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Inmate and Prison Gang Leadership

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

Sandra H. Fortune

December 2003

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Prisonization, The Inmate Code

ABSTRACT

Inmate and Prison Gang Leadership

by

Sandra H. Fortune

Almost 2,000 males who have been convicted of crimes covering the gamut of criminal activities are institutionalized in the state prison in Johnson County, Tennessee. These inmates, housed in the confines of a few concrete buildings, represent a society that is dissimilar from the free-world society.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to determine the characteristics of an inmate leader. Research data were collected through interviews with 20 prisoners located in the Northeast Correctional Complex in Mountain City, Tennessee. Inmate leaders, selected for the study included gang leaders and non-gang leaders. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for the data analysis. To capture the essence of the interviews, interpretivism was used for the analysis. A holistic view allowed certain overlapping themes to be isolated. Findings were presented thematically as they answered specific research questions.

Past experiences of inmates and the prisonization process gave them a unique and different understanding of leadership. To serve in a leadership role, the inmates determined that the person had to be trustworthy, follow the code of silence, and show respect for fellow inmates in the carceral setting. Gang leaders had a greater focus on coercion and power in their roles as leaders. The controlled prison environment conditioned the inmates to a survival mode. Inmate Larry encapsulated life on the other side of the fence: "Prison is what you make it."

Recommendations included researching the leadership traits of juveniles in the correctional system. These data could be useful in re-directing the leadership energies of these youths. A study of leadership traits identified by females in the correctional justice system would provide information on how the traits are shaped by gender, prisonization, or a life with little exposure to leadership role models.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

History and Content

Research has explored gangs and the impact these negative groups have on society. The actual leadership traits of prison gang leaders and other inmate leaders are not totally identified in the research database. Although prison gang leadership and other inmate leadership exist in correctional facilities, research has not explored the traits that shape these leaders.

The purpose of my study was to determine the characteristics of an inmate leader. Prior research was limited on the topic of inmate leadership, with no definitive answers on how prisoners achieve leadership status in the institutional setting. Leadership status is a fragile position and may change because of fellow inmates' decisions to either deny a position or award power. With the rotation of prisoners into and out of the system, leaders may change frequently. This qualitative research identifies traits that are demonstrated by inmate leaders.

This prisoner study was confined to the inmates incarcerated at Northeast Correctional Complex in Johnson County, Tennessee. Information on how leadership is achieved in the institutional setting provided data that showed additional profile information on inmates and showed how this profile differs from the leader profile of a person in the free-world. Additional information on how inmates relate to each other, such as through leadership positions in the carceral setting, is discussed and adds to the

data bank on understanding the criminal mind. This information on inmate leadership traits could potentially impact the early intervention program for juvenile offenders.

Prison Setting and Early Beginning of the Institution

Northeast Correctional Center was located in the Doe Valley Community of Johnson County, Tennessee in the early 1990s. Land for the prison site was purchased from the heirs of the Wilson property and a 119-acre tract was purchased from Boyd Ray (Staiger, 1989). In the late 1990s one warden was designated for both the correctional facility in Johnson County and the correctional facility at Roan Mountain in Carter County, Tennessee to form Northeast Correctional Complex. Locating this state prison facility in the county was an issue of great concern for the local citizens, even though a resolution in support of the prison was passed by the Johnson County Commission in January 1989 (Quarterly Minutes). A popular vote of the people on November 8, 1988, was required before Governor Ned McWherter signed the paperwork to locate a medium security institution, designed to cell 700 inmates, in the county (Smith, 1988; Staiger, 1988). Today, the facility houses almost 2,000 inmates and includes inmates of all security levels. Housing units include those designed to handle inmates who require maximum security, the main compound that houses inmates who are medium security risks, and the outside annex facility that houses the minimum-security inmates. Sometimes inmates are transferred from one security area to another to protect them from other inmates.

The inmates participate in a variety of programs, including education and vocational skills that are designed to help them eventually return to society. Opinions are

varied on what kinds of opportunities should be provided for the prison inmates. Each inmate is required to work a job in the system. Inmates complete all kinds of jobs, from the most menial tasks to those that require educational expertise. One work option is educational training that fulfills the job requirement for inmates.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to discover identifiable traits that are possessed by inmate leaders and ways these inmates achieve leadership status. The review of literature failed to provide research pertaining to the leader achievement status of inmates and the leadership behaviors possessed by these incarcerated individuals.

Phenomenological analysis, as described by Creswell (1998), was used to discover the leadership traits of incarcerated individuals in this qualitative study. Open-ended interview questions were used to gather the data from inmates for inductive analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Rudstam & Newton, 2001). This phenomenological research focused on the evolving leadership traits in this culture and interpreting the data gathered in the cultural environment of the correctional facility (Bogdan & Biklen; Creswell; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Rudstam & Newton).

Research Questions

Questions to guide the initial stage of this study were as follows:

1. What traits do the gang leaders demonstrate?
2. What traits do inmate (not gang-related) leaders possess?
3. What does it take to be a leader as an incarcerated individual?

4. To what extent do the free-world leader characteristics apply to an inmate leader?

Significance of the Study

This phenomenological research is significant to the reader if the reader is interested in criminal behaviors, attitudes, and actions. The study shows existing similarities in leadership traits for incarcerated males and leadership characteristics for free-world individuals. The reader will develop a better understanding of the criminal justice system and its impact on prisoners through this study. The research showed some of the survival mechanisms used by prisoners to deal with the leader role of fellow inmates. The findings may help prison staff and volunteers in understanding inmate behavior and response to peers. This study may be transferable to inmates in other institutional settings with similar freedoms and privileges as the prison inmates in this research.

Almost 2,000 males who have been convicted of crimes covering the gamut of criminal activities are institutionalized in the state prison in Johnson County. Persons who have committed a criminal act are not the folks generally chosen as next-door neighbors. These inmates, housed in the confines of a few concrete buildings, represent a society that is dissimilar from the free-world society. These men, from teenagers to the elderly, committed crimes ranging from a routine misdemeanor to horrific and unspeakable criminal acts. The type of crime does not segregate inmates and designate housing of prisoners. Inmates who committed violent crimes are warehoused with other inmates who may have sold drugs to their peers. This mixture of individuals means they

have to negotiate for rank and leader status due to conflicts. Research by Alexander (1998) found that members of some groups in society desired to leave the communities where they lived and form different social systems. Intergroup conflict is a problem issue for groups of people who wish to form a different social system (Alexander). The leader role and achieved leader status of specific individuals often causes intergroup conflict.

Identifying the way leadership and status is negotiated among inmates may be a significant factor in deterring crime. American policy mandates an enormous budget for crime control and an even higher budget for eradication of crime and terrorism since the tragedy on September 11, 2001. The system has “repeatedly turned to the mechanisms of policing, prosecuting, and punishing as tools of first resort” (Roach, 2002, pp. 3-4). These methods have not been a satisfactory deterrent to crime. Without a deterrent, the correctional facilities continue to overflow with inmates and society has more criminals needing assistance. Roach stated, “Scholars will have to break more ground on research that examines how communities have been affected by the incarceration explosion” (p. 7).

Criminal activity is usually the lead story in the newspaper. The “socially constructed reality about crime” is generally formed from what the media portray (Surette, 1998, pp. ix-x). “...Reality is elusive, but *perceptions* of reality are concrete products of the way the world is informed about contemporary life” (p. x). Individuals in the free-world have varying perceptions of the inmate leader. These differing perceptions are constructed through information presented by the media. Because the media helped to construct the free-world view on inmate leadership, it may be real or it may not relate closely to the actual veracity.

Definitions of Terms

Words that relate specifically to this study and are not used regularly in everyday conversation are further explained in the section below. The term “free-world” is common only in a penal setting.

Free-world

Free-world is the term used by inmates for all that exists outside the walls of the prison. Free-world was used in this context for the research study and data presentation.

Phenomenological approach

The phenomenological concept is “primarily an attempt to understand empirical matters from the perspective of those being studied” (Creswell, 1998, p. 275).

Prisonization

The concept of prisonization from Clemmer (1958) is “the taking on, in greater or lesser degree, of the folkways, mores, customs and general culture of the penitentiary” (p. 299). Prisonization describes the impact of incarceration on inmates.

Overview of the Study

The study, as explained in Chapter 1, presents the following sections: the background history of the research location, the statement of the problem, proposed research questions, the significance of the study, and definitions to clarify terminology throughout the document.

Literature of past research that impacts this study is presented in Chapter 2. Included in this literature review are research studies related to prison culture and prisonization. The historical background of the leadership genre includes the beginnings

of leadership and a section on charismatic leadership that reflects the impact of this type of leadership upon a variety of leaders. The chapter concludes with free-world leadership versus inmate leadership and the connection between leadership in prison and gang leadership.

Research methods for this phenomenological study are identified in Chapter 3. The qualitative designs are presented in this chapter. Explanations are included on the use of the qualitative research paradigm and the phenomenological process. The process of data collection and analysis through the inductive method is clarified. Trustworthiness and the qualitative research paradigm are also addressed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 2 relates the literature on leadership and the prison culture. The first section on evolution of leadership discusses leadership from the early beginnings to the present day models. Some of the theorists' ideas on charismatic, transformational, transactional, and trait leadership, as well as a section on followership are reviewed in this chapter. Additionally, prisonization, inmate leadership, gang leadership and free-world versus inmate leadership are discussed.

Overview and Historical Evolution of Leadership

The words *leader* and *leadership* have been researched endlessly for decades, but consensus definitions of the terms are still elusive ideals. Each researcher adds a particular focus for the terms and shapes a definition based on the focal point. A descriptor that has been repeated by some sectors in higher education is that “a leader is a person who has followers.” This simplistic clarity melds the term leader into an understandable description. A cursory examination of the literature revealed that leadership is reshaped by each leader to fit needs and goals for individual situations (Maccoby, 1981).

Leadership has been an evolving concept for centuries. As a concept, leadership was analogous with management at its beginnings around 5000 B. C. with the Sumerian civilization. Historical artifacts from the Sumerian civilization document an effective management process that reflected how people were organized to get things done.

Expanded leadership continued to change throughout the Greek and Roman Empires as it moved to the middle ages. The European Renaissance Period provided the basis for leadership behaviors that exist today (George, Jr., 1968; “Historical Foundations,” 2002; University of Chicago, 1997). The great man leadership theories prevailed during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This leadership philosophy theorized that leadership qualities were inherited because “great men were born and not be made” (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 48).

Leadership of the 21st century is an evolving process that began, not only with the organizational structure of people building a city, but with hierarchical models of the church and the army, as well. With these hierarchical models, leadership focused on the attributes or behavior of a person with authority (Bowers & Seashore, 1966). The authority model was compatible with the industrial leader concept of Rost (1991). An abundance of leadership theories developed through the years to define the leadership concept. These leadership theories reflected an industrial paradigm according to Rost. Descriptors used in relating these theories are: “(1) structural-functionalist, (2) management-oriented, (3) personalistic in focusing only on the leader, (4) goal-achievement-dominated, (5) self-interested and individualistic in outlook, (6) male-oriented, (7) utilitarian and materialistic in ethical perspective, and (8) rationalistic, technocratic, linear, quantitative, and scientific in language and methodology” (p. 27).

Kotter (1990) stressed that a leadership role is often given to an individual who does not know how to lead, whether it be in a formal or informal setting. Kotter’s research indicated that the leadership term is not always designated for a person who has dynamic leader skills. Kelleher (1999) stressed that the leader should not be controlling.

He defined the “best leader” as the “best server” (p. 44). A leader must have visionary thinking and be creating more future leaders within the group, according to the ideas of Harper (2001).

Massive amounts of research have focused on the leadership role in a formal organizational or group situation. The concept of informal group leadership has evolved through the work of Bass (1985). Leadership can have a designated leader or have members leading other members. With either formally designated leadership or informal interactive leadership, four dimensions emerged in the research of Bowers and Seashore (1966) that presented a simple structure for the leadership term:

1. Support. Behavior that enhances someone else’s feeling of personal worth and importance.
2. Interaction facilitation. Behavior that encourages members of the group to develop close, mutually satisfying relationships.
3. Goal emphasis. Behavior that stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting the group’s goal or achieving excellent performance.
4. Work facilitation. Behavior that helps achieve goal attainment by such activities as scheduling, coordinating, planning, and by providing resources such as tools, materials, and technical knowledge. (p. 247)

An aspect of informal leadership addressed by Austin (1999) listed attributes used in leading without formal authority that include “ability, passion, and conviction” (p. 379).

An additional aspect of leadership evaluation was presented by McElroy and Hunger (1988). The ambiguities surrounding leadership theory were addressed in the McElroy and Hunger research as they presented the concept of leadership as an “antecedent of performance” (p. 169). These researchers argued that leadership actually contributes to the performance of the group.

The ideal leader may be illusive, which makes it difficult for researchers to reach a consensus description. As related by Gardner (1990): “Leaders come in many forms, with many styles and diverse qualities. There are quiet leaders and leaders one can hear in the next county. Some find their strength in eloquence, some in judgment, some in courage” (p. 5). Personal behavior theories demonstrated that varying leadership styles are needed for different groups and organizations (Hodgetts, 1975). Triandis (1993) used the terms “collectivists” and “individualists” to describe the ideal leader. The collectivist “takes good care of the group” by providing “support, solving personal problems, and generally showing maintenance and consideration behaviors” (p. 175). The individualist leader serves as a support system to respect and help the members to achieve and be themselves.

Charismatic Leadership

The scientific community did not recognize charismatic leadership as a subject worthy of study until the late 1980s (Conger & Kanungo, 1988b). Church historian Rudolf Sohm first used the word charisma in the religious context in 1892. “Etymologically, charisma means a gift of grace, being favored by the gods” (Kets de Vries, 1988, p. 237). Leaders with charisma become products of their time. In times of turmoil, distress, and unrest, charismatic leaders rise to power and provide their followers with a common goal or focus. Part of the charisma mystery is revealed in understanding the effect of the transference processes between reality and fantasy. The human dynamics can impact the charismatic leadership in such a way as to have a “potentially negative side as well as a positive one” (p. 249).

Charisma was a term given credence by Weber in the 1920s. The understanding of the charismatic leader evolved from Weber's description as the conceptualized idea of "charismatic authority" (Conger, 1988, p. 13). Charismatic leaders possess many remarkable abilities including strategic vision and ability to motivate others, with intense effects on a group (House, 1977; Howell & Avolio, 1992). These leaders are set apart from "ordinary mortals," in the opinion of some individuals who assume that charismatic leaders "possess superhuman qualities or powers of divine origin" (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2002, p. 2). Qualities of charisma have been misunderstood and limited by organizational traditions, according to Conger & Kanungo (1988b). Often these leaders go beyond tradition and assist followers in completing miraculous feats and profound social changes (House). The charisma concept usually depicts leaders with immense, enthusiastic followings, although the concept can apply to political structures that would not follow that concept (Downton, Jr., 1973; Hughes et al.). Many evocative words describe the charismatic leader including visionary used by Boal and Bryson (1988). These researchers disagree with other experts in the field that charismatic leaders have exceptional ability. Instead of "extraordinary individuals," Boal and Bryson argued that "extraordinary circumstances create the charismatic effects" (p. 11).

Charismatic leaders can be effective either ethically or unethically in their standards of leadership. The charismatic label includes ethical and unethical leaders in politics, religious groups, in social movement organizations, and in business. Charisma is a "neutral value that does not distinguish between good or moral and evil or immoral charismatic leadership" (Howell & Avolio, 1992, p. 43). Other descriptive terms for this type leader were "elitist-entrepreneurial qualities" in contrast to the "power orientation"

as proposed by some researchers, such as Howell (Conger & Kanungo, 1988a, p. 327). Distinguishing attributes of the charismatic leader compiled by Conger and Kanungo, as a consensus from past research, included: “(1) vision, (2) emotional expressiveness, (3) articulation skills, (4) high activity level, and (5) exemplary behavior” (p. 325).

The charismatic leader is determined to be more of a revolutionary leader than an evolutionary one. The charismatic leadership behavioral model identified by Conger and Kanungo (1998) recognized this leadership as “an attribution based on follower’s perceptions of their leader’s behavior” (p. 47). This model is the most encompassing theory on charismatic leadership. Comprehending leadership through the idea of social perception is the controversial issue discussed in the writings by Ayman (1993).

Researchers agree on profound effects resulting from charismatic leadership, either as a direct result of the leader’s guidance or from the follower’s actions. The motivational aspects of this type of leadership were not previously addressed until the 1990s. A motivational theory was proposed by Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) that “activates two classes of leader behavior: (a) role modeling and (b) frame alignment” (p. 584). In role modeling, the leader represents a symbol to “give meaning and direction to the lives of the followers by defining the kinds of traits, values, beliefs and behaviors it is good and legitimate to develop” (pp. 584-585). The motivational needs and cognitive abilities of leaders were researched by Sashkin and Fulmer (1988). Sashkin and Fulmer determined that leaders with motivational needs and cognitive abilities used reason and focused on relevant factors to become effective leaders. With the behavior of frame alignment, a “schemata of interpretation enables individuals to locate, perceive and label occurrences within their life and the world at large” (p. 585). Followers respond to the

communication of the charismatic leader to join the past and present through the framing process. Followers increase both self-esteem and self-worth through the membership connected to the leader with motivational charisma. The motivational theory is further identified by “increased self-efficacy and collective efficacy” that provides “high personal commitment to the mission and the sense of meaningfulness associated with the tasks” that eventually reveals “heightened performance motivation among followers and higher levels of performance” (p. 587). Additionally, individuals with personality patterns that included “dominance, intelligence and general self-efficacy” emerged more frequently as leaders in the study by Smith and Foti (1998).

Dynamics of Power

Some leaders use power as the guiding element in working or managing groups. Social power was the basis for a theory of social influence and power recognized by researchers, French and Raven (1968). The five bases of power identified through the study completed by French and Raven included:

- (a) reward power, based on the person’s perception that the social agent has the ability to mediate rewards for him;
- (b) coercive power, based on the person’s perception that the social agent has the ability to mediate punishments for him;
- (c) legitimate power, based on the perception by the person that the social agent has a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him;
- (d) referent power, based on the person’s identification with the social agent; and
- (e) expert power, based on the perception that the social agent has some special knowledge or expertness. (pp. 262-263)

Other researchers defined social power as “the potentiality for inducing forces in other persons toward acting or changing in a given direction” (Lippitt, Polansky, Redl, & Rosen, 1968, p. 237). The study by Lippitt et al. determined that when the group ambience was vying for power through competition, individuals controlling social power were less likely to “contribute to the manifest power of others” (p. 250).

Understanding the impact of social influence provides a perception of how power and influence effect groups and group decisions (Likert, 1967; Yukl, 1989). Interpersonal power may evolve from such things as, “wealth, prestige, skill, information, physical strength, and the ability to gratify the ‘ego needs’ that people have for such intangibles as recognition, affection, respect, and accomplishment” (Cartwright & Zander, 1968b, p. 217). Individuals may participate in a group because of their personal needs or interests, rather than because the group is accomplishing something. Personal motivation for participation within a group relates to a belief that individual participation will “bring about satisfying consequences” (Cartwright & Zander, 1968a, p. 403). Reactions to leaders who displayed power were often either dependence or defiance, according to Cartwright (1959). Exerting influence within the group often determined how group goals were established, sometimes with no thought to individuals within the group. The person who has gained power wants to keep this control over the group and individuals. As explained by Cartwright and Zander (1968b), the person with power often used extreme measures to maintain the ownership of power. These researchers further illustrated that persons under the power structure “tend to become apathetic, submissive, pessimistic, or generally alienated from the social system” (p. 231).

The leader concepts of power and influence are addressed by other researchers including Lane (1988), Lamb (1951), Zaleznik (1993), and French, Kast, and Rosenzweig (1985). French et al. included authority as another term that was similar to power in their study, but they preferred to make the term “influence” all-inclusive for the leadership concept. Power was a key concept, along with control, analyzed in the organizational research of Lamb. Lamb’s study focused on the leadership of certain outstanding individuals. Power and influence were considered “basic currencies of exchange” that impacted the hierarchal system where the “authoritative power assumes both inequality and dominance relations” (Lane, pp. 80, 100). The influence of the leader was discussed as altering the way persons feel about what is “desirable, possible, and necessary” (Zaleznik, p. 40).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is closely related to charismatic leadership, according to Hunt, Baliga, Dachler, and Schriesheim (1988), as well as House and Shamir (1993). Leaders with a transformational style “seek new ways of working, seek opportunities in the face of risk, prefer effective answers to efficient answers, and are less likely to support the status quo” (Lowe, Kroeckh, & Sivasubramanian, 1996, p. 387). With this connection between transformational and charismatic leadership, Hunt et al. questioned whether “charismatic behavior leads to superior outcomes or do subordinates where such superior outcomes exist attribute charismatic or transformation behaviors to the leader after the fact?” (p. 9).

With the varying ideas on charismatic relationships and behaviors, the transcendental character of charisma was addressed as “mainly intuitive and arbitrary” (Downton, Jr., 1973, p. 213). Shamir et al. (1993) clarified the new genre of leadership theory. “Leaders transform the needs, values, preferences and aspirations of followers from self-interests to collective interests” (p. 577).

Northouse (2001) presented four leadership factors in his description of transformational leadership. Leaders with strong standards of moral and ethical conduct are categorized in Factor 1, which he called “charisma or idealized influence” (p. 137). These transformational leaders are powerful examples of visionaries who are often emulated by their followers. The identifying label for Factor 2 is “inspiration or inspirational motivation” (p. 138). Motivation from these leaders often focuses on emotional appeals to accomplish the group utopian plan. Northouse refers to Factor 3 as “intellectual stimulation” (p. 138). This type of leadership encourages followers to be artistic and inventive. The fourth Factor is identified by the term “individualized consideration” (p. 138). Leaders who use the style for Factor 4 respond similarly to trainers and advisors. Task delegation is a way they assist followers.

Political sociologist Burns (1978) considered transformational leadership and transactional leadership as distinct entities. Transformational leadership provides a bond between the leader and follower to enhance motivation for both leader and followers to achieve their potential. Sound moral values and improved morality are often additional benefits from transformational leadership. Transactional leadership encompasses more of the leadership models than does transformational leadership. The individual needs of the followers or subordinates are not addressed in transactional leadership, according to

Kuhnert (1994). Personal development and growth are not inclusions in the transactional leadership model. Transactional leadership has a greater focus on exchanging things of value rather than lifting individuals to higher levels of existence through the mind (Burns).

Transactional Leadership

A salient need for status is critical for males who feel their identity is threatened by outside forces. Males create their identity in many ways, including leadership and athletics, as researched by Messner (1987). Leaders are comparable in many arenas, according to Fayol (1984); they “differ in the specialized areas of competence” (p. 83). Because sports have not always held the prominence they hold in today’s world, Messner selected an “historical prism” for researching the phenomenon of the intensity of “male identification and status as athletes” (p. 53). The young male athlete gained additional attention from both family and peers if he was considered “good” by the standards of society. The additional attention motivated the young athlete to excel in sports. The young male is further motivated in sports because of a need to be close to others. “This conscious striving for successful achievement becomes the primary means through which the young athlete seeks connection with other people” (p. 57). Self-image is identified through the accolades from the media and community, but the young male athlete has to continually prove his athletic prowess to maintain his achieved status. This research suggested that the “individual life structure of the male” pivots around sports from boyhood through adulthood (p. 65).

Masculine status is also achieved by rank, as identified by Maier (1997). Intimidation of others, who are considered as less worthy of recognition, establishes implicitly a hierarchy of status. “Men tend to use communication primarily as a means of establishing status and telling others what to do, whereas taking orders or compromising is perceived as a marker of low status” (p. 246). Maier’s research further revealed “that a cornerstone of masculinity is one’s paid employment status” (p. 247). Inferior status defined the males with lower rank in the organization.

Trait Leadership

Leadership traits have been discussed as qualifications for an effective leader for decades. Researchers have not reached a consensus on specific leader traits as determinants for leader success. Research completed by Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) renewed the controversial issue of some leadership traits serving as positive enhancements for leader effectiveness. Their investigation revealed that leaders are different from other people and “the individual does matter” (p. 59). The following excerpt on leadership traits expressed the views of Kirkpatrick and Locke:

...There is evidence that effective leaders are different from other people in certain key respects. Key leader traits include: drive (a broad term which includes achievement, motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative); leadership motivation (the desire to lead but not to seek power as an end in itself); honesty and integrity; self-confidence (which is associated with emotional stability); cognitive ability; and knowledge of the business. There is less clear evidence for traits such as charisma, creativity and flexibility. (p. 48)

Some leadership traits “impacted attitudes and ...job performance both within and across hierarchies” in the military study of officers conducted by Dorfman, Howell, Cotton, and Tate (1992, p. 399). The leadership behaviors that impacted all types of

military leadership in the research of Dorfman et al. were supportive and participative leader behaviors. Leader rank was a factor that impacted the enhanced leadership in this military study. Behaviors, when no neutralizers existed, that were effective across the officer spectrum of military leadership were identified by Dorfman et al. as “supportive, charismatic, representative, and contingent reward behaviors” (p. 414).

Leadership and Followership

Status is granted to some individuals who are designated as leaders (Stogdill, 1948). A status of power is given to leaders with many followers. Heller and Til (1982) stated, “Leadership and followership are linked concepts, neither of which can be comprehended without understanding the other” (p. 405). The needs and goals of the follower are intertwined with the leader (Burns, 1998). The “paradigm of leadership describes effective leadership as an exchange between leader and follower” (Bass & Avolio, 1990, p. 232). Literature uses the descriptor of transactional theory for much of the research on the concept of followership. The leadership theories identified as transactional recognize the leader/follower relationship as a progression of interactions or inherent negotiations between leaders and followers (Bass, 1985; Chemers, 1993; House, 1971; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). When the follower is in need of additional motivation or guidance, the leader will compensate for these deficiencies (Bennis & Nanus, 1998; House, Woycke, & Fodor, 1988). Charismatic leadership has five subsequent effects on follower behavior, according to Conger and Kanungo (1988a). These effects include: “(1) high attachment to and trust in the leader, (2) willing obedience to the leader, (3) heightened performance and motivation, (4) greater group cohesion in terms of shared

beliefs and low intragroup conflict, and (5) a sense of empowerment” (p. 328). The six-component model of charismatic leadership proposed by Boal and Bryson (1988) included three components that are integrated with the follower. These three components are “the perceptions and feelings of the followers, the behavior of the followers, and the consequences the followers” (p. 18).

Authors such as Heller and Til (1982) considered the concepts of leadership and followership as equal. Burns (1978) interconnected the leadership and followership concept in his definition of leadership that stated, “Leadership is leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations...of both leaders and followers” (p. 19). The self-concept of followers is interrelated to the dreams and goals of the leader, according to research (Arnold & Plas, 1993; House, 1977; Shamir et al., 1993). Other literature suggested that “leader prestige and respect emanating from competence and expertise are quite influential in affecting the behavior of associates” (Doyle, 1970, p. 1). While the early theories focused on the relationship between the leader and follower, leader behavior in the 1990s “emphasized symbolic leader behavior, visionary and inspirational ability, nonverbal communication, appeal to ideological values, intellectual stimulation of followers, high leader expectations for follower performance, leader confidence in followers, and leader concern with her or his image in the eyes of followers” (House & Shamir, 1993, pp. 82-83).

According to Heller and Til (1982), “Leadership and followership, like so many other social phenomena, may be importantly affected by prevailing societal conditions and trends” (p. 412). Societal conditions are at opposite ends of the spectrum in comparing the free-world society and the prison society. In a changing society, the speed

and way of change may critically limit the structure accessible for leadership and followership. Social changes also exist in the carceral system. In the prison environment, according to Fox (1984), “The politically powerful are always being identified and approached by the less powerful” (p. 99). Fox iterated, “There is a ‘pecking order’ of organized dominance and submission in any group” (p. 99).

Prison Culture and Prisonization

Correctional institutions house a unique culture in which leadership and status are positions that may serve different purposes than the outside world. The limitations of resources within the prison environment require various strategies for the achievement of leadership status. An interview with inmate Jimmy (personal communication, September 30, 2002) gave explicit details on life as an institutionalized person in the unique carceral culture. It is easy to use “ethnocentrism” and “judge another culture using the standards of one’s own” (Ore, 2000, p. 3). This “judgment is based on the assumption that one’s own group is more important than or superior to other groups,” according to Ore (p. 3). Instead, individual cultures should be judged by the rules and values of that specific culture which is called “cultural relativism” and provides the “real meaning of another culture’s ideas and standards” (p. 3-4). Author of *The Will to Manage*, Marvin Bower, gave an informal definition of culture as “the way we do things around here” (as cited in Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 4).

A prisonization process causes inmates to change their attitudes and become socialized in their prison environment through months and months in “the penal milieu” (Clemmer, 1958, p. 294). Prison is a total institution where inmates evolve through the

prisonization process that is more about defining behavior acceptable to fellow inmates than behavior to please the staff (Gaines, Kaune, & Miller, 2000). The socialization process into the prison culture, according to Wheeler's (1961) study, confirmed the prisonization theory of assimilation identified by Clemmer as it related to the length of time served by the inmates. The Wheeler research also revealed that the inmates either entering the penal system or getting ready to leave the penal system conformed more to the staff role expectations than did the inmates serving longer sentences who had been incarcerated for several years and were not leaving the correctional system. Even with a socialization process into the prison environment, organized groups are created inside the prison walls that reflect similar associations to the segregated groups in the free-world. In prison, racial identity groups are quite common; gangs continue operations in prisons; and religious and radical political affiliations exist in the correctional system. These groups and affiliations create conflict among the inmates (Jacobs, 1975).

Clemmer's prisonization theory based on time served has been questioned by later researchers (Alpert, Noblit, & Wiorkowski, 1977). Alpert et al. argued that age was more of an indicator in male prisonization than time served. Males also adapt through a dimension identified by Alpert et al. as "experience with criminal careers" (p. 32). The social dynamics of prison life, as previously theorized, was discredited by Atcheley and McCabe (1968). Thomas and Foster (1973) stressed that the prisonization models used in early research were not mutually exclusive.

Imprisonment

Few countries imprison a larger percentage of the population than does the United States even though it is known that caging a person teaches the individual how to exist in a cage (Sullivan, 1990). The prison setting originated to deprive the individual of rights as a means of punishment and deterrence from future crimes (Owen, 1988; Sullivan). At the time of first incarceration, individuals go through a process of assimilation to become a part of the prison organization (Lawson, Segrin, & Ward, 1996). The carceral system is a repressive environment that can impact inmates both psychologically and physically (Baker & Meyer, Jr., 1980; Finkelstein, 1993; Stevens, 1994). Although being incarcerated is punishment for all inmates, another subculture exists in prison that ostracizes offenders who committed sex crimes. Sex offenders become outcasts in the institutional system although they are sometimes considered not completely guilty of the crime due to reasons of alcohol consumption or a mental condition (Akerstrom, 1986).

Self-Esteem and Dignity

Life as a person who makes decisions for self ends when the convicted individual passes through the prison gates that are surrounded with mesh fencing and razor wire. This institutional setting enforces rules that impact the hourly existence of an inmate. Baker and Meyer, Jr. (1980) stated, "For prisoners in our society, the concepts of individual dignity and self-worth do not apply" (p. 189). Incarceration removes all liberties from an inmate by restricting his existence to the institutional environment and further restricting movement within a small confined area. Changes for the inmate often include the loss of an emotional support system of family, other relatives, and friends.

Even though communication with the outside world is allowed, “this communication tends to lessen as the months and years go by” (p. 190).

For incarcerated individuals dealing with loss of liberty, with loss of family and friends as a support group, and with loss of familiar existence as it had previously been experienced diminishes self-esteem and dignity. Baker and Meyer, Jr. (1980) related:

...Loss of freedom with its resultant loneliness and boredom is important in a symbolic sense as well. It represents a deliberate, moral rejection that is underscored by the uniforms and by the degradation of no longer having names but only numbers. (pp. 190-191)

Prison rules regulate every aspect of an inmate’s life. The rules dictate the time to get up each morning, the time to bathe, the time to eat, the time to work, and the time to go to bed each night. Locks and keys help to enforce these rules and regulations within the institutional structure (Fox, 1984). Regimentation in prison and the social structure create a “prison system that is a caste system” (Baker & Meyer, Jr., 1980, p. 193). Self-image vanishes with the “deprivation of autonomy” and the lack of being able to make decisions (pp. 193-194). Clemmer (1958) described the inmate society in his writings concerning socialization and loss of identity in the penal system. Clemmer defined the concept of prisonization as “the taking on, in greater or lesser degree, of the folkways, mores, customs and general culture of the penitentiary” (p. 299). A criminal outlook evolves for many individuals with the institutionalization and core values of self-esteem and identity disappear.

Free-World Versus Inmate Status and Leadership

Social stratification exists in various forms in different types of social structures. The theory of stratification, as identified by Shrivastava (1974), has sub groups and sub

systems that also have “their own system of social stratification which may be common or unique of its own” (p. 387). According to Shrivastava, “The prison is also a sub-system with certain well defined and clearly distinguishable characteristics” (p. 387). The inmate society is not a strong unified body, as often presumed by the free-world (James, 1974). While the inmates are not considered equal to each other within the correctional institution by the staff, the inmates follow unwritten norms and principles in responding to each other as they continue a system of inequality. The incarcerated population “commands differential esteem and prestige in the total system” from fellow inmates (p. 387). Alpert (1979) used individual status factors and prison status factors in his research on “Patterns of Change” in the institutional system versus the free world (p. 159).

Distinguishable social status designates both rights and responsibilities for persons of all cultures (Lorber, 2000). Kelleher (1999) took the idea of status as a way of designating responsibility one step further by indicating that culture can actually define a personality.

Status and leadership in the free-world are often designated by some distinctions that do not exist in the institutional setting. Persons who used their own initiative to enhance a group goal were the types of individuals identified in the writings of Kelleher (1999). Within the free-world, leaders refrain from a coercive power and depend instead on a process of negotiation with the members of the group (Bass, 1990). Status characteristics in the free-world identified by Katz (1972) in her study on classroom power and status included sex, race, and social class. The class concept, identified in writings by Marsden (1997), Prasad and Elmes (1997), Collins (2000), and Mantsios (2000), reinforced the impact of social class in the lives of free-world individuals.

Leadership and power intertwined in Katz's research to show status and prestige as characteristics that overflowed into other competencies in the classroom situation.

Family is a part of the free-world status structure that is non-existent in the institutionalized setting. "Work and family role scripts," as stated by Cazenave and Leon (1987), "are key determinants of both personal identity and social structure" (p. 244). Work in the carceral system covers all types of jobs, from no skill to additional skilled programs. "High achievement motivation and instrumental values of upwardly mobile minority group members" identified the traditionalism of the black males in the Cazenave and Leon research (p. 246). Their research revealed a "majority status maintenance perspective" for white males and a "minority status attainment" for the black male college student (p. 247). The research by Avolio (1999) described effective leadership as the design that works best for a specific group or organization. Avolio discovered through his studies that there was not a best way to complete all leadership tasks.

Leadership in Prison

The findings from a prison study by Benaquisto and Freed (1996) indicated that an inmate "may behaviorally conform to the subgroup to which he is confined" (p. 508). The inmate "negotiates his behavior with regard to what he believes to be group standards" which arise "out of the conditions of confinement" (p. 508). At the time of incarceration, convicted criminals assimilate the "process of socialization, feelings of powerlessness, and social skills" necessary for survival in a new environment (Lawson et al., 1996, p. 294). Individuality and autonomy of members are diminished in the carceral environment. Because individuality is limited in the prison environment, inmates achieve

status from their peers in others ways. Research completed by Shrivastava (1974) indicated that inmates assign status to other inmates based on several criteria including “the nature of the crime and the prison term” (p. 387). Prestige, longer sentences, and murder give the inmate higher status. Inferior status exists for criminal acts that are less than murder. Education gives the inmates more rank than other less educated inmates. The illiterate inmates often seek “guidance, suggestions or information” from the educated inmates (p. 389). The acquisition of inmate status, as researched by Shrivastava, includes the “caste system, the socio-economic background and becoming a convict officer” in addition to the previously discussed status areas of the type of crime and education (pp. 388-389).

With prisonization, according to Akers, Hayner, and Gruninger (1977), there are central leaders, followers, and detached individuals. Where society has reduced resources, such as in a correctional facility, the leader often becomes an “adversary of the followers” rather than a facilitator (Hiller & Till, 1982, p. 413).

Gang Leadership

Peer influence reflects the social learning theory on imitation or modeling. Peers are also the persons who define the behaviors of others, including what is right or wrong (Brownfield & Thompson, 2002). Gangs continue to exist through strong peer pressure tactics and a leadership of fear. Cohen (1990), who first wrote about gangs in 1955, indicated that “the definitions of *gang* are legion” and he identified them as “collectivities” (p. 9). Even though gang definitions vary from expert to expert, most agree that a gang has to be described as a “group” whose members consider themselves

as distinct entities (Decker, 2001; Hope & Damphousse, 2002). Peterson's (2000) study sought answers for the definition of gangs and peer groups from research participants. The definitions in the Peterson study varied depending on whether the respondents were members of gangs or non-members. "Parameters of what constitutes a gang," as explained by Horowitz (1990), is not critical for research and allows the discovery of additional phenomena about gangs (p. 47). Gangs have "norms of bravery and disdain for external authorities," according to the research of Vigil and Long (1990, p. 63). Some research reflects status within gangs being achieved by several criteria, including "fighting ability, organizational competence, and reputation in the sense of notoriety" (Kobrin, Puntil, & Peluso, 1968, p. 190). When incarcerated, gang members adjust easily to the prison environment because they are, in most cases, rejoining friends who are already imprisoned. Gang members iterate that participation in the gang "allows them to feel like a man; it is a family with which you can identify" (Jacobs, 1974, p. 401).

Because "prison is a microsome [*sic*] of general society," as gang members increase in the free-world, prison gang membership will continually rise (Jackson & Sharpe, 1997, p. 1). Tsunokai and Kposowa (2002) presented literature research on Asian gangs in the United States as compared to African-American gangs, but they did not expound on numbers of Asian gang members inside correctional facilities. "Project GANGFACT," which researched 3,500 gang members, revealed that more than 61% of the participants "felt that the gangs that exist in correctional populations are the same gangs that exist on the street" (National Gang, 1997, p. 49). Gang identification decreases as drug use increases, as recognized in the research by Short, Jr. (1968). Hagedorn (1990) argued that, "An incarcerated gang member has good reasons to lie," and that there is

sometimes confusion between the prison gang and the community gang (p. 248).

Conflicting research exists on prison gangs, as found in the writings of Decker (2001).

Evidence indicates that prison gangs are infinitely different from street gangs, according to Decker. Decker explained that prison gang members generally were older and had greater criminal involvement than did those in street gangs.

Leadership position or rank within the gang membership plays an important part in the gang organization. Autonomy within gangs is often given to the members by allowing a division of power that allows different personality types to have leadership roles (Bloch & Niederhoffer, 1968). Of crucial importance for gang survival is leadership that creates the nucleus for the gang's existence (Jacobs, 1974; Jacobs, 1975). Jacobs used the indigenous influence theory to "explain prison leadership as arising within the context of situational contingencies" (Jacobs, 1974, p. 402). A 1996 study by the National Gang Crime Research Center (1997) indicated that almost 62% of the individuals in a gang hold a leadership position or have some rank (p. 48). Taylor (1990), as well as Decker and Curry (2000), emphasized that strong leaders are a part of an organized gang that functions similarly to a corporate structure. Some gangs have a constant change in leadership and have members joining these gangs because of "their impulsive behavior and their need to belong" (Taylor, p. 105). While a risk incurs to seek leadership status in a gang, immediate gratification is bestowed if the gang member is successful (Strodtbeck & Short, Jr., 1968). Within the prison walls, violence toward non-members and intimidation are key elements of the gang structure and maintenance tools of the leadership (Decker, 2001; Toch & Adams, 1989).

Just as there are different types of gangs, there are also different reasons for participating in gangs. Extensive qualitative research by Miller (1968) over a three-year period resulted in more than 8,000 pages of observational data on behavior patterns of group members and community residents. The observational group was lower-class America, which has a distinct cultural system of “values and characteristic patterns of behavior” (p. 136). Focal concerns of Miller’s study were: “Trouble,” “Toughness,” “Smartness,” “Excitement,” “Fate,” and “Autonomy” (pp. 138-147). In some instances, “getting into trouble” conferred prestige. Lower-class culture considers “law-abiding” and “nonlaw-abiding” behavior as a choice (p. 139). In lower-class culture, the most important components of toughness are “physical prowess, evidenced by possession of strength and endurance and athletic skill; masculinity symbolized by such things as bodily tattooing and conceptualization of women as conquest objects; and bravery in the face of physical threat” (p. 140). Smartness is being able to “outsmart, outfox, outwit, dupe, and con another without being duped oneself.” Mental agility is used to “gain material goods and personal status” (p. 141). Excitement requires great emotional stimulation for this cultural group. Fate is concerned with “being lucky” or “in luck” as though some supernatural forces intervene (p. 144). Autonomy reveals a conflicting “discrepancy between what is overtly valued and what is covertly sought” (p. 145). A need for nurturance exists while the expressed idea is for personal independence. Final observations in the gang phase of the Miller study were the overwhelming need to “belong” and achieve “status” (pp. 149-151).

Summary

This chapter synthesized past studies relating to prisonization as identified by Clemmer (1958) and further explained by Benaquisto and Freed (1996). The parameters of gang leadership were identified by Horowitz (1990). Gangs and the impact of peer pressure on the membership were addressed by both Cohen (1990) and Peterson (2000).

The literature review included the historical evolution of leadership and pertinent research data by some of the leadership gurus of the 20th century. Charismatic leadership was researched and documented in this chapter. Other leadership models of transformational, transactional, and trait leadership were examined. A look at potential differences between free-world leadership and leadership of the incarcerated individual were referenced in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 discusses the methods and procedures used to investigate the leadership behaviors of prison inmate leaders and prison gang leaders. The research was conducted with inmates in the Northeast Correctional Complex in Johnson County, Tennessee. This carceral institution is a state correctional facility that houses inmates of all security levels, from minimum-security inmates to maximum-security inmates.

The correctional institution is a self-contained community enclosed with high electric fences and razor wire. A unique culture is institutionalized in a correctional facility. Inmates learn to adapt to a life where basic decisions are made for them. They rise at a specific time of day; they eat their meals at specified times; and they are told when to go to their cells for lock down at night. Incarcerated individuals have to adapt to a lifestyle of living with hundreds of other inmates in a very small space. The inmate culture evolves into a survival culture where adaptation and self-control are survival mechanisms.

A socialization process allows the inmates to adapt to a procedure that Clemmer (1958) identified as prisonization. Behavior acceptable to fellow inmates evolves through the prisonization process (Gaines et al., 2000). The socialization process into the prison culture identified as the prisonization theory by Clemmer was confirmed in Wheeler's (1961) study as it related to the time served by the inmates. The prison culture defines inmate behavior.

Design

The design for this qualitative study followed the tradition of phenomenology. As a school of philosophical thought, phenomenology underpins all qualitative research. Even though phenomenological experiences traverse all qualitative research, a phenomenological study can be completed with “inquiry techniques that differentiate it from other types of qualitative inquiry” (Merriam, 2002, p. 7). The phenomenological form of inquiry focuses on the phenomena of experiences from everyday life “in such a way as to make sense of the world and...develop a worldview” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 82; Patton, 1990, p. 69).

Around the turn of the 20th Century, the European continent had a “back to basics” movement that related to an “unbiased description of experience” (Stewart & Blocker, 1987, p. 504). German Jewish philosopher and psychologist, Edmund Husserl, initiated this philosophical movement that is now more than a century old. The refugee scholars from Europe helped to establish the phenomenological movement and Husserl’s philosophy in America (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Ihde, 1986; Moran, 2000). This perceptual research “concentrates on subjective, phenomenological experience” (Swenson, 1953, p. 102). A naturalistic approach is used in phenomenological inquiry that allows an understanding of “phenomena in context-specific settings” (Hoepfl, 1997, ¶ 4). This qualitative methodology can be used when little is known about the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The social setting of the inquiry research allows for interaction effects of the gathered data (Cronbach, 1975; Dallmayr, 1978; Douglas, 1976; Ihde, 1977; Patton, 1990).

The term *phenomenology* is “derived from two Greek words: *phainomenon* (an ‘appearance’) and *logos* (‘reason’ or ‘word’), hence a ‘reasoned inquiry,’ as defined by Stewart and Mickunas (1974, p. 3). As a practice and extreme way of perceiving philosophy, Moran (2000) stated,

Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophizing, which emphasizes the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe *phenomena*, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experienter. (p. 4)

The philosophy of phenomenology evolved to combine the opposing perspectives of empiricism and idealism. Originally, this philosophy related to situations concerning scientific thinking. Phenomenology later changed into a way of helping people cope with the meaninglessness in their lives (Ihde, 1986; Stevenson, 2002). The principle of phenomenology, according to Zaner (1975), is for philosophical criticism. Levin (1975) goes further with the principle of phenomenology by explaining the philosophy as one that “facilitates a deeper and indeed more subjectively meaningful installment of man in the midst of the objective world” (p. 76). The phenomena, for the phenomenological philosophy as expressed by Mohanty (1970), is “nothing other than essences and essential structures” (p. 94).

A comparative approach to phenomenology, ethnomethodology and interpretive practice were presented in the literature by Holstein and Gubrium (1994). Holstein and Gubrium related the sociological basis for this qualitative research approach and constructionist theorizing. The phenomenological tradition is the basic tenet for these approaches to the sociologically constructed experience. Published in 1962 in Vol. 1 of his essays, Alfred Schutz contributed a method to qualitative research that combined

“subjective assumptions about the nature of lived experience and social order” by bridging sociology and social phenomenology (as cited in Holstein & Gubrium, pp. 262-263).

Based on the literature relating to the phenomenological tradition, the qualitative research with inmates at Northeast Correctional Complex in Mountain City, Tennessee typified the tenets for a phenomenological study. The “social phenomenology rests on the tenet that social interaction constructs as much as conveys meaning” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994, p. 263). The socially constructed nature of the research uses language as the medium of transmission and for conveying meaning, as phenomenology is used as the research structure (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Fieldwork to gather data was completed through an interview process for evaluation in this phenomenological study.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

This study included the two fundamental assumptions of qualitative research as identified by Patton (1990) and Rudestam and Newton (2001). These assumptions are a “holistic view and an inductive approach” (Rudestam & Newton, p. 37). The holistic perspective strived to understand the phenomena as a whole. Inductive logic did not impose expectations on the phenomenon that was studied. The inductive process flowed from specific observations to general patterns. Phenomena was researched in the natural environment with no predetermined course by the researcher. The paradigm focused the research to identify what was important and legitimate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton; Rudestam & Newton).

Research Participants

Qualitative research uses a dominant strategy called purposeful sampling. This sampling technique, as explained by Patton (1990) and Kuzel (1992), seeks information-rich data. Sampling for qualitative inquiry is selected to “include as much information as possible, in all of its various ramifications and constructions” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 201). Maximum variation sampling, as identified by Patton, is the purposeful method that most often provides unique variations that adapt to different conditions. Important common patterns and diverse variations in the sample will help increase confidence in the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Boundaries were set and a frame created for the sampling process in this qualitative research. The boundary related to research questions and that which was studied. The frame that was created assisted in uncovering and confirming the constructs of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Particular characteristics for purposeful sampling listed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) included: “(1) emergent sampling design, (2) serial selection of sample units, (3) continuous adjustment of ‘focusing’ of the sample; and (4) selection to the point of redundancy” (p. 202). The informational sampling process followed the guidelines established by the experts in qualitative research.

Inmates for this study were selected from the population at Northeast Correctional Complex in Johnson County, Tennessee. Permission to conduct research at this prison was granted by Tennessee State Commissioner Quenton White. The 1,970 individuals who are incarcerated at the facility were used to identify a purposeful sample. Inmates were selected for the study by Howard Carlton, Warden at this institution, and his administrative staff. The selection was based on a profile of association with gangs in the

past or currently, of institutionalization during their teen years, types of crimes, length of incarceration, and (or) of leadership roles among their peers. Inmates selected for the study were chosen because of their potential to contribute valuable data to the research. Sample size is less important for qualitative inquiry than the rich information collected from the participants (Patton, 1990). The sample size included 20 inmates but was ultimately determined by the saturation during the research process. The inquiry research was terminated when the interview answers become repetitious and redundant (Rowan & Houston, 1997).

Data Collection

The research interview is a frequently used method for the creation of field texts (Mishler, 1986). Field texts can be developed from interviews through both note taking and transcription. The frame for participant's answers was shaped by the types of questions and the presentation of the questions. The interviewer's questions and response to the interviewee formed the relationship and the answers to the selected questions (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). The individual's point of view was sought through detailed interviewing (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative data can be collected through three basic approaches in open-ended interviews according to Patton (1990) and Hoepfl (1997). These three choices are: "(1) the informal, conversational interview, (2) the general interview guide approach, and (3) the standardized, open-ended interview" (Patton, p. 280). The informal interview has spontaneous questions in a natural flow of conversation. The general or semi-structured interview guide approach follows an outline or checklist of topics that is used for each

interviewee. A specific set of questions in a specific format is used for the standardized open-ended interview. The flexible nature of qualitative research allows for modification of the interview guide to focus attention on specific areas or delete questions that are unproductive (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Krausz and Miller (1974) refer to the basic instruments for interviewing as the questionnaire that uses a form, the interview schedule that uses a specific set of questions, and the interview guide that uses a list of topics for the interview. The interview guide is suggested by Krausz and Miller as the instrument that provides more qualitative information and allows more depth for researching social relationships.

Steps to follow in completing an interview were presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The five steps they addressed included:

- (1) Deciding on whom to interview.
- (2) Preparing for the interview.
- (3) Initial moves.
- (4) Pacing the interview and keeping it productive.
- (5) Terminating the interview and gaining closure. (p. 270-271)

Through these steps, the interviewees provided informed consent. Preparation for the interview included learning about the respondents and practicing the topic questions. Step 3 allowed the respondent and interviewer to find a comfort zone for communication. The productive interview provided for the subject to do most of the talking with some follow up on specific answers that needed more detail. The interview process ended when there was redundancy of information being given.

Qualities of a good interview were addressed by Bogdan and Biklen (1998). An awareness of the subject feeling at ease and being able to talk freely about his point of view was the criterion for a good interview. The good interview seeks rich data with words that reveal the interviewee's perspectives. In a good interview, the respondent is aware of the attentiveness of the interviewer. Transcripts of thorough detail and examples are produced through the good interview. Clarification questions followed the questions from the interview guide to get the full perspective from the subject.

Phenomenological interviewing, as explained by Marshall and Rossman (1995), is a "specific type of in-depth interviewing grounded in the theoretical tradition of phenomenology" (p. 82). For this study, the interview followed the common interview type which is "individual, face-to-face verbal interchange" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 361). To provide greater depth, the interview followed an unstructured format that used a question guideline and allowed the inclusion of follow-up questions from leading answers by the interviewee. Producing data for academic analysis was the basis for the interview format. The unstructured interview is sometimes referred to as "depth" or "exploratory" by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 268).

Interview protocol was addressed by Creswell (1994). The following components were included in the Creswell (1994) protocol:

- (a) a heading, (b) instructions to the interviewer (opening statements), (c) the key research questions to be asked, (d) probes to follow key questions, (e) transition messages for the interviewer, (f) space for recording the interviewer's comments, and (g) space in which the researcher records reflective notes. (p. 152)

In addition, the protocol included the demographic information of time, place, and date to allow correct referencing of the interview data.

For accuracy and enhanced listening, the interviews were audio taped for later transcriptions. A concern of using audio recordings to tape the interview sessions was expressed by Douglas (1976). Douglas's concern related to the "profound effects on the people being recorded" and the lack of spontaneity of answers with a tape recorder in use (p. 33). The advantages to taping the interview were reiterated by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The positive impacts of tape recording included:

providing an unimpeachable data source; assuring completeness; providing the opportunity to review as often as necessary to assure that full understanding has been achieved; providing the opportunity for later review for nonverbal cues, such as significant pauses, raised voices, or emotional outbursts; and providing material for joint interviewer training and reliability checks. (pp. 271-272)

With the need to retrieve interview answers verbatim, the researcher strived to assist the inmates who were interviewed in becoming at ease with the tape recorder and comfortable in giving accurate responses.

Permission to conduct this research was granted by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University; Commissioner of Corrections, State of Tennessee; and the warden at Northeast Correctional Complex, Howard Carlton. Each inmate who was a participant in the study was informed of the study's purpose. He signed a consent form before he was allowed into the study.

Phenomenological interviews from 20 inmates were used to collect the data for this research. Qualitative interviewing was completed through open-ended interview questions. The interviewee's perception of carceral leadership was the focus for the interview. The intent of this interview process was to learn information that is not currently known and could not be gleaned from an observation process. An interview

guide (Appendix C) directed the process but did not restrict the researcher to a mandated set of questions.

All interviews were audiotape recorded on a cassette recorder. The interview questions were continually refined throughout the interview procedure. Inmates were identified through a pseudonym method. A professional from the transcription field transcribed the taped interviews for the analysis process. Transcriptions are accurate, including incorrect grammar and repetitions.

Data Analysis

Inductive, interpretive analysis served as the process for analyzing the information collected via phenomenological interviews (Merriam, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Analyzing inductively is one of the characteristics of the naturalistic inquiry research paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Rich data gathered through the research were coded. The coding procedures as identified by Merriam were used. The rigorous coding procedures followed the stages of “open, axial, and selective coding” (p. 148). The open coding examined the data then continued through a process of naming and categorizing the information. Axial coding reconnected the data to join them together in different ways within the categories and subcategories for the emergence of new categories. Identification of a core category that integrated most of the categories was the basis of the selective coding process. Identifying the core category allowed the emergence of a theory from the data (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

The transcribed interviews were coded using the social science qualitative research computer software developed by the Australian company, Qualitative Solutions

and Research International Pty Ltd. This software is entitled, “Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing and Theorizing,” and is known by the shortened name or acronym of NUD*IST. The qualitative software version used in my research was QSR NUD*IST power version, revision 4.0. This technical program, created in 1980 by Tom Richards, manages a system to explore the unstructured data (Qualitative Solutions, 2003). The NUD*IST program provided a structure for inductively identifying the patterns of thought that developed through the interview data. Data were analyzed by expanding the emerging categories and subcategories of information. Visual clarity of the interview transcripts evolved through the subcategory process. Rigorous and systematic content analysis was available through the use of this qualitative and scientific computer program.

The verbatim transcripts provided the narrative for the coded and categorized data that are quoted in the following chapter. Pseudonyms, rather than the real names of the inmates, were used to retain the confidentiality of the participants. Many of the participants are quoted several times throughout the analysis shared in Chapter 4.

Trustworthiness

While qualitative research tends to lack generalizability to other populations, the inferences drawn from the data need to show trustworthiness (Hittleman & Simon, 2002). Marshall and Rossman (1995) related that, “All research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated” (p. 143). Each systematic study of the human condition must address the “truth value” of the study, as identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 290). The broader set of questions

posed by Lincoln and Guba were condensed to the terms of credibility, applicability, consistency, and neutrality.

Credibility

Truth value is known as credibility in the interpretive paradigm. For a true design the researcher must establish suitable controls for the study. Three distinct inquiry elements, as presented by Patton (1990), were used with the credibility issue of the qualitative analysis. These three elements include:

- (1) rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that is carefully analyzed, with attention to issues of validity and reliability...;
- (2) the credibility of the researcher, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self; and
- (3) philosophical belief in the phenomenological paradigm, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, and holistic thinking. (p. 461)

The hierarchy of credibility is often disturbed by qualitative research that considers all data sources as important. Researchers must monitor the way the findings are presented to avoid “obsequious public relations writing” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 216).

Questions formulated from a “psychometric perspective” focus on the credibility issue for qualitative research (Janesick, 1994, p. 216). The researcher describes the phenomena from the participant’s eyes to make it credible.

Five major techniques are suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) that increase the likelihood of producing credible findings and interpretations:

- (1) Activities increasing the probability that credible findings will be produced are prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation.

- (2) Peer debriefing is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind.
- (3) Negative case analysis is analogous, for qualitative data, to statistical tests for quantitative data.
- (4) Referential adequacy is a concept that determines the means for establishing the adequacy of critiques written for evaluation purposes.
- (5) Member checks is a process whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected. Member checks are the most crucial of the techniques for establishing credibility. Member checking is both informal and formal, and it occurs continuously. Member checking is a process carried out with respect to constructions. (pp. 301-316)

Credibility for this study of inmates at Northeast Correctional Complex was achieved by using precise techniques in gathering high-quality data that were meticulously analyzed. Postmodern research recommends the term *crystallize* rather than the term used for decades known as *triangulation* for ensuring validity and reliability (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Merriam, 2002). These researchers stressed that there are many more than three sides, which generally identifies triangulation, from which to view the world. The accuracy of data, as well as the comprehensiveness of data is a concern of qualitative researchers. For qualitative studies, "reliability is viewed as a fit between what the researcher records as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study" (Bogdan and Biklen, p. 36). The reliability of this study was the consistency of data coding, so that another researcher may replicate the study.

Peer debriefing allowed a complete inquiry that explored all aspects of the research that might otherwise have been overlooked and assured that the answers are honest. The peer review process was completed as research colleague, Dr. Pashia Hogan,

made comments after reading the findings from the research to assure credibility. Dr. Hogan reviewed the data findings and made suggested changes to clarify the written information on the research. The official role of my peer debriefer was to ask the difficult questions about each phase of the research and to maintain the integrity of the research throughout the dissertation process. Additionally, the peer debriefer served as a support system, both professionally and emotionally, as suggested by Rudestam and Newton (2001).

Referential adequacy determined the adequacy of the critiques that were written for evaluation purposes and provided a benchmark against which other data could be tested. Referential adequacy was completed through precisely recording the interviews on audiotapes. Member checking was not a part of this study due to the lack of availability of the research participants.

Transferability

The external validity of qualitative research refers to the generalizability or transferability of the results in a specific study to other investigations (Merriam, 2002; Rudestam & Newton, 2001). The evaluation of qualitative research through generalizing must be considered differently from quantitative research. When the idea of generalizability is identified through the process of knowledge being transferred to varying situations from data analysis, then it becomes possible to generalize. Merriam emphasized that “providing rich, thick description is a major strategy to ensure for external validity or generalizability in the qualitative sense” (p. 29). Readers are able to

determine through the depth of the findings presented if the study may be transferable to their specific needs.

The degree to which the results of inquiry research can be transferred or generalized to other contexts and settings is the description of transferability or applicability. The researcher is key in this concept. A thorough job of describing the research context and the central assumption for the research enhances the applicability of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher was responsible for providing a database that allowed for transferability judgments from persons who might evaluate the transferability of this study. In this study, rich, detailed descriptions were used in the analysis to reflect the codes that emerged from this research.

Dependability

The need for the researcher to account for the ever-evolving context where the research occurs expresses the idea of dependability. Changes that occur in the setting and the impact of these changes on the research have to be addressed by the investigator in qualitative studies (Merriam, 2002).

Conventional terms that relate to consistency or dependability, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), are “stability, consistency, and predictability” (p. 298). In qualitative studies, replicability is dependent on naïve realism. Lincoln and Guba specified that something had to be “tangible and unchanging” to “serve as a benchmark if the idea of replication is to make sense” (p. 299). Instrumental unreliability is an accepted phenomenon of qualitative research. As stated in the literature, “In order to demonstrate what may be taken as a substitute criterion for reliability—dependability—the naturalist

seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 299).

Dependability claims are strengthened by four arguments, as presented in the literature of Lincoln and Guba (1985). These arguments are:

- (1) Demonstrating credibility is sufficient to establish dependability.
- (2) A more direct technique of “overlap methods” is a simple way of carrying out Argument 1.
- (3) A third technique of “stepwise replication” is a process that builds on the classic notion of replication in the conventional literature as the means of establishing reliability.
- (4) A fourth technique is that of the inquiry audit, based metaphorically on the fiscal audit. (pp. 316-317)

Confirmability

The confirmability audit is the major technique for establishing confirmability. Halpren identified the specifics for the audit process in his 1983 dissertation, as explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The Halpren audit concept is categorized below:

- (1) The audit trail. This trail includes:
 - (1) raw data, including electronically recorded materials such as videotapes and stenomask recordings, written field notes, and survey results
 - (2) data reduction and analysis products, including write-up of field notes; summaries such as condensed notes and quantitative summaries
 - (3) data reconstruction and synthesis products, including structure of categories; findings and conclusions; and a final report
 - (4) process notes, including methodological notes; trustworthiness notes; and audit trail notes

- (5) materials relating to intentions and dispositions, including the inquiry proposal; personal notes; and expectations (predictions and intentions)
 - (6) instrument development information, including pilot forms and preliminary schedules; observation formats; and surveys
- (2) The audit process. The Halpern algorithm is divided into five stages:
- (1) Preentry. This phase is characterized by a series of interactions between auditor and auditee that result in a decision to continue, continue conditionally, or discontinue the proposed audit.
 - (2) Determination of auditability. The auditor's first task is to become thoroughly familiar with the study. Next, the auditor must familiarize him- or herself with the audit trail as it has actually materialized. Finally the auditor must make a determination of the study's auditability; in effect, this determination signals continuation or termination of the process.
 - (3) Formal agreement. The contract reached should do the following: establish the time limit for the audit; determine the audit's goals; specify the roles to be played by both auditor and auditee; determine the product outcomes; determine the format; and identify renegotiation criteria.
 - (4) Determination of trustworthiness. This stage is concerned with reaching assessment of confirmability, dependability, and , as an optional feature, providing an external check on steps taken in relation to credibility.
 - (5) Closure. The final two steps are feedback and renegotiation and writing of a final report. (pp. 318-325)

Confirmability for this research with the inmates was established by checking and rechecking the data throughout the study and documenting the procedures. At the end of the study the data auditor examined the data collection, analyzed the procedures, and made a judgment about the potential for bias. Ms. Jessica Genco, fellow doctoral student, served as auditor for this study. Her audit report is included in Appendix D.

Summary

This research project was conducted with a purposeful sample of inmates from the population at the Northeast Correctional facility in Johnson County, Tennessee. The phenomenological study used qualitative research methods and was conducted using the naturalistic inquiry method. The interviews were completed with an interview guide to focus the direction toward learning more about the traits of inmate leaders and prison gang leaders. Audio taped interviews were transcribed for use in the inductive analysis of the data. Credibility was preserved through crystallizing, referential adequacy, and peer debriefing.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This phenomenological research compared the leadership traits of prisoners with the leadership theories from the literature. The various leadership theories, as related in the literature review, exemplify the leader traits of the free-world.

Twenty inmates, incarcerated at Northeast Correctional Complex in Johnson County, Tennessee, participated in the study. Data analysis revealed that the leadership concepts and leader traits used by prisoners vary from those used by the traditional free-world leaders.

State of Tennessee Department of Correction

Tennessee State Correction Commissioner Quenton White granted permission for my research project. A committee at the state Department of Correction reviewed the research proposal and recommended that I receive authorization to conduct the study. Correctional system contact person for the project was Howard Carlton, Warden at Northeast Correctional Complex. Warden Carlton was instrumental in the selection of inmates who were interviewed in the study. He and his staff chose inmates with varied leadership characteristics who were then given the choice to participate or decline to be interviewed.

Mission of Corrections

The Mission Statement for the state's criminal justice system expresses an awareness of serving the taxpayers. The department's mission is from the website for the Tennessee Department of Correction (2003):

Mission Statement—with the safety of the public, employees and offenders as our top priority, the Tennessee Department of Correction supervises convicted offenders by implementing correctional practices which contribute to the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. Our vision is to become a nationally recognized leader for the economic and social contribution provided to the State of Tennessee and its taxpayers (§ 1).

Prison Population

According to Joyner (2003), data from the United States Justice Department Bureau of Justice Statistics showed that “about one in every 37 adults in the United States either was in prison at the end of 2001 or had been jailed at some point in his life” (p. A1). Males are imprisoned more often than females. Tennessee currently has almost 22,000 prisoners in either state or local institutions.

The prison population is increasing rapidly, with a new record reached for 2002 (Kniazkov, 2003). Projections are that “6.6 percent of people born in 2001 will be imprisoned at some point in their lifetimes” (Joyner, 2003, p. A9). Statistics from the Justice Bureau indicate that “7.7 million people will be in prison or have a prison record by 2010” (p. A9). Criminals are becoming violent at younger ages than a few years ago. Longer prison sentences are being given in addition to the enactment of obligatory sentencing laws. Juveniles comprised more than 110,000 of the incarcerations for the 2002 year (Kniazkov).

The prison population continues to rise according to the Justice Department. The criminal justice system has become a way of “responding to social problems” which concerns groups that consider other alternatives more satisfactory (Salant, 2003, ¶ 3). While arrests have declined for the most violent crimes, drug crimes have continued to rise. Probation is not always the perfect solution. Statistics for 2001 revealed that during probation “40 percent went back to jail or prison for violations” (¶ 8). A measure of prison time served by American adults had not been compiled prior to the study by the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2001 (Fox News, 2003). Data at the end of 2002 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics revealed that “there were 3,437 sentenced black male prisoners per 100,000 black males in the United States, compared to 1,176 sentenced Hispanic male inmates per 100,000 Hispanic males and 450 white male inmates per 100,000 white males” (U. S. Dept. of Justice, 2003, ¶ 2).

Interviewee Profile

The 20 inmates who participated in my research ranged in age from the early 20s to late 60s. More than half of these men had been arrested during their teen years and some prior to becoming a teenager. Several of the participants spent most of their years as a youth in juvenile detention centers. As a group, they had been incarcerated from 7 years to more than 30 years. They were serving sentences that ranged from 12 years to more than one life sentence. More than a third of the men were incarcerated with life sentences. Eight of the inmates graduated from high school before entering prison, with most of the others completing the General Educational Development (GED) program while incarcerated. Five of the participants had completed some college coursework.

The participants represented a cross-culture of the prison population that included whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Some are current gang members and others are former gang members. Some of those interviewed had never participated in a gang. Inmates who participated in the study were housed in various locations at the facility, including maximum security, the main compound, and the annex. About half of the participants were reared in states other than Tennessee. Seven of the contributing group were married.

Data Collection

A purposeful sample of inmates was selected for the interviews by the prison staff, under the guidance of Warden Howard Carlton. After a list of potential interviewees was developed, the list was circulated to the inmates to allow them to indicate if they wanted to participate in the research. Initially, 24 inmates indicated by signing the interview list that they would participate in the research. From that original number, 20 inmates actually completed interviews for my research. Of the four inmates who did not participate in the interview process, one inmate had transferred from Northeast Correctional Complex to another correctional facility before the interviews were conducted. Another inmate, who was slated to participate, was in the infirmary on the day scheduled for his interview. The other two men who did not participate came to the interview room but decided they did not want to have their conversations taped and did not wish to sign the consent form which allowed me to actually do the interview. Both non-participating inmates indicated that signing the consent form, which informed them of their rights, and having the interview recorded on tape reminded them too much of their interrogation.

The transcribed interviews were coded using the social science qualitative research computer software, Qualitative Solutions and Research International Pty Ltd. QSR NUD*IST power version, revision 4.0 was used in my research data analysis. The transcribed interviews provided the narrative for the data that is quoted in this chapter. Pseudonyms, rather than the real names of the inmates, are used to retain the confidentiality of the participants. Many of the participants are quoted several times throughout the analysis shared in this chapter.

Benefits of Groups

Groups in a prison are both organized groups and those clusters of individuals who just do the same types of activities, such as crafts or weight lifting. Thelen (1954) indicated that for different situations “the group not only contains different people, but the relationships among them are different” (p. 228). Additionally, Thelen iterated that individuals can receive approval from a group and they also “respond to the behaviors of others in the group” (p. 229). According to the research participants, inmates group themselves with others of the same ilk including such associations as men from the same hometown, the same state, the same culture, the same sport, the same job, or the same reading choices. Peter referred to these groupings as “subcultures.” When he was asked to explain the term and elaborate on subcultures, Peter clarified his terminology:

Subcultures in here are exactly what they are on the streets or in the free-world. You have individuals who hang together. Child molesters will hang together because no one else will be with them. Blacks will hang together in most of their areas. Whites, educated people, will hang together. They will also break down in area, from where they are from. If they are from Kingsport, they will hang together. If they are from Johnson City, if they are from Knoxville, if they are from out-of-state, they will all hang together in those groups and they will start dividing as they start knowing each other. Those who lift weights will hang

together. Those who have an interest in basketball will hang together. Those who have an interest in cooking will hang together. It depends on what the interests are; the culture will come together.

Another inmate, Ryan, entered the prison environment after living some of his early adult years in the free-world. When asked about participating with a particular group or organization, he prefaced his remarks with a cliché:

It really comes down to birds of a feather flock together. A certain caliber of men will hang with a certain caliber of men. It's a true saying. A certain type of person tends to hang with people of his own character or his own caliber. Once you more or less, evolve into the group of caliber of men that you are yourself, then, uh, you have like levels of echelon. I guess, you know, mutual respect for one another.

I also asked Ryan how you find the people that you chose to hang with in this environment. He explained, "... you just migrate to them I guess. You'll usually seek out men as friends that are on your same level, that thinks about the same way you do."

Some of the group associations for inmates began during the teen years in juvenile facilities. Donald related his experiences in the juvenile correctional facility, in terms used in the past, when he shared what he learned in "reform school" during his brief stint. He explained:

I don't think it did anything except introduce me to...more people...that were either sealing cars or things like that, that we were doing as juveniles, that became associates. Most of them have grown up with me on into the prison system.

The literature emphasized that "the group must serve its members just as the members should serve the group" (Beal, Bohlen, & Raudabaugh, 1962, p. 114). Several of the interviewees stated that they did not participate in groups. They related that trouble, such as fights, began when inmates were grouped together and then the whole group would be punished by the correctional system because of the violent actions of only a few inmates. Some other inmates were more adequately served by their groups

through their positive group experiences, such as Ben, who related the constructive side of group participation:

I try to stay involved in a lot of inmate groups that have engaged in various things, you know, to help the communities. I've always had a big interest in that. I guess you'd call it charity work, I don't know, community service work. I've always enjoyed that.

Through their individual lives in juvenile detention facilities, from hometown communities, of traversing from prison to prison, or celling with a fellow inmate, these men grew accustomed to associating with each other in small and large group situations. Many of the inmates used their individual knowledge concerning fellow inmates and group circumstances to their advantage of improved life in the system.

Education and Betterment of Self

Education and keeping the mind functioning were important factors to many of the research participants. "Educational philosophy is a way not only of looking at ideas but also of learning how to use ideas in better ways" (Ozmon & Craver, 1990). George referred to completing his high-school equivalency General Educational Development program (GED) as a birthday present to himself because he had influenza on the day he took the test. He explained the stance on education from his gang's perspective, "You know, we, uh, definitely support education because without education, what do you have? Without a mind, what do you have? Without education we're without no type of learning. Everything in life is like that."

George continued to clarify his personal interest in education. He considered himself as always having been a good student and was certain that education was going

to impact his future. He expressed his thirst for knowledge and discussed his participation in the classes at the prison that are taught for students pursuing the GED program:

I slept the whole time. I got kicked out like a million times. I hardly ever went because I knew I could pass it because I had always been a good student, so to speak (laughs), you know, in school. I just, like I said, teachers get in the way. Teachers always get in the way of my learning. Why am I... they'll tell me to read just one chapter when I can read the whole book? They'll say I don't want you to be ahead of everybody...well, why not? I'm eager for learning. I hunger for knowledge. I'm hungry for whatever it is that's out there for me and teachers, you know, they prevent you from doing that. Teachers have always got in my way. I've never liked school but I've always loved learning. You know, I've studied different things. Some people call it distance-space. You know, the distance from the earth to the sun or planets. You know, I might go on to be a millionaire one of these days and I might need to know that.

Education and continual learning impacted each of the inmates differently. Andy, an inmate who was incarcerated at middle age and as a free-world professional, expressed his thoughts on learning and, specifically, reading:

I'm an answer nut so I read every single night from usually around 10:00 until they turn the lights out at 11:00. I'm always reading and keeping my mind busy. I've got a word processor and that keeps me busy, too. It's almost a computer. It's so close to it. It even has a program on it where you can send out messages but we don't have full access to computers for letters to attorneys and stuff and some don't have any access to anything, not even a typewriter. I think that's bad, too, because there's so many people that need those typewriters. I thank God for those things. I use mine every day.

Another participant, who had completed some years in college, shared his approach to keeping his mind strong while incarcerated. Ben talked about his early educational endeavors in prison as well as his current pursuit of staying current in education:

When I first came to prison, I tried to learn a lot and I did learn some. I got a paralegal certificate and I've worked in law libraries of different prisons and the main prison, several of them. That was always a big interest to me. If you read the law, you're going to keep your mind active, that's for sure. I've helped on some cases. I've even helped get four people out of prison on life sentences.

That's the only people that I've been able to help, those four. Those types things, you know, I've done a lot of reading.

Ben also stated that for leisure reading he “read a lot of those old classic novels.”

Peter, who has been incarcerated for several decades, talked about the necessity of staying current with all of the changes that exist in the free-world. To keep his mind keen and alert, Peter stated:

I read a lot. I watch the world news. I watch and read magazines. I know what is going on in the world. I try to keep up with the, uh, new gadgets that come out. You realize that when I got in here, they still had the circle on the telephone. So it took me a long time to understand that you could push a button, so a lot of things have changed. So I try to keep up with these things and that keeps my mind alert. And then I don't allow myself to dwell on negative thoughts. I try to be as positive as possible.

Some inmates felt a greater need for learning and growing because of their race. These inmates had similar beliefs to the philosopher, Francis Bacon, who “...believed that ‘knowledge is power’ and that through the acquisition of knowledge we could more effectively deal with the problems and forces that beset us on every side” (Ozmon & Craver, 1999, p. 58). Paul said, “...I know that's the first thing people notice about me, that I'm black; but I want them to realize that I carry myself with knowledge. I don't want them just to look over me as some dummy...” Other participants responded to the reality of incarceration at an early age and how this confinement made a difference in their educational opportunities. Adam told of being “locked up since I was 15 years old so the last grade I did in school was the eighth grade.” He listed the topics that he is currently studying as “focusing on theology and adolescent psychology, sociology and anthropology.”

For the gang members who enter the prison system without at least a GED, attending the educational prison classes and achieving a GED are required for continued

membership in those organizations. Eric said, “It’s mandatory that when you come in here that if you ain’t got your GED then you got to get it.” When asked how many months or years the inmates had to receive their GED or high school equivalency diploma, Eric iterated, “You can’t hustle it. You have to go to that GED class until you get your GED...”

A look at educational philosophy, as discussed by Pulliam and Patten (1999), indicated the “basic divisions are metaphysics, epistemology, axiology, and logic” (p. 18). The simplistic definition, “as defined by Webster, is the ‘love of wisdom’” that reflects the Greek interpretation (p. 18). Webster’s definition of philosophy espouses the educational view of many of the inmates who participated in my research.

Internal Factors of Leadership

The inmates who considered themselves as leaders were from all races and cultures. These inmates were both young and old, including all of the ages in between. Some of them approached leadership from a physical perspective, while others considered leadership to be mental guidance. The inmates included gang leaders, former gang participants, men who had never participated in gang activities, and men who had been leaders in the free-world. One leadership trait identified for gang leaders, regular inmate leaders, and free-world leaders was power. “The sources of power are infinitely varied,” according to Gardner (1990, p. 59). As Gardner listed the sources of power that come into play, he included: “Property, position, personal attractiveness, expertness, reason, persuasive gifts, the capacity to motivate—all these and innumerable other

sources” (p. 59). He further reiterated that power is obtained by being in proximity to a power source.

Prison Gang Leader Traits

The inmates viewed leadership from their individual perception of the term. Those who were in gangs shared the gang view of leading people. From the literature, Owens (2001) alleged, “The Machiavellian view of leadership is still prevalent.” Machiavellian leadership “...required the ruthless exercise of position power, the use of guile and deception when expedient to achieve the leader’s personal agenda, and indifference to the concerns of others” (p. 240). Gang leaders verbalized a concern for fellow inmates while describing actions that portrayed the Machiavellian leadership style.

Charles indicated that inmate leaders and free-world leaders had the same basic traits. As he shared his gang perspective, he said that the traits were: “Just living the way of life that you’re supposed to live. We don’t believe in interracial relationships at all.” When I asked Charles about the specific traits of the top leader in his gang, he stated, “The ability to keep situations under control and not let them get out of hand.” I continued the interview by asking how the individual received that top position of leadership. Charles responded with another short answer: “By voicing his opinion and keep them from fights.” He related that to stop someone who intends to have a fist fight that you “just make them know if they don’t slow down, there’ll be consequences.” There was no excuse for aggression due to anger, as per Charles’ response: “It don’t make no difference. His actions reflect on the whole group.”

As Charles and I continued our conversation, I questioned the consequences for the inmate who does not listen to the leaders in making his decisions about aggressive behavior. With no excess words, he said, “He gets drug (sic) out of his cell and gets his brains beat out.” I asked for an explanation on the type of leadership he had described. He told about the impact of one’s actions on the whole group:

It’s not always violent. It’s not meant to be, but there’s disciplinary actions in here that’s going to happen if you make the whole group look bad. Somebody else is going to come down on the whole group as a whole. So one person can mess it up for everybody. You can also lose things, certain privileges. If somebody goes to them raising hell about it, we lose those privileges. I mean everybody does just because of one person’s actions.

Sonny talked about how the inmates achieve certain power within the gang organization. He gave details on the process of an inmate moving from one rank to another:

How they act; how they present themselves; their mind and normal intelligence. They have got to be somebody that is not explosive. It is bad for the organization. Somebody that cares and devotes time to the organization. We are Christian. We believe in the Christian faith. They have to believe in the Christian faith and without violation. They can’t violate.

In talking to gang member Adam, I asked him to tell me how he could recognize an inmate leader. He responded, “You really wouldn't know it right off the top. You've got to pick them out. You've got to see how much respect they've got. See how they carry themselves.” He continued with a description of how the leader carries himself: “He holds his position at all times, walking around with his head held high and just demanding respect everywhere he goes.” Adam reflected his thoughts on how the leader demands respect: “There's not a way to really describe it, but you'd know it when you see it.”

To fully understand Adam's interpretation of gang leadership, I suggested that he define leadership. His definition included a detailed picture of the power structure in his gang:

Leadership is being an OG [old gangster]. They tell all the others, "Look, this is not the way it's going down. This is the way it's going to happen, and you're going to respect this." Whatever call is made, you've got to respect it. It takes a lot to hold it down because of all that's going on and all there is. You've got the Vice Lords. You've got the Gs. You've got the Crips. You've got the Aryan Nation. You've the Brotherhood, the Terazas. There's all kinds of gangs around here so you've got to be able to stand strong. Even though I'm only six foot, 185 lbs., I've got a lot more respect than the leaders of the other gangs.

Eric, a young man less than 30, considers himself a leader in his gang. He talked about his leadership traits and particular leadership style:

First of all, you have to be strong to be a leader. Ain't nobody going to listen to none of what you're saying if they feel that they can run over you. So, when you do something, you have to do it with an iron fist. They gotta know that what I say should be done at any cost and any straying from what I say, there will be some serious repercussions.

Later during the interview, Eric presented his views on being both a leader and a follower. Part of Eric's emphasis was on the upper management of the gangsters:

To some the leader is still a follower, only to just a few. Yeah, I'm a follower to a few but a leader to many. I stepped out to shine when it was my time. Like when the time came, somebody had to stand up and it could have been somebody else but I stepped up, you know? I assumed the position. We've got our own style. Whether I was in the CEO of Mobile Company or the manager at McDonalds, I would apply the same leadership traits...Strong, dangerous, conniving, sociable because it's still survival of the fittest. I'm going to go with what's keeping me surviving than to try something that I don't know nothing about. Knowing how to survive has kept me alive all these years. That's basically what I'll go with. If I was the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, I'd run that the same way that I run ... [gang name]. It would be the same way because I know this discipline. I'd probably hire all ...[gang members] anyway.

Demand Loyalty

One of the characteristics of the gang structure is the mandatory devotion to the cause. Eric described his duties as the appointed chief for his gang and why they do exactly as he says:

I'm the shot-caller. Meaning wherever I am, and brothers around me that ain't got the authority that I got, it's mandatory that they do what I say. Devotion to the nation. They're a part and everybody knows that you have to crawl before you can walk. Each order, you know, I used to have to take them, too; and I took them with pride because it was something that I wanted to do. We're not through all, without all, and killing all and all that. It's a unique brotherhood that we're a part of, and we follow the rules.

To become a part of a gang there is "work" that you have to do for the gang, according to one of the young inmates who has been incarcerated since his youth.

Adam's description of work was unique for the gang structure:

First you got to learn all the history behind being a Blood. You've got to learn the basics, you know, the basic history of who started it, when did it start, where did it start. Basically, you've got to do a lot of fighting. You might have to go knock somebody out and beat somebody up just for the hell of it. You may have to bring some money to the mix, too.

I consulted with Adam on ways the inmates can bring money into the organization. He shared some of the ways that the monetary process ensues:

Say we've got one brother and he goes to visitation and say he gets some dope in. There might be two or three other Bloods who've paid for that dope, but this Blood brought it in. You know, we all work together. We all help sell the dope, and distribute the money amongst each other and make sure that we're all square.

Enforce Through Fear

Leadership is dictated, often, with the fear factor. A few of the inmates expressed their reality focus of not wishing to die. Others accepted death or any consequences as a

way of life in the prison system. Eric discussed the sacrifices he had to make as a leader in his gang:

You're going to lose some friends because they ain't going to like that group; or you're going to lose the respect of some of your peers because they'll be like, "I ain't going to do that gang shit," you know? And then some even lose their lives and brothers lives. Like me, I don't mind paying the prices as long as it's for the cause. Whatever price it takes. I'm paying with my life. It's all part of the price, right here. But, it's sad to say, that I've not learned my lesson; and I'd probably do it again. If the same situation occurred right now, I'd probably do the same thing that I did then. I don't know that I'd do anything.

Initiation rights were often a part of the process of becoming entrenched in the gang organizations. To move into a leadership role in his gang, Adam told his story:

Well, just like I said, you have to put in your work and do what you got to do. When you first get in, you get beat in. You have to face how many ever people are under that particular set. Like I say, there's five people who are [gang descriptors] to get in and they'll take you in a room and beat the hell out of you and you've got to still be standing. If you ain't standing, then they'll just continue to beat you; but if you're standing on your feet, you can stand it, and then you're a blessed man and you've got to keep putting in work in order to go through the rank system.

Reputation and Protection

Each of the gangs has a certain standing within the prison community. The position occupied by gangs is significant to the leadership of the groups. Eric expressed the requirements for being a strong leader and how this leadership is maintained:

Just how you assert yourself. It's how you carry yourself. They want a strong leader because if you're in a different organization, and one of my brothers and your brothers get into it, you gotta be able to go in there and dive into the situation and figure out who's lying and who's telling the truth, you know, and come up with a firm decision because a lot of brothers will lie to you to your face. They'll go out there and start something and come back and tell you a lie and then if you can't discern the difference, you might get your soldiers involved in a war based on a lie. You gotta be able to distinguish the truth from falsehoods.

I questioned Eric about how you lead these soldiers into war and get to the truth.

He gave his blunt answers on truth and war:

It's up to you to get to the truth but you don't go to war until you've come up with your conclusion and you see that there's no other alternative but to go to war. But, somebody's got to die. There ain't no reason to sidestep the truth. We've been in one [war] for years. They was in one way before I got here.

Quickly, Eric continued his saga of what happens when they have a war. He

iterated the seriousness of a gang war:

You see a lot of stickings and the compound'll be locked down. Yeah, stickings and beatings and they throw hot lead shavings on you. They can come up with all kinds of vile....this is the penitentiary. This is the scum on the earth. They got all kinds of ways to hurt you. Like me, I ain't never been involved in none of that for the simple fact to where I don't prove myself down from the time. When I'm going to the most extreme measure is when we definitely have a problem, so it's best not to have no problem. There's other people that I respect like that because I know when we have a conflict, there's going to be a real vital problem.

Inmates participate in gangs for a sundry of reasons. Protection is often on the list of reasons prisoners join a gang. Carl reframed the picture of the inmate/gang connection:

Most of them got in because they were looking for protection, and they didn't think they were strong enough to be on the compound. They thought if they had any trouble with anybody, they could come to the leader; and as a pack, as a team, they were stronger as an individual. I guess that's why there's such a strong brotherhood on this compound than any other, because they pack up and team up. ...He said, "Usually when you white guys congregate, somebody's going to get stuck or get killed or something." They know that it's a stronger thing with the Brotherhood than some of the these other gangs. They think if you get with a group, I saw the power they had and I wanted that. These other guys might have a young guy come in, 19 year-old; and he's scared that somebody's going to try to molest him, or want to have sex with him, or take his money, or whatever it is, his T.V. or his shoes. He'll clique up with them for a protection thing. So, \$10.00 a month ain't nothing. They'll pay that just to have protection. That's the way things go around here.

Respect

Adam referred to his years in the system and his leadership role to identify his respected status. He stated, “I’ve been doing this for so long, and I’ve been through so much that they’ve come to respect that. I demand their respect.” Even though Adam is still a young man in his early twenties, he focused additional information on having completed a lot of years in the correctional system and gaining a lot of knowledge:

Being that I've been here so many years and I've done so many things, not only because of the work that I've put in but because of the way I carry myself and because of the knowledge that I obtained since self-study, you know. I bring education and what's the word I'm looking for?... Yeah, knowledge to the family. That's what I'm about now. Now that I've gained a little rank and I'm not as violent as I used to be, I'm more like the person that teaches and guides the young brothers who are still out there running wild. You know the ones that are 23 years old and nobody cares where they're at. They consider me to be in my 40s or something because I'm so expressive. I'm a very intelligent guy. I like to teach people.

Respect was one of several leader traits shared by Carl as he related his previous experiences with gang leadership. No matter what combination of traits were given for the gang leader, ultimately the gang leader controlled by force. Carl’s life as a prison gang leader was a continuum of his previous life in the free world and in juvenile facilities. He suggested why he was given a gang leadership role:

Because I was strong in my belief. If I told you something, I believed it. I was sort of a peacemaker, too. Like if things didn’t go right with the Brotherhoods or G’s, which is a black gang, I had enough respect showed to me that I could go to these guys, whether they were black or white, and sit down and talk to them; and they knew if we couldn’t work things out, then something was going to happen. I have a way of just keeping things together, keeping things running. I managed to keep things in control, just like a military thing. You’ve got to have discipline. You’ve got to have fundraisers. You’ve got to have a treasury, for things that you might need on the outside. I was just ripe for a position; but I wasn’t really mean towards people, you know. I did go to max when we got into a big fight on the ball field and a guy got his head busted with a ball bat; and they said, “You’re my brother,” and I took it from my brother who had been the captain for years; and you know, it was about control. I took control of things.

A person who deserves respect, has a good personality, and shows responsible actions are gang leader traits identified by Daniel. He gave a lengthy epistle with his emphatic understanding of these leadership characteristics:

I think I'd look toward their personality to see what kind of person they were, if they were a good person and that projected. When I was growing up, people tended to use you more than anything. They'd put on this false facade you know, like they're going to do something but then, they turn around and do something else, which is really bad. That was really why I hated authoritative figures when I was a kid, too, because they'd tell you one thing and then they'd do something else or they wouldn't do it at all. I really didn't like that and I didn't want to project that myself so I think that I'd look for somebody that I could respect because of where they're at in the community or whatever or what their responsibility was but whether they would hold true to their word, you know, if they say they're going to do something, they do it. Don't tell me you're going to do something and then not do it. To me, that's disrespectful and it's of no account to nobody so I look toward their personality, whether they were true to what they were saying and I guess, back when I was a kid, I was raised by priests and nuns so I don't really know what I looked for then, I just looked to that as they were the people who were supposed to take care of me. I don't know how else to put it.

Obedience to Gang Orders

According to Gardner (1990), "Probably the oldest source of power is the capacity to accomplish physical coercion," (p. 59). Eric exemplified following orders, which were from the gang leadership, in his interview. He remarked on what happens in an argument, as well as providing a clarification on the terms, "getting ready to push":

It's up to me. If I want to squash it then I will send my dudes and chill it out. I've got that, you know? If I want to do something, I'll tell the brothers to get ready to push. He better leave for the door now because there's going to be a problem and there's going to be some violence.

Disobedience is not allowed by gangster leaders. Ryan presented the ultimate truth as he explained the gang allegiance for the membership. In expressing the fate for disobedience, he stated:

Sometimes, they get warned, you know, maybe have to pay a fine. Sometimes they'll be made to apologize to the person that they've failed; or sometimes, if it's serious enough, they'll get beat down by the other members of the group. An example is, at Westside, I was down there seven years; and being a white group leader, they all knew what we had to do to survive. Because, an example is, I caught one of the black guys stealing down there; but he was stealing from blacks and whites so, one of the white guys that he had stolen from was fixing to get a knife and go after him. Well, I said, "Hold on." I go to this black group leader and tell them, "Look here, he's stealing." They take him up in the cell and beat him up for a few hours because he was stealing from them and everybody else. So, he would lose his status because of his behavior.

Former member of the Brethren gang Greg told how obedience to gang orders applies to the membership. Greg explained how gang obedience is enforced and his reasons for not continuing in a gang in this prison system:

Because I fought all the way through my life by myself. I'm not going to have somebody tell me, in a gang you have people telling you what to do. They're not going to tell me what to do. I get enough of that from the police. No inmate is going to tell me what to do and they really go by that. In the feds, [federal penitentiary] if you're in a white gang, like Gay Big, they tell you to go stab this dude and you've got to go stab that guy or they're going to stab you, you know, and that ain't right. This dude here's had an argument with somebody and he tells me to go stab them, "why don't you go stab him if you want him stabbed?" You know, that's the way I look at that; and that's the way they play it. It's not the ones, you don't have to worry about the gang members, it's the ones that are wanting to get into them gangs that you have to worry about because that's the ones they send to do their dirty deeds.

Brotherhood Connection

Within the gangster groups, members were connected through the organizations' goals, which were often deemed as power and ownership of group possessions. George explained how the gang groups connect their membership. He expressed the members' commitment to the entire organization:

Certain gangs, they beat you up. I mean, like three, four or five people, just beat you, you know just to show you they're there. But, my organization doesn't lay a hand on 'em. We don't beat nobody up. You know, if you love me as your brother,

why you got to beat me up? Like my uncle said, "I hurt you cause I love you." I mean, that hurts, so we don't do anything like that as sort of initiation or anything like that. You take a pledge to be a positive person. As you go along and as you show a positive way, and a helpful way, or should I say, an uplifting way, to this nation, that's how you basically gain leadership. Some people gain it through, maybe killing. Some people I know will kill, maybe the police and gain leadership in a certain group that way. Different people obtain rank different ways. Like me, they know I'm now a very spiritual person so they look up to me in that way but I have no idea how a supervisor that's been in college gets into a leadership position.

Eric chatted about moving through the ranks to achieve his leadership role within the brotherhood. He chose not to reveal the name of the leader who gave him the leadership title:

I stayed down when they was something that needed to be happening. I proved myself to be...if I give you my opinion that you can trust my word. When I say something's going to be happening, it's going to be happening. It's got a lot to do with responsibility and I proved that I was responsible and that I could keep my mouth closed and all that. That's how I got it. Another chief, but we're going to let him remain nameless.

Non-gang member Ben who has been incarcerated for over two decades affirmed some of the gang members' connections to each other. Ben talked about those things that exist within the gang structure:

They use the weakness of their members. The members individually are weak. The members need the gang, they think, to survive, to get by. I don't mean actually to live, as in survival. You know, to get by in prison you need resources. Money. You need money. Money or dope or something to get you money. Some need more than others. Some have drug habits and they need money for that. You know, like I said, some are weak on their own and they don't want to be victimized, you know, robbed or raped, extortion, or whatever. There's just a number of things like that going on. Weak people need gangs because as a gang they become strong.

Power/Control

Several of the participants described power as a form of leadership. George shared his opinion on the positives and negatives of power and leadership:

I feel that power has always been negative; and you know, leadership is positive. Because, uh, if someone evokes power, they going to get messed up pretty bad. They come around with their chest puffed out and somebody around here will help you get your chest in place. A leader is what all of you are looking for. They are looking for it in society. They are looking for it at home. They are looking for it in school. If you look on the T.V. today, like in Columbine and all these different shootings or whatever, the leadership has been video games, music, and television. I don't even listen to rap music no more because it elicits violence in me and makes me somebody I don't even know. Everything is connected to leadership, at least to me. But, like I said, power is totally different; that's ego. Someone that throws around their power, that's just ego. Leadership, on the other hand, like I was telling you, binds you from doing things. Everything is based on my lead by my always speaking adequately. You know, someone will follow you if you're speaking adequate with a pure mind and that helps to cleanse you as a shower does to a bum. That right there simplifies my leadership. I try to be that strong ox for these young people that come in like that and I'll try to tell them all kinds of spiritual things and help them.

In addition, George described the importance of his gang members proving their positions of power. The consequences of an inmate indicating some power without proof could be devastating:

If someone comes in and says that they a ...[specific gang], and I've got this much status and this much rank, they have to have a verbal proof. Yeah, if they said they have power and have not, or can't show it, it's no telling what going to happen to him. They're going to ask for writing first. Like, where did you get the power from? They'll write to another institution until they find it. If the letter you write don't validate your statement and rank, and no one knows who you are, you'll need some type of immediate protection.

Power and leadership were viewed from the gang's perspective by Carl. He alluded to leadership matters being handled by other members in the group, while power was, traditionally, managed by the perceived leader. Carl provided examples of his astute definition of the two terms:

If you want power you're more apt to press forward without compromising. You don't compromise nothing you do until you get that power; whereas in leadership, you're more laid back. You can tell this one what to do, but you don't have to do nothing yourself. You've got people up front to do all that. If I'm a leader and this dude's a follower and I see something, I'll say to this guy, you know, "like what happened on the ball field." One of our brothers got told on, and we think this other guy's the one that told. So, we confronted him about it; and he got smart. I was doing my business and just trying to talk to him, but he gets mad. So, he puts out a hit on me. So you know, I didn't do it personally, myself, but I sent somebody else to do it and the job got done. That's leadership. Power is getting out there and doing it yourself to make sure all that's done right, and you just thrive on that. You get your thrills off that. I didn't get any thrill from it, but I knew it had to be done. Power is where you want to get out there and do it yourself because you thrive on it. It's just like a druggie needing a fix.

Intimidation and control were descriptors that Ryan used in talking about gang leadership. He told how these leaders dominate the membership:

The ones [leaders] about power and control try to dominate everything, and they send out all their members to be control and on top of everything and take advantage of anybody they can and try to exert force and power on other people, to intimidate and to get what they want.

Non-gang member Alan talked about his ideas of gang power. He related that respect was one of the characteristics they had rather than possibly power:

From what I've seen, there might be some individuals, particularly guys in the gangs that are older than you, that get respect but to me, I don't see no power. There ain't no power because whatever the administration tells them to do, if they don't do what they tell them to do, the same power that they think they do have will be taken from them and that's no power to me.

On the other hand, power was explained in gang terms by inmate Adam. He related to the operation of a gang group: "Power is being a YG [Young Gangster]. If you're a YG, that means you have the power to violate other Bloods. You've got the power to make certain calls."

Inmate Non-Gang Leader Traits

Traits affirmed for the non-gang inmate leader included ones that are identified as nurturing and caring, while other traits were more authoritative and domineering.

Northouse (2001) explained the educational theory, "...The trait approach was one of the first systematic attempts to study leadership" (p. 15). Several of the compassionate traits were mentioned as the inmates expressed the characteristics that allowed each of them to be identified as a leader at Northeast Correctional Complex. These traits include the varied list from listening and respect to reputation and fear.

Listens

Several specific traits were identified by the inmates as those leadership qualities that are shared by inmate leaders. Having the ability to listen was one trait given by Larry. He emphasized listening, even when the leader may otherwise have his attention diverted:

You have to be willing to listen. I feel like I'm a good listener so that's, you have to be prepared to do that every day, not just one day. Because you may be watching your favorite T.V. show and the boss will come and get you and tell you that they need you over here; and you've got to be willing to go and that's what, basically that I stand on. You know, you have to be able to tell them, either it's going to be this way or it's going to be that way; and they'll appreciate it. At first they won't, but when they get off to themselves, in their cells, they realize that you've told them the right way. That's the difference. Not that I'm the leader of the gang, now, because he's answering to so many people, too.

One of the inmates who is an active religious leader shared the needs of inmates in the spiritual setting. Donald's work allows him to communicate and listen to fellow prisoners in his leadership roles. Donald stressed the listening trait as being a key to his leadership position:

...Sometimes they just need to talk. They just need somebody to unload to and a lot of times there'll be somebody picking on them and bothering them, and if we can pull them into the church, even if they're not Christians, pull them into the church and keep them from the wolves. I know all the symptoms and it's just by the grace of God that I've got a lot of respect of the hardcore people, too; and I can go along side anyone here because of my past. I came out of the rough side and there's still a lot of old rumors about me from the past that grow every time they're told, but I try not to deal with that anymore.

Andy told his story about leadership in the high security area of the institution. A leadership ministry is shared weekly with inmates in the high security area. Andy related the loneliness of the inmates in this section:

...They come out of there so lonely. They all want to talk and all you have to do is talk to them down there. I've had it. I've had urine thrown on me down there and I've had spit thrown on me, but that's the only two that have done that. The rest of them down there have fully accepted me.

Listening was a mandatory trait as Frank explained his leadership versus others who might just be followers. Frank maintains his presence in small group situations:

...I'm with one or two. I'm never with three or four or five or six. I'm walking. I'm talking. I'm giving other encouragement. I'm trying to help and assist as well as being there to listen to them because there's a lot of people who have problems and need to tell someone ...If you sit and let someone talk to you and get things off their chest, it will ease tension and the hardness of their hearts.

Compassion and Understanding

When I talked to Andy about reshaping himself to fit the leadership and prison environment, he explained how he changed to work with others. Andy offered, "I had good, close-knit friends, five or six that let me put my hope and trust in them; and they did the same for you; and you just don't let them down."

George connected with the inmates through understanding both young and old. He emphatically shared how he managed:

Because I care. Not someone caring for someone at home. I mean, if someone has brothers or family members that don't care nothing about them, you know, they don't like them. I just like to see compassion. What is weird with the staff here, you know, a situation comes up and they hear about, it they'll come and ask me and I'll pretty much, you know, go and talk to whoever it is. I can pretty much talk to anybody. Everybody likes me, you know, even the Aryan Nation; so, I can talk to just about anybody.

As I conversed with Daniel about his transition into the prison system, I asked about the assistance of fellow inmates during such a stressful adventure. He synthesized the way other inmates provided leadership for him:

They just befriended me and took me through the channels that you've got to get through, you know, the jobs you can get, things like that. Things that you need to know when you're at a place like this. You need a job. You need to have some stability in your life. Even in prison, you need to have that stability.

Respect

One of the traits mentioned frequently by the inmates, as they described inmate leaders, was "respect." This trait was necessary for the inmate to be able to function in the prison culture. For example, Daniel shared experiences from his childhood to elaborate on the necessity of respect as one of the required inmate leader traits:

I think I'd look toward their personality to see what kind of person they were, if they were a good person and that projected. When I was growing up, people tended to use you more than anything. They'd put on this false facade, you know, like they're going to do something; but then, they turn around and do something else, which is really bad. That was really why I hated authoritative figures when I was a kid, too, because they'd tell you one thing and then they'd do something else or they wouldn't do it at all. I really didn't like that, and I didn't want to project that myself so I think that I'd look for somebody that I could respect because of where they're at in the community or whatever or what their responsibility was but whether they would hold true to their word. You know, if they say they're going to do something, they do it. Don't tell me you're going to do something and then not do it. To me, that's disrespectful and it's of no account to nobody so I look toward their personality, whether they were true to what they were saying; and I guess, back when I was a kid, I was raised by priests and nuns so I don't really know what I looked for then. I just looked to that as they were the people who were supposed to take care of me. I don't know how else to put it.

One inmate considered the word respect as all encompassing of an abundance of leader traits. When I asked Greg his opinion on what makes a leader in prison, without hesitation, he replied:

Respect. Everything falls into it, you know, there's all kinds of different reasons, the ability to not lead people in the wrong. You know, if you're showing good leadership, you're not going to send some dude into max to get himself killed or something and people respect that, that you're not trying to get people hurt. You know, they'll listen if he's got some sense about himself. There's all kinds of different things. It's really hard to explain.

Trustworthy

The inmate leader traits, as listed by the inmates, projected the positive attributes that are desirable for most any leader. Very succinctly, Donald qualified the list of traits that he shared: “Depending on who he’s leading. Hopefully, strength and truth and honesty. But, it doesn’t turn out that way a lot of times, you know. Sometimes leaders aren’t so good.”

A sense of trust by fellow inmates was included in the conversation with Frank. He has been a part of the correctional system longer than many of the inmates who are younger. Frank’s years of incarceration makes him more trustworthy and believable:

Others would possibly see me as a leader because I would sit down with them and explain to them that they have an opportunity to go back out and live their life while they’re young and be with their families and stay out of trouble and do something positive with themselves. If there’s a conflict, I try to intervene before the authorities get involved.

The Code

“The code” was terminology that was uttered by several of the inmates during their interview. They just referred to “the code” as they shared answers to questions. In

1980, Baker and Meyer, Jr. indicated that the most inflexible rule for the inmate code is “Never rat on a con” (p. 197). An inmate who betrays the code is categorized as a rat. Jacobs (1974) considered the inmate code as the unwritten rule that “prescribes solidarity among inmates” (p. 400). Inmate Carl was deliberate with his answer about the code, “It means that it is the prison code that you don’t tell on nobody. ... in here, that if you’re going to talk to the police, you take somebody with you that is well-known.” When I questioned Adam about the meaning of the code, he related his answer from the gang perspective:

The code of silence. It’s basically getting caught without telling. Killing without feeling. I couldn’t exactly break it all down for you but no one is to ever open their mouth to the police. That’s an automatic death violation.

In talking to the research participants, I asked some of them for names of other inmates who might have valuable insight to contribute to the study. Paul was one of those inmates whom I asked for names of others who might volunteer to participate. The code of silence was evident as he responded to my request, “I, you know, just ain’t going to come to you with nobody else’s name. I can only speak for me. I wouldn’t do that.”

Donald mentioned “codes of ethics” during his interview. When I asked him to explain those ethical codes, he responded:

If you talked to an officer for instance, you’d talk real loud. I wouldn’t have sit in here and talked with you. I’d had to have somebody else in here as a witness, especially with a tape recorder, because everybody would be thinking that I was telling on somebody; but now, it’s different now. Maybe more so with me, because I’m not into nothing, but there’s sort of an understanding between certain officers and certain inmates that you know, they just talk and communicate like, not friends, because there’s that line that’s always there, not only for your protection that you keep but for theirs also that they don’t seem to be something that they’re not; but back then, if a guard was talking to you, you’d better have a witness there. You didn’t get off by yourself and talking to an administration official; that was completely taboo. You just didn’t do that.

Because talking to officials was taboo behavior without a witness, I asked Donald what the punishment was for inmates who ignored the code. Donald shared his experiences and knowledge about the kinds of things that could happen to an inmate:

Depending on who thought what, you may be...you may die. That was a very violent time in the 70s and early 80s. When Brushy Mountain was closed down in '72, and they shipped everybody back into the main prison, there was a lot of killing and violence. For instance, now a housing unit is sort of a comfortable setting if they'll let it be, some of them are loud; but most of them are comfortable so you could rest. In the 70s and early 80s, it wasn't like that. You got up if that door opened and you went out into the yard, and if you didn't it was a sign of weakness. It was a sign that you were afraid and they'd come to you and take what you had. That's all in the past. There's a lot of money in these facilities; but now there's the lack of violence, in this one particularly. There was major violence everyday for a lot of years, every single day; and it's not because of the security staff because there's 1,800 of us and 300 of them. They have systems that can go into effect, but it takes a minute. You know they can get the National Guard here real quick, but inmates want to govern themselves. In this facility, more than any place I've ever seen, and have order. They want it. Some of them won't admit it. They want to come across as the old school, hardcore convict but that day is gone. It's over and you can accept that and go along with it or you can wind up in max and deal with all that again and start working your way back up the ladder.

Additionally, Larry had an explanation when questioned about the inmate code.

Quickly and with laughter, he said:

Not to talk to people like you...No, let's see, just stay away from the things that could get you in trouble like gambling, homosexuality, you know, anything that you could get into deeper than you wanted. I would tell them to stay away from the gangs if at all possible. The gang mentality, as far as I'm concerned, is protection. That's all it's ever been. I mean, it wasn't designed for that; but in this days and times, they join because they have nobody else to turn to.

Reputation

According to the interviewees, reputation is another important leader trait. Adam was quite specific in iterating his personal traits and identifying how his reputation had

preceded him into the correctional facility. When I asked him what makes a leader in prison, he explained:

Different things and different ways but basically when I, let's just use me, just mention my name or my parents' names, and they'd think that I'm so much more than I really am. I've never been able to shake that even on the streets, especially because of my mother doing this and that; but what makes a leader is just him being able to be trusted. You know, take the convict that's been around thirty years and doesn't have a bad record as far as snitching on anybody and the like, that's what makes a prison leader. If somebody can just see that you can make a difference, you become that whether you want it or not. That's the way it is here.

Often violent behavior is identified as part of the reputational leader traits. Inmate Greg expressed his ideas relating to his reputation as a violent leader:

They look to me. See, it's not just the violence. It's the understanding that comes with the violence and it does no good. I'm not violent anymore. I don't have to be and in some ways, that in itself, is intimidation because the threat of violence is there. People do not want that with me and that's what makes me a leader in here more so. They don't want the violence, but I've got more understanding.

Fear and Control

Several of the inmates referred to respect and power as it related to the length of time served. Crime and age were sometimes considered as important factors that allowed another inmate to spawn fear and control. As I talked to Greg, he affirmed respect and power as part of the total picture of an inmate's time served, his age, and his crime:

They're all in there together. Every one of them factors in including how you carry yourself. Just like Creole or Big Head, or whatever, you know, he's got a different stature because he's been down just as much as I have. He's done just as much time, and he's done the same kind of stuff; but he went to the religious side and they don't respect him the way they do me. They fear me. They give Big Head respect, they do but they don't fear him. They fear me because they don't want me to do nothing stupid, and I tell them that. If they don't do what I say, I say, "If you do this again, you don't want what's coming." It doesn't go on again, and they leave me alone.

The traits of fear and control were given credence by Donald. He emphasized the characteristics that were not good in some of the inmate's leadership. He indicated that "physical strength and the ability to manipulate" were some negative traits that are used by some prisoners. "There's a lot in here that can make you think that everything's going to be alright, and people follow them."

After Larry pondered the leadership traits prevalent in bad leaders, he mentioned the dangers that exist around those leaders who use fear and control. He framed his answer with a partial description of gang leaders:

The bad leader would just as soon as kill you, if they had to. That leader is the most dangerous leader; but the thing is, most of the time, here's the catch. Most of the time in these gang leaderships, everybody who's not a part of that gang knows he's the leader, and as the old saying goes, "if you kill the head, the body will die." So, he lives a dangerous life himself as far as being that type of leader. But as far as being a leader like we are, of course, we know we have to answer to God too, which is the greatest thing that's ever happened. I didn't have to rebel no more.

Power

Power and leadership were conceived as words with similar definitions by some of the interviewees. Researcher Gardner (1990) considered leadership and power to be two different things, but traits that "interweave at many points" (p. 55). Gardner summarized the word *power* as "ethically neutral" (p. 66). Most of the inmates concluded that there was a degree of difference in the words and their meanings. Larry captured the essence of power with his reasoning as I asked him if there was a difference between power and leadership:

Yes. Power to me is to have the ability to gain something, but it has to do with a weaker person. Leadership involves more stronger people; but that power stuff, I

tend not to like that because there's too many people in this prison that have too much power.

Larry, again, alluded to the gang structure in his reflection on power. Emerging in his answer was a comparison of this institution with other state facilities. I asked how these inmates acquired their power:

Like I said, you either gang it or a lot of times these guys will come from other institutions, and you'll hear whispers about who they are, and that's how it is. This camp is so much better than the other camps; and I don't just say that because, well, it's just because I know that. I've been in others, and we have more liberty to do in here than anywhere else. I mean everybody wants to come here; especially the white guys because the further west you go, it's all black.

Free-World Leader Traits as Defined by Inmates

The men who participated in this study had varied experiences to connect with leadership in the free-world. Those who had been in the carceral system since childhood had witnessed free-world leaders functioning prior to the teenaged years. Others had lived in the free-world society well into their mid-life before leaving that world for the different one of incarceration.

Several characteristics surfaced for free-world leaders such as charisma, moral values, and political direction. A current approach to leadership, from the free-world perspective, is transformational leadership. According to Northouse (2001), "It is a process that subsumes charismatic and visionary leadership" (p. 131). Parameters expressed by Ryan when he was asked to describe the free-world leaders connected the two different worlds:

You've got all types of leaders. You've got leaders that are charismatic, that use a charismatic attitude to better themselves. They'll take and put down other people to try to make their own self look good, and then you've got the guys that rule by physical prowess and that's about it. Most of the guys that try to lead in a

respectful manner fail to succeed because it usually requires physical force to be a leader or some type of extreme dominant mental capability.

To verify that Ryan named the traits for free-world leaders, I asked him which world he was describing. Without hesitation, Ryan emphasized, “For both worlds; for both worlds.” Ryan continued his details for the free-world leader:

Well, the leader out there would have passive aggressive. In order to assume the leadership of any role, you have to have two things. You have to have an attraction that draws a lot of people to you, and then you have to have enough wisdom to captivate people into thinking like you think.

Two other prisoners considered the free-world leader and inmate leader as not very different. In the discussion with Ben he offered, “I don't see them as that different. Politics come into play a lot. You know, personal politics, if you're PTA president or CEO, your interaction with others, you know, politics. It's the same thing in prison.” Larry, also, considered the leadership concept in the free-world and carceral world as the same. He concluded, “I don't see them as that different. Politics come into play a lot, you know, personal politics.”

The political references were part of the descriptors cited by Donald. He alleged that only the rules were dissimilar for the leaders in these vastly separated worlds as he answered how the inmate leader and free-world leader are different:

Well, other than the rules that they operate under, I don't think any. Everything's politics. There's politics in everything. You're either popular or your not. How people receive you, that determines whether or not you're a leader and uh; we've been fooled many times, just like we've been fooled in our government.

In Greg's view of the leaders from these two distinct worlds, he saw the free-world leader as fearless. Additionally, he confessed his lack of knowledge of leadership beyond the prison walls:

One thing they don't have is the fear and intimidation that comes with leaders in here. I don't know how that stuff works to be truthful. I haven't been out there

long enough to find out and when I do get out, I don't plan to be amongst anybody else. I'm going to kind of hide out to myself and I'm not coming back to prison.

Alluding to leadership outside of prison was difficult for inmate Eric. After pondering his description for free-world leadership, he stated:

I don't know because I ain't really never been around that type people. I wouldn't know how they do or nothing. I know that they're probably educated and they probably rich. They're probably pretty slick, too. They could be doing all kinds of vile stuff, too; but I don't know. I couldn't really describe them, because I don't like speaking on something I really don't know, you know?

Each of the inmates who participated in the research was asked to compare the inmate leader and the free-world leader. Certainly, many of us in the free-world have some misconceptions about prison life and prison leadership. Larry shared some of his thoughts on inmate leadership from the perspective of false impressions by the public. He reminded me, "There's so many myths about prison and so many things; but the free-world leader and an inmate leader would be a lot the same in my eyes but to them, probably not." When I questioned what the differences would be, Larry stated:

The motives. What motivates you to act. What motives do they have. In here, if you have the right motives, they see that; and even when you run across some that don't believe you or agree with you, they're still going to respect you because they understand that you were trying to do it for them. In the free-world, they might not even notice that. You can really be legitimate leaders in the penitentiary. For every given situation there needs to be, and a lot of times, they are trusted.

Another inmate viewed the differences in leadership traits for the inmate versus the free-world leader from the perspective of the prison community. Adam told of the tremendous responsibility to lead in such an environment as the correctional system:

An inmate leader has a whole lot more responsibilities because he's got 2,000 inmates that he's probably never heard of, and they're all packed into this one small area. You are living amongst your rivals. You're living amongst people who despise you, and you're walking with them everyday, and you might even be in a

cell with one. It's a whole lot harder than on the streets. There's nowhere to run. There's nowhere to hide.

Power/Control

The practice of power or control was noted in the interviews concerning the leader trait comparison between the free-world and the incarcerated world. George linked the two worlds together by his comparison:

Actually in prison, here, it's different because you can actually tell anybody what to do. You know what I mean? If that's what you feel like you want to be, then you say "go get him" and "go get him" and you could do that, in here. But on the street, that don't mean nothing. Out there I might say, "do this;" and he'll say, "I ain't going to do that." On the outside...you know, you always try to sugar-coat something and try to show that there's benefits of war and doing this; but it always comes with an excuse. A person on the outside, a so-called leader on the outside, speaks a whole bunch of propaganda. There's no truth in nothing that they be talking about, you know. To me, you have to confound people to be a true leader; and what the difference is in here in being a leader is because you have people you know. If I feel that, you know, I'm going to tell you one thing, I'm going to tell you. I mean straight and direct. I deal with reality, not propaganda. Like I said, I'll take the preacher, for example. When I went to ask the preacher something, he always tells me, uh, don't question the word of God; but he's speaking and telling me about this man. Can't you give me some type of sign, some type of idea of what this guy's problem is? If you can't show me that, then I don't consider you an effective leader. So, there's a lot of people out there that are not leaders. A true leader, [by] his followers will be known; and they will live and exemplify his teachings. In here, that's the only way you're going to be a leader. You have to show them that they have to listen to you; but on the street, I don't see no true leaders.

Ben's opinion on free-world leadership traits was similar to that of George. They both shared that the leader on the outside gives a lot of orders. Ben formulated his response to the differences:

In the free-world, it's different. In the free-world, a leader just basically sits back and gives orders. He might say, "You five go do this, and you five go do that." In the free-world, [he] don't really have to participate in anything unless he really wants to. In here, the leader has his hands in everything.

Selfishness was a trait listed by Frank as he deliberated on the characteristics of free-world leaders. He proposed two opposites for leaders in his conversation:

There's two types of free-world leaders. There's those individuals who are out for self, selfish. Then there are those individuals who lead and do help individuals; so, those are the two traits that I could pinpoint as leaders in society.

Ben agreed with some of the other inmates on the selfish nature of the free-world leader. Again, he iterated the sameness of the inmate leader and free-world leader:

There's probably not that much difference. You know, you look at people and people are still people. The tactics and techniques might be different, but there's probably not that much difference in what people look for in a leader. People are always looking for something to gain in their leadership. You know, show us the way. How does he get things done? How is he going to help me? I think that works the same way in the free-world and in prison.

Likewise, Eric was certain that the free-world leader was going to use power and control to manage the individuals in a group. He compiled several ideas in his reflections on the question of the free-world leader:

The answer to that question is difficult to put into words. I'd say cunning, slick, they'd have to be strong, real and dangerous. That's the only thing that's going to get you any respect. They lead the same way we lead, with an iron fist. In here, if you put somebody in violation, you'll probably get maxed out but out there, you can do it and get away with it. It's tighter out there because the discipline is better. When you call the shots out in the free-world, you do it from an office somewhere. You don't really got to get out there and mingle because you've got people who will jump at your beck and call. You could be in another state, and people will do what you're saying to do. Maybe they don't always honor your authority; but in here, it's different story because you've got to mix and mingle. You've got to be confident and stay alert. They ain't no sleeping all day. You have to be the first one out in the morning and the last one in the cell at night so you can be on top from the beginning, from sun up to sundown. You've got to be in the know of everything that's going down all around you at all times. You've got to watch what your brothers are doing and who they're talking to, and who they're doing business with because they might be with somebody that ain't cool.

Owner of Worldly Possessions

Affluence was cited as part of the free-world leader structure. Several of the research participants viewed free-world leaders as having a vast collection of materials goods if they were in a leadership role. Adam quickly proposed the free-world leader traits as “definitely, financially well-off.” He further stated, “Very well respected amongst the community, not just the gang members, but the entire community and very much feared.”

The free-world leader might be identifiable by his appearance according to the descriptors presented by Eric. He was quite deliberate as he painted his picture of the style of the free-world leader:

They got it easy. Basically, they just want to look good so they’ll stand out; and when you see them you’ll know they’re the leader, because they got on more jewelry and better clothes and better shoes, pretty tops; but in here, it ain’t like that.

Donald covered a broad spectrum of leadership as he shared his vision of the current free-world. He connected his past life of freedom with his understanding of society’s leadership. He began by stressing the traits needed by the free-world leaders:

Lack of greed. If we’re not careful we’re not going to have to worry about that too much longer. All our industry is going to be in China. All of the things that were there, you see, I’ve been in prison a long time; and when I left society, there was little textile companies in every town. There was shirt factories, and shirt factories and shoe factories; and all that’s gone now. My wife told me that I won’t even know how to go through the mall. I understand it’s different. I know it’s different. Everything’s based on greed. That’s the end of capitalism.

Commands Respect/Possesses Integrity

Nathan proposed some of the more positive traits of leadership. He linked power and respect together in his explanation. Laughingly, he compiled the alternatives that would be important:

I don't know if they have to be honest, do they? Seems like none of them are anymore. I would just look at their power. I would think of honesty as being one, but I don't really think that's a top priority anymore. I guess most of them would be well respected. A lot of them would have to be knowledgeable. That would have to help. Probably well-rounded and able to talk to folks and is comfortable leading others. Somebody who is comfortable around all people and can relate to everybody.

Other inmates reflected free-world leaders in a positive light as well. George considered strong values as a valid aspect of their leadership. Additionally, George included the fear factor:

...On the street on the other hand, their morals and values are very high and very strong. Sometimes they're too high and too strong, because people are afraid of not living up to expectations of these people. Fear plays a part in both the free-world and institution leadership or under-ship, should I say. Fear, fear of not being able to live up to and match up to this man, you know, on both sides of the fence is one thing that has been adopted.

Timothy summarized the outside leadership traits and style from the perspective of individuality. He commented, "...It's all different. People look up to people for different reasons and in different ways, the way they do things different. To be the leader, they do things in a totally different way." Alan, also, considered the leadership of a free society and an incarcerated community as different. His reflections typified the significance of freedom:

Leaders in the free-world are respected. People in the prison don't get no respect; because they're considered the scum of the earth, you know, the lowest of the lowest. There's no respect in here; so, they're a whole lot different. In the free-world you get respect when you have power and you have the right to do certain things; but in here, you don't have no rights. You don't have no rights to do

nothing. All of your constitutional rights have been stripped, even the right to speak in certain instances; that's been stripped. You can't even voice your opinion on nothing; so, there's a whole lot of difference between that 'cause you don't get no respect in here, period.

Life connections became an integral part of the huge leadership picture when Daniel shared his thoughts on the free-world leader. To lead a group of people, Daniel mentioned:

He has to have integrity and moral values, and sometimes that doesn't even work because they've got so much money that it doesn't even matter. But in order for someone to truly have a leadership quality out there in the free-world, whether it be in business or whatever, especially in the legislature, I don't see it. I'd like to see it; but I don't, like I should. I think a man needs to live right. Whatever that takes for a person that's in leadership, I don't know. I had to change my life. I was just plumb stupid, in the way I lived my life, you know, drugs and violence. Look where it got me. It sent me to prison and took away everything I ever had; it's gone. My kids are coming back into my life, which is wonderful; but uh, I lost a lot because of the choices that I've made. If you don't make the right choices and lean on what moral character you have in making the right choices, you'll be in trouble, too. A leader also has to have integrity. That's the bottom line, and I think he should be a church-going person. I just think that if he's going to be a leader out there, he needs to show a strong personality and have spiritual values; and he's got moral values; and he's not out to just make money and take advantage of people. It's so hard to find people like that.

Most of the inmates did not allude to specific leaders in their lives. Larry was the exception to that idea. He diverged to analyze and iterate the characteristics of his mother's leadership. Larry concluded:

She was very bold, smart, well-studied; and she was honest. I don't know. She certainly didn't have a low self-esteem or anything like that; and I think that I suffered with that because back in those days, I drank just to be able to talk to you, just to be around you. But now without all of that, that was the biggest misconception of all. She didn't really teach us what was wrong; she taught us what was right. In my case, out of all the kids, I guess I was the most confused about all that; but it was nothing that they done. She was always a leader. Dad was always gone [because of his job]. ...She's always been around in my life.

Commands Loyalty

The inmates related the ease with which free-world leaders have followers. George examined the lives of some great historical figures in his exposé. He offered a compilation of his own life experiences after he presented information to answer the question on followers of free-world leaders:

Less propaganda and being more realism, being more real about how it should come down, because today that's what they want. They need some guidance from strong people. You have to be willing to take that extra step like Gaundi or Martin Luther King and different people. They gotta be willing to take that extra step. That's what leaders, or so-called leaders, on the outside need to do. That's the reason a lot of people won't follow their orders, but people will in here. In here, it's like you're your own example. I've been here eight years and it's the only example I deal with. It don't bother me, because I feel good about myself to have only completed the eighth grade and be at the level of intellect that I'm at now. I don't have to be worried about someone else being satisfied because I'm satisfied. That's where everything starts, see?

Freedom on the outside seemed to be a key element of free-world leadership, according to Andy. He considered the leaders in prison and the free-world are very similar. Basically, they command loyalty by guiding others:

There's really no difference in here. There's difference only because of the freedom outside. It's practically the same thing. If you're in a position of leadership, you're going to do the right things and try to lead and show the others what they need to know and how they can accomplish things, how they can proceed and how they can keep out of trouble and how they can be the best they can be.

Decision-Making Ability

As George compiled his answer on the identity of free-world leader traits, he charted that life as something good. He built his response on their abilities:

I would say that the traits of an outside leader is they have goals. They have ideas, and that's good. You know what I mean, I know that's good. Those are things they have in common with the prison leaders.

Timothy shaped his answer for society's leader characteristics by describing Martin Luther King. He noted, "...That he was a very smart, well-educated black man who wanted the best out of life and wanted everybody to come together." The inmates considered the leadership roles of free-world and prison leaders as very similar. They indicated that to lead more than 2000 inmates the decision-making process in prison was a mammoth procedure.

External Factors of Leadership

All of the groups within the correctional system have leadership signs that are visible to the world. Many of them are openly visible while others are subtler. These factors range from visible tattoos to a more elusive element, such as the way a person carries self. Gardner (1990) discussed *symbols* in his book chapter on power. He explained that "power is derived from custodianship of potent symbols" (p. 63).

Gang Hierarchy/Structure

Research by Sherif (1948), which presented some of the early street gang studies, correlated with the structure of the incarcerated gang. A few of the gang members discussed the hierarchy of their gangs. While each gang had different titles for the levels of power, they all followed a pyramid-type structure. For instance, Sonny referred to the levels of power among his gangsters as "three state powers...over the state." Sonny continued by elaborating on his role within the group and the titles for fellow leaders:

I am the first enforcer and leader. You have a vice president and the 2nd enforcer are people you have around the top. Each unit is separated and is made up of a

captain president, a vice president, a captain, a lieutenant, a 2nd lieutenant, sergeant, and a prohibitionist, in that order.

In addition, Sonny explained how these members gain a particular power. He identified ways these leaders move from one rank to another:

How they act; how they present themselves; their mind and normal intelligence. They have got to be somebody that is not explosive. It is bad for the organization. Somebody that cares and devotes time to the organization. We are Christian. We believe in the Christian faith. They have to believe in the Christian faith and without violation. They can't violate.

Several of the inmates whom I interviewed were located in maximum security. I asked George if he would be safe in the regular prison population when he leaves maximum security. He replied, "I'll always be safe. Wherever I go in the state of Tennessee, I'm safe." He explained that his rank made him safe. George elaborated on the gang ranks as he identified his individual status:

Three-star B. I'm a branch; it's like, marks. You've got different marks, so to speak. Yeah, there's like at least 50 marks for an inmate. I'm like 12 in a leader inmate. You have a big 'ole chain and your name revolves all the way around the state and when it makes it all the way around the state, everybody knows you. You could step off, and by like my name is, uh, like, unique or just different. Like, they'll take two; and if I go back out there, and everybody's Cs, I would be like, back over top of them. Out of everybody in the population out there, they would choose me because I'm open-minded; I have a understanding; and I'm just an all-out nice person, unless someone causes me not to be. Like I said, I'm a man before I'm anything, and if someone does something to me, I don't know if it's being in here and seeing so much or what, but they'll say don't do something to him because they have respect for me. I won't do that. I'll take care of it myself because you lead by example.

He further explained the leadership structure when I questioned if someone else took his role in the main population of the compound. The leadership chain of command appeared to be in place as George related how the structure flows:

As soon as I go away, somebody automatically resumes, somebody that's underneath, assumes and at that time, they decide who's going to be the one to do this; and I mean, anybody that's the farthest along will be the best person for this.

Normally it would be someone that I have spoke with and talked to a lot and has the same mindset that I do. If anything goes on and they feel they don't understand at the institution, they would write me; and I'll write, you know, and see what's going on. There's always, down here, a competition with my brothers in the ...[gang name] and some others; but I knew what to do, just to tip the Muslim, because he's here on a murder charge from 1993. So I could go to him and extinguish the whole thing, you know, peacefully. So, like I said, I'm just not big here, all over the state; it's the policy.

George continued by identifying some of the levels of leaders at the top of his group. While there is only one king at the top of this gang's pyramidal structure, the next level has more members in leadership roles:

Well, you have the king....Yeah, that's like the originator of the whole thing. Like, some people call them OGs, original gangster, which is like a king to us. We have a king, a five-star supreme, university league...uh,

Only a few members could serve as a 5-star supreme. I questioned how these certain members could achieve the rank of 5-star supreme. George shared information as to what these individuals do or have done, previously:

The size they've been in, like 20 or 25 years. It's no telling what they do because a lot of people like that is already on the street. You know, you hardly ever see somebody like that in here. About as far as it'll go would be a 5-star university league. Those are the ones that if they say to do something, I don't care what mob you are, you base your actions on what they said because they've went through a lot of blood, sweat and tears to get to where they're at, whether they've sacrificed their freedom, or by killing someone else, or by sacrificing their bodies, whatever. There's no telling what you might do cause you can't pay your way to the top. Then you got the three-star, and then it goes 1B. Then it goes 3B, which is the rank... I'm at that starting position. By 35, if you want to get out, you get out. Actually, the way you get out is that you've got to join a religious...Muslim movement. You've got to become part of the spiritual group or you got to be like a thirty-five.

Charles has already stopped participating in the gangs. He indicated, "It was causing more trouble than it was worth." I asked him about the echelon of power in his former gang and how many levels existed: "Many. They have chapter leaders, chapter lieutenants, chapter captains, and so on." Charles said that he was near the top as "the

third in charge.” He verified that any prison would recognize his leadership of sergeant-at-arms.

Rank was the key to the power structure of Adam’s gang. He implied that it is difficult to describe the actual hierarchal composition:

Well, it's hard to say; but everybody respects rank. What kind of rank you've got depends on whether you've got respect or not. You gain rank by what we call putting in the work, you know, fighting, sticking, bringing money or whatever it is to the gang, or just being in it for so long. You've got..., you start off as a blood drop...That's the first thing you're put down for. They usually call them puppets. Then you become a TG, a training gangster, training to be a gangster. Then there's BG, baby gangster, YG, young gangster, and an YOG, a young original gangster, then there's an OG and a OOG, the highest rank [original gangster and oversee the original gangsters].

Daniel had been a gangster in another prison facility in another state. I asked him about his status in the hierarchy of leadership when he was a part of the gang:

I wasn't. I was just one of the soldiers, that's it. I was never a leader in that group at all. I wasn't even in it until I was in prison. The guy that was the leader over us, his name was ...[Jim], and he was probably over that whole Latin group about 10 years or so.

In fact, according to Daniel, ...[Jim] was so powerful and such an essential part of “keeping peace among the inmates” that the warden and parole board refused to release him from prison. “They knew if they paroled him, it would be chaos. People respected that dude.” Daniel did say that this top gang leader may have gotten out of prison since the time he referenced was during the 70s. He said that was years ago and “that’s when I was a whole lot younger and dumber.”

Eric considered his gang role as “close to the top.” He related that some of the gangster leaders are in the penitentiary and some are in active gangs in the free-world. I questioned him about how leadership status is maintained during a stint in maximum security:

Before they come in the prison, it's an ongoing respect and when they come, it's already established. Before they come here, people see their name and recognize it. Before you ever come here or wherever, you've built it. They're going to keep your name alive and you've got a loyal brotherhood. They're going to stick by you through thick and thin regardless of whatever happens.

Identifying Tattoos

Tattoos were not just on the inmates who were gang members. Particularly the convicts who had been in the system for many years, also, had several tattoos. One of the Vice Lords described their symbolic tattoo: "That's a champagne glass. That's one of our symbols, a star laker, a possessed cat... Yeah, a possessed black leopard waiting in silence."

I was told that the most common identification for the Brotherhood Forever is "usually tattoos." Part of their tattoo looked like lightning bolts. The inmate said they are "SS signs" and represent a "socialist society." Another inmate describe the lightening bolts a bit differently: "It was just like Hitler's eyes and stuff like that; and you know, there was so many different things that they represent. To me, it was a racial thing and thunder bolts; cracker bolts is what we call them." He continued to explain that the "cracker bolts" meant a white sandwich.

A member of the East Side Cabbage Patch Gangsters described in explicit detail the tattoo for their organization. His specifics included spelling and coloring:

This is just a broke -- which represents D Dogs, that's us, and it's got the red color and it's got E-S-P-P-G, which stands for East Side Patch Piru Gangster. The Black Panther on my arm is just the symbol for revolutionary, which we can get whether we're individual revolutionaries or not.

As I chatted with another inmate, I asked him about his visible tattoo.

Even though he did not describe the tattoo for me, his answer was quick and terse.

“Stupidity. I wish that I'd have never done that shit. I don't like tattoos. I won't do it again; but whatever's there, I guess that's the way it's going to be.”

Gang Symbols

In addition to tattoos, gangs have other symbols or actions that represent their gang. Sometimes these symbols are identifiable only to the membership. Gang signs as “identity through symbolic representation” was explained in Jacobs’ research (1974, p. 399). In addition to gang colors being worn, “members ‘represent’ to one another by esoteric salutes and verbal greetings” (p. 399). When I interviewed George, I asked him how he could find fellow gang members when he entered a prison:

Usually, maybe the way they wear their hat or the way they might stand up against the wall or something. I mean, it's just different patterns and different uh, methods, or whatever, or symbols that you are able to recognize. Like you might see someone standing up against a wall and they might have their arms folded a certain way and you will recognize the difference, or their feet might be spread a certain way and then you'll go and ask "so what're you?" and they'll usually tell you "I'm a ...[gang name]." Colors, uh, it's really grown past colors now. A lot of people, I wear blue, you know, I wear whatever I want to wear. I'll just wear anything you know, but every gang usually has a primary color scheme to identify them to that particular organization, or gang, or whatever. It's a symbol. Like mine might be black and gold, but I can wear anything I want to. Like if I walked in, say in a blue institution, and say I have a Pittsburgh Steelers hat on, and everybody would automatically want to know exactly what it is to me because of the colors of black and gold.

Another example of a gang symbol was shared by Adam. I noticed that his cap was turned at an angle. I asked him if that was part of his costume for a gang:

Yeah, we call it banging to your right. When we put our hat on, we cock it to the right and that's our jiving hat or a lot of times, I'll have my right sleeve pulled up and everybody knows what it is representing since we can't wear colors in here. We have to be known [by] what we is.

Opinions varied on gangs wearing specific colors for their organization. Some of the inmates considered colors for gangs as past history. Eric mentioned gang colors as he explained the actions of his gangster group:

Basically, we try to uplift the black people because when they came pitching drugs and stuff like that, we got knocked way off course, like tripping out over colors and.... You know, like red, and blue and....But I ain't never wore no color, but these gangs like that change; you know, that's how my generation got to be a part of it. Back years ago, at least in the community, it was about selling drugs and killing each other and all this; you know, about something that started before I was born and they didn't really know why they was killing each other, they was just doing it.

Inclusive Inmate Related Factors

Some factors identified by the inmates as leadership qualities were not exclusive for either the gang leaders or non-gang leaders. These traits were delineated by both types of inmates.

Tends to Business

Everyone of the research participants was adamant about “tending to your own business” and leaving the other fellow’s business alone. Without hesitation, Carl stated:

You don't get in other people's business; and if you see, and it's been done over a thousand times, if you see this guy over here getting stuck and he's laying there on the ground, then you just walk over him and go on about your business. You don't tell nobody, and you don't go in there and talk to the police.

Inmate Alan stressed the necessity of respecting fellow inmates as he explained the importance of not getting into the affairs of others. He formulated his response:

I understand the difference between being respected and disrespected. I don't disrespect no one. I mind my own business, which is really the thing you've got to do to be concentrated on, do not disrespect nobody; mind your own business and stay out of the way of nonsense, you know, stay out of the way of confrontation.

If you can do that, you'll get through the system, as far as the inmates go. As far as the administration, they're going to bother you no matter what you do. You can be good as gold and they're still going to find a way to provoke you.

A good summary for becoming a part of the population at a prison and leaving others to their own agenda was expressed by Charles. His concise response was, "Mind your own business. Do what you're supposed to do. Stay away from everybody else and don't snitch."

Way You Carry Yourself

A frequently used term in describing an inmate leader was the way a person "carries himself." I asked Daniel to explain that terminology to me in connection with leadership:

Let me just give you an example and that might help you to understand it. When we walk, when a person like myself, walks on this compound, I have to be an example to other people in here. O.K. When the officers need something or when the warden needs something, or when the chaplain needs something, they come to someone like me and they ask me to do certain things because they know that when I get involved in something, that I'm going to do whatever it is that they need me to do. So, I guess that's a way of carrying yourself around here so that people can understand that you're someone they can look up to. When I walk on the compound and people see me, they want to ask me questions. They want to ask me things about something that's going on or something that I may have heard or rumors or something like that because they think of me as someone who can get this information better than anyone else. Well, sometimes I can't do that; but I try to be as informative to people in here as I can. Plus, time has a lot to do with it. If you've been locked up for a long time, people tend to look up to you, regardless. If you've got an 11 number on your back and this guy's got a 35 number, you're not going to listen to that guy because he just got locked up. He don't know what going on. They're going to go to some of these old-timers and they want to know who's asking who questions; and it's by word of mouth, so a lot of these guys will say "go ask... [Daniel]."

The ability to "fit in" is important to inmates. Charles connected that ability to fit in and the way you carry yourself as interrelated traits. He emphasized, "As a criminal,

we all fit in.” When questioned about the outcome of not fitting in, he responded, “Depends on how you carry yourself, really. If a person carries himself in a good manner and doesn’t bother anyone else, he’s pretty much going to fit in.”

The words “carries himself” are much broader by definition than a particular way to walk. Inmate Greg shared information relating to the entire vision of an inmate rather than just the way you walk. When Greg was asked to describe the terminology of “how you carry yourself,” he explained:

If you’re right or wrong. I stay on the right side. If I’m right, I’ll die and go to hell. If you’re wrong on something, say you’re wrong. I go over here and just take something. I take your glasses, well that’s wrong and you stab me, when you came at me with that knife I might hesitate because I was in the wrong. If I was right, I’d attack your right back. If I’m in the wrong, I might hesitate. I don’t lead people wrong. I carry myself on the right side. It’s not just the way you walk, it’s how you project yourself. I can walk into any room and they know. ...It’s how they see you. It’s how you present yourself, totally. It’s the way you carry yourself. It’s the way people see you. It’s everything together, that’s the way it is.

Inmate Paul presented the idea of how you carry yourself as a way to learn and grow. Paul used a comparison of the professional world to describe his thoughts on “carrying yourself”:

Yeah, you know, the way you carry yourself involves, like, if you’re a businessman, I’m going to carry myself in a professional way. By my being a convict, I’m going to carry myself in the way of a convict. It means head high and eyes open, mind focused, and senses sharp. You know, I don’t want to sit up here and waste the years away and not learn nothing. I want to come up and advance my mind where I can go back to work; learn from my mistakes. I don’t want to just sit here and waste away and basically do this time and not allow it to be a learning experience. So when I carry myself, I want that to show that I come here and walk honestly. I want to leave people alone and I want to be left alone. The way you’re treated depends on how you carry yourself. If you walk around like a punk, you’re going to be treated like a punk, basically. Like, if you carry yourself like a chameleon, they’re going to treat you like a chameleon.

In Eric's interview, he also mentioned the inmate expression of "how you carry yourself." He described these terms as he shared views about himself:

I walk around with my head up, even though I'm in the penitentiary. I still have my pride and my stance, and they respect that because a lot of people come to the penitentiary and it weakens them.

To continue that line of thought, I asked Eric what he saw as he walked along with his head held high. In a comical tone, he answered, "I guess you're looking at the sky. You're looking for a way out."

Convict Versus Inmate Terminology

During the interview process, some of the inmates who had been in the correctional system for many years mentioned the difference between the words *convict* and *inmate*. These particular prisoners talked about an inherent disparity in the two terms. Larry synthesized his understanding of the language:

A convict is one that's been bound for a long time and actually did it the best way that he knew how to do it; and a lot of times, it's not so much that he did it the right way, but he did it the way that he thought was best and actually has made it through. An inmate can adjust to mean several different things. He could go this way or the other way. He really doesn't fit in. This is mainly just a residence because he's not going to be here long. He's just in it for the ride; whereas, a convict is really set in this ways as far, you know, a convict holds the Bible or something like that. Inmates are not going to be here that long and a convict has been there, done that, and continues to do so.

To fully understand the concept of a difference between an inmate and a convict, I asked Larry how many years it takes to become a convict. He formulated, "To my mind, I would say at least 10 or more years." I continued the questioning with a scenario of the inmate who had served 2 years, been out 6 months, and then comes back to serve 4 more years. I learned that a lack of consecutive years keeps the prisoner from transcending the

process for full recognition as a convict. Larry responded to my scenario of non-consecutive imprisonment and not becoming a convict:

No, I don't think so. I'd disagree with that because he changes over time, especially when he's out. See, a convict in here wakes up every day and everything's the same. In his mind, the same as it was 10 years ago; and he always, I've talked to several of them, and they always say, "I just wish it was like it was back then." I tell them that it's not going to be that way; but they've seen so many changes that just to be with them and talk with them gives you an inspiration to say, "Man, times have changed." Some of them actually die in here.

As I chatted with Donald, who has been incarcerated for decades and served timed at each of the prisons in Tennessee, I tried to learn more about the reasons that convict is the preferred terminology for a prisoner. I iterated to Donald that inmate sounded more sophisticated than the term convict. He responded immediately:

Well, not to the convict. To the convict, the man that's harder and won't take nothing from anything, and this is all on the inside now. I lived under this code for about the first 20 years that I was incarcerated and the harder core guy that won't take anything from you, will not speak to me, if somebody asked me a question, I would not answer and if somebody gets in my face, I'll slap you down. That's a convict. Asks nothing. Gives nothing. Now, an inmate is somebody that bends. They may tell on you and they may not. They may just be weak. If the administration comes down and he'll accept anything that they pour on him. See, I used to be a convict and now, I'm somewhere between the two because I've been and I get my direction from the Lord to know when to bend and when to stand and that's, uh, sometimes I have to bend when I really want to stand but I think that's maturity. That convict facade gets people killed because there's not really a lot of the old school convicts left. They all died. They even tried to throw in a thing called "resident." The administration tried to throw that on us for a while and quit calling people inmates and convicts for a while and started calling them residents. We're all residents.

With Donald's depth of understanding of fellow inmates and the prison system as a whole, I inquired about the impact of the word prisoner in this carceral environment. His response reflected the impact of labels on his individual existence. Donald answered,

“Well, none of those labels bother me because I am a prisoner, a convicted felon; so I am a convict and, you know, I’m... the Bible says that if you’re saved, even being a prisoner, you’re a free man.”

While talking to Alan, he reminded me that he was categorized as a convict. His succinct words were: “I’m labeled as a convict, you know, I’ve been in over a decade and I understand the law of the prison system.” Another research participant Paul was specific as he used words that are unique to his institutionalized status. Without hesitation, Paul stated, “There’s a difference between a convict and an inmate; and I’m a convict; and there’s a lot of inmates running around and I don’t kick it with the inmates.”

Prisonization

Researcher Donald Clemmer studied the concept of prisonization in the 1940s and the 1950s. His research showed that prisoners could not remain unprisonized. The practice of incarceration exposed the inmates to aspects of the prison community that evolved into a socialization process (as cited in Wheeler, 1961). Inmate Ryan expressed his thoughts on life in prison: “It’s, more or less, a completely different world than what society is on the street. It’s a world of its own.”

Opinions varied among the inmates on the impact of prison on an individual’s life. Donald shared his viewpoint on the young men who have been given short sentences in the institution:

He generally doesn't stay here long. He'll generally stay here and there's things going through here that, he really doesn't have to get involved in the prison system, per se. If he has a small sentence they'll have him out in the community working pretty soon. There's a lot of young guys that come in here and stay on the yard and play ball and stuff like that and work and nobody ever bothers them. You know, people in the free-world get this concept that whenever people come

into an institution, everybody that's been here for a long time walks up to the door to see who they've now got and who they are. It's not like that. There's so many people coming in and out, you may know even know how much time the people around you have got. They can stay off by themselves and come out of here without being molested in any way and I'm not talking specifically about sexual, now. But it can be a pretty safe environment in here.

Because Donald has been in the correctional system for many years, he willingly shared his views of life on the other side of the fence. When I asked him what the word “prisonization” means, he responded:

Sounds to me like being institutionalized; prisonization to me is knowing that. And I've never heard that word before, but just what it brings to my mind is, you get up at 6:00 in the morning, the door opens, chow is at 6:30, 11:00 you go back to camp, a regular prison day. You get shook down and you expect certain things and your life being in control of somebody else other than yourself to a certain degree. Just accepting that prison is eating at a certain time, sleeping at a certain time and everything's laid out for you and you're all institutionalized. Anybody that don't admit that, just don't understand. If you've been here over a year, you're institutionalized, but there's different levels for different people.

I questioned Donald about how long it would take for an individual to become institutionalized if he had never been in the criminal justice system previously. Donald emphasized the daily prison routine as he explained his thoughts:

He's going to start feeling the effects of it immediately. Within six months, he's going to start expecting certain things to happen at certain times and that's the first signs of it. You expect the door to pop open. You expect this to be this way or this to be this way; but the thing that's not how all this takes. It's the power that it takes to get that out of you. That's the thing we need to understand from in here. I don't think that there's anyone in here and doesn't have the hope of leaving here, and some of them never will. But I believe what you're asking me is how long it takes to become a convict, you know, and some people never do.

Andy reflected on prison life from his perspective of entering the carceral system at a much older age than many of the other inmates. He approached the institutionalized life from an acceptance mind-set as he explained the concept of reality from the general understanding of a free-world view:

I think it's the laid-back attitude. In here, I don't really feel like I'm in prison. We're busy everyday and we've got something to do. If I want to, I can go to church; or I can go to the library. Keep the mind busy; that's the main thing.

Having been incarcerated for more than a decade, Andy was asked about his current concept of the outside world. At the time Andy entered the correctional system, computers and cell phones were just evolving into the free-world. He shared his thoughts on the possibility of everything remaining as it was and everybody remaining the same age as they were when he entered the institution:

Basically, for me, time stopped when I came in here. It stopped right there and in my thinking, when I go back out there, they'll all be there and at the same age; but you know it won't be that way. It'll be a big change.

Nathan approached prisonization from the acceptable answer for inmates. He iterated the importance of pretending such human uniformity does not happen in this facility when I asked him how long it takes to adapt and become institutionalized:

You know, I don't. We all say we're not. O.K.? and that's one thing you want to say. You want to say that you've not been institutionalized, you know, you're not going to become a part of that. So many people fall into that; but you know, one of the things they do is that they control you in a way that you really don't realize that you're being controlled somehow. They do this mainly by having set times for everything and you know, like count times, and even when we have free times like on the weekends. It's controlled by counts and things and you know, you eat and everything at a certain time and it's easy to get used to it. A lot of people try to blame the process of being institutionalized on other people. You know, the officers, they try to blame them. I talk to them, and if they treat me right, we get along and if they don't, you know, I'll talk to them because I don't want it to come to the point that when I get out, I can't talk and I'm suddenly against everybody and you learn a lot of tricks in here. It's easy to learn how to be a crook and stuff. I guess about the only way you don't fall for all that is to try to keep some sense about you and keep certain your pride's in tact and stay away from certain things, you know, like not stealing, not lying, and that's about all you got.

Anybody in here that says that they're not institutionalized is lying. You know, I tried to say that I'm not. I'm now a little worried and troubled about how I'll do when I get out. I'm not worried about getting into any more trouble or anything; but it's just this life, I don't want. I don't want to continue down this path. I feel lucky, in that respect, that I think I can have a life outside; and I realize for some

guys, this is it. So, that's why a lot of them go to drugs and everything else. Some people use drugs just to get through the day, you know, to take away the hurt and think I'm not getting older; but they still are. They say it's like time stands still and I think you age more, too. It's hard and I think everybody that spends time in prison needs a half-way house or something. Work release is pretty close in Tennessee.

Prison Survival

Prison survival, as explained by the inmates, is often exactly what the words imply, “managing to stay alive.” Surviving in Northeast Correctional Complex, where I completed my research, is not quite as melodramatic as the television shows and news broadcasts make this carceral life appear. The participants who had been incarcerated for many years had seen a lot of changes evolve through the years in the correctional system, with many of the changes making prison survival easier than just a few years ago.

Inmate Donald, who has experienced the vast array of changes in prisons during his incarceration, expressed his views on the correctional system from the past and the differences that exist today. Donald also stressed that he had grown into an extremely different individual:

My survival was pretty much cut out for me before I ever came to prison. I come from ... and I was raised around a lot of criminals and I knew a lot of people in here before I ever came and I never had. I wasn't who you're talking to now when I first came. You wouldn't have liked me when I first came to prison. I was hard and they don't keep you here 30 years for preaching. I've done some terrible things. The Lord's forgiven me for them and they're all back there and, I'm ashamed of them but I'm not ashamed to talk about them. You know, there's a difference in that. I was always fairly intelligent. I've been able to manipulate the system before I was saved, as far as my drug dealings, and different things, to a point that I was usually in control of a certain amount of power from dealing or whatever in that way to where people followed me for different reasons then. So now that I've come to belong to the Lord, for the last 10 years everything's been completely different. You know, when you lose your fear of dying, it gives you a peace that's beyond human understanding, especially when it's based in good.

Donald continued his discussion concerning prison survival. As he shared his thoughts about prison, he celebrated the positive changes in the institution:

I've been in the system for a lot of years. I've been in here off and on since 1968 and I already knew a lot of the people that were here. The people throughout the system in Tennessee know each other and before I came here, and before I met the Lord, I was in lockup quite a bit and I knew a lot of people that were in lockup with me in different institutions and that I'd served time with in different institutions across the state all the way from the main prison in Nashville up to Brushy Mountain, Bledsoe, Morgan County and here.

The term "lock-up" was used by some of the inmates to describe the current security management known as maximum security. Donald remembered the way life was in maximum security decades ago:

It's different now than it was. I haven't been on max since the 80s, since 1987 or '88 and now, it's gotten a whole lot more sophisticated with the new institutions and the new security things that they have going on now. The last time I was in max was an out unit that they called the control unit in Brushy Mountain, it's the old D block unit, and you could sit on your bed and put your feet on the wall. There was no room in the cells; and everywhere you went, you had four guards with sticks; and you were handcuffed; and you only came out of your cell one hour a day but that's been, there's been a lot of changes in the system since then. This institution, nor any of these newer institutions, weren't even built.

The interviewed inmates recognized that treatment of prisoners "is a little more humane" than it was many years ago. For the inmates who spend time in maximum security, the cells are larger now. The inmates who had spent some of their prison time in the maximum security unit had learned survival skills for that part of the system just as they had for existence in the main population. At the discretion of the Warden, Charles has been housed in maximum security for several years, according to Charles's explanation. When asked how he came to this facility he quickly stated, "It wasn't by choice." Charles did indicate, later, that he was "lucky" to be located in this particular

prison. Each of the research participants agreed that prison survival was “easier” in this state correctional facility.

David talked about the “strong survival skills” that are necessary for prison existence. He explained what is required for survival and how he established his abilities for self-defense:

In other words, when a man gets locked up, he has to show that he can take care of himself; and then others will be there to provide the service for a small charge. [I had a] Decent education, decent home upbringing, just being a man that can stand on his own two feet and when problems come up, he don't run from them. In other words, he takes the bull by the horns and whatever happens, happens, whether he has to whoop somebody, stab somebody. If a man threats you and says he's going to kill you and you know that he's stabbed two or three others, you've got one of two choices. You need to check-in and constantly be in a cell by yourself, or you can stand firm and still have the freedom of being in the population.

David quickly answered when asked how soon he took a stand for his own survival: “Immediately. When I first got locked up.” When I asked him if he had to always look over his shoulder to stay alive, David laughingly replied, “In a sense, yes and no, because when I get here and there's 1,800 inmates at this prison and 900 of them are murderers, you know, how well is anybody going to sleep?”

George expressed the reality of survival in prison. He had served part of his sentence in maximum security because “they had me on possession of drugs, alcohol, and different weapons.” Another stint that he completed in maximum was from a confrontation between he and a gang brother. George said, “...I just happened to be there, and I go jammed up in there.” George's last maximum security time was his assault charge:

But I came back less than five months later because some guy threatened to kill me and called me out by name, and you know, you don't do nothing like that, let

somebody call you a bitch or something like that and just let it slide. So, I . . . , I assaulted him.

Different inmates approach prison survival in dissimilar ways. Nathan, who had never been jailed prior to entering the correctional system for this charge, indicated that prison survival is easier for some men since “they already know a lot of people.” He continued:

Some guys come in and it's like a reunion. I finally started to meet people and learn and screw-up and learn some more. It's just being around a while, you get to know a lot of people and stuff but it's an adjustment each way you go; and it's very scary. I didn't like coming to the annex from the compound because of the unknown. What you find out is, when I came up here I tried to remember who came up here that I knew; but I couldn't remember but two or three of them. All this was overwhelming and if it wasn't for [Saul], he helped me a lot. It's comforting to know that you might get through the day because certain people are sort of watching out for you, so that was good. It was scary. It really is, and I'll admit that I was scared.

Ryan talked about the “extreme nature” that exists in prisons that requires total inmate alertness for survival. I asked him to elaborate on the terminology of “extreme nature”:

You have to use all the abilities you have as a human being to survive in here. You have to use all of your mental and physical capabilities just to survive and whereas on the street you can go to work for a few hours and if you want to go home, you go home but in here, there ain't no break time. You're just locked inside a cell and everyone else is locked up also. At least that gives you a little peace of mind to know that if that door's locked, then nobody's going to come in there and bother you. It's not that extreme all the time but still yet, there's the violent mentality that you have to keep in mind in here.

A young inmate who had experienced life in the juvenile system had a different perspective on prison survival than did some of the other inmates. Timothy articulated his thoughts on what he had to do to survive is to “just be me.” He expounded on his original brevity with these words:

As long as I've been up here, I ain't never been in a fight with nobody. Long as I've been here, I ain't been scared. It was just like the juvenile center. Only thing I do is what I did at Northwest, I just stay to myself and leave everybody else alone. That's the way to do time. Just do your time and leave everybody else alone and don't worry about what the next person's doing and don't talk what the next person's doing. Whenever you do, it'll all come back to you.

Frank began life's survival on his own at age 12 and was arrested before that age.

Having lived for more than two decades in the correctional system, he said that your word was your bond and that allowed you to survive in prison. As a small-framed person, Frank had to take a stand for his physical survival in the early part of his incarceration:

Well, when you come into an institution and you're small such as I am, you want to let folks know that you're going to stand up and make an example within your first month or so and when it's noted abroad they'll know you can't be run over. See, now I live for the Lord; but back then, I didn't. You would take something or do somebody bodily harm and I mean, drastic bodily harm so that people would leave you alone, you know, they'd fear you or you could go into the "I'm insane so you better leave me alone." A lot of inmates won't mess with crazy people. I hit a man with mop handle and after he fell, I began to stomp him. I didn't know his name. He was just huge. He was humongous; and he was in the unit that I was in; and I swore and I said, "This is it. I have to do this."

Ben's views on surviving in prison related to mentally comprehending the population. When questioned about how prison changes individuals for survival, Ben responded:

Well, it makes me very skeptical. I hope to be a good judge of character. If there's anything in prison that you need to learn in order to survive, it is to be able to judge people real quick because if you can't do that, you have problems. If you make a mistake when you judge somebody, sometimes it will cause you problems. A lot of times it does. When you're in a closed environment like prison and you see the same people day after day, a lot of these people you really don't want to deal with; but you're going to be around them anyway so if you make the wrong judgment about them, it might come back to haunt you later.

Having been incarcerated for more than two decades, Ben was still very aware of his previous life where he developed his mind through education. He further iterated the importance of using mental abilities when he described a successful prisoner:

This is somebody who can live comfortably in prison. You try to find those things, whatever they might be, that will give you a little joy in life, whatever you enjoy doing and it's little simple things a lot of times. Like I said, you have to be able to adapt to the new life that you're faced with or uh, you're in trouble, big trouble. If your mind is always filled with thoughts of what's going on out there with my wife or what's going on with my mom, she's sick; she needs me. All that's true, but you can't do anything about it. It's become my motto over the years that if you can't do anything about it, don't worry about it because you have no control over it, so why worry? A lot of guys can't get around that worry aspect, and it takes its toll on them.

Alan shared the same aspect of prison survival as did Ben. They both were adamant about survival being dependent on the use of the mind. Alan was emphatic when he said, “The strong survive. The weak are pushed to the wayside.” When I asked him if “strong” was physical or mental, he continued:

Mentally strong. As far as physical strength you can be one of the weakest and the skinniest persons in this institution; but if you've got a powerful mind, you're going to be able to overcome all the physical aspects of the whole institution. You've got to have a mind. Without your mind, you ain't nothing. I'm big, over 200 pounds, and most people might look at me and suit me up as a jock; but I have a mind. That's how I survive; I use my mind. I don't use my bodily strength; I use my mind. Some try to use physical strength, but it ain't nothing. If you're all the time depending on your physical strength, you'll end up in maximum security.

Defending Yourself in Prison

With inmates entering the system from all avenues of life, their ideas of self-defense vary, as did their previous life. A few inmates are adamant about defending self with physical strength, while others are equally as vocal about self-defense with the mind. Andy, who was first arrested after age 50, said, “There’s no way to defend yourself physically.” He is dependent on higher powers for his personal survival.

Ryan shared his perspective on defending yourself in the prison environment. He did say that there was no initiation at this institution but “you’re either a man or you ain’t,

here. There's not a whole lot about initiation. There's times when people will try you and test you to see how you stand up." I questioned Ryan about how the other inmates test you:

They'll tease you or come up and hit you or try to talk you out of your commissary or stuff like that, you know? The phrase "kindness is weakness," a lot of people don't think that it applies in here; but it does to a certain extent, you know, quite a bit. It's not always that way. You just have to stand up for yourself when you're being tested. If you don't stand up for yourself, people will run over you and take advantage of you. If someone does you wrong and disrespects you, then you don't let it linger. You go and deal with it immediately, you know? You approach them. You confront them and you'll either talk it out or you'll fight it out if it's real serious, whatever the situation warrants, you know? If you think the other guy's going to get a weapon, then that's what you do too, to look after yourself so you won't get hurt. So, it's either talk it out, fist-fight it out, or go seek weapons. Those are basically the three methods of dealing with things.

Fear was not a characteristic that caused most of these inmates concern, or at least only a few acknowledged and admitted being fearful in our interview. If they experienced any fear, they had learned ways to deal with it. Frank responded that fear did not exist in his life during his early days of incarceration:

Well, back then, I really didn't care because I was coming off of drugs and things; and I wasn't in the mindset that I'm in today. So, I didn't care if he came back and killed me or whatever. As far as being fearful, that was something I never was; and I think that's what carried me as far as I've come.

Greg, who has survived many years of incarceration, told me of some of his experiences when he first entered the system. He related his response to the actions of fellow inmates and how he stood up for himself:

Yeah, they tried you. They wanted to see how brave you were and see if you had heart enough to stand up for yourself. I stab them. I stick them and be through with them. If me and a person fight, if I beat him, or say he beats me up, I'm not just going to sit there. I'm going to go get a knife; and I'm going to stab him for beating me up because I know I can't beat him up, so I'm just going to stab him. Why fight? That's the type of prisons that I've been in. There's no reason to fight. Somebody's going to get stabbed, and they don't have to exert all the extra energy of a fight. That's the type of prisons that I've been used to. This place isn't like

that. It's all right. It's like a . . . , I don't know, there's just no threat of that here. Everybody just stays off to themselves.

I asked Greg about inmates stabbing other inmates and if such a stabbing is done with the intent to kill. He was quick to answer with his affirmative response:

For sure, you're trying to kill them. The guy could testify. So, if you're going to do it, you may as well do it all the way; because if you do it halfway, he'll come back and stick you.

When I questioned Greg about what happens to the folks who aren't killed, he expounded on their exit from that particular institution. Greg shared additional information on his personal transformation in the system after he explained how inmates are transferred to another facility:

They'll get transferred somewhere else; and if they ever run into me again, they won't have a problem with me because they know that I was trying to kill them; and if they mess with me, I will try to kill them again. So, they don't do that and understand, this is in the past. That's the way I used to be. I'm not that way now, seriously. Max is what stopped me from being like that. It took a long time of sitting on max to change it. Federal max is different. Max down here is just in the hole, but they've got whole institutions with nothing but max. They've got that stuff down to a science, and they know exactly how to make you move whenever they want you to.

Paul talked about some of the things that happened in prison and how he chose to deal with them. He related, "The first time somebody came trying to steal, I broke them off." He clarified how he broke them off: "Yeah, I beat them down with my fists." Paul continued his story by talking about family members that were imprisoned. In addition to several cousins, his father had served a sentence in prison. I asked Paul what he learned from his father about serving in the correctional system:

Well, my father came through the penitentiary when there was a whole different way of doing things, you know, it's calmed down a lot in certain aspects. I learned never to lay down for nobody and always hold my head up. Don't let nobody, should I say, pump me out. And basically, don't let nobody run over top of me. If

I act like I'm giving, they're going to take; and just carry myself with respect and I'll be alright.

As Adam shared his beliefs on self-defense, he equated his emergence as a leader with his abilities to defend himself physically. Having experienced life in the juvenile centers, Adam, at his young age, told his story of self-defense, gangs, and gaining respect:

Since I've been in here, I've been in probably, no exaggerating, probably 50 hand fights, fist fights, at least and I've been involved in all kinds of gang activities, gang fights and people, I guess, just respect my skills, my fighting skills and the fact that I'm not scared of anything and that I'm down for whatever. They know that I'll do whatever it takes to be respected. And the fact that I'm financially well-off, I don't have to be receiving on money. I do my own thing. I make my money the best way I can in here, and people respect that.

Reflections on Incarceration

Each of the inmates had unique stories to tell about the reality of serving a sentence in a state correctional institution. Many of their stories reflected life as they were poised for the future. Others had faced the reality of losing complete freedom as early as their teen years. Their individual stories help provide insight into their perspectives of leadership, group associations, gang life, and free-world leadership.

Andy told his story of leaving his professional life to enter the prison facility. He shared the moment of being lead away in hand-cuffs with these words:

That's the most mind-boggling thing that you can experience. One day you're up on top of the world; and the next day, you're down as low as you can go. That is the most destructive thing you'll ever face. I couldn't tell you or really describe it. I used to think my mind was playing tricks and I'd open my eyes just a little bit and hope that it was all a mistake; but when I opened them up, I was still here. It's the most devastating thing. I can't explain it.

When I asked Andy how long it takes to adapt to imprisonment, he presented a reality focus of incarceration. He stated, "I think when you come to prison, you accept it once you realize that this is home. I guess you always let your mind wonder about what you'd be doing if you weren't in here." Having endured incarceration for more than a decade, David had a different answer to adapting to prison life:

I don't think a person ever adapts to it. It's like going on a camping trip and you're camping out there and can't get away. I've never forgotten the day they took my freedom, and I won't never forget it. Basically, the way that I've dealt with it, and I've been overwhelmed by it at times, is simply because I love my mama and daddy and God has helped me more than anybody. In other words, I love my mama and daddy enough that I wouldn't try to run off or kill myself or, you know what I mean, I love my family. I love the moral support of my family. With a lot of people in here, it's their kids, they really love their kids; and you know, they don't want to harm their kids.

Nathan shared his experiences of going to jail for the first time in his life as a young man in his 30s. He had no prior criminal record before his arrest and conviction for his offense. His concerns related to the fear of the unknown as he explained the beginning of this new life, "I remember first going to jail, but I was half out of it because I tried to kill myself." He continued with how he attempted unsuccessfully to divert that situation and possibly that he really didn't intend to take his own life:

Well, if I would have, I'd have done a better job instead of just taking a bunch of pills and banging myself up. I got in there and I probably only stayed about two days in there, in jail, before I went to Brushy and I just wasn't familiar with anything. I was scared, you know, it was nothing that I'd ever experienced. When it got time to go to Brushy, I didn't want to go. I had finally been able to talk to some others and I just needed someone to talk to. We talked about parole violations and how much better it was at Brushy. I was very intimidated. Then, when I got to Brushy, man, when I saw that thing, it was the scariest place in the world. You go through these big metal doors and they walk you back there and get you set up and everything and basically they leave you there with your T.V. and stuff. You don't know anyone and you see people watching and you think they're concerned about you, but they're just making sure everyone's accounted for in case you escape or something, or if they find a body, you know. I didn't realize that at first; I guess it was stupid of me. But, see, I wasn't used to it. I

didn't realize that kind of stuff. I thought they might be concerned about me, but they're not. They're just trying to find out your routine; and they want to know about your tattoos and breaks in any bones and that sort of stuff, so they can identify you when something drastic happens. That was very scary. I remember seeing guys in the population who were scary, but it's like you finally get used to that. I just didn't know anything, so I was more than disadvantaged. Some people know exactly what's going down. I sure didn't. I didn't know anything.

For some families, imprisonment is almost impossible to accept. Nathan used a comparison of family support or lack of family support from the perspective of the stigma of criminal activity. He told of the impact of imprisonment with no previous convictions versus the inmate who had been incarcerated as a juvenile:

I've learned a lot of the difference from that aspect would be your family because, let's say somebody was young and always in trouble and maybe their brother's in trouble. The family is used to people being in trouble but when nobody in your family has ever been in trouble and you're the first one, it doesn't just effect you, it effects your entire family. It's always there...[the stigma].

Nathan continued his saga as he related that his family was so traumatized by his incarceration that they chose not to tell others of the incident. This lack of knowledge by family and friends creates a wide chasm in Nathan's life:

Even though people have an idea, they [his family] never told them. I'm sure they've noticed that I haven't been there in ... years so I'm sure it's probably obvious.... My mom tells nobody, not even her brothers and sisters. To me, that doesn't make any sense. Shoot, I wish everybody knew. Maybe some of them would write me. That's their choice, but it isn't going to change anything about me; but it's the way they feel that they have to deal with it. So it's something that your family has to endure. You've hurt everybody. Basically, you put yourself in here; and you've got to realize that you don't need to blame everything on everybody and try to make them feel sorry for you and all that. I think it takes a few years to get over that. It effects so many people that you don't realize; you know, at first, you think it's just you. My brother is taking it the hardest. My sisters will talk to me on the phone, and I guess they'd help me if I needed something, but it's really a shock because it's never happened. It hurts terribly and it's something unfamiliar and when they come to see you in prison, it's really hard on them.

Frank emphasized the reality of good prison behavior versus unacceptable behavior. He told about the consequences of prison disobedience:

When I first came here, I was going the wrong way; but I finally realized that going to the hole and getting in trouble wasn't the right way; and I started doing the right things and started getting my education and everything started to improve.

Realization of the pain and heartache of family in the free-world is one of the stories that these inmates cannot change to a different ending. Even though Frank had experienced self-sufficiency, including some of his juvenile years, he could still relate to family trauma while a son or brother completed time in the system:

Coming here from the streets is a very hard adjustment especially if their loved ones are not there with you. And I've learned that once you're incarcerated, the families are also somewhat incarcerated with them and it's true. As long as one remains focused on where they're at and not start being concerned about the things going on outside in society, they will adjust in here a lot better because we can't do anything about what's going on out there. We can just support and give advice.

Donald iterated the massive changes in both the facilities and the prison population since his incarceration decades ago. He briefly related to taking a stand for your own well-being:

It's a lot different now. When I came into the system, there were only three prisons: Brushy Mountain, the main prison in Nashville, and Fort Pillar, that's all there was and everybody knew everybody and you were a crook. You came in here and you were a crook. Now, there are people that come in here that are not really criminals as we call criminals. There're people in here now that are mentally deficient. There's people... there used to be places to put people with various problems but now, they just put them all in prison. There's a lot of sexual crimes now that there wasn't back in the 60s, or there weren't as many people coming in for those types of things and back then, you had to be a little bit tough. They'd try you and see what you were made of and uh, if you was weak, they'd take what you had and you wouldn't ever have nothing. Now, you can find a place to fit in. I don't care who you are, there's all kinds of... from protective custody units all the way to maximum security units and all levels in between. They have different prisons designated for different types of people. People here that can't get along with people at other facilities and everything has gotten so

complex and complicated that the best thing the inmate can do is just let it flow and try to figure out a way that he fits in, but it's not like it used to be. There was a certain amount of toughness you had to have and a certain amount of ethics that people don't have anymore.

As Alan talked about life in prison, he discussed a resignation and acceptance to the institutional life style. He mentioned the paths he took to reclaim his life:

Well, when I came in, personally, I had a murder charge. A drug deal went bad, and I got caught in it, and a guy got murdered. I knew then, when I came into the system, that I had to change my life all the way around and certain things that I had a way of doing; I had to do different things. When I came in, they locked me up during my 12th grade year, before I even got a chance to graduate or anything. I was just out selling drugs; so, I got locked up. My education had to be put on hold; and so, when I came in, I just took advantage of everything, all the activities and vocational programs, got my GED and my vocational diploma, and learned a lot of different trades and tried to keep doing positive things and stay active. If you don't stay active, you finally get caught up and get your act into a gang; and you're bound to get on drugs and get beat up, and anything. If you do your time and keep active, time will roll; and next thing you know, you'll be on the street.

Resignation to a life of imprisonment was apparent from the conversations with the inmates. Daniel echoed the sentiments of many, "...These guys need something positive in their lives. Some people in here have just given up. They don't know where to turn." He seemed to be uttering a plea for help in dealing with life on the other side of the fence.

The reflection from Larry is a summation of the evolving carceral system. His response to incarceration is inclusive of total reality: "Prison is what you make it. It's not like the movies. It probably was at one time. There's no real rehabilitation. You have to be able to rehabilitate yourself to get to where you actually need to go."

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The traits of inmates perceived as prison leaders were investigated through a phenomenological study. Interviews were conducted with 20 inmates at Northeast Correctional Complex who were selected by the purposeful sampling method. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed into verbatim scripts. Research data were coded for the analysis process. The data were organized into categories of leadership traits and prisonization, which followed the emergent themes from the coded transcripts.

The purpose of my study was to determine the characteristics of an inmate leader. Comparing the traits of the inmate leader to those characteristics that exist in the free-world, according to the theories of leadership, was the thrust of the research. The rich narratives of the inmates shaped the phenomenological analysis in Chapter 4.

A vast collection of literature was available on the numerous leadership theories that have evolved over the last few decades. Additionally, several studies have been conducted on the theory of prisonization. Prior research was limited on inmate leadership, with no definitive answers on how prisoners achieve leadership status in the carceral setting. With the rotation of prisoners into and out of the correctional system, leaders frequently change. This qualitative study examined the traits that were identified and demonstrated by the inmates who were considered leaders.

Organization of the findings was designed to answer the research questions in Chapter 1 that related to gang leader traits, non-gang leader traits, the evolving process of becoming an inmate leader, and a comparison of free-world and inmate leader traits. The

findings revealed the emergent sub-themes that evolved from the rich data of the inmates. Related literature was included in the discussion.

Pertinent Findings from Inmate Interviews

Findings were related to the literature and the analyses of the data. Conclusions evolved from the analyses and implications for further research.

Inmate Leadership

From the inmate interviews distinct traits emerged that related to their leadership roles in the correctional system. Information revealed the benefits from group participation as well as the internal and external factors of leadership.

These men participated in formal as well as informal groups. They chose to cluster with fellows of the same ilk as themselves. Among other groupings, the inmates associated with prisoners who had the same interests, the same culture, and think with the same mindset. The formal group participation included gang membership. The literature emphasized that personal needs are met by participating in groups and some of our behavior is a reflection of that group participation (Thelen, 1954). Clemmer's research published in 1958 indicated that prisoners more often joined small organizations or groups of friends, which had similarities to the group participation in this study.

Inmate leadership traits that are considered as negative and other traits considered positive emerged as the data were coded. External characteristics for the inmate leader were "the way he carried himself" and also "tending to his business" which means dismissal of all things seen and heard. The internal traits deemed necessary to be an

inmate leader included: listening skills, compassionate, respectful, trustworthy, powerful, respectful of the code of silence, and the ability to lead with both fear and control.

From a theory perspective, the trait approach is applicable to some of the inmate leaders. Stogdill's research in 1948 was explicit in showing no specific set of traits that established leaders from nonleaders. Northouse (2001) recaptured the trait leadership theory in his book. He emphasized that "an individual with leadership traits who was a leader in one situation might not be a leader in another situation" (p. 15). Northouse's comparisons of trait leadership studies showed the complexity of naming definitive leadership traits. The central leadership traits that traversed the different studies included: "intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability" (p. 18).

Prison Gang Leadership

Those inmates who participate in gangs are committed to the organization through a brotherhood connection. To become a gang member, the inmate goes through a hazing process where he is "beaten" into the gang for some of the gangster organizations. Some inmates feel they need the protection of the gang structure.

The gangsters at the top of the hierarchy consider individual actions as a reflection on the whole group. Disciplinary action, which can be violent, is administered to the disobedient inmate. To achieve power within the gang, an inmate must "put in the work," according to inmate Adam. Sometimes this work for the gang includes a lot of fighting. The leadership for the gangs possesses the abilities to demand loyalty, enforce rules with fear, keep things under control, demand respect, and carry themselves in a

particular way that represents pride in the organization. Externally, the gangsters have visible, gang insignia tattoos and symbols that represent their group.

French and Raven (1968) presented the theory of social influence and power in their research. The five bases of power, as identified by French and Raven, relate closely to the leadership structure of prison gangs, especially in this study. From a differing viewpoint, Jacobs (1974) in his gang research, considered the most “salient characteristics of inmate leadership to be its autonomy from situational variables and its influence over large secondary groups” (p. 403). Prison gangs and their leaders were more controlled in the prison environment in Johnson County, Tennessee.

Requisites to Be a Prison Leader

Inmates, both very young and those older than 60, each considered that they had the skills to serve as a leader of fellow inmates. The interviews with these men revealed their interpretation of leadership to be mostly leading by example. Inmates who had served longer sentences gleaned more respect from fellow inmates. Those inmates, who had served long sentences, were revered by the other inmates for their survival and endurance in the correctional justice system. Some crimes were given more credence and recognition than other lesser crimes. As in the free-world, the inmate population often shuns those inmates who are child abusers and rapists.

The free-world definition for leadership is often condensed to the simplistic terms of “having followers.” The inmate definition is slightly different; they only have to set an example for one other person to be a venerated leader in their carceral world. Northouse (2001) addressed a style of leadership known as *authority-compliance*. This leader shows

traits that are “controlling, demanding, hard-driving, and overpowering” (p. 39). Some of these traits are requisites to the inmate leadership in the prison system.

Free-World Leadership Versus Prison Leadership

Free-world leadership has a multitude of definitions, as also discovered for prison leadership. Bennis and Nanus (1985) reported 350 different definitions of the term leadership from a research survey. From the free-world perspective, generally two factors are prudent for leadership, according to Owens (2001). These two things are: “leadership is a group function and leaders intentionally seek to influence the behavior of other people” (p. 234). Owens contended that while leaders and followers work toward group goals; the leader also has position power and authority. In 1978, Burns considered the broader concept of leadership theory as different than having power over others. He compared the ideas of transactional and transformational leadership, with the transformational leader taking the follower to a higher level and meeting more of the follower’s needs.

While free-world leadership has many facets, the inmates shared their perspectives on the traits for a free-world leader. Some inmates stated that they did not have previous experiences that would allow them an understanding of free-world leadership. For those prisoners who did discuss the traits of free-world leaders, their list of characteristics included: charismatic, moral values, political direction, loyalty, decision-making ability, integrity, respect, power, and control. In addition, several of the inmates thought all free-world leaders had an abundance of worldly possessions.

Prisonization

The socialization process for incarcerated individuals occurs very quickly after a person is institutionalized. Studies by both Clemmer (1958) and Wheeler (1961) confirmed how the inmate accepts the prison culture and functions in this imprisoned society by rejecting the mores of the free-world society.

Some inmates become the keystones of the prison foundation. The prison culture is perpetuated by the process of learning and adapting from the examples of the keystone inmates. The inmates both identify with fellow inmates and also fear some of their inmate peers. The interviews revealed that all of the inmates become prisonized. Survival, any way possible, is part of the prisonization process.

Conclusions

After studying and comparing the identified traits of inmate leaders to the theoretical perspectives from the literature, it appears that the past experiences of the inmates gave them a unique and different understanding of leadership. The inmate's interpretation of leadership was that of surviving in the penal system and setting an example of survival for fellow inmates.

To serve in a semblance of a leadership role, the inmates determined that the person had to be trustworthy; his word meant he would complete the task. To become a leader in the prison environment, an individual had to fully understand *The Code*, which is a code of silence on seeing nothing, hearing nothing, and telling nothing about fellow inmates. Showing respect and receiving respect are additional traits that are required to achieve a leadership position in the carceral setting.

Gang leaders tend to lead with coercion and power. Members in gangs are not given choices on issues considered important to the gang. Those decisions are mandated by the gang leaders. Allegiance to the gangsters is crucial to the organization and the survival of the inmate.

The inmates indicated that many traits of the free-world leader are the same as the traits of the inmate leader. Several of the participants indicated the free-world leader owned an abundance of worldly possessions. Additionally, they described the free-world leader as an individual who commands loyalty and has exceptional decision-making abilities. The free-world leader was also affirmed as a person who has significant power and control over a group.

The prisonization process, as described in the work of Clemmer (1958), undergirded all of the inmate responses in this study. The controlled prison environment conditioned the inmates to a survival mode. Those inmates who had been in the system for only a few years had become prisonized equally as much as the men who had been incarcerated for decades. Inmate Larry's aphorism encapsulates life on the other side of the fence: "Prison is what you make it; it is not like the movies."

Implications for Further Research

Qualitative research on the leadership traits of juveniles in the correctional system could provide comparative data to evaluate changes in the individual's understanding of leadership as a youth to an incarcerated adult. This data from the juvenile population could be useful in re-directing the leadership energies of these youths.

A study of leadership traits identified by females in the correctional justice system would provide information on how the traits are shaped by gender, prisonization or a life with little exposure to leadership role models. A comparison of the leadership traits identified by females versus the ones identified by males could provide helpful information for the department of corrections to deal with these prisoners in ways that might impact a rehabilitation process. This research of female leadership traits would give additional insight into the mind of the female inmate.

Additional studies are needed to identify the leadership traits at other male prison facilities. With a dissimilar prison environment, the inmates' answers on leadership characteristics could be varied from this research. A closer look at factors that cause a different perspective on leadership could allow an in-depth understanding of the uniqueness of prisons.

A study is needed on a longitudinal look at the early life of the inmate leaders. This study could reveal how their childhood and/or home environment shaped their lives as incarcerated leaders. Additionally, information might be gleaned about the steps that lead the individual into the justice system.

A quantitative study could reveal information about an inmate's strong need for power. A survey instrument that identifies power style and power motivation would be used for this research.

Further study is needed within other non-prison environments that are equally difficult places to survive. Such a study would evaluate and compare the leadership traits identified in these difficult situations with those of the prison facility to see if the leadership characteristics are the same ones for both groups.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
4TH FLOOR RACHEL JACKSON BUILDING
320 SIXTH AVENUE NORTH
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0465
OFFICE (615) 741-1000 EXT. 4025 FAX (615) 532-8281

February 4, 2003

Sandra Fortune
740 Dillon Road
Mountain City, Tennessee 37683

Dear Ms. Fortune:

I am pleased to inform you that the research project, Commissioner White has approved *Leadership Behaviors of Inmates and Prison Gang Leaders*, with you as principal investigator.

You are free to begin their research at any time. Your contacts are as follows:

Howard Carlton, Warden, Northeast Correctional Complex

Please remember to provide this office with a copy of the completed research. I wish you luck in your efforts and look forward to seeing the results.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle L. Chapman
Director of Planning and Research

LEC

pc: Howard Carlton, Warden, NECX
Eric Qualls, Coordinator, Security Threat Group
Debbie Inglis, General Counsel, TDOC
Howard Cook, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Operations

APPENDIX B

INMATE CONSENT FORM

ICD

Page 1 of 3

Informed Consent
Revised 06-16-03

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sandra Fortune

TITLE OF PROJECT: Inmate and Prison Gang Leadership

This Informed Consent will tell about being a part of this study. It is important that you read these pages slowly and then decide if you wish to be interviewed.

PURPOSE: The reasons for this study are as follows: To find out traits of inmate leaders and ways inmates receive a high standing. The study will tell how inmate leaders and free-world leaders are alike. The study will help in understanding inmate leaders.

DURATION: (Months for study). The project will start in June and end in November. There will be 16 –20 inmates taking part in the study at Northeast Correctional Complex in Johnson County, Tennessee. Each interview will last about one hour.

PROCEDURES:(What will happen.) The steps include: answering questions in a one-hour interview that will be tape-recorded. An audio camera and prison personnel or prisoner advocate may be present in the room during the interview. A typist (Jill Penley) or the researcher will type the tape. Your name will be kept secret and will not be written in the final paper.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: The possible risks are: talking about information, which could be used against you. You are free to not answer questions and have the recorder turned off. You will be able to delete any answers in the typed interview.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: The benefits of your answering questions include: helping prison staff and volunteers have a better understanding of inmates. The benefit for you will be recognition by yours peers for answering questions. You will get to tell someone your story. Your parole will not be changed. There will be no pay for answering these questions.

03/13/03

_____ Subject Initials

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sandra Fortune

TITLE OF PROJECT: Inmate and Prison Gang Leadership

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS:(Other studies). There is no other study for you to do.

CONFIDENTIALLY: The researcher will keep the records of the study from the public. The records from this study will be stored at 106 Village Green Drive, Nashville, TN 37217 for 10 years after the study ends. The results of this study may be printed and/or talked about at meetings without naming you. Even though your name will be a secret, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the East Tennessee State University/V. A. Medical Center Institutional Review Board, the Food and Drug Administration, and the East Tennessee State University Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis will have the right to use to the study records. My records will be kept secret by the law. They will not be shown unless demanded by law.

COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT: East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of first aid for any injury that may happen because you were in this study. They will not pay for any other medicine or care. Claims against ETSU or its employees may be given to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be paid under the rules for TCA Section 9-8-307. For more information about claims call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board of ETSU at 423/439-6134.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS: If you have any questions or medical problems at any time, you may call Sandra Fortune at 423/727-7191 or Dr. Russell West at 423/439-7619. You may call the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6134 for any questions you may have.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Answering questions in this study is your choice. You do not have to take part. You can stop at any time without punishment by calling Sandra Fortune at 423/727-7191. You are free to ask questions.

By signing below, I agree that I have read or had these pages read to me. I will be given a signed copy. I have been able to ask questions and to discuss my part with the researcher. I choose to be in this project.

03/13/03

_____ Subject Initials

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sandra Fortune

TITLE OF PROJECT: Inmate and Prison Gang Leadership

SIGNATURE OF INMATE

DATE

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

DATE

03/13/03

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Can you tell me a little about how long you have been at this correctional facility and why you came here?
- What was it like to become a part of the group at this correctional facility?
- You have been identified as someone who is a leader of others in this facility. Tell why you think others see you as a leader.
- Tell me what it is about you, or what you do, that causes you to be seen as a leader by other inmates in this correctional facility.
- Tell me about the things that have happened to you over time at the correctional facility that have led to your emergence as a leader. Please describe any initiation rites that you had to participate in or activities that you had to become involved in to become known as a leader?
- Describe for me what makes you a leader instead of another inmate who is only seen as a follower.
- Tell me how you have gained power or authority over other inmates. How did this happen?
- Is there a difference between power and leadership? If so, describe the difference.
- What is it that makes a person a leader in prison? What does it take? How would you know an inmate leader if you saw one?
- Do you know of situations where other inmates have lost their leadership status in prison? If so, tell me how this happened.
- How is an inmate leader different than a leader in the free-world?

APPENDIX D
AUDIT REPORT

October 7, 2003

Ms. Sandra Fortune, Doctoral Candidate
East Tennessee State University
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
501 Warf-Pickel Hall
Johnson City, Tennessee 37683

RE: Dissertation Audit Report

Dear Sandra:

It is my pleasure to submit this auditor's letter of attestation for inclusion in your doctoral dissertation. The Halpren audit concept for qualitative research, as identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985), in *Naturalistic Inquiry* was utilized as the criteria for these auditing procedures. My examination of the raw data was through the individual audiotapes and the transcripts of these recorded interviews. Additionally, I examined the items listed below as they evolved in your research process:

1. Data reduction, interview reflections, and other analysis products were thorough and without researcher bias;
2. Beginning development of codes through a hierarchical structure and use of the Nud*ist 4, social science software were systematic;
3. Analysis and coding of data, comparisons to the existing literature base, and findings and conclusions, as they related to data reconstruction and synthesis products were complete;
4. Process notes, including audit trail notes followed the specifications for this research;
5. Materials relating to the intent of this study, including the initial research proposal were methodical;
6. Instrument development information, including the interview guide and preliminary interview scheduling was comprehensive.

This extensive audit found the data and your procedures to be pristine and comprehensive. Auditability was confirmed through the useful data and recognizable associations. Trustworthiness was deemed to exist through the truth value, consistency, applicability and neutrality established through this audit. Credibility was preserved through crystallizing, referential adequacy and peer debriefing. All of the aspects necessary for qualitative research were confirmed through this audit.

Respectfully,

Jessica Genco

Jessica Genco, LPC, NCC
Project Director,
Career Planning and Placement
Mountain Empire Community College
Doctoral Candidate, ELPA

VITA

SANDRA H. FORTUNE

Education: Itawamba Junior College, Fulton, Mississippi (Now Itawamba Community College), General Education, A.A., 1964

Mississippi State College for Women, Columbus (Now Mississippi State University for Women); Home Economics Education; B. S., 1966

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Textiles and Clothing; M. S. , 1971

East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D., 2003

Research: Survey and photo observation of *Teenage Boys Clothing Behavior*
Mississippi State College for Women, 1971

Class study of *Inmate Rehabilitation*
East Tennessee State University, 2001

Literature study on *Rehabilitation of Prison Inmates*
East Tennessee State University, 2002

Crime and Media Research on *Inmate Sentencing*
East Tennessee State University, 2002

Professional

Experience: Extension Program Specialist for 4-H, University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky
1971-1973

Adjunct Faculty, Walters State Community College (Branch)
Mountain City, Tennessee
1978-1989

Adjunct Faculty, East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, Tennessee
1996-1999

Tax Consultant and Accountant, Tennessee Farm Bureau
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1981-Present