hope is my newfound maturity I guess it is part of growing old.

Subtheme 2D: Family

This subtheme involved missing family, death of family. The absence of family relationships either through death or the inability to visit with family or friends was a major issue with most participants. Subtheme 2D is expressed differently by each participant. Some are facing loneliness, some need counselling, others come to the realization of the hurt they caused the family. Though not listed as the single hook I found it mentioned in 75% of participant responses. For example, BB 115 stated,

Thinking about my dad changed my life. I wanted to prove myself to him and my family. I was no longer an addict or alcoholic. I got my Education GED and a BA from Villanova and took any and every program or course I can. Sometimes you just don't get it until you lose it. My dad died and brought my wasted life into focus. I regained my senses and was tired of being a criminal and stuck in my own mess. I got control of my thoughts and learned the right way to treat others and they treated me back. Even though I may end up in prison as my final

residence nothing inside me gives me acceptance of this existence my maturity has changed me as I am now a mature and pro-active thinker. First time in jail and I just am getting older. I have no choice but to stay alive for my daughter who knows I am innocent. I stay alive for her and take it one day at a time.

Similarly, S 117 explained,

For the past forty-seven years all I wanted was to stay alive and get out of here to show my grandchildren that I can change into a better man. I got my associate and bachelor's degrees in sociology and my changing will always be a work in progress, but I owe my family to see me as the man I am today.

DG 110 recounted,

I am an innocent man and got sentenced to life and it took everything out of me except my family love. The cop set me up my kids know it so how can I adapt or adjust to that? I took a lot of classes and learned. So, knowing I am innocent and that my family knows I just keep my faith and hope God can save me somehow.

Subtheme 2: Hope

Hope was the single most prevalent thought process expressed by every inmate interviewed. It was something always on their minds. The hope of one day getting a chance to get free and prove they can be a better man is articulated in almost every interview. TR 111 seemed uncertain but optimistic and stated,

cannot predict, I got my PhD in Theology and have become a preacher, teacher, and mentor, sharing what I have learned with the young men who have found

themselves in prison. Today I have forgiven myself and love myself. I have learned a great deal throughout my incarceration.

SM 112 stated,

Every feeling I have uncovered over the decades of the plight of my incarceration has in some way influenced the character and conduct of the man before you, and it does me good to weigh in on the challenges I have endured. Although the question faces me cause for me to reflect deeply on a past that is not desirable, moving forward is more exciting because of the noticeable self-gratifying growth I accomplished through patience and maturity.

ER 113 wrote, “I have a willingness to accept accountability for the taking of another man’s life God knows what the future holds.” Likewise, LS 117 said,

It would be with me forever. This memory of my crime changed my life, and I want to do good if they give me a second chance. I have been here for 37 years and never got any violations or troubles. I will do the same if I get a chance outside. Nevertheless, even on the outside, I will never forget my crime.

SB 114 said, “I hope to go home one day that is what I pray for along with my daughter. The worst thing is that I never see my family again and die in this forsaken hole.”

Another participant, BB 115 explained,

As time moved on, I adapted, I got a big picture view. I became a goal-oriented person setting landmarks to get from one point to another. I keep a glimmer of hope alive by relying of God and moral support from my family and other friends,

but it is only a glimmer I don't want my family to see me die in prison. I think about dying in here and have nightmares frequently.

CR 116 stated,

I will never commit another crime I don't want to send negative messages to my daughter and family my children need to know to err is human and I should be forgiven at least that is my hope when I get out of here. Look I have been here over forty years, who needs a hook? I only made one mistake in my life and here I am, and I am not a career criminal.

DG 110

I will be liberated one day and start a process of building a healthy relationship with my family and the community and within the next five years I will have my own cleaning business and continue to fight unjust incarcerations. Education and spiritual enlightenment inspired me to become a better man. I was only a child when I came to prison and had selfish ways about me. I learned to appreciate the loss of freedom and loss of family and friends and not to take what blessing I have for granted. I am taking every program I can get so they notice I want to change and want to come out of here and not die in a prison. Being away from my family eats me alive and I can't be home when someone dies.

Subtheme 2A: Religiosity

The acceptance of higher authority was prevalent in most of the responses; however, no participant described newfound religion as the hook for transformation. This

theme did present strong evidence as prevalent in the inmates' resilience and motivation to keep a positive attitude.

The data collected from the interviews revealed that they continue to make every effort to adjust and adapt to make themselves desirable for commutation and parole after decades of incarceration. These results become evident by examining the inmates' behavior and achievements. They avoid troublesome behavior and take advantage of every opportunity for self-improvement.

The data were collected from 10 men serving LWOP. The results of being sentenced to LWOP, also known as DBI, are very similar to a virtual life sentence. However, with a virtual life sentence, the inmate is parole-eligible after a certain period depending on the term of his sentence served. LWOP is by far the most inhumane and harshest prison sentence possible in the United States. The inmates serving this sentence are not eligible for parole. Parole by commutation is nonexistent. The result for LWOP inmates is that they will die in prison.

Summary

This study presented common themes in the men's accounts, demonstrating from their perspective positive adaptation, adjustment, finding new meaning in life, and most importantly, the hope for release and the ability to achieve a second chance. The questions I utilized sought a panacea from the men themselves and therefore were open-ended and semi structured. However, the participants' responses were not necessarily in sequential order or format and therefore confusing. The main goal of this research study was to discover through interviews if long term inmates adapted and what motivated

these prisoners to change their ways. The rationale is that the researcher believes that more pertinent information and data will be discovered by exploring the inmates' perspectives on long-term imprisonment rather than solely depending on shareholders' viewpoints. as stated by Di Lorito et al. (2018)

Toch, 1992 found, that aging and therefore maturing in prison leads to inmates gaining better self-control. Lifers make their sentences their own by choosing personal routines and going along with the institutional program, which they come to realize they cannot change. I found they maintained control over their incarceration by spending much of their time in solitary pursuits. They also become more thoughtful and join life groups

The results of the interviews rendered and displayed that old time-honored myth that the lifers deteriorated in prison to be false. All the participants demonstrated that they are not living their lives in a state of passivity. The pressures of prison life have not worn them down. All the participants in this study proved to be resilient, had good psychological profiles, and had common pro-social attitudes.

My research showed that time or aging was vital in the adaptation process. In other words, responding to Research Question 2, I found the adjustment process began slowly and fed on itself. As the men learned more skills, they gained more confidence in themselves and attained skills. All my participants achieved school educations while incarcerated early in their sentences. While learning to read and write, they gained verbal intelligence and emotional security. According to Flanagan, 1981 these men, as they aged and participated in programs to improve, also demonstrated substantial reductions in

violations and had no occurrences of hostility. They remain resilient in their pursuit and hold onto hope, stating that hope is crucial, which is no easy undertaking. Maruna, 2004 called this “making good.” By avoiding for decades in the case of my participants, they demonstrate persistence, deep faith and become aware that their behavior would one day be pertinent to a possible release through commutation

None of the participants could point out any specific hook which led them to adaptation. It appears there is a combination of factors that leads to adaptation. It seems to be a matter of time, Education, religion, family issues, and psychological adjustment. Of course, the environment is essential; however, there was no singular common theme. Toch, 2002 describes the transition as follows, long-term lifers appear to cope maturely with their confinement by establishing a daily routine that allows them to find meaning and purpose in life that might otherwise seem empty and pointless.

I did find that all the participants were very thoughtful and fully aware of the likelihood of dying in prison. The most prominent factor that either caused or reinforced a positive adaptation was the death of family members and loved ones.

In Chapter 5, I will summarize my findings. Finally, I will analyze and interpret the finding compared to what has been found in the peer-reviewed literature. The further discussion surrounding the findings’ interpretations, limitations of the study, implications, recommendations, and conclusions follow in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study had a meaningful purpose. It was designed to provide insight into the positive psychological and social effects of adaptive processes. The primary objective was to understand the actual inmates' perspectives and experiences regarding adaptation and adjustment as they experienced it during their life sentence of incarceration. This study presented common themes in the men's accounts, demonstrating from inmates' perspective positive adaptation, adjustment, finding new meaning in life, and most importantly, the hope for release and the ability to achieve a second chance.

The results of this study indicated that these men, despite all the hardships they endured, have never relinquished the hope that their rehabilitation will be accepted and recognized, and they will one day be freed. They never abandon hope, and hope intensely molds their behavior. The data collected from the interviews demonstrated that these men continued to be resilient and to make every effort to adjust and adapt to make themselves desirable for commutation and parole after decades of incarceration. These results became evident by examining these inmates' newfound behavior and achievements, as they avoided troublesome behavior, and took advantage of every available opportunity for education and self-improvement.

Interpretation of the Findings

The study showed the lives of incarcerated men whose life stories are described by most academics and scholars as resulting in the negative consequences of mass incarceration. Research has not adequately documented the social, psychological, and behavioral changes among older men with sentences throughout their imprisonment and

their lived experiences with adjustment and adaptation (Sliva, 2015). These are men who lived in the hope of one day being heard and understood? As they told their stories they revealed and demonstrated their rehabilitation and transition to persons who can return to society and desired to not only make amends but also make substantial contributions to society.

The peer-reviewed literature documented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation accentuated the need for additional research and study. None of the extant literature delved into the main issue required to affect positive social change. They merely present snapshots of prisoner statistics and attempted to solve their varied academic research questions. Most existing studies are quantitative, outdated, and conducted in the European rather than the American context. The results of this study will extend the knowledge of the extant peer-reviewed literature and confirm the need for future studies. This study confirmed the statements of Smoyer et al. (2019), who stated that the research on how those serving sentences achieve positive adjustment and adaptation during incarceration is minimal. Smoyer et al.'s study emphasized that increasing knowledge of inmate adjustment to prison practices is a viable way to improve prisons' efficiency.

Although researchers have identified many aspects of prison adjustment, many predictors and outcomes are still understudied, and the results of existing studies have been inconsistent (Smoyer et al., 2019). For example, observations of two academics would leave the reader confused, not knowing who to believe. Though relatively recently, Johnson and Tabriz (2011) suggested that individuals serving life sentences, with rare exceptions, are a class of living dead. They are sentenced to lonely and untimely deaths

due to traumatic stress and anxiety while incarcerated. The study by Johnson and Tabriz came some 10 years after Zamble (1992) who studied lifers for 7 years and found that they did not exhibit the traits stated by Johnson and Tabriz. The results of this study yielded results 180 degrees in opposition to the Zamble statements. The participants have not exhibited negative adaptation in ways that would inhibit or make it more challenging to cope. They also did not sink into despair, or rebellion. On the contrary, they improved their emotional states, health, and conduct, and their ability to cope with adversities. This is an example of the vital need for the existing study as is suggested by Leigey (2015).

The results of this research confirm Leigey's (2015) comments that learning more about how older male prisoners serving life sentences adjust to and cope with prison life is essential to understanding how programs to enhance their ability to adapt can be implemented. Inmate adjustment to prison is also necessary concerning several essential correctional practices: explaining institutional infractions, health care utilization, and coping strategies (Goncalves, 2014). Most extant literature relied on stakeholder groups' perspectives other than prisoners, which neglects prisoners' subjectivity. The results of this study reinforced the remarks of Smoyer who continued to illustrate the need for more research. Smoyer et al. also stated that there were only two qualitative research studies that were peer-reviewed, and they were decades old. He stated it was necessary to analyze and utilize existing literature to develop a theoretical framework. This study accepted the shortcomings accentuated by Smoyer et al. and relied on only literature no more than 5 years old for data and utilized the extant literature only for historical veracity. This study also accentuated the findings of Bonfield et al. (2018), that it is

essential to ensure articles are peer-reviewed, relevant to the problem studied, have a purpose, and are focused on the theoretical concept of the study; most importantly indicate a knowledge gap. For this study, as stated in Chapter 2, I used only peer-reviewed references that were relevant to the stated problem of this study. Like Miszewski (2017), I found that in the past studies the inmates' positive perspectives were overlooked or ignored in favor of the perspectives usually rendered by stakeholder views and that the perspectives were focused predominately on and prioritized the negative aspects.

In this study, observing the direct quotes from the participants, I noted the acceptance of the ongoing public narrative stated in colloquial terms, "do the crime, do the time," "adult time for an adult crime," "tough on crime." These types of references only contribute to ripping away prisoner's sense of efficacy. The interview responses indicate that these men have reached a state of acceptance.

The study of adaptation dates to Clemmer (1940) who provided the first study on adaptation as an important theory. Some 80 years ago Clemmer stated that prisonization thwarted attempts to rehabilitate inmates and inspired behavior contrary to our accepted standards of conduct. It is obvious from reading the response of the participants that Clemmer theory is a generalization My results indicated the shortcomings and what I would call hasty generalizations of Clemmer. Times have changed and so have the long-term inmates. The change is also evident in the study of his adaptation theory because it led to more current studies like Nelson (1984) who was best known for his adaptation-level theory. Nelson reported that the previous literature mainly focused on a specific

catalyst for change and merely discussed its value as a catalyst to change. The early studies seemed to overlook the extremely complicated question of achieving adaptation and the “how” of the adjustment to positive social change. The status of adaptation and adjustment in this study yielded key findings that illustrated the complicated nature by illustrating the several combinations of factors involved in obtaining positive social adaptation, whereas Clemmer and Nelson worked with one or sometimes two themes, neglecting the complication of multithemed theory. For example, in the tables listed in Chapter 4, the various categories are shared by more than one participant and are intertwined in providing positive reactions from the participants.

Each participant was asked identical questions in the same order. The response to each research question led to the coding by described phrases and words. Various categories which developed into subthemes emerged and utilizing hand-coding and therefore was very difficult to understand what was written and the meaning of the emerging patterns/themes. The findings indicated that no one theme was the cause or catalyst which produced the adaptation. Rather, it was the combinations of themes acting together which produced this adjustment to the environment of life in prison. By reacting to the tone of the responses it indicated that handling fear and survival were prominent in producing resilience, yet no one theme was named by the participants as being responsible for the adaptation. Noted is the fact that interview question 4 evoked a unanimous response in all participants who indicated hope for release and becoming a new man leading a new life. Yet the question remained unanswered.

Nelson proffered the belief that the inmate had the ability to adjust to new experiences and information which is in sync with Crewe (2017), who stated that the frameworks for making sense of adaptation and adjustment to prison need to be sociological or psychological. I have found that, like any other humans, these men want to put the past behind them and advance their lives with positive change. They want to bring meaning to their lives. The participants all accepted their wrongdoing and the meaning they sought was to prove they could and did become better people. They wanted to prove they earned freedom through merit and that they can and one day will reconcile with society. However, they live in max-security where survival is a major concern and isolation is a key survival technique. It should be stated that even in 2021 these inmates, as easy keepers who caused little or no disruption, followed the rules and keep to themselves as a survival technique. A record of the good behavior of my participants was a mandatory requirement to be accepted as a participant in the study. Because of the low profile, these inmates have a low place on the priorities of the correctional staff, and they are blocked from access to meaningful education and real job training and have little assistance or a chance to add meaning to their lives.

According to Smoyer et al. (2019), the results of current studies have been inconsistent even though they identified many aspects of prison adjustment the predictors and outcomes, yet the predictors remained understudied. This study was mindful of the need to attempt to explore every possible variable and to find what emphasis could be derived. Extant literature also omitted or under-represented the inmates' survival mechanisms and the reality of the daily fear experienced. I found that all the participants'

initial reaction to incarceration was extreme fear and trauma which stimulated the need for the resultant isolation as a panacea to enhance their survival potential. However, neither fear nor trauma can be claimed as the catalyst to change. My research indicated that time or aging was vital in the adaptation process. In other words, the adjustment began slowly and fed on itself. As the men learned more skills, they gained more confidence in themselves and attained skills. All my participants achieved their high school educations while incarcerated through the GED program early in their sentences. While learning to read and write, they gained verbal intelligence and emotional security. This research reinforced the study by Flanagan (1981) anywhere men, as they aged and participated in programs improved, and demonstrated substantial reductions in violations and had no occurrences of hostility. They remained resilient in their pursuit and held onto hope, stating that hope is crucial, which is no easy undertaking. Maruna (2004) called this “making good.” Furthermore, in this study, the inmates made good; they exemplified “making good” for decades by avoiding bad behavior and the participants demonstrated persistence, deep faith and became aware that their behavior would one day be pertinent to a possible release through commutation.

None of the participants could point out any specific hook that led them to adaptation. It appears in the analysis of my results that there is a necessary combination of factors that leads to adaptation. It seems to be a matter of time, education, religion, family issues, and psychological adjustment. Of course, the environment is essential; however, there was no singular common theme. Toch (2002) described the transition as follows: long-term lifers appear to cope maturely with their confinement by establishing a

daily routine that allows them to find meaning and purpose in the life that might otherwise seem empty and pointless. This study found that, like the statements by Toch, the establishment of meaning and purpose was evident in the responses to the interview questions. Some inmates adjusted in 3 or 4 weeks, some in several years. However, their adjustment never eliminated the hope to survive and the daily fear of being confronted or attacked and killed by other prisoners.

This study also reinforces Flanagan (1985) observations that the changes that occur while imprisoned are observable but in an unexpectedly positive direction. He suggested that scholars' thinking about the long-term incarceration effect had come full circle from the earlier research on the deterioration model. Flanagan also noted that, yes, they adapt and adjust, but the strategies they use to do so are not easy to deduce and even more difficult to classify. This is a hard-earned lesson I encountered during this dissertation. However, I found I agreed with Mackenzie and Goodstein (1985) who stated that long-term confinement's adverse effects had not been satisfactorily demonstrated in any existing empirical research. Like Porporino and Zamble (1984), I believe literature focusing on the prison experience is deficient in advancing an understanding of adaptation and the changes that occur in the thoughts and behavior of the LWOP.

I agree with Miszewski (2017) that the literature on LWOPs is in fact decades old and deals mostly with European countries rather than the United States. While people of color are always over-represented in prisons those sentenced to LWOP are even more evident where one of five African American prisoners is serving a life sentence (The Sentencing Project, 2020). For now, even though we have demonstrated through their

own voices the changes that occur to the long-term inmate there is no one explanation of how the identity emerges; it is a complicated phenomenon that requires more study.

Theoretical Concept

This study utilized adaptation theory as the framework facilitating insight into adaptation's practical function and adjustment to positive change among long-term inmates. I used a theoretical lens to explore the lifers' perspectives and to understand their experiences. Older men with LWOP sentences realize they must change their ways, and engaging factors (like religion, education, and socialization) help facilitate adaptation and adjustment. This study was based on Clemmer's (1940) adaptation theory, used in various fields, including psychology and criminology. Clemmer's research suggested that prisonization thwarted attempts to rehabilitate convicts and inspired behavior contrary to accepted social conduct standards. The narratives of the participants did make necessary behavioral changes. In psychology, adaptation is a process by which individuals or groups make necessary or desired changes, cognitive, behavioral, and effective. It is the result of encountering new or different environmental conditions or demands to meet the basic need and maintain a good quality of life. Taylor (1983) suggests that humans cope with threats in their lives by creating a set of positive concepts or illusions, which serve to protect their psychological health. According to Taylor's theory, these positively slanted cognitions create space for hope, personal growth, and flexibility. As the subthemes in this study clearly demonstrated the men adopted hope, achieved growth, and remained flexible and resilient. This adaptation involved changing cognitions in three domains: searching for deeper meaning in the experience, increasing individual

control, and restoring positive self-views; all of which are evident in the responses of the participants.

The knowledge obtained in this study supported adjustment and adaptation as necessary elements in exploring the mechanism that leads to behavior change and positive outcomes among long-term inmates.

Limitations of the Study

The potential for this qualitative study to be subject to potential bias as described in both Creswell (2013) and Patton (2015) is due to my role as the researcher as the primary data analysis instrument and the study results being subjective in interpretation. This study may have also encountered, due to the small number of participants, a limit to the transferability to larger populations. Lastly, validity required the need to give the participants the benefit of the doubt with the assumption they provided honest responses to the open-ended, semi structured, interview questions. The other limitation inherent in the research design and approach to this inquiry is due to the COVID-19 pandemic which necessitated and change from face-to-face interviews to written correspondence because of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections eliminated all visitation for the past 18 months. The inability to observe body language or facial recognition limited the additional ability of the researcher to make judgments other than the analysis of written responses to correspondence.

Recommendations

As discussed in Chapter 2, I included and discussed reviews of findings from existing studies concerning adjustment and adaptation. and I believe that further research

is necessary to address transformation and behavioral change because of long-term incarceration. Toch (1992) found, that aging and therefore maturing in prison leads to inmates gaining better self-control. Lifers made their sentences their own by choosing personal routines and going along with the institutional program, which they came to realize they cannot change. The results of this study indicated the participants maintained control over their incarceration by spending much of their time in solitary pursuits. They also become more thoughtful. However, the questions asked of the participants asked them to recall feelings they experienced at least 20 years ago. It is possible that during their adjustment to prison life may have diminished over time. The primary objective of this research was to acquire a solid understanding of how these men adjusted to long term sentences and adapted to incarceration. Because they have had such a long time to reflect on their life in prison their responses should be less emotional and more thoughtful.

The most important aspect of future studies is to understand the positive adjustment and adaptation of long-term inmates will require quantitative research. This growing science regarding measuring behavior and methodology may enable a researcher to identify significant determinants and subjective behavioral supports. Hopefully, advances in research on adaptation and adjustment will be recognized as vital factors in understanding the possibility of the prosocial changes long-term inmates often undergo.

Implications

As the system is today, it will be difficult to achieve a positive social change with our long-term inmates. To implement a change individuals must first be willing to change and if society accepts change; then like a tree falling unwitnessed in the forest after they

change will society hear their pleas and accept the possibility of change? While the LWOPs adapt and adjust no results will be measured unless society allows access to the necessary supports needed to demonstrate their change. Each of the participants expressed their perspectives on their experiences during their long-term incarceration which expands our knowledge on the needed intervention initiative required. Results of this study reveal the long-term inmates' perspectives and how they differ from the stakeholders' perspective. This understanding of the process as described by the participants may lead to more effective intervention programs and professionals aiding in the commutation process of LWOPs.

The results of this study further confirm the need to focus on the LWOP population and their unnecessary hardships in acquiring educational, vocational, and other developmental programs accessible by only younger inmates.

Many of the themes and summaries within this study can be transformed into educational programs for the LWOPs and for the organizations that support the LWOPs. The problem of men left to die has become an ethical and moral issue as most scholars and academics have described a lack of attention to the problem of the long-term incarcerated dying-in prison. By implication, it is time to concentrate efforts and to focus on this problem of oversight. The findings of this report demonstrated that a positive adaptation occurs. The stakeholders must take the time to realize these positive changes and that these men can contribute to society and help implement programs educating youth in the neighborhoods about the pitfalls of drugs and crime. The input and guidance of these men would be respected by the street youths.

Conclusions

The findings and results of this study are reminiscent of the Faustian bargain. Faustian bargains are designed as a pact when a person believes something thought to be of moral importance such as life in prison in lieu of taking a life (execution) as LWOP appears to be more humane or morally acceptable. The emphasis is to solve an immediate issue or done for present gain without regard for future cost or consequences. Faust refers to the legend of Doctor Faustus, a character in German folklore. The LWOP sentence was the result of anti-execution lobbyists, pro-life and various other religious advocates. The findings of this study found the perspectives of the inmates illustrate an inconvenient truth that life without parole is not a moral alternative but a travesty of justice and violation of human rights and is not defensible; LWOP is the death penalty ‘in sheep’s clothing’.

By reading the comments of the inmates the reader should realize the importance of the inmates’ perspectives over the normal institutional stakeholders. Will it be possible to change societies’ views of life without parole? It should at least provide a needed perspective over our punitiveness. By hearing the voices of the long-term prisoner, the reader will learn the truth that life without parole has turned out to be a worse option than the death penalty. LWOP denies any hope of rehabilitation or redemption, and the basic humanity of mankind.

The message from the participants is that prison is a harrowing experience. However, though it is challenging if the time is met with mature coping it can be constructive time as indicated by the inmate response to the interview questions. The

long-term inmates established the prison as home and realized that to survive they must adapt because this is all they have. They avoid trouble and as stated by Johnson (2002), they make the most of the limited opportunities for work, they seek out rehabilitative programs and education. The inmates live by the adage “Do your own time” they take control by doing their personal routines as they aged and matured. They also have become more thoughtful as they aged.

According to Zamble and Porporino (1984) the inmates seem to experience an increase in pro-social attitudes as well as improved psychological profiles. This successful adjustment and adaptation seem to feed on itself. According to Flanagan (1981) adaptation seems to feed on itself producing more success, more confidence, and more skills. He goes on to state that, over time, lifers gain emotional maturity, significant increases in verbal intelligence and demonstrate significant reductions in hostility during their stay in prison. He also stated that recidivism rates for these lifers are extremely low and are almost certainly a byproduct of aging in prison as well as the lessons learned while maturely coping in prison over time.

Hope is the hook. The trouble-free behavior and productive records of adjustment compiled by the lifer is the product of hope. They hope to somehow secure their freedom through commutation and as a result, they gain positive attitudes and behavior. Their ability to avoid trouble for decades while incarcerated and the ability to show faith in the fact that their prison good conduct will one day matter in gaining commutation is their hope for the future. This sense of purpose is key. The question remains that these men are

reborn, they have a strong message and mission to bring and to guide their lives, but is society willing to listen?

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Tell me how you felt once you were initially incarcerated. What was it like for you? What was the main thing that helped you adapt to being in prison?
2. You have been in prison for decades please describe your primary source of motivation? How would you describe how you have changed?
3. How did this source change the way you looked at the fact you were in prison for life? How would you describe how you have adapted to being in prison? What has helped you adjust to being in prison on this type of sentence?
4. How do you feel about life generally? What is in the future for you? How do you look at the years ahead do you have a prediction?
5. When a person makes up his mind to go straight, it is usually due to what we call a hook. Please tell me what your hook was, and describe how this turning point changed your ways?
6. Tell me about your best and worst experience serving a life sentence?
7. Looking back over the many years you have been in prison, what do you think helped you most to adapt to prison life and what keeps you going today?

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Narrative of Adjustment and Adaptation among Older Males Serving Life**Sentences**

A research study and proposal are being conducted by John Taglianetti, a researcher and doctoral candidate at Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The project is under the direction of Dr. Ethel Perry and Dr. Sharon Xeuerb, members of Walden University faculty. John seeks to recruit 15 older males to meet the requirements for this study who have reached 50 and have served a minimum of 20 years in a maximum-security prison. By conducting narrative interviews with the older male Lifers, we can better understand how the long-term prisoner adjusts and adapts and how this phenomenon and the collected phenomenon impact prosocial attitudes and relationships.

You will be considered eligible to participate in this study if you are at least 50 years of age, have served a minimum of 20 consecutive years in a maximum-security prison, are fluent in English, literate in not requiring a legal guardian, not currently mentally or physically ill, have not been suicidal in past 365 days, do not suffer from bipolar or any manic episode in 30 days, and are willing to consent to audio recorded interviews whether in person, Skype or Zoom formats.

Your participation will be entirely voluntary, and there is no expected direct benefit nor compensation. A series of two written interviews to verify results will be held. The interviews are designed to study your experiences regarding adaptation and adjustment while you are incarcerated.

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study and proposal conducted by John Taglianetti, a doctoral researcher at Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The project is under the direction of Dr. Ethel Perry and Dr. Sharon Xeuerb, members of Walden University faculty. John seeks to recruit 15 older males to meet the requirements for this study who have reached 50 and have served a minimum of 20 years in a maximum-security prison. By conducting narrative interviews with the older male Lifers, we can better understand how the long-term prisoner adjusts and adapts and how this phenomenon and the collected phenomenon impact prosocial attitudes and relationships. This form is known as Informed Consent, enabling the participants to understand this study and make an informed decision before participating in the program.

Background Information

The written interviews are designed to explore and divulge the inmates' perspectives on adjustment and adaptation to long-term prison sentences and attempt to understand them better and discover how the prisoner adjusts and adapts and the resulting impact of prosocial development attitudes and relationships.

Procedures

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Return signed response to the advertisement

Return signed copy of Informed Consent

Participate in two interviews each scheduled two weeks apart and a final interview following two weeks after the 1st interview.

The interviews are confidential, and you will be assigned a code number that is not disclosed to anyone other than research supervisors at Walden University.

You can also email me or call me if you have questions before, during, or after any interview session. This follow-up communication is voluntary and solely for the participants' ease of communication.

Nature of the Study

This research study is entirely voluntary, and you can accept or reject the invitation without any consequences whatsoever. You can continue the study or leave the study or change your mind at any time. As all inmates are being contacted, the researcher will follow up with all volunteers to let them know whether they were selected for the study.

Payment

No payment or personal benefit is received by participating in the research project.

Risks and Benefits

This study will not pose any risk to your well-being or physical safety. However, there may be some risk of discomfort, stress, fatigue, or upset due to the subject matter. The benefit could be using the results to improve effective policy for LWOPs and Lifers serving life sentences, leading to a better parole opportunity.

Privacy

The participants' identity is confidential, always protected, and never disclosed, as the researcher will utilize pseudonyms and not disclose the location. Data is stored in secure

files password protected in the researcher's secure site. No identifiable information will be available, and the only researcher has data access, which will be kept for five years as required by the university. Confidentiality mandates that past crimes will not be reported the potential danger; however, to self or others must be reported

Contacts

Ask questions either now or later via email.

If you feel you understand this study well enough to make an informed decision, please indicate your consent:

If you are doing so by email use, replying to your email with the words, "I consent."

Otherwise, sign and send below.