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Running Head: **IMPRESSIONS OF BLACK MALES
WITHIN THE US CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**Impressions of Black Males within the United States (US)
Criminal Justice System: Thoughts, Words, and Feelings
From Samples of Incarcerated Black Males**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study had no hypothesis or paradigm. It was designed to explore the impressions of incarcerated black males in North and South Carolina jails about high numbers of black males incarcerated within the United States criminal justice system. An objective of the study was to answer the question: how do incarcerated black males understand their fate. A background analysis of the reasons for the large number of black males in prison has been conducted. Four environmental and contextual factors – poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies – were identified as major stressors for black males. The design of the study has allowed other additional environmental and contextual factors to emerge for the inmates' perception of their fate. The additional environmental and contextual factors have been identified to include drugs, gangs, biased court, police, criminal justice system, abuse, and victimization.

The methodology entailed the application of a semi-structured questionnaire, which was administered by workers that were trained to do the job. The questionnaire collected demographic data presented in tabular and narrative form. The validity of this exercise has been discussed thoroughly from the point view of two different thoughts.

The study has revealed similarity and differences in perceptions, thoughts, and impressions among all groups of the informants concerning their understanding of their fate and of the phenomenon of high numbers of black males incarcerated in the United States. The differences found were based on age and location. One important determination of differences in perceptions and attitudes was the geographic location in which the informants lived and the responses of that location to historical changes. In general, the findings of this study reveal a group of informants who perceived the world treated them differently, disappointed them,

betrayed them, and/or failed them due to their skin color. Thus, they saw themselves as always outside the mainstream of American life. This study's findings tell the story of how informants interacted with environmental and contextual aspects within certain historical time periods, and how those interactions influenced their behaviors and actions that brought them into prison.

This exploratory study is a small study that was limited by time and many other factors. Hence, it is imperative that there is the need for broader, random, and qualitative studies with more holistic examination of the issue of the high number of black males within United States jails and prisons. These larger samples should include studies of all age groups incarcerated in prisons and of various locations in which incarcerated black males are found. I conclude that the major significance of this study is that it allows the informants themselves to give their understanding of their fate. Further, I conclude that by understanding their perceptions scholars and practitioners within all disciplines can work toward a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional theory about black male criminality. In addition, scholars and practitioners can then can work toward holistic and multi-faceted approaches for solutions to the phenomenon of high numbers of black males in prison.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

According to the United States Department of Justice reports of 1998, 1999, and 2000 the number of black males incarcerated is alarmingly disproportional when compared to their number in the general population. This has raised a great interest in trying to find out the underlying reasons or factors that might play a role in the incarceration of black males at a very high proportion. As a result, of this curiosity several and various kinds of sociological, socio-psychological and even behavioral studies have been undertaken to find the causes and solutions to the problem.

In my study, I have chosen a qualitative approach to find out the impressions of black male inmates about the phenomenon of high numbers of black males incarcerated within the United States. In particular, my question is how do black male inmates perceive and understand their fate as incarcerated black males. I have chosen this method because qualitative research is concerned with the meanings people attach to things in their lives and hence it gives the chance and opportunity to understand people from their own frames of reference. Qualitative research is inductive; it helps for the development of concept, insights, and understandings from patterns in the collected findings. Qualitative research methodology looks at people and settings holistically. It looks at people in the situations in which they find themselves. Hence, qualitative research is naturalistic because it is concerned with how people think and act in their daily lives in their own natural environment. I have chosen this methodology because as a sociologist I know that the approach I use will determine the outcome from my investigation.

Based on the methodology that I described above I have chosen to find the impressions of black males who were either incarcerated or were under parole in two jails in North and South Carolina. The total number of the inmates from the two jails mentioned above is one hundred

thirty black males. The background data on these inmates are provided in the methodology chapter of this study.

Based on the principles and concepts of qualitative research a semi- structured questionnaire was designed. Personnel that I trained to do the job administered the designed questionnaires. The designed questionnaires contained specific and general questions and the full content can be found in the methodology section. The inmates were asked to make written reply to all the questions. All the findings reported in this study have been obtained as a result of the application of these questionnaires. Additional interviews and oral response sessions were also conducted to obtain the impressions of the informants. This qualitative research approach gives the informants a chance to put into words their opinions, feelings, understanding, and thoughts regarding the phenomenon of this study, and specifically, their own fate. I am of the opinion that this approach may suggest new understandings about the phenomenon of this study. New understandings could lead to new approaches in research and applied practice that would reflect new knowledge in society's quest to solve the problem of high numbers of black males incarcerated in the United States.

Although this study did not put forth any prior hypothesis or paradigm, I based the study and its question on four environmental factors - poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies within the United States. I chose these four factors based on my work as a sociologist and professor in the community and in the criminal justice environment. My work experience brought me into contact with individuals from many backgrounds and various American institutions. Consequently, I observed a tendency within American society to handle problems from crisis-oriented planning. Thus, when a problem became serious enough to come to our attention, American society would deal with that problem. However, this often resulted in taking care of the immediate problem at one moment in time. Thus, my perspective was that this

kind tendency on the part of American society led to a general failure to deal adequately with many of our problems, including poverty, racism, inequality and oppressive social policies. My observations were that this led to continuation of the problems affecting American citizens, and that it was especially true when observing problems that affected minorities such as black males.

This study offered no preconceived definitions of these four environmental factors, but allowed working definitions to emerge from the informants. The goal was to seek common patterns of thought, feelings, and attitudes that might open avenues for research and communication for the future. The information needed was the informants' narratives about their experience of these environmental factors and about their perception of their fate. The responses and narratives were analyzed based on the interpretation of the meanings and understandings of those words to the informants. The concluding remarks reflect information obtained from the interpretation and analysis of the findings. I conclude that these findings could form a basis for future approaches to research and to holistic approaches to understanding the nature of the phenomenon and possible approaches to practical solutions.

CHAPTER 2

Statement of the problem and literature review

Background

As of May 31, 1998, statistics compiled by the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, on federal and state prison and jail populations indicated that approximately 452 men and women per 100,000 U.S. residents were incarcerated in federal or state prisons. The rate for males was 866 per 100,000 male residents, and for females it was 55 per 100,000 female residents (1998). The racial breakdown was 41 percent white, 41 percent African American, 16 percent Hispanic and 2 percent other. This report indicated that relative to their numbers in the population that African Americans were six times more likely than whites and 2 times as likely as Hispanics to have been incarcerated at one time or the other. These figures included pre-and post-trial detention. The United States Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics do quarterly and yearly reports on the movement of men and women in and out of our nations prisons and jails. Their statistics only include figures that are actually reported to them from the prisons and jails throughout the United States. The statistics are broken down by state, gender, and race. However, the figures from some local and state jails and prisons are not inclusive. Due to the overloading of paperwork, lack of adequate personnel, and in some cases, inadequate computerization, the statistics given to the Bureau may not reflect totally accurate numbers, thus leaving the impressions that the figures could be higher for any one group (Department of Justice, 1998). However, these statistics give a picture of increasing numbers of black males being incarcerated relative to their population figures.

This increase in black males incarceration can be further documented with 1999 statistics from the Department of Justice and by comparing those figures to census estimates. As of May 31, 1999 there were 1,860, 520 inmates held in the jails and prisons of this nation, with

an increase of 58,333 from 1998, and an increase of almost 712,000 since the 1990 Bureau and census data gathering (Department of Justice, 1999). Of this increased number, women were 11.2% of the prison and jail populations, which puts the percentage of males at 88.8%. Of these numbers, 41.3% were white, 41.5 percent were black, 15.5 % were Hispanic, and 1.7% were other. The year end report for 2000 indicated 1,933,503 incarcerated individuals in our prisons and jails (Department of Justice, 2000). Of these numbers, 6.6% were women, with over 93% being men. The year 2000 saw more black males than white males in our prisons and jails, 46% being black, 36% being white and 16% being Hispanic (Department of Justice, 2000).

All of these statistics from the Department of Justice can be further put into perspective on the growing increase of blacks in prisons, and specifically the black male, by looking at census figures from 1990 and 2000. The Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics indicated that in 1990 blacks represented 14% of the entire United States population. However, black females and males in 1990 represented 30% of all prison and jail populations (Department of Justice, 2000). The Department of Justice year end 2000 report also included census figures provided by US census bureau for the 2000 census. In the 2000 census, blacks made up 20% of the population, however, blacks were 60% of the total population of United States Prisons. The report further reported that more than 46% of inmates were black males. Census figures used in these reports are important for comparison because unlike the Department of Justice which only reports statistics provided to them by prisons and jails, the data collection of census figures is done under the federal law which requires census takers to actually go into the jails and prisons and count each prisoner (Department of Justice, 2000).

A further concern was raised by these various statistics, especially those from the year 2000; this concern is the changing composition of the black inmate population. Fifteen years ago the black inmate population was mainly older individuals. However, the population is

becoming younger, with many offenders under the age of 25. For example, in the year 2000 10% of black males in prisons and jails were between the ages of 25-29 years of age, with 9.7% black non-Hispanic males, 2.9% Hispanic males, and 1.1% white males. The percentage of older black males in prisons and jails, ages 45-to 54, was 2.7% (Department of Justice, 2000). The indication is that the older population of inmates consists of individuals who simply want to do their sentences and return to their society. The younger inmates, who appeared to be more violent, are often involved directly or indirectly with drugs. The crimes that concern drug trafficking or drug addiction have many consequences and are usually serious in magnitude. As we will understand later in this study, the informants suggest one of the major causes for the incarceration of black males is drug addiction or drug trafficking.

An examination of two perspectives on gangs in the United States can be used to look at the increase in crime for youth. As a part of the concern about the rising gang presence in our cities, Domash (2000) examined youth gangs. He examined this phenomenon from a police perspective, using interviews with prosecutors and police regarding the issue. Domash also examined court records and rode along with various police units in different cities. He did attempt some conversations/interviews with gang members, but due to the police presence and mistrust of anyone coming into their territories, most would not talk with Domash; those that did talk often did not give complete or accurate information. However, Domash did include in his conclusions that from the data he gathered many of the youth gang crimes are linked to burglary or petty theft to support the drug habit or drug trafficking (2000). Domash's work gave the law enforcement perspective on the issue of increasing crime among youth, and especially black youth, a chance to be highlighted. His use of interviews with police and other law enforcement officials gave added emphasis to the statistics of court cases and reports. However, this work

was not done in a way to allow for the youth gang members to voice their opinions, ideas, and thoughts free of police presence.

Dawley studied gangs from a participant observation perspective (1992). He networked with a couple of leaders of a Chicago gang and disclosed his intentions for his study. He worked to gain trust and spent approximately two years observing their inner workings. Dawley's work allowed for the gang members' habits, spoken thoughts, activities, and ideas to be documented. As we will see later in this study, Dawley's work documented that this particular Chicago gang tried to be community leaders for their fragmented communities, involving itself in community improvement. Dawley documented how this gang's involvement in community issues was part of the members' perception of ways to improve the community infrastructure (1992). For example, gang leaders tried to act as advocates for their community to Chicago's economic and city leaders. They sought investment in the gang's community area. However, Dawley's findings did indicate that drugs and drug trafficking were a component of this gang's activities, including burglary and petty theft. In the findings, Dawley also documented that most of the gang members admitted to having been incarcerated at one time or another in their lives. The results, from the statistics given above and from the two observations of gangs, indicate an ever increasing number of inmates going into our jails and prisons. Further, a significant percentage, in comparison to their numbers in the population, are black males. It has been suggested that the solution to the ever-increasing number of inmates is tougher and stricter punishment of the offenders. Advocates for strong approaches to crime and punishment, such as prosecutors, police organizations, victims' advocate groups, and other citizen groups, profess that harsh measures may be the best formula to insure that individuals do not return to the criminal justice system. The lobbying was so strong during the early 1990s for these kinds of measures that in 1994 Congress created a crime bill, signed by the President, that included the

creation of “three strikes and you’re out” policies and longer sentences for relatively minor crimes. This bill also shortened the appeal process for death penalty cases, abolished parole at the federal level, and led to less judicial discretion authority for judges. Prior to this bill, Albonetti (1991) studied the use of judicial discretion. He described this discretion as a power that judges had to grant diversion sentences rather than the use of jail or prison for some cases that came before them. This power was often criticized by police groups, victims advocate groups, and other public policy lobbying groups who saw it as one more way in which offenders were not given adequate punishment. After the 1994 crime bill, this discretionary power was lessened at the federal level and many states followed by creating their own version of this bill.

Some of those who disagree with this approach profess that harsh measures are nothing more than a society’s unwillingness to deal with the issues which create violence within any society (Franklin, 1998; Weich & Angulo, 2000). Franklin’s The Race Report, (1998), was a result of a presidential commission created to study issues pertaining to race relations in the United States. President Clinton asked the commission to study numerous racial issues, including race relations and criminal justice. The commission examined these issues in terms of past attempts to solve racial problems, where the nation stood in 1998 in regards to these problems, and in terms of what still needed to be done. Part of their report discussed issues of race, criminal activity, and the criminal justice system, including the movement for harsh measures in punishment as a deterrent. In reporting their conclusions and recommendations, this commission did discuss the idea that the United States society was so involved with punishment due to fear of rising crime rates that underlying social issues, including poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies, were being overshadowed by the fear, distrust, and concern resulting from high crime rates (Franklin, 1998). The strengths in this report were the commission’s uses of historical analysis of the phenomenon, the use of current literature, and

the use of interviews from individuals from both sides of any issue, including those involved in the criminal justice system and criminal activity. However, political critics called the report partisan.

Another report that disagreed with the harsh measures as deterrent philosophy was also criticized as being politically partisan. This is because, it was a study commissioned by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The report, Justice on Trial, Racial disparities in the American Criminal Justice System (Weich and Angulo, 2000) also documented how underlying social issues were being overwhelmed by the push for punishment. This report included the examination of court cases, an historical analysis, and interviews from those involved with the matters under study, the police, prosecutors, court officials, corrections officials, and with prisoners.

Observation and the study of the cultural makeup and environmental influences of those in the population group from which the informants for this study were chosen reinforce the empirical verification for much of this information. The perceptions are partially based in observation of the populations in the prisons where the study was conducted and by my extensive work with prisoner populations over the past nine and one-half (9 ½) years. Various authors have examined the environmental and cultural influences affecting youth, including black males, these influences include community decay, crime, violence, educational inequality, and youth in trouble (Bender, 1978; Brown 1997; Clark, 1965; Haveman & Wolfe, 1994; Kotlowitz, 1991; Kozol, 1991; 1989; 1988; 1967). Bender's work is a study of the demographic changes that took place in the United States from the 1960's until the late 1970's(1978). He examined how our society has transformed itself into various demographic strata, with the white's leaving to find refuge in the suburbs, leaving the cities to decay. Bender does this examination as a work in progress, showing how the society is constantly changing to fit the

evolving definition of change. Within this work, the environment of blacks in the cities is described in terms of fragmentation, decay, and increasing crime. This work traces these changes in terms of historical movement from 1960's to the late 1970's. It sets the backdrop to understand other studies that focus on the blacks, and especially black males and environmental influences that may affect criminality.

In a similar manner, Clark traces the social dynamics and pathology of ghetto life, especially in terms of power and what some see as the resultant racism, inequality, poverty, and oppressive social policies (1992). He uses oral interviews and historical analysis. He lays out a case for oppression plaguing the black community for a long time. He attempts to find causation perspectives for crime, emotional illness, delinquency, masculinity concerns, social decay, underemployment, and inequality of the blacks with whites. Both Clark (1992) and Bender (1978) discuss issues for which we will see later in this study, many of the informants commented about what they perceived as their communities being left to crime and decay by the white society around them.

More specific examinations of the effects of these kinds of environmental influences can be seen in the works of Brown (1997), Haveman & Wolfe (1994), Kotlowitz (1991), and Kozol (1991; 1989; 1988; 1967). All of these works examine children in terms of their environments, including inequality in education, crime, single parenthood, and fragmented and decaying communities. The 1997 work of Brown examined the case of one youth that became involved in crime and died at a very young age. Brown describes this very youthful individual in terms of living in a life-world dominated by crime, gangs, and violence. Brown examined this case from both sides of the issues involved. He examined police and juvenile reports, talked with relatives and other youth peers of this individual, and did an historical analysis of this individual's short life. While Brown did not reach to give definitive causal references from this one case study, he

did connect this young person's environment with the general description of community and social change described by Clark (1992) and Bender (1978). Brown described a social world that apparently left this child to survive through whatever means available, including crime.

In much the same way Kotlowitz (1991) examined the lives of two young boys growing up in environments of poverty and communities left to decay. His work, There are no children here: The story of two boys growing up in the other America, traces their lives and how they did or did not find ways to survive within these environments. The title is very telling, these children had no childhood, forced to survive in various ways. This work also describes how criminal activity became a way of life in these environments for some children. This work focuses in detail on the lives of only these two young boys. Thus, Kotlowitz's and Brown's work cannot be generalized to a larger population. However, these works were done to put a mirror on the environmental and social changes that have taken place in the United States and how these changes affected real lives in terms of crime, hate, drugs, and rising violence.

Much of Kozol's work has focused on the effects of all of the issues described thus far – racism, poverty, inequality, oppressive social policies, communities left to fend for themselves with crime and violence, and inadequate or lack of equal education (1991; 1989; 1988; 1967). His works describe young people dying at an early age, homeless families, runaway children, and the consequences of that decision to their lives, and inequities in our educational system. Kozol's works also sought to put a mirror up to our society and its policies regarding our children, particularly our minority children, and all children who live in poverty. He describes the very issues and concerns raised by various sociologists, social workers, politicians, and human rights advocates, the plight of our youth, including young black males.

Haveman and Wolfe (1994) take a much more encompassing look at environmental effects on our nation's children. Their work, Succeeding Generations, on the effects of

investments in children, also examines inequities and disparities suffered by children of all races, including fractured families, economic woes, poverty, and communities that are deteriorating. They suggest that without appropriate investment in all communities and families, no matter their race or difference, we will have a generation of children that will respond to the social conditions in which they find themselves in any way they believe will help them survive. According to the authors, this will be true even if the ways to survive are not mainstream society's ways.

Thus, as society attempts to come to grips with the problems of crime, hate, drugs, and rising violence, the plight of the black males, especially young black males is prominent in these social advocate's works. Nevertheless, within United States society there appears to remain the popular notion that it is better to incarcerate individuals, even youthful offenders, than to rehabilitate. The 1994 Congressional Crime Bill advocating harsher measures for punishment and deterrents remains in effect (Domash, 2000; Franklin, 1998).

In addition, there remains a basic underlying mistrust between whites and blacks, which authors suggest affects solution-seeking for higher crime rates and increasing jail and prison populations. For example, some advocates point out that within the judicial system, when black males commit the same crimes as their white counterparts, black offenders often get harsher and stricter applications of the law (Paternoster, 1991; Petersilia, 1985; Welch, Combs, Sigleman, & Bledsoe, 1996; United States Sentencing Commission, 1998; 1999; Weich & Angulo, 2000). For example, in 1985 Petersilia wrote a work called Racial disparities in criminal justice system: A summary. In this work he did a study, random in nature, where he examined court cases, looked at pretrial and appellate cases, and interviewed various individuals regarding the issue of racial disparities. This work was a combination of qualitative case study and quantitative statistics. His work came to conclusions that racial disparities do exist and could be an

explanation for the plight of blacks, especially black males, within the criminal justice system, including the death penalty.

Paternoster (1991) focused especially on the death penalty and racial disparities in this sentencing and appellate aspect of the criminal justice system. Paternoster used historical analysis, including the examination of the black codes from slavery days; and he examined case studies, focusing on a particular case in the state of Georgia. His work is similar to the work of Petersilia (1985), in that they both lay out a historical pattern of disparities against blacks in criminal justice treatment and sentencing. Paternoster concludes that blacks were more likely to receive the death penalty than whites. Paternoster traces these disparities to mistrust of whites for blacks, going back to slavery and post-slavery days.

The United States Sentencing Commission (1998; 1999) also examined the issue of disparities of sentencing for black males. The discussion of this report included indications that Petersilia's (1985) and Paternoster's (1991) conclusions were well founded and that such conditions remain in existence today. Both reports are done yearly and examine issues of the black male. Further, Weich & Angulo (2000) in their work, Justice on trial, racial disparities in the American Criminal Justice System, examined the issue of racial disparities. Weich & Angulo also concluded that disparities do exist. However, as discussed earlier in this background and literature review, their work has been criticized as being politically biased because the ACLU commissioned it. However, yet other advocates of this position that there is racial disparity in the criminal justice system are Welch, Combs, Sigleman & Bledsoe (1996). Their work, Justice for all: Still an American Dilemma, also examined cases and records on treatment of minorities versus whites in our criminal justice system. Their work was done in a comparison and contrast modality. In the conclusions, the authors suggest that disparities

remain in our system against blacks, and that this disparity points to basic mistrust of blacks, especially black males.

These works differ, in some conclusions, from other works on racial disparity in our criminal justice system. For example, a recent report done by the US Department of Justice (2001) argues that at the federal level, no racial disparities exist in terms of federal prisoners who receive a death penalty sentences. This report was commissioned by John Ashcroft, US Attorney General, in response to increased criticism of the use of the death penalty in the US. The study did a statistical examination of death penalty sentences at the federal level, but only looked at existing federal prison population, no attempt was done to do a historical comparison. In addition, this study did not include state prison figures regarding death penalty sentencing. However, the study did conclude that blacks were more likely than whites to go to prison.

Nevertheless, Klein, Turner, Petersilia (1989) suggested that race did not relate to the length of a term of sentence. This study was done by prison system collection of data and not from direct interviews. The study was purely quantitative, judging disparity existence in terms of in and out decisions on inmates leaving incarceration. This study was done before the 1994 crime bill, which created harsher penalties. Similarly, a later work by Kramer (1993), entitled "Race and Imprisonment Decision," for the Sociological Quarterly, suggested that there existed only a small race effect on the in and out account on departures from prison that appeared to favor white defendants. Kramer suggests that offense severity and prior criminal record determined the sentence. However, he did make suggestions on ways in which data on black incarceration could be checked.

However, some researchers continue to indicate that mistrust can be seen in the attitude of neighbors and police when a black male is found in an upper class neighborhood, especially after dark. They indicate that the automatic assumption is that the individual is up to no good.

They add to this perspective in talking about shop keepers automatically putting forth a suspicious attitude toward a black male who comes into a store (Dawley, 1992; Lusane, 1991). Feagin (1991) and Harris (1999) both give diverse examples of this suspicious attitude. Feagin, in the work, "Blacks still face the malevolent reality of white racism," (1991), responds to the increasing racial tensions on our nation's college campuses. He examined the increasing incidents taking place through review of the records and interviews with those affected by the incidents. As his title indicates, he suggests that the mistrust and suspicion still exist. Harris's work, Driving while black, racial profiling on our nation's highways (1999) looks at this mistrust from the aspect of black drivers' encounters with police on the highway. This is another work commissioned by the American Civil Liberties Union and therefore criticized as being partisan. However, the study did a historical analysis and review of records describing highway stops and the attitudes of the police involved. According to Harris, there were apparent attitude problems from the police involved that demonstrated the very basic mistrust discussed above.

The indication from some researchers is that this attitude of mistrust and suspicion is a carry over from the slavery days and of the post-slavery era (Kerbo, 1991; Paternoster, 1991; Wickersham Commission, 1930; Williams, 1996). These authors do historical analysis of the plight of black Americans from varying examinations of issues. Williams (1996) studied Ku Klux Klan trials during 1871 to 1872. The work documented the attitudes of racism that existed, which included a very basic mistrust of anyone who was black. As discussed earlier in this background section, in looking at the historical use of the death penalty for blacks, Paternoster (1991) traced this mistrust and racism. Kerbo's (1991) work was a more encompassing historical analysis of racial and class conflict, including attitudes toward the black male throughout history. According to these authors, this slavery days and post-slavery era were a

time during which the sentiment within the southern states and in some areas of the North was to keep blacks in their place. They further indicate that the net result was the continued perpetuation of racism and oppression in society.

For example, in the 1930's, President Hoover asked that a study be done regarding the actions taken; peace from many of the nation's power departs. President Hoover was responding to rising concerns regarding unrest in our country during the depression and apparent police abuse of citizens. The Wickersham Commission (1930) authored the study. It found rampant corruption as a result of how many police forces were organized. This corruption included abuse of citizens' rights, and specifically, abuse and mistrust of minority citizens. The report concluded that police forces, most politically appointed and not civil servants, were inadequately trained, especially in terms of individual rights and minority issues. The Wickersham Commission advocates for restructuring police forces so that they were civil servant and not political appointees. Further, they advocate for training in all areas, but especially in issues of civil right. This reports' strength was that it includes interviews with all concerned, including victims of police abuse. Thus, in the 1930's mistrust remained between whites and blacks. However, most of the recommendations for upgrading, training, and developing approaches to deal with immigrants and diverse populations did not commence until the late 1960's. The 1960's was when the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration was created to commence local training of police (G. Perlstein, Criminologist, Portland State University School of Urban Affairs, Personal Communication, 1996). Thus, Dr. Perlstein suggests that this 30-year lag in enacting the recommendations of the Wickersham Commission fostered the continuation of mistrust between whites and blacks in American society.

A clue may be found in the work of Fanon (1987) as to how this continued mistrust effects the mindset of and reactions to environmental factors of blacks, and especially black

males Fanon writes from a pan African perspective on colonialism and its apparent long-term effect on individuals, even after the removal of the oppressive policies and policy makers in a society. He describes African peoples who were colonized and oppressed, and the fact that they remained uncomfortable within new environments after the removal of oppressive governments. He indicates that colonization effected the African peoples' identity, linguistics, culture, and family life. In a personal conversation with Douglas Davidson, Ph.D., a black sociologist at Western Michigan University, (Personal Communication, 1999), Dr. Davidson suggested that Fanon's work was a good backdrop for understanding how slavery affected blacks in the United States. He indicated that such oppression and racism in a society, past and present, can manifest consequences socially, culturally, physically, and psychologically on members of any given group or community. Dr. Davidson points out that one of the things Fanon suggests is that the result can be psychological perceptions of one's status and place within his or her own life-world. Thus, individuals respond to their environment, including the apparent basic mistrust that remains within the white society towards blacks, and especially black males.

Further, indications from researchers are that the race of the victim is often an influence on the verdicts reached within state and Federal courts. This pattern is believed to continue today (Barrera, 1979; Paternoster, 1991). As an example, when the victim or victims are white and the perpetrators are black, the indications are that the perpetrator will be twice as likely to receive the death penalty or longer sentences, when compared to the sentencing of a white defendant who commits the same offense. The indication from researchers is that this pattern is a long-standing result of The Black Codes that were initiated during slavery and that are, in some cases, still on the books. These codes prescribed harsher penalties for blacks who committed specific crimes and reaffirmed lesser to no penalties for whites committing the same

or similar crimes (Barrera, 1979; Lusane, 1991; Paternoster, 1991; Weich & Angulo, 2000; Welch, Combs, Sigleman, & Bledsoe, 1996).

Recent studies conducted within the state of Ohio give credence to these beliefs about United States Justice. One recent study suggested there were indications of disproportionate rates of conviction and sentencing for black males and that this pattern had remained consistent since the early 1980's (Ohio Sentencing Commission, 1997). Due to the findings of this study there now exists a movement within the Ohio legislature to force the Parole Authority to live up to the legal mandate in the truth-in-sentencing legislation already on the books. It appears from the study that the practice of the Parole Authority has been to require inmates to do additional time even though they may be eligible for early release due to good conduct and rehabilitation. In some of the cases studied the indication was that black inmates were especially victimized by this underlying practice, resulting in many being re-sentenced by the board to additional time equal to or greater than their underlying charge at conviction. This suggests the board was acting as a court without jurisdiction. Nevertheless, due to this and other studies, in the year 2000, Ohio legislature created laws that require parole authorities to release inmates according to their original sentences. Some of the researchers in the Ohio study concluded that this kind of practice is believed to exist in other states as well. The researchers further suggest that there has been an overkill of prejudice inflicted on black male offenders by a fearful and mistrustful white society.

What United States society seems to be dealing with is the continued effect of such environmental circumstances as poverty, racism, inequality, and social policies that continue those oppressive environments. Thus, black males are victimized by the continuation of such influences on their lives. Dr. Davidson (personal conversation, 1999, Western Michigan University), suggests from evidence he has found in his research that the result of these racial

issues has been the use of a label for this group, the criminalized underclass. Dr. Davidson is in agreement with other authors and researchers who indicate that the high crime rate, and apparent criminalized underclass, is a direct result of the lack of opportunity and acceptance in mainstream society of black males (Franklin, 1998; Kerbo, 1991). Further indication from these authors and researchers is that this has resulted in illegal activity because individuals are barred from contributing to their society and families (Dawley, 1992; Domash, 2000; Kerbo, 1991).

Further, current social and correctional policies reflect a society eager and willing to devote its resources to incarcerating individuals on possession, or conspiracy to possess, less than one-half ounce of a controlled substance (Lusane, 1991; Paternoster, 1991). This is accomplished in the name of fighting crime and drugs. However, the same statistics on incarcerated users and possessors indicate that the majority of these individuals are of minority status (Lusane, 1991). The United States has many profile cases of users that have come to light, in the past and present, who have used the hard drugs of the street and have not had to pay any penalty other than middle class therapy. Many of these cases are well known and have often included those of fame in the contemporary world. Further, these kinds of cases suggest a different standard may be needed to address the adult drug problem. Should the policy of incarceration be replaced by drug treatment? Many critics suggest that the practice of incarceration should be replaced by prescribed treatment of drug offenders as sick people.

Some sociologists have carried this study of drugs and gangs farther into the realm of racism within the criminal justice system. Clarence Lusane (1991), in his work Pipe Dream Blues, examines the United States and suggests there has been the continuation of inequality and oppression which has resulted in blacks continuing to see the so-called American Dream as a "pipe-dream". Within his work Lusane suggests that there is and has been hypocrisy in law enforcement over drug dealing within the black communities of the United States. He critically

examines the law enforcement system and indicates that those who control the drug traffic in the United States are often white. Lusane further contends that when those who are considered to be the controllers of drug traffic are brought before the justice system, they often do not get the same treatment as black individuals who are brought before the courts for drug charges. Lusane does seem to suggest that the United States is not alone in this use of white authority. He cites testimony from Latin America, Asia, and parts of Africa. However, his work stops there and only offers a limited global analysis. As discussed earlier in this background review, Herbert (1997) examined sentences given to minorities on drug charges and compared those sentences with those given to white defendants. Herbert's work augments Lusane's work because Herbert looks at blacks and Hispanics and finds that both blacks and Hispanics are given severer sentences on cocaine charges than white defendant counterparts. Herbert looks at actual cases, however some of his literature support is not up to date.

Drugs and gangs in the black community are indicators of longer-term issues in the economic growth and prosperity of the community. There is suggestion that gangs and drugs underlie the black community's view of their role in society and culture. In addition, there are indications that black males feel a different connectedness to society because they have never been a part of that culture. Further, studies on poverty and inequality have focused on lack of economic resources, discriminatory practices in the work place, and institutionalized racism (Franklin, 1998; Marger, 1991).

Conceptualization

There are many possible approaches to do research on black males relationships in the social structure. As discussed in the methodology chapter, including literature on methods for studying prisoners, the literature and popular culture studies often use scholarly paradigms in explaining poverty and racism, or in explaining why a person may be at the bottom of the social

structure. Such studies approach the examination of black males and criminology from theoretical perspectives whereby the study seeks to prove or disprove the particular theory. In some cases, political explanations have been proposed. These studies cover popular culture, government commissions, and limited studies on various sociological phenomena. Studies on minorities and, specifically on black males within the criminal justice system, are emerging. There are at this time a few governmental commission studies that discuss black male incarceration as a specific phenomenon (Franklin, 1998; Ohio Sentencing Commission, 1997; United States Sentencing Commission, 1998; 1999; Weich & Angulo, 2000). What is missing from many of the works that do exist is a focus on the experiences of black males of the factors of poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies, and specifically the phenomena of black males involvement with the criminal justice system. As discussed in the methodology chapter, few of the studies done so far on these phenomena allow for the words, thoughts, and perceptions of those most affected to be heard.

Pilisuk and Parks, in their work The Healing Web Social Networks and Human Survival (1986) suggest that best and appropriate approaches to finding solutions to social issues should include involvement of the people most affected by the issue. However, the problem that has prevailed with many social issues is that they have been researched from a white perspective, which has not addressed the cultural factors of those individuals experiencing a particular life issue. Thus, this research perspective can result in a clouding of the core of the real issues that affect people in certain life situations. However, if we can understand and appreciate the perceptions of the people who are affected by a variety of problems, we might be able to assist in areas of concern, perhaps through understanding the life challenges of those we are researching. That understanding could, and maybe should, begin with hearing and listening to those individuals' own thoughts, words and perceptions. For example, black males and white

youth grow up in a society with many questions about the relevance of their social institutions, and they often respond by creating their own social structures such as gangs. The gang element becomes important to discuss for several reasons. First, you do not have to be poor to be a gang member. One of the most noted gang members a.k.a. "Monster Cody" came from an upper class family. Cody is also a published best selling author regarding the inner meaning of the black revolutionary society. Dawley (1992) portrays black gangs as an agent of societal change in conflict over the survival of urban society. As mentioned before in this chapter, Dawley's work is significant because it came from the thoughts, words, ideas, and expressions of those who were in the gang. It portrays a group on the outside of white society looking in, which is reflected in chapter one entitled, "It's your world; I'm just living in it" (Dawley, 1992, p. 3). This outside looking in philosophy can also be seen in words and phrases such as "The gang was family of all street cats" (Dawley, 1992, p. 4), "The gang gave him initiative, responsibility, and input which he didn't get from society" (Dawley, 1992, p. 4); and finally, the gang was about survival reflected in the statement "if you weren't in the gang and went into these areas, you were dusted" (Dawley, 1992, p. 4).

Mission

This study used an approach focusing directly on black males who are incarcerated or soon to be released. In addition, data regarding family situations of these subjects as background to the study itself have been included when such data would augment the subjects' own narratives and thus provide a more complete overview for readers to understand the results obtained in this study. Prison inmates, and those soon to be released, offer a diverse array of opinion on their experience of racism, poverty, social inequality, and oppressive social policies. This approach thus moves the study of these subjects beyond a focus on the crimes committed, to a concern with describing and exploring their perceptions of why they became criminal

offenders within their society. Such exploration and description is intended as adjunct and enhancement to the idea which some sociologists and social workers feel has been overlooked, a focus on the social and psychological environment within which these individuals are a part of society. For example, why does someone choose drug dealing or thievery over working at McDonalds? Some advocates and researchers indicate answers to questions such as this one may provide a picture of the expectations of the poor in a given society.

The argument presented by some is that creating conceptual words like poverty, inequality, racism, and oppressive social policies and, then creating measurable constructs, and moving to empirical research only gives one side of the phenomena of poverty, inequality, racism, and oppressive social policies. Therefore, the answers obtained in standard research may not be relevant (Dawley, 1992; Pilisuk & Parks, 1986). Denzin and Lincoln, editors of the work, Handbook of Qualitative Research, (1994), and Janesick, (1994) one of the authors in the Handbook..., indicate that, the questions asked, the methodology used to get answers, and the groups which are the population of the study make a difference in what answers are received and how socially meaningful the conclusions and results are for further research and practical application.

Purpose, Objectives, and Rationale of Study

This study sociologically puts forth the interpretation of the informants' words regarding environmental circumstances that, in their perception and understanding, had an impact on their lives. Thus, this study sought to explore the question of how the informants perceived their fate as members of the United States' high numbers of incarcerated black males. To accomplish the goals, mission, and purpose of this study, findings were collected from black males involved with the criminal justice system. In this manner, the study did not use a white social structure perspective. Neither did it ask these informants to accept any paradigm proposed or used by their

white counterparts within the United States as a solution to the issues raised by this study. The study allowed the group affected by the factors to generate ideas about causes and solutions concerning their involvement with the criminal justice system.

The rationale for this study is based upon my nine and half years of direct work with black offenders. My theoretical knowledge of the impact of poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies, and crime from a cross-cultural perspective has contributed much in the design of the study. In addition, my personal and professional background is based on a humanistic philosophy, which has included involvement in and study of various issues and concerns and their impact on human behavior.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

This research study utilizes the pre-designed semi-structured questionnaire and applies a qualitative approach to find the impressions of Black males within the United States Criminal Justice System. Thus, the qualitative method chosen for this study is the informants interview. The semi-structured questionnaire used in the study is presented in Appendix A. The qualitative research methodology applied throughout this investigation is based on The Handbook of Qualitative Research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods a Phenomenological Approach to the Social Science (Bogden & Taylor, 1975) and Introduction to Qualitative Methods, 2nd Edition (Taylor and Bogden, 1984). As I mentioned in the introduction, the rationale for applying the qualitative approach is based on the facts that qualitative research is inductive hence it helps for the development of concepts, insights, and understandings from patterns in the collected findings. Qualitative research methodology looks at people and settings holistically. It looks at people in the situations in which they find themselves. Hence, qualitative research is naturalistic because it is concerned with how people think and act in their own natural environment. Taylor and Bogden (1984) demonstrated this concern for naturalistic research by explaining that unlike other kinds of research studies, the preferred manner for reporting a study involves fundamental and basic terminology, such as informants not respondents, inmates not study population, and findings not results. I have also used my training and orientation in blended critical scholarship in trying to adapt and maintain the qualitative research methodology throughout this study.

I approached this project with prior knowledge of and experience in the world of black males. However, in using a semi-structured interview instrument, I allowed for factors from the informants' perspective of their world to emerge as a small aspect of the reconstruction of their

experience. Consequently, the research methodology made no clear predictions and allowed the experiences of the inmates to paint a picture of possible influences for the phenomenon of black males' involvement in criminal activity and with the criminal justice system. Factors that arose out of the collected findings were then analyzed and interpreted to ascertain whether these informants' words revealed possible causes for the phenomenon under study.

Methodology Considerations

The semi-structured interview guide was designed within qualitative methodological guidelines. Within these guidelines, the strength of a qualitative interview is that it permits the researcher to understand in descriptive detail how people think, feel, perceive, believe, and behave regarding their experiences. Further, these guidelines indicate that face-to-face conversations allows the informant and interviewer to pursue a topic at length and to reach a level of inter-subjective understanding between them that allows for the increased possibility of validity of the findings. Within the consideration of validity, research has also shown that face-to-face interviews increase the response rates of subjects better than self-administered questionnaires (Bradburn & Sudman, 1979; Lee, 1993). The major weakness of a qualitative interview is its failure to provide causal analysis (Manning, 1982). There may also be errors produced by distortions in the situations and time periods that were sampled for observations, distortions due to the selection of people who are sampled for interviews, and distortions by the researcher's biases in analyzing the data (Patton, 1980).

The interview is one of the most used methods in psychology. In addition, it has been used successfully within the discipline of sociology and within the applied tradition of humanistic psychology. However, it is often the method most criticized for its lack of reliability and validity. These criticisms include such issues as the use of probes, leading questions, analysis, rapport, and recalling information that may have taken place a long time ago. These

are issues that focus on internal validity of the study. Internal validity examines how well the researcher "has controlled all factors, other than the ones being studied, that might account for the results" obtained from the inquiry (Hadley & Mitchell, 1995, p. 224). Traditional methods view the probing of various themes emerging during the interview to obtain different aspects and levels of the subject's perceptions as a source of error. A qualitative method asserts that it would be an advantage to explore in this manner so that a broader and more diverse picture of themes and patterns is revealed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Greene, 1994; Holstein & Gubrium, 1994).

Researchers using the interview method are often criticized for asking leading questions. Kvale's answer is that, "in principle, it is impossible to avoid leading questions in an interview. The solution is not to try to eliminate such influences, but to analyze the different types of leading questions and their influence upon the answers given" (Kvale, 1983, p. 190). Bogden & Taylor (1975) and Taylor and Bogden (1984) suggest that another strategy to lessen the threat to validity of the responses is to question the motivation behind a subject's remarks to see if he or she wants to be seen in a favorable light.

Another criticism of interviews centers around the way an interview is analyzed, which can be different depending on who is doing the analysis. However, researchers suggest that varying emphases seems impossible to avoid if one accepts the notion that human beings actively formulate the meanings about any given phenomenon, and these representations of reality are historically situated and interpersonally contrived (Gergen, 1985; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1983). Therefore, if the principle of legitimate plurality of interpretations by interview analysis is accepted, then it becomes meaningless to pose strict requirements on interpreter reliability. In response to this particular concern Kvale (1983) suggests that, "what matters then is to formulate as explicitly as possible the evidence and arguments which have

been applied in an interpretation in order that the interpretation should be testable by other raters" (p. 192).

A further criticism of the interview method focuses on its dependence on good rapport and trust to obtain the rich level of data desired. Rapport and trust is crucial so that the researcher understands the interactional contexts of communication and the resulting knowledge is inter-subjectively valid (Johnson, 1975). Developing trust is a necessary condition for valid observations but not a sufficient one. Even when trusting relationships do exist, it is still necessary for the observer to record his or her observations with a keen critical sense of the past and present events.

Additional criticisms concern the idea that since much of the data collected in an interview are recalled accounts of experiences, there is a natural tendency to distort information. However, what people remember in detail and what they forget can in itself be important data. By examining the accounts for inconsistencies and asking for more elaboration or clarification a researcher reduces risks to reliability and validity of the data. During the implementation of this study I gave informants the opportunity to elaborate and/or clarify responses on the questionnaire and those made in the follow-up sessions.

Another criticism of interviewing concerns whether the person doing the interviewing may have influenced the informant through interviewer body language or speech and tone of voice. My background includes training in questionnaire design and implementation. In addition, I possess training in various interviewing and listening techniques based in individual and joint counseling skills, and group processes and dynamics. This background training provides the counselor, group facilitator, and interviewer skills in restatement of information given which allows the interviewee to feel he is understood. This often naturally leads to the interviewee becoming comfortable in expanding on information already provided. In addition

this kind of training includes ways in which to present the main and qualifying questions in a neutral body and speech presentation. I sought to train my fieldworkers in these same skills.

The broader exploration of responses allowed for factors to emerge. Thus, with the use of these listening and interviewing skills, during the interview process I found that leading questions offered an opportunity to probe for clarification to questions. Within this interviewing process, my fieldworkers and I were able to probe for psychosocial information from the informants. In addition, I was firmly convinced that rapport with the informants was critical and that it would contribute to the creation of trust on the part of the informants and, thus, contribute to the outcome of the interview process. This study allowed for possible theories and ideas regarding causes to emerge from information provided by incarcerated black males. According to Taylor & Bogden, (1984), this is inductive reasoning. Since this study was to be compiled from the perspectives of incarcerated black males some could argue that the subjects may be in denial and, thus, have not given accurate information (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Some of the critics of inmate studies, which rely on direct information from the inmates, suggest that the data is unreliable due to the use of rationalization, denial, deception, and inaccurate self reports (Anderson, 1992; Arnold, 1982; Lilly, Cullen, and Ball, 1995). There are several theories that criminologists use to critique studies using the words, thoughts, feelings, and opinions of inmates. Most of these theories fall into the rationalist school. Advocates of this school of thought believe that male inmates tend to justify crime or criminal activity as something society has done to them, therefore it is ok to commit crimes. Further, such critics believe that because male inmates are able to justify everything in a rationalist perspective, that any impressions on their social world may well be distorted, thus not valid (Arnold, 1982; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Critics that believe in the denial process suggest that inmates housed in involuntary circumstances have not accepted their guilt and may serve such sentence never accepting their guilt. Thus, if the inmate cannot accept such guilt, the critics ask, would they be more candid on their view of their social and life world? In addition, these critics would say that the subjects may well have skewed their answers to give me what they perceived I wanted them to say (Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 1995).

In reviewing the literature, I have observed that critiques of qualitative studies of inmates tend to perceive that deception and denial may distort the information that can be obtained from inmates. This is often represented in the word "con." He/she cons other inmates, the warden, or authorities in general. Another word used to describe deception is often associated with the person who would snitch to get freedom. Those who doubt inmate credibility because of general "behaviors like lying, deception, etc," believe that inmates are totally apart from their social world and thus they cannot or should not be trusted (Anderson, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 1995).

Another theory used to critique inmates' self-report studies is called relational, and is applied with the greatest frequency to explaining why women commit crime (Clay, 1998; Chesney Lind, 1986; Chesney Lind & Rodriguez, 1983). Studies of a broad range suggest women commit crimes because of who they are with, such as spouses or boyfriends. The broad implication is that women's dependence on a strong influence in their lives is the fundamental reason many commit crimes. This is based heavily in feminist perspective. However, it is also reflected within a broad range of literature.

These theorists suggest that the category of self-report does not always reflect an accurate assessment of the situation. Prisoners will tend to give answers and assessments reflecting what they feel their captors want to hear, especially if they do not know the person

who is administering the study. However, Nowak (1991) found that self-reports can be reliable data for a research study. She also found that a good rapport with the subjects is important if one wants to receive an honest and realistic assessment of a survey instrument.

I will not deny that elements of deception, bias, and rationalization could be present in all sociological work involving prisoners' thoughts, words, and opinions. However, I feel that alternative theories can be ruled out if one seeks to become familiar with the participants before one studies them. Further, I feel that this activity - gaining familiarity of the participants - is the strength built into this work. In compiling questions from the pretest preliminary research, I found it quite important to take the prisoners' observations literally and consider the data that were there, not what I could or might read into it. To prevent the possibility of bias I focused my efforts on what the informants said in their own language, phrases, and the descriptions they employed.

The study was originally designed to focus on only those serving sentences behind the wall of prisons. However, correctional and criminal justice definitions of incarceration include additional locations for criminal offenders in addition to sitting behind prison walls. These additional locations can include jail time or prison time which can be served through work release, short intensive boot camp style time, community work, and living at home while connected electronically to the criminal justice representatives within that community to keep track of the individual's movement at all times. In addition, halfway houses and parole are also considered still being in jail as the individual is still under the system's control. While I did not fundamentally modify the questionnaire, I incorporated family, community, and neighborhood information as the informants freely gave it during the initial questionnaire implementation and, as part of the follow-up individual and group sessions used for clarification and expansion of questionnaire information. The addition of psychosocial, family, community, neighborhood,

abuse history, and criminal histories of both juvenile and adult informants aided in clarification and understanding by providing context to the information that emerged.

I believe that in using findings collection methods such as the semi-structured interview, the result is a narrative based on key phrases related to the phenomenon of study or to the question of inquiry. This narrative story yielded an understanding of the personal experiences of the informants, and of the meaning given by them to the question or phenomenon under study. The challenge for me is to convey the participants' own experience of the phenomenon in a language that readers can understand. By meeting this challenge, I aid the reader in attaining a clearer understanding of the phenomenon under inquiry.

Consequently, I had the duty to obtain the informants' own perceptions of living in the real world. I then had the obligation to analyze and interpret the data so that a reconstruction of their experience, relevant to the question of the inquiry, was generated and presented to the reader. To accomplish this result I could not put any preconceived ideas into the minds of the informants of the study as to what may or may not be expected in the results. Thus, part of the planning of the research had to be an examination and acknowledgment of not only my own knowledge about the phenomenon but also keeping the informants' experience open for what they reported about it. I, therefore, examined their interpretation of their world and built the narrative out of their words, thoughts, opinions, and feelings.

This approach was enhanced by skills in critical thinking. It permitted me to approach the informant and conduct the interaction in full knowledge of my perceptions and to use critical inquiry and thinking to allow other alternative perceptions to emerge. Critical inquiry methods allow the researcher, in his or her evaluation of a problem, to gain greater depth in the aspect of research covering intellectual inquiry. My intended use of this approach for this study was guided by the work in critical theory of Jurgen Habermas (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994; Turner,

1991). Additionally, earlier exponents provide grounding to the basis of the theory in sociological analysis (Turner, 1991). Critical inquiry of this nature demanded that I be mindful that if the methodology is truly pursued rigorously new findings may be generated about the questions under inquiry, and may point to other possible factors or causes than those that are part of my experience and knowledge. This constant mindfulness required consistent awareness to explore for answers, new or old.

Qualitative study, as a method of inquiry, allows the researcher to introspectively view problems and situations from the perspective of those who experience the situation. The perception of the subjects of qualitative inquiry form the basis for collective opinion and perception on a situation that may well lead to culturally based decision making. One way in which this might be accomplished is illustrated in the work of Pilisuk and Parks. Their work, The Healing Web Social Network and Human Survival, (1986), demonstrates how people can apply qualitatively based inquiry to form the basis for social networking and self-help as a result of findings collected using this method. Further, one can use content analysis to assist in analyzing and organizing the words obtained in a study. In the section on analysis, an expanded description of content analysis is provided.

The study was done without imposing preexisting expectation on the research setting. However, incorporation of my previous knowledge and experience with the black community gave me greater understanding in analysis of written narratives from the informants. In this manner, I assemble the informants' perception of the truth about the phenomenon under study into language the reader can understand and, thus, allow the informants to be heard and their perception given consideration and acceptance.

Findings Collection and Procedures

As discussed, the questions used in the interview guide were designed to elicit information regarding the informants' perceptions about their experience of poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies. In seeking responses from the informants, I obtained information from offenders regarding behaviors before and during incarceration. The objective was to use this information to enable researchers to make sense of the informants' experiences, without imposing preexisting expectations in the search phenomenon.

In addition, the questions were designed to gather information about how the informants' respective experiences of these factors may have influenced their decisions to enter into illegal activity. Since I did not have direct and observable access to black males as they made the decision to participate in illegal activities, the insight was sought through black male offenders who recounted descriptions of the process at a point in time. Within these descriptions I also focused on their thoughts, feelings, perceptions, opinions, and general behaviors about the following:

1. Contextual nuances of illegal activity
2. Economic conditions.
3. Interpersonal relationships.
4. View of self.
5. Personal motivations.
6. Other factors that were part of the findings collected

These identified factors derived from previous research and professional experience.

When the inmate interviews were completed, I compared, contrasted, and analyzed the responses to see if any similarities, differences, or exceptions might exist. The goal of the analysis was to discover how black males in society perceive poverty, racism, and inequality and to do this using their own words. (See Chapter 5 Findings and Interpretation)

Findings Collection

Protocol for questioning inmates and obtaining their approval was observed. Due to sampling modifications (discussed under Sampling section of this chapter), I held group meetings with informants prior to conducting the interviews. I answered any questions they might have regarding the research. During the meeting I told the informants that part of the procedure for this study included the possibility of further follow-up meetings with informants whose questionnaires reflected a need for clarifications. I told them that these meetings could be individual or group sessions. I further informed them that all confidentiality rules would apply throughout the entire process, including any individual or group follow-up sessions. I provided informants with procedure information of how I would contact them for follow-up sessions, based on the informed consent. I proceeded to obtain signed informed consents (See Appendix C), and then my field workers and I assigned each participant a subject-determined confidential code.

On the informed consent informants were given the opportunity to request a copy of the completed study. I informed the participants that if they requested a copy I would need their name and address and, further such information would remain confidential. All informants to the study provided this information, thus confidential codes could be correlated with names. The procedure for follow-up meetings was to contact the institution and seek a meeting with those whose questionnaire required follow-up. I then proceeded to the semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and either my fieldworkers or I took notes.

On the semi-structured interview questionnaire, I used a predetermined set of questions to ensure reliability in findings collection. However, I did use unstructured probes, when appropriate, to clarify the meaning of the subject's verbal reports, to elaborate more clearly a particular area of interest, or to re-focus the subject on the task at hand. This procedure was part

of my training of fieldworkers prior to administration. As indicated above and in the description of the findings collection, the interviewer listened carefully to the kind of responses supplied to make sure that the interview was providing the kind of findings needed. Process notes were kept on a copy of the interview guide or note pad by the fieldworker doing each interview, or by me, while the informant was interviewed. These notes were to describe behavioral observation and nonverbal communication. My or the fieldworker's feelings and reactions to nonverbal cues were recorded and included as part of the findings. I reviewed the questionnaires prior to ending the interview sessions. I then did follow-up with various of the informants as their answers dictated the need to obtain clarification on answers and questions at that time. I made some decisions about the need for follow-up sessions at this time and when I began to review the questionnaires prior to findings analysis. During administration of the questionnaire the fieldworkers and I probed on terms and words, such as street slang, to translate individual meaning as given and perceived by the informant.

Within the North Carolina informant-group 26 informants agreed to an individual follow-up session two weeks after the initial interview. During the individual session the discussion centered on questions from their original questionnaire that I pin-pointed as needing further clarification. The need for clarification with these 26 informants' questionnaires appeared to be a result of their inability or their reluctance to voice their concerns and answers in writing. During individual sessions with these informants I made a professional decision to add further modifications to data collection procedures to include group sessions with free discussion of the questions related to the answers of the 26 informants. I made this modification to illicit more findings from these informants, especially regarding psychosocial, family, criminal history, abuse history, and neighborhood information. All 26 informants who came to the individual sessions agreed to be part of the group discussions.

Instrumentation

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the instruments were semi-structured questionnaires (see Appendix A) with space for the informant to use for providing a narrative amplification. The Semi-structured Interview Guide combines two types of interviews, the unstructured interview, and the standardized interview with open-ended questions (Lofland, 1971; Lofland & Lofland, 1984). In keeping with the concept of interviews being designed to describe a defined set of people (Hadley & Mitchell, 1995), this combination allowed a number of basic questions to be precisely asked, while permitting me more flexibility in probing to elicit detailed material within any narrative amplifications offered by the informant. The standardized questions were used to obtain some of the demographic background.

I designed the questionnaire to illicit from the informants whether they agreed or disagreed that poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies are underlying environmental factors to the informants' understanding of their current condition as offenders. Further, I designed the questionnaire to allow informants to provide their perceptions of additional or alternative factors that affected their understanding of their status as offenders. The questionnaire instrument was used with the black male inmate-sampling frame. I further designed the interview guide to begin with factual questions. This strategy helps establish rapport. Questions 1-10 were designed to begin the interview with non-controversial topics that ask for relatively straightforward descriptions and minimal interpretation.

Questions 11 and 12 sought the respondents viewpoint on how black men, the informant in particular, were treated by society. Questions 13, 14, 15 were specific to the phenomenon of this study, high numbers of black males incarcerated in the United States. Informants were asked their opinion as to whether higher numbers of black males did exist in United States prisons. They were then asked to expand on their answer, depending on yes or no to question

13, using their words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions. Next, the interview asked the informants to describe the illegal activity that led to their incarceration (Question 16). Once the activity has been described, they then were asked about the informant's thoughts, feelings, perceptions, opinions, and behaviors about factors that may have affected the informant's decision to participate in the illegal activity. Asking for this kind of information at this point in the interview can help make the responses more spontaneous. Question 17 and 18 asked the informant's viewpoint about the suggestion that more black males commit crimes in society than do males from other racial groups. Question 18 asked that the informant expand and explain his answer to question 17.

I designed questions that followed number 18 to obtain informant's views on the four environmental factors of poverty, racism, inequality and oppressive social policies. Question 19 asked the informant to give a viewpoint as to whether poverty creates hopelessness in society for black males and, then asked for expansion, clarification and explanation of their answers. Question 20 asked the informant to use his feelings, thoughts, and opinions and describe his experience of racism within society. Question 21 was a question designed to bring out the informants ideas about possible solutions to some of the issues raised by giving them a chance to think creatively. The question asked them to imagine that they had been elected President for a day and how they would work to restore peace, health, and tranquility in society. This question's position at this point moves the informant from negative or controversial subjects to a positive solution seeking situation.

Question 22, 23, 24 were designed to gain information about gangs. These questions were included to ascertain something about the informant's environment and community from which they came. Questions 23 and 24 asked each informant to explain their answers to Question 22, depending on whether they gave a yes or no answer to ever having been in gangs.

A question about relationships was now included, asking the informant to discuss what makes you feel secure in a relationship. This question was designed to give the informant a chance to give further information about community and family, yet also a chance for possible further explanations of gang relationships. Questions 26 through 29 all continued asking questions about gangs and the community and relationships; informants were asked if they were still a gang member, and to explain their yes or no answers. Question 29 asked them to explain their reasons for not joining a gang, if they had said they were never in a gang. All of these questions could elicit information about the informants, their environment, their community, family and society in which they grew up and lived.

Questions 30-33 returned to the factor of racism. These questions asked for viewpoints on whether racism exists in American society, if so, did they think it was a white against black or black against white issue. Question 33 asked them to expand on their answers with clarifications and explanations. Questions 34-37 focused again on the factor of poverty. These questions were also designed to ask if informants believed poverty existed in their society and to ask them the same kind of white versus black questions. Question 37 asked the informants to again expand and explain their answers.

Questions 38-46 were all designed to illicit responses regarding oppressive social policies and inequality. Informants were asked to give their viewpoint about whether they saw themselves as a victim of society and to further explain their answers. They were then asked about any factors in society they viewed as giving them opportunities. Question 42 and 43 were designed to allow the informants to give ideas about problems and solutions by asking them their viewpoint on the number one problem in society; while question 44 asked them if they were totally satisfied with society. For each question they were immediately asked to expand on their

answers. Question 44, 45, and 46 asked the informant to consider their position in society and whether they would change it in any way.

The field workers and I had been trained to be aware of the answers given regarding demographics throughout the interview, to allow probing and clarification of answers that could bolster the results with further data. The foregoing procedure was based on research studies documenting that moving from non-controversial topics to controversial topics, and back again, during a semi-structured interview reduces the perception of threat and increases positive rapport (Fowler, Jr., 1993; Lee, 1993).

The interview questions were worded to ask singular questions, to use terms familiar to the subjects, and to elaborate upon dichotomous responses. Further, putting the question in a way that elicits discussion rather than a single word response gives the subject a chance to talk and it indicates that the researcher values the response (Jackson, 1987).

Materials

I manufactured 190 questionnaires, due to caution on possible data collection problems. Field workers were provided with printed instructions about the material and how to properly administer the instrument. As investigator, I am well acquainted with many United States prisons and I had several local prison authorities give tentative, verbal approval for this study to take place within their prisons. Each of the respective facilities used had a human subjects approval procedure. I provided the United States prison administration with the paperwork needed to study human subjects after approval of the proposal from the University of Cape Town.

Pretest of Questionnaire/No Pilot Study

A full pilot study was not conducted due to time and financial constraints, the lack of availability of inmates for pre-testing and pilot study, and some problems with local authorities.. However, the questionnaire was pre-tested to help refine the measuring instrument. All of the questions on the pretest were answered and thus the pretest could be defined as successful. There was one modification made to the study questionnaire as a result of the pretest. A question was included on the study questionnaire that was designed to seek informants' perception of why they became criminals (Question 16). This modification was made due to the pretest of informants, adding this information on their own and most often in essay form. The results of the pretest obtained are not necessarily representative of any conclusive trend. However, they do suggest some prevailing issues and concerns that may be validated on a wide sampling of black inmates.

The pretest was done with 12 black inmates in a South Carolina Jail. Two of the 12 inmates were black South Africans and the remaining 10 inmates were African American. The group of inmates came from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. Ages ranged from 16 to 35, their education level varied, with only 3 having had post-high school training or education. In addition, their criminal history varied from misdemeanor convictions to felony convictions.

Training of Field Workers

The workers came from three North Carolina and South Carolina Schools - Gardner Webb University, Cleveland Community College District, and Clinton Junior College. The interviewers were 19 young people out of which 12 were females and the remaining 7 were males. From the 7 males four were black and three were whites and from the 12 interviewers seven were whites and the remaining five were blacks. I trained the group of fieldworkers on site

at each correctional setting before the initial administration. This was true of the parolee camps, medium prisons, and the out of jail parolees interviewed in the community correction sites. I used this procedure to aid the workers in understanding black males' culture and the prison environment. This was a response to many being uncomfortable with walking into any inmate environment and, to give them the opportunity to react to the environment prior to interviewing the inmates. This allowed for biases to come to the forefront and allowed workers to decide whether they could leave those biases at the door and proceed with the study data collection in a proper manner. If after discussion with me, any worker decide that he or she could not proceed within the protocols of this study, they were free to leave without any problems as to their status with me. This was a procedure that allowed for mutual discussion of the issues raised and for mutual decision making as colleagues and professionals. This modified procedure for training allowed for the development of professional relationships and for empathetic listening skills that worked well in implementing the study data collection.

I was aware of potential reactivity to all field workers, including females. During the training I prepared all field works for possible reactions, negative and positive, from informants. During the administration of the study questionnaire I watched for reactivity to all field workers. Also, I based all reactions on information provided to me in private conversations first with Louise Bill in 1995-96, Criminologist at Kennesaw State University and with Retired Judge Paul Fowler in 1997, Director of Prison Programs at Shawnee State University, from the State of Ohio. Both of these individuals indicated that females have an easier time with male inmates because male prisoners view females as role models and use interactions with them to help prepare them with appropriate behavior for reintegration into the community. My observation of the voluntary feedback from the informants were in line with Dr. Fowler's and Dr. Bill's comments.

Sampling and Informants

The sampling technique used for this study was a combination of purposive and convenience sampling. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define purposive sampling as when a researcher “seeks out-groups, settings, and individuals where (and for whom) the processes [or phenomenon] being studied are most likely to occur” (p. 202). For this study the phenomenon concerned high numbers of incarcerated black males. Thus, I purposely sought out settings within corrections and criminal justice with high numbers of black males.

The scope of understanding I sought was the perspectives of the very informants, the incarcerated black males. Such a scope is large and could cover a wide range of locations and individuals. However, due to practical considerations, one researcher or research project may not be able to include the entire scope of comparisons needed for a full understanding. Therefore, this study must begin the process of doing a smaller, more focused exploratory study and using the factors that emerge from the informants’ responses to suggest avenues of further study and research.

The study also used convenience sampling as a way of obtaining informants and locations. Convenience sampling is when “the researcher simply selects a requisite number from cases that are conveniently available” (Singleton, Straits, Straub, & McAllister, 1988, p. 153). This form of sampling offers “no basis to infer representativeness” of the particular groups of participants to the larger population of interest, thus there is no attempt to generalization to a larger population (Hadley & Mitchell, 1995, p. 267). However, in combination with purposive sampling technique it provides the beginning exploratory needs for this study.

Locations were chosen for the practicalities of convenience sampling based on the following criteria: authorizations to do studies within the facilities, my prior experience with the

locations, time limitations placed on me, and monetary issues involved with more numerous locations. Therefore, I used boot camps, prison farms, and intensive offender units, made available to me by those who are familiar with my work and credentials and/or who have the authorization needed to allow this study to involve the populations under their supervision. I had broad access to the South Carolina Department of Corrections, North Carolina Department of Corrections, and the State of Ohio Department of Corrections. The study was conducted between January 1999 and August 1999.

Inmates

The subjects for this study were 129 black males who are incarcerated or under close supervision both in North and South Carolina. Out of the 129 inmates, 99 were from North Carolina and the remaining 30 inmates were from South Carolina. Those who are on probation or doing community service were excluded from this study due to practical problems of sampling individuals who are an indeterminate population. Within the United States, probation and community service does not fall under the definition of incarceration as used in the design of this study. Incarceration includes jail, prison, house arrest, parole, correctional boot camps, municipal jails or at any stage of supervision except probation. Parole by definition is still jail atmosphere, even if the point of detention is your house. Also included were individuals who are under supervised custody. Within the North Carolina respondent group 54 were officially prison inmates.

In addition, the North Carolina Department of Corrections (NC DOC) has devised supervised parole for selected inmate/parolees where the individuals sleep over at prisons. These are housing programs for individuals. They then work during the day and have passes on weekends. The reason for this arrangement is that many individuals being paroled do not have families for support. The NC DOC suggests that this kind of housing serves to provide halfway

house-like support for the process of the inmates' return to the community. This system is North Carolina's intensive parole system, 45 of the North Carolina informant group were in this category.

The South Carolina (SC) group was under the supervision of intensive parole. This group consisted of youth ranging in ages from 17 to 29. This group consisted of 30 individuals. South Carolina uses 'diversion programs' for youthful offenders. This means that the group may not just be juvenile in age. The goal is to divert the youthful males and females away from prison. Their primary population is black offenders.

Size and Selection

The informants consisted of two groups for a total of N 129 who were in two states- North and South Carolina. (See Table 1)

Table 1. Informants by State and Status

<u>South Carolina</u>	<u>North Carolina</u>
30 Intensive Parole	54 Incarcerated
0 declined	45 intensive parole
	58 declined

I also included, as part of the study questions, information designed to collect findings on five factors to explore how the particular pool and sampling frame might be similar to larger specified populations of incarcerated black males. These factors might be useful in future research that would follow this exploratory study and in considering how the responses received might fit within these factors. The five factors are:

- age
- literacy
- language
- education
- criminal history

Modification to this additional demographic information was made to augment all information obtained during the sampling. As previously discussed in this chapter, information about community, neighborhoods, and psychosocial aspects of the inmates life were gathered.

Sampling Technique within Sampling Frame

As stated earlier in this chapter on methodology, I was not able to do a totally random sample of the population of interest, which is all incarcerated black males. The original concept for this project was to work within the prisons and work camps to select the actual sample with the prison's own random numbers system. This system is employed in some areas of the United States to select individuals for drug and substance abuse screening. The plan was that in using this system, with a few modifications, there would be some assurance that no one person or block within the prison was unfairly selected for this study. However, prisons and locations in which I gained authorization to proceed with this study did not use this kind of random numbers system. Therefore, a volunteer recruitment was used. Informal meetings with all black males within that location were put together. I explained the study, its purpose and mission, and the importance of the work; at the same time I explained the process and the protections afforded anyone who would volunteer to be part of the study. Within the random numbers system, individuals retained the right of refusal once they presented themselves and the study was explained. Within the informal meeting system, only those individuals who want to participate showed up for the actual administration of the findings collection. As inmates reported, they were again given an explanation of the study and told their participation was strictly voluntary, and that no institutional penalty would fall on them for failure to participate. If anyone declined they were free to leave without penalty. This was true at any point within the study. If someone chose to leave during the middle of the study they also were free to go and were asked if their

responses up to that point could be used for the study. All informants received a form to review and sign showing that they agreed to the study.

Results of Demographics and Social Information

Age

The study populations included 30 youthful offenders from South Carolina who were on intensive parole. The North Carolina respondents were an older group, with ages ranging from 24 to 60 years of age (See Table 2). There were 11 NC parolees under the age of 30 and 20 parolees between the ages of 30 and 40; there were 14 parolees over the age of 40. The total (N) for parolees was 46. Within the incarcerated informant group there were 21 informants under the age of 30 years of age, 16 between the age of 30 and 40, and 16 over the age of 40 for a total of 53 informants. The individuals who declined or stopped early gave information by self-report. There were 37 over the age of 40, and 21 over 40 but under 60 years of age. Individuals could decline the interview up till and even after interview completion; a few initial informants agreed to fill out the questionnaire and signed consent forms. However, upon completing and further thought, these informants asked that their information not be used in the final study. I counted these questionnaires as declines, but did not use the data in the study.

Table 2. North Carolina Informants Distribution

<u>Age</u>	<u>Parolees</u>	<u>Incarcerated</u>
24 - 29	11	21
30 - 35	12	3
36 - 40	9	13
41 - 45	11	7
46 - 50	2	6
51 - 60	1	3
TOTAL	46	53
With 58 Declines		

South Carolina informants were all within intensive parole. This group was chiefly made up of youthful offenders between the ages of 17 to 29. The greatest number fell into the 22-year old age group (See Table 3)

Table 3. South Carolina Informants - Intensive Parole Supervision

<u>age</u>	<u>No. Informants</u>
17-19	9
20-22	12
23-29	9

Social Information

In spite of probing there were repeated cases where I was unable to obtain current data on marital status, numbers of children fathered, in-depth history on substance abuse, and detailed sketches of how the individuals were employed. In most cases, informants considered this information to be private. Perhaps one reason for this reluctance can be found in this response given by one individual:

“This study is about me, the rest is personal.”

In addition, many informants were reluctant to acknowledge community involvement or support, possibly for the same reason. Furthermore, only some general data was obtained on physical and sexual abuse or on substance abuse. The inmates would cooperate grudgingly on these questions but only after the third round of probes. However, the probing technique remained soft and respectful. For example, I was able to put together a listing of vocational attainment for the North Carolina Group (See Table 4). And, with individual and group follow-up to questionnaire results, information regarding physical, family, community, and sexual abuse was revealed in discussions and comments. This information is presented in the Findings and Interpretation chapter.

Table 4 Vocational Attainment of NC Informants

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>No.</u>
Grave Digger	2
Longshoreman	4
Salesman	6
Religious leader	4
Accountants	5
Plumbers	5
Warehousemen	2
Professor	1
Police Officer	3
Teacher	3
Hairdresser	3
Truck Driver/Mover	5

Educational and Language Achievement

Educational specialization marks the achievements of the combined North Carolina group. There were only a few in the group who began educational programming after entering prison. The majority within the North Carolina sample had highly specialized training in the trades, professions, and significant apprenticeships. (See Table 5, 6, and 7)

Table 5 – Educational Attainment
North Carolina Incarcerated Adults

<u>Educational Attainment</u>	<u>Informant No.</u>
9 th Grade and 10 th Grad/Horticulture Training in Progress	4
GED	14
Graduated High School	17
Vocational training achieved	2
High School Diploma and GED with vocational training	17
Bachelor Degree – 4 years of college	6
1 year of Community college	3
Graduate degree	4
Vocational Training in Progress	3

Table 6 - Educational Attainment Intensive NC Parolee Supervision Informants

<u>Educational Attainment</u>	<u>Informant No.</u>
High School Grad with vocational training	2
GED	6
Vocational Training Only	4
Completed 10 th Grade – Took GED later	1
High School and One year of college	2
High School and Two years of college	1
High School and Three years of college and vocational training	1
High School, Community College and Vocational Training	1
High School and 4 year college graduate	4
10 th grade than got GED later	2
High School Graduate and special military training: Heating, AC, Electrical, Machinist, Auto Mechanic	3
9 th grade, Working towards GED	1
High School, Vocational Training and Two years Com. College	2

Table 7 - Language Attainment NC Group
North Carolina (N99)

<u>Language</u>	<u>NC Parolees</u>		
	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>Speaking</u>
English	23	23	23
2 nd Arab	2	2	2
2 nd Spanish	5	5	5
NC Incarceration Population			
English	48	48	48
Spanish	2	2	2
Hebrew	2	2	2
Arabic	2	2	2

For many of the South Carolina informants, education was not an important issue within their family situation. Further, many indicated they were placed in the role of watching younger siblings while parents worked. Thus, some never made it through the formal education process. Others within this group completed high school. There were no reports of special skills or vocational training. Their language attainment was not significant. The majority of the respondents reported English as a language with a small number indicating Spanish also. (See Tables 8 and 9).

Table 8
Educational Attainment
South Carolina Youth Intensive Offender Paroles

<u>Completed 8th Grade</u>	<u>Completed 9th Grade</u>	<u>Graduated High School</u>
4	5	21

Table 9
Language Attainment – SC Respondents

<u>Language</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>Speaking</u>
South Carolina Youth Intensive Offender Parolees			
English	25	25	25
Spanish	5	5	5

Criminal History

I asked all informants to reflect on their adult and juvenile criminal history by self-report. These self-reports were to include crimes accused of, crimes actually convicted of, and those offenses committed but never brought to attention of the criminal justice authorities. The procedure for each group was exactly the same. Prior to 1999 both North and South Carolina local and state police and or sheriffs could arrest and detain individuals on creatively designed charges. This jurisdiction was a part of the old Southern Black Codes remaining on court

records. However, post 1999 the Black Codes were removed from the records of both North and South Carolina legislature. Consequently, a meaningful and organized classification of offences could not be created against certain individuals.

Within both groups of North Carolina informants- incarcerated and intensive parole supervision – very few of these adults reported juvenile criminal history. When many of these were juveniles, diversion programs were not in existence. However, the family structure provided the means to keep these informants out of jail. What juveniles crimes were committed usually were not related to drugs. This means that a majority of these individuals entered criminal careers later in life and most of those were drug-related offences.

Many of the North Carolina group reported that they had held responsible positions within the community prior to incarceration. According to the responses this group had a high incidence of economic related crimes that included breaking and entering, robbery, and related offenses. Further, as adults many of the crimes committed by North Carolina informants were more serious, more likely were drug related, more violent, and the informants admit to getting away with much more crime as adults than juveniles.

All the South Carolina informants had juvenile and adult criminal histories. Since this group included ages 17 to 29, the types of crimes were broken down into adult and juvenile crime as prescribed by South Carolina Law. The ratio of arrests to convictions reflect diversion of the juveniles away from the jails, yet they continued in criminal activity, consciously breaking the law and committing crime. Thus, this group of youthful parolees had the lowest arrest and conviction rate. However, they were not afraid to admit criminal activity not brought to the attention of the authorities. No diversion is evidence from the adult histories the arrest to.....

Demographic Summary

The younger South Carolina group appears to fit with descriptions from the United States Department of Justice, which concurs on single or absent parent households and dysfunctional families. However, most of the group were high school graduates or equivalent, rather than the typical inmate described by United States Department of Justice who has only a 5th grade education.

The Older North Carolina group is even more highly educated. Most (59/99) have achieved high school graduation and appear to be atypical versus the United States Department of Justice descriptions. This group came from stable households, two parent families, and have limited juvenile criminal records. This is a group that perhaps merits more investigation and wider study.

Procedure for Analysis of Findings

Findings Analysis was accomplished by a combination that included aspects of Qualitative-Analytic-Descriptive Method - QAD (Arnold, 1982; Lofland, 1971, Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Patton, 1980), a qualitative method used by Janesick (1994) as he describes "Methodolatry" (p.215), and a qualitative method described as de-contextualization and recontextualization of the data. De-contextualization is a technique by which informants' individual responses are separated from the larger context of influence and described as to only what those response appear to mean to the informant. Thus, all factors were analyzed individually according to the meanings of the particular experience of the informant. Recontextualization takes the individual factors and place them back into the larger contexts of life world influences such as socio-economic and political experiences. The exploration of recontextualization gives a broader view of holistic meanings of informants words. QAD method

uses many of the same procedures of comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, and theme analysis (Kvale, 1983; Spradley, 1979). However, the method is different from analytic induction (Manning, 1982), analysis of basic social processes (Bigus, Hadden & Glaser, 1982), and the psychological phenomenological method developed by Giorgi (1985). Qualitative-Analytic-Descriptive Method, (QAD), involves the process of organizing the data into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units (Lofland, 1971; Patton, 1980). The resulting analysis can provide a holistic approach to describe the interdependence and relatedness of complex phenomena that effect informants' responses. This mode of analysis has the feature of striking a balance between abstract and general concepts on the one hand and descriptions and quotations from the subjects on the other hand.

After proceeding with QAD, I made a modification of the analysis procedure that fits with Janesick's qualitative findings collection method. This QAD analysis resulted in observing a commonality of responses and the unfolding patterns of meanings as interpreted from the words of the informants. Qualitative research depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data, so that the researcher leads the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience under study. The steps followed to obtain the "solid-descriptive data" includes finding factors or patterns, as in QAD. I did not offer a definition of the factors but allowed the informants to describe their understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon, as they understood their fate within those circumstances.

Once I analyzed the interviews, I integrated the findings with the demographic and social profile description. To ensure that the qualitative data analysis is valid, I used several strategies (Janesick, 1994; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Patton, 1980). I examined rival explanations for their ability to explain the same data. I then scrutinized the data to ascertain if it might support

alternative explanations for the issues or problems of incarcerated black males. Deviant cases in the data were studied to understand when and why these differences exist.

The five previously selected demographic indicators were tabulated and reported in simple tables and narrative style. In addition, the psychosocial, family, community, and neighborhood findings collected and analyzed were integrated with all results..

Written Presentation of Findings as Method of Inquiry - Narratives

Richardson indicates that writing within academic and other subjects can be a “way of ‘knowing’ - a method of discovery and analysis...a way of finding out about yourself and your topic...*a method of inquiry*” (Richardson, 1994 p. 516). This fits well with the research methodology and analysis procedures used for this study. In my presentation of results I am using narrative and written procedures and this adheres to Richardson’s belief that “qualitative research has to be read, not scanned; its meaning is in the reading” (p. 517). In this manner I work to lead the reader through the results so that the facts are presented within the context of: a) the phenomenon under inquiry, b) the demographics of the informants, and c) the psycho social, family, community, and neighborhood factors. Thus, my goal was to aid the reader in discovering the meaning the informants gave to the phenomenon under inquiry.

Ethics Review and Appraisal

There are rules and procedures that govern the study of human subjects in the social sciences (American Counseling Association, American Psychological Association, and American Sociological Association). Parties in the United States Department of Corrections closely observe those rules and procedures and this is true nationwide. This involves human subjects research committee reviews at the University and corrections institutions where the graduate student performs his research. As a candidate within the Sociology Department of

The University of Cape Town, South Africa, I followed any additional policies and procedures that were part of the academic discipline in which I was working.

Throughout the entire study I ethically observed the same human subjects procedures for safety as prescribed by the United States academic institutions and by The University of Cape Town Sociology Department. Further, in accordance with human subjects stipulations, and based on my reputation as an academic and practicing criminologist, I obtained formal clearance from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Ohio within the United States, under the authority of the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections.

It is my belief I have dealt with and addressed the issues of confidentiality, consent, and disclosure. The release form next to the questionnaire addresses this array of subjects, and as a consequence, I believe I have complied with all obvious human subjects stipulations required in conducting this study.

CHAPTER 4

Findings, Interpretation, and Analysis

Based on the qualitative semi-structured interview method employed for this study, the findings obtained from the informants of the study are presented in this chapter. The findings are presented in narrative format based on the method of representative sampling. I am aware that some of the words used to express the informants' responses to the questionnaire and follow-up interviews are not grammatically correct. This may be due to the informants' educational level. However, comments or clarifications are given wherever there is a need to do that. The following narrative expresses the informants' impressions, perceptions, and understandings of how they came to be members of the high number of black males in prison.

The raw data collection took place in two states, North Carolina and South Carolina. As the demographic information in the Methods chapter indicates the informants differed in age and by location. The North Carolina informant group included both younger and older informants. The South Carolina informant group was all younger informants. The contrasts between age and location are presented in this findings chapter. However, in the analysis of the informants' words, differences of perception, understanding, belief, and attitude based on life experience as lived within the two contrasts of age and location were found. The narratives in this chapter tell the informants' stories to highlight these contrasts and differences. The words and life-word contexts of the older informants from North Carolina are presented as two groups, one group 45-60 years of age and one group 30-44 years of age. The younger informants from North Carolina and South Carolina are presented as one group with comparisons and contrasts of experiences. The findings presentation also compares and contrasts the experiences of all the informant groups with each other.

The 45 to 60 year old group grew up during the 50's and 60's decades. This was a historical period of great change in the social, economic, and cultural environment of the United States. Traditional beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about gender and race relations were challenged by the civil rights and woman's rights' movements. In addition, these decades saw massive technological changes that influenced social, societal, economic, and labor environments within the United States. While the informants' words were in response to the semi-structured questionnaire and follow-up interviews, their words provide indications about how they perceived the effect of these changes on their particular life-world.

The 30 to 44 years of age informants were the next section of the older North Carolina group. Many of these informants were very young during the changes experienced by their older counterparts. Thus, their growing up years may not have been influenced as heavily by the changes that took place earlier. However, those movements had only begun the changes. Thus, all black males from these time periods were influenced by the results of those movements and the ongoing process by which the various towns, cities, counties, and states throughout the United States, and especially in the South, attempted to respond to these demands for change.

The youth informants from South Carolina and North Carolina ranged in age from 17 to 29 years of age. This puts their birth years between 1970 and 1982, placing the life-world, in which they developed, after the civil rights movement and Women's' movement had resulted in changes nationwide. Their words invoke pictures of a life-world influenced by the responses of their parents and the communities to the ongoing process of racial, social, cultural, societal, geographic, and economic changes.

The raw data collection from the youth in South Carolina provides a beginning picture of their perception regarding one small Southern town and its apparent contradictions between the nationwide response to the 50's and 60's demand for changes and results, and the reality of

day-to-day life. According to these informants' perceptions, this town apparently chose to retain some form of the pre-civil rights movement attitudes. The raw data collection from the North Carolina youth also provides a picture of their perception regarding Charlotte's and its expanding suburbs, including that city's response to those same demands for change. However, their words indicate an environment of subtle, and sometimes, hidden racism and inequality. This environment was part of the city and its attempts to grow and partake of the economic benefits of the expanding technologies and economic benefits of the late 1970's and 1980's. Thus, both youth groups' words show their response to the perceived continuation of racism, inequality, poverty, and oppression within their environment. However, location, family, and community involvement are central to the comparison and contrast of their words and resultant feelings. One difference found was that these younger North Carolina respondents were treated differently by the North Carolina Criminal Justice system than their South Carolina age peers were. In South Carolina, the justice system has created the young intensive offender program which is designed to deal in a more specialized way with youthful offenders by providing diversion out of adult prisons. However, North Carolina continues to incarcerate their younger age offenders in adult prisons.

In recounting the words of all informants, several themes emerge. These encompass attitudes and beliefs about their fate. The themes cover feelings of hopelessness, ambivalence, apathy, qualified optimism and hope, pessimism, a kind of fatalism, anger, and rejection. Further, there is a theme about how societal laws are created to keep people down. The informant words and the resulting themes help to build a narrative picture of contextual factors affecting informants' behaviors and actions. This narrative describes and illustrates the informants' perceptions of all the factors that were part of their environment, which they use to verbalize their understanding of the life-world in conjunction with their fate. These various

factors include the individual, the families, interpersonal interactions, institutional interactions, and societal and cultural contexts of their life-world.

Older Informants

Ages 45-60

As indicated in the demographic section of the methods chapter, the older informants were raised in and around areas of Mecklenburg County, Rowan, Cabarras, and other close by future counties. This area is now a large growing community spreading out from the urban city of Charlotte, and encompassing surrounding communities as suburbs. However, for the older group, especially this group born and raised through the 40's, 50's and early 60's, this was an area where Charlotte was a large town and the surrounding communities were largely rural. Thus, these individuals' life-worlds encompassed segregation by race and by economic status. For example, this was a time in the United States when many older blacks had not received the benefits of education. Thus, many older children were often left at home to care for siblings. The following statement by a 45+ year-old informant was in response to questions about poverty; however, he relates how poverty meant that his education was interrupted.

I has to do with ways individuals are brought up and if
there are experiences of poverty then that will color
your life, for example my mother had to work and she
wasn't only like that, I understand it clear now. I had
to watch my brother and sister, I tried to explain to
my mom and she did not believe that staying out of
school and missing days would get me in trouble.

Yet, in spite of the apparent issues of lack of education and poverty, the 45-60 year-old informants describe a life-world ruled by strong immediate and extended family members. The

indications for this familial influence is found in informants' words throughout the study. For example, one older informant indicated the familial influence on his behavior and actions when he answered questions about poverty. He stated:

Our parents played a close hand in raising us and
our extended family played a good supporting
relationship to the efforts of our parents to raise
us right.

Strong families – immediate and extended – combined with the town/rural environment meant that this group of older informants were not exposed to urban problems at young ages. It also meant that their family, church, and cultural/social network had a strong influence on their behavior, until in their young adult years they had more experience with the outer world. For example, five of this group of older informants commented that they were aware of gangs in their communities, but that in their own lives, gangs were not a major factor until they came to prison. As one 45 year old indicated:

When we were growing up gangs were not the in thing and the
small town nature of Mecklenburg, Monroe, Rowan, and
Cabarrus counties in NC discouraged such activity. In addition,
parents and other authority figures in our community kept a
firm hold on the principal that it was wrong to engage in black
violence. We knew about such activities in Chicago, Los
Angeles, and New York, but that was different. There were no
turf issues to fight over here. There were no big drug deals to
be had and besides, our parents had us in after school sports,
summer camps, music lessons, and church; so there was not

time to breath. However, as we grew and became more educated and our communities grew, we learned about ghettos, gangs, the poor and others who made much more money in a day then we made in a year.

Another individual, 45+ years of age, responded similarly in this written answer about the subject of gangs.

We didn't have gangs when I was growing up, so it never entered my mind to be part of a gang, not until I came to prison.

Further, a 52-year-old informant wrote about how he was aware of gangs, but because of where he was brought up gangs were not an influence:

I was brought up in a rural environment and we didn't have gangs where I was. The only thing I did was either heard about them or read about them on TV or in the news.

This group of older informants indicated that part of the strong familial influence on their behavior included strong discipline. It must be noted here that during the 40's, 50's, and the early 60's society presented a different social and legal perspective on familial discipline than one finds in the late 20th century. For younger informants much of the discipline described by these older informants would be socially and legally labeled as abuse by contemporary authorities. The 45-60 year-old informants often did not view the situations as abuse. They only became aware of this discipline as abuse when they became adults. This was after they had experienced the changing attitudes and beliefs of the post-60's, including movements of advocates who highlighted differences between the growing description of what was abuse

versus the description of discipline. Thus, these informants' words are used here to illustrate familial and community control on their behavior while growing up. It would be up to another researcher to focus on how these instances of discipline might have affected the informants psychologically now that they are aware that in the Contemporary United States these incidents are defined as abuse.

In follow-up interviews this group of older informants talked about the disciplinary influence as abuse. However, in their words, one also can come to understand the behavior control that, in the informants' understanding, meant they were kept out of trouble. For example, one older informant, 50 years of age, voiced the following opinion in writing and in verbal follow-up with other members of his age peer group. When he made this statement verbally, many of those in the follow-up agreed, by nodding of the heads or just saying "yes" or "that's the way it was", that black families during the 50's and 60's often acted in this manner. Further, the indication is that the informants did not know these actions as abuse at that time, but understanding now these actions would be labeled as abuse. In addition, a reader can understand from this informant's words that for these older informants their families were the authority in their lives. This 50-year-old individual said:

My mom said if I ever got in trouble they would kill me...I
lived to see this threat come true when my brother who stole a
car and took a joy ride, got whopped silly in front of the police
and he was black and blue...then my aunt took over and my
brother ended up going to the hospital.... I felt he had
disrespected my family so bad they did what they did to show
us were not in authority – they were the authority.

A 52 year old spoke very quietly at this point in the verbal exchange, indicating:

Yes that is how it was done, but in those days it was:
not abuse it was discipline.

For the black male, one major movement became integrated with their families' belief in the so-called American dream as described in the literature review. This change was the Civil Rights movement as it grew in the 1950's through the 1960's and resulted in violence, change for some, and national legislation. For some of the 45-60 year old informants, their parents, and communities, these changes influenced their behavior and actions in terms of racial, social, and societal interaction. For example, in some of the responses we see cautious optimism about race relations. For many informants this can be traced to their experience early in life and familial influence about race relations. For example, one older informant in his late forties indicated that:

Our families counseled us that whites will always have more
and that is just the way it has always been and will always
be...however if you worked hard and get an education you will
be able to gain equality with the white man. Because of our
parents' promises, many of us looked the other way on cross
burnings and nigger bashing within our communities.

As a consequence of these early life, developmental experiences the informants moved into adulthood with hopeful optimism. This hopeful optimism apparently was also the result of their experience with civil rights involvement. Further, this optimism was based in their continued investment to the parents' viewpoint that the informants had to work hard and make it within the existing societal and cultural structure. Therefore, they were trying to live the American Dream that their parents had supported as a goal.

However, the words of these informants illustrate themes of anger, resentment, feelings of rejection, and ambivalence in their understanding and perceptions of their fate. These themes became apparent upon analysis of the written words to questions on the semi-structured questionnaire and in follow-up interviews. Thus, the words of this group of informants are part of their reflection on the interaction between these informants and their environment. The raw data collection covered subjects such as race, poverty, inequality, oppressive social policies, biased courts police and criminal justice system, drugs, gangs, abuse, and victimization. These aspects of the informants' environment touch on familial, face-to-face, community, and societal significant events and the informants' interaction within these contexts. Further, their words touch on the informants' resulting perceptions and understanding of their life world and fate.

Hopelessness was a theme that was part of the questions on poverty in the questionnaire. Some of this older informant group saw hopelessness as being the result of their communities' responses to poverty in the environment. As an example one 45+ year old wrote:

Yes, poverty creates hopelessness because black males
don't see anything when society itself turn there backs
on us because of the drugs the black on blacks crimes,
and all things we do wrong.

In analyzing these words, the interaction seen between society and black males is of a negative nature. The informant suggests that poverty creates hopelessness in the environment, and that the larger societal and community turned their heads away from the problem, thus, leaving the black male to fend for himself. The words of this informant also include a theme of rejection by society. The informant's parents encouraged him to work hard and be part of the existing society. This theme of rejection can also be found in the words of the informants who talked about their perception of inequality. These words paint a picture of older informants attempting

to fit into white society, as they perceived their parents raised them to do. This older group saw inequality in terms of opportunities and barriers placed in their lives. They saw themselves as pursuing a good, stable middle class existence with education and jobs. Yet, they also perceived that they were never good enough for the rest of society. For example, one 45 year old wrote:

Nothing I do will ever be good enough to be accepted into
the mainstream white society, especially since I am a
black male. I have tried to make it by white standards but
I still am treated by people and places as if I am second
best.

As adults, these older informants perceived themselves working hard to fit into mainstream society. However, some of these informants began to experience life-worlds within the context of racism, inequality, and social policies they saw as oppressive. As a result, for some informants, feelings of rejection became anger, disappointment, and resentment. For example, a 52-year-old man wrote:

As a black man I went to school under segregation
laws. We were not taught to think but to listen to
what we were told. Because of that, after finishing
school I could not find a job, my family was poor,
there was no food at home. The white policies
made me this way.

Several older informants' words describe their interaction with society in times of need. An analysis of their words indicate anger, resentment, and rejection regarding how they perceived society's failure to treat them fairly. For example, a 45+ year old wrote that he perceived that:

I was turned down for assistance because I was black,
I was treated as if I was already a victim just because
I was black. Many of us found out the work ethic
of America was a pipe dream and when we needed
extra assistance black families could not get help,
yet white people were given assistance.

Another informant goes further with his understanding of his fate when he wrote the following account about how he got into crime:

I was the chief accountant for a major company. I was
interested in starting a business of my own to earn some quick
money for family emergencies. Being an accountant I envisioned I
could siphon off the books and replace the capital later. I was
not caught for embezzlement but for a transaction with an FBI
agent. My \$410,000 loan made me \$900,000 before I was
caught. My child got the money for treatment at the Mayo
Clinic.

Thus, in answering questions about poverty, racism, inequality, and oppressive social policies, many older informants perceived these contextual factors as being a vicious circle that seemed to characterize the lives and fate of black males in contemporary America. While their words were meant to describe this vicious circle, the words also point to their disappointment at society's response to their needs and to their feelings of rejection. One older informant's words illustrate how he sees a failed interaction of society with him as an individual affecting his self-esteem.

Crime was a result of disillusionment with the system and the need for assistance in one form or another for our families. We found that we could not obtain this assistance in any other way, and we felt that society was denying us and giving it to whites over blacks. However, it was unnerving to think of breaking the law to care for the needs of our families. We felt our manhood was in question, that we were bad fathers and husbands, but there seemed to be no alternative.

In the older informant group this theme of disappointment with the society in which they perceived themselves to be working hard runs through many responses to questions and in the verbal responses to follow-up interviews. For example, analysis of responses from this group as to how they became engaged in criminal activity, finds the same feelings of resentment, anger, and even ambivalence being represented in the words. For example, a 45-year-old informant who wanted to illustrate his impression of the circumstance of his criminal down fall wrote:

I was a former correction official. I had come up through the ranks as a commanding officer, trainer, deputy warden, and warden. I saw guys come into prison for drug offenses who had made money beyond comprehension on the streets. It was the success of those on the street getting this money when I could not afford to provide assistance for my family that persuaded me to deal drugs within the prison. So in the final consideration it was a sick spouse and child needing help that I could not provide that finally made me go over the line. I did ten (10) transactions before my brother turned me in. This resulted in

my being arrested in the prison parking lot. It was the easiest money I ever made, but finally landed me in the 'masters's' jail.

In addition to the contextual matters and the feelings of rejection and anger, a reader can also find in some older informants' words terms of pessimism. For example, one 48 year old talked in pessimistic terms when he wrote:

Racism will never disappear, there will always be racism.

There are still white people who are not prepared to change, they still think black man is low.

One of his co-informants agreed with this pessimistic viewpoint on society and its interactions with black males. This 45 year old wrote that:

Society thinks blacks are all thugs and killers, and thieves, and rapists, just bad all the way around.

Most of the words reflect a telling of circumstances that illustrate for these older informants their perceptions of black males' interaction with white society. This recounting of circumstances shows the hurt and rejection, even anger, at what happened to them. However, there appears to be an almost accepting quality that this is just the way it is. The foregoing words, narrative, and analysis lays out a beginning account of how this 45-60 year-old informant group interpreted their personal circumstances and their life-worlds. Thus, we also receive a picture of how these interpretations influenced their actions as adults. For example, some of the informants continued to reflect on their disappointment with their interactions with the society and community within which they were raised to adulthood, and within which they attempted to work hard to fit in with the rest of society. Within these words is also reflected how they perceive that what they were taught in younger years, in reality did not exist for them. A 48-

year-old explains his perception of society, black men, and inequality in the following manner as he wrote:

Hard to get jobs. What do I feel made it hard? Lack of education. Some people not caring enough to help someone get an education. Having to get a job the best way you can. Instead, for me and others, got drugs and stuff. All of this has become a way for black person to make money. Poor black people I came up at a time with a lot of racial disturbances. Fighting for freedom and fighting against the Ku Klux Klan. I was born around 1949 by the time it got into the 50s I got a taste of what was happening. Having to go in back doors and stuff. The biggest thing was fighting for freedom and we're still not free yet.

Another of the older informants, 52 years of age, described some of the same type of experiences when he wrote about his experience of society by saying:

There has been numbers of times that I have been passed over for jobs that I know that I out qualified the other races and were turned down. Plus I was born in the late 40s and the black race was always considered to be low class regardless of whatever. To me society has never treated black men equal, regardless of education, wealth, or who you know. We always seem to have to do twice as much to advance to just be equal. I had to always do or work twice as hard at anything to accomplish anything top

just be competitive with the Caucasian race. This included all
my military service of over 13 years.

These words of the informants could also be said to show a sense of betrayal. For example, this
sense of betrayal, resentment, and anger continues as an individual, 48 years of age, wrote:

The 60's civil rights movement created an illusion that we were
now free people, however, we had to confront the white
establishment for every crumb of freedom.

One of his peers also refers to the same feelings when he answered:

We learned the American Dream was a reality only for some
people, and that it was an illusion for many blacks; it was a pipe
dream for many of us. Many of us found out the work ethic
was a pipe dream.... This was a greater shock than the myths of
Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.

One 45 year old, describing how he ended up in jail sums up feelings of betrayal, rejection,
resentment, and anger. It is this individual's perception that his fate was a final result of an
extreme failure of society to justly interact with a black male. He wrote:

I was a resident of a small northeastern community just north of
Mecklenburg County. I had been a victim of KKK house
bombing where they blew my house up because they were
jealous of my economic independence. I went to the police and
they did nothing. I even provided leads to the police and they
never questioned any of the individuals that I reported. Several
of these white people had threatened me before my house was
bombed. I know they had Klan alliances and after my house

was destroyed several of these people said to me 'this is just to keep you niggers in your place.' I was so angry that I burned down the property of one of the individuals who tortured me and of course I was caught, charged with arson and convicted. I have no regrets for what I did. The justice system failed me and allowed the destruction of the only thing I ever had gained, my home, and this also destroyed my pride. The police did nothing because the victim was a black man.

In the beginning of this section on the 45-60 year-old informant group, the themes that reflect feelings, attitudes, and beliefs were presented as being based on life-world experiences. These experiences in-turn reflect the interdependent and inter-relatedness of all contextual factors and their interaction with the individual. As a result, the words of these informants have illustrated feelings of betrayal by community and society, resentment of the disparities and contradictions the informants have faced, and anger over how the informants have perceived the effects of this interaction on their lives, self-worth, and fate. Generally, in looking at the narratives and words presented thus far, there is a sense of ambivalence regarding their fate. This informant group reflects the anger, resentment, and disappointment; yet, most do not seem to present themselves as having a total lack of hope. These words and narratives from the 45-60 year old informants give a picture of a group of individuals who have one over-riding thing in common. At the core, the indications are that the value system by which they define their understanding of their life-experience and fate remains based in the values of their families and the community in which their foundation of beliefs was built. This also encompasses a knowledge that ultimately they screwed up and violated the very values, norms, and rules, which defined them and their families. In addition, there are some indications of pessimism about race

relations ever changing in this country. However, in general, the words of these informants do not seem to indicate a feeling that there is no future. Thus, unlike their 30-44 age group counterparts, the cautious optimism, in spite of episodes of betrayal, rejection, and anger, appears to remain for these informants.

30-44 year of age

As stated in the introduction to these study findings, the older informants ranged in age from 30-60 years of age. Unlike their older peers, the 30-44 years of age group grew up after the initial phase of the civil rights movement. Thus, many of these informants, and their parents, were interacting with a society and community in flux, attempting to determine how individuals and communities would fit into the emerging world, societal, social, and racial relationships in America. Many of these informants lived in their parents' rural communities, yet the interaction with the wider environment was spreading to these towns. This was the beginning of larger towns becoming big cities, and thus spreading outward to the rural areas. Further, sweeping national changes taking place highlighted the economic division within society. President Johnson's War on Poverty of the late 1960's is just one contextual factor evidencing these problems.

For those of the 30 to 44 year old age group, their years of development coincided with the late 60's and 1970's during which they and their communities experienced the consequences of the last of the Vietnam War and the initial years thereafter. During those years, there was a backlash against policies and ideas seen as too liberal. Thus, this was a time of more conservative national and local policy. As a consequence, the issues raised by movements such as the Civil Rights movement continued to be debated, legislated, and struggled over, often resulting in individuals and communities left to fend for themselves in a rapidly expanding and changing world.

Thus, this group of informants continued to face contextual factors of racism, inequality, oppressive social policies, poverty, drugs, gangs, abuse, victimization, and biased courts, police, and the criminal justice system. The difference for these informants is that some of them only had their parents' words and memories about what difference existed in terms of black and white relationships between the time of their parents and the time of these informants.

Additional stresses were added to this group of informant's life-world, including the growth of gangs that are more violent and the gang's beginning movement out of the big cities into other American towns and counties. Another part of this additional stress was the beginning growth of destructive drug use in their community. Some of this group did relate that their particular families, and often more importantly their communities, made valiant attempts to hold to the previous generation's values and keep the negative changes at bay. For example, in discussing racism, one informant stated:

Where I grew up there was no such thing as racism.

Everybody stands as one.

Moreover, one of his fellow informants agreed with this when he stated:

I really never had a problem with racism due to

The fact of the area I was raised up in.

In addition, another 42-year-old informant reflected on his family upbringing when he answered questions about poverty and racism. He wrote:

I have had it pretty good. I have always had what I

wanted to have because I work for it. The jobs I

had most of people I work for was good to me.

I can always go back to work for them in most cases.

I had to face the fact at young age I would have to

Work for what I wanted. [Emphasis from informant]

This was taught to me by family members.

Like their older counterparts, these informants' words reflect many feelings. Many of the answers and narratives reflect feelings of anger, rejection, and some hopelessness. Similarly, this anger and rejection is often voiced in terms of perception regarding interactions with white society and of its results for them. For example, when various members of this informant group wrote or voiced answers regarding poverty, one could hear some of these feelings beneath their words. For example, one 31-year-old informant wrote about hopelessness as something one learns when:

They see their mother's and father's live in poverty all
their lives even when they have worked hard all their
lives they still can't get out.

In another example, feelings of rejection and hopelessness are clearly reflected in this statement by a 30+ year old that wrote:

When you don't possess the fine things in life,
the society helps you feel small and hopeless.

This group had a diverse perception on many subjects. These informants were more aware of the differences between groups and the reality of life-worlds based on race and on economic status. This awareness was a product of the growing education and media coverage of these issues. For example, we see outright anger at their circumstances and at society. In addition, in some of these responses, there is the rejection that these informants feel because of interactions with society. For example, one informant wrote:

I became a criminal because I was looking for a job,
but couldn't find anything, had kids at home, needed

food and clothes, I felt I was forced to do something
for them. Black men are not working there are no
jobs people are still starving.

Moreover, another peer to this informant expanded on poverty and its effect in talking about his criminality:

Of course it does. I did not choose to be a criminal,
I was forced by poverty.

In addition to their concerns for how they perceive society has failed to interact with them in a just manner, some of the informants also show concern for their fellow peers in the community. As one examines the words of this 30-44 year old informant group and their perceptions about their fate, concern for community as a whole becomes a part of their responses. As a beginning example, a 30 year old informant answered questions on poverty and hopelessness with a "yes" and "no" answer and then expanded on this answer by indicating:

Some believe they are meant to have nothing, so
they just keep on the same way. Some see themselves
above others and when they fall they get hopeless.

Another informant from this group wrote a brief comment that connected these effects of poverty to the attitude of giving up:

If blacks give up and become content with the need
for resulting crime, they will remain for the most part
in poverty.

These two informants reached outside themselves to expand their perceptions to other black male peers.

Others of this group saw poverty in a social class perception, thus expanding feelings about hopelessness to the community, and, then to include all disadvantaged. As one informant, 36 years of age, indicated:

It's an act of blindness that no one sees but it's a
trick of devil, and making people think it's a black
and white thing but its not. No, there are poor
whites, we all suffer poverty.

Yet, another peer within this group wrote:

I think that if there is poverty, it would create
hopelessness in any society among any people.

This perception of poverty crossing the race lines continued when a 31-year-old wrote:

Yes, poverty is affecting blacks as well as some
whites, therefore it's a issue that needs to be
addressed so maybe everyone who wants an
opportunity in this society will not be
discriminated against.

This theme of reaching out and showing concern for community and other individuals is also seen in the response from a 42-year-old on work release. He said he "agreed poverty existed" but said "no" to the idea that it was a black against white or white against black issue. He expanded on his answers by writing:

I see people of all races in the streets and on welfare
and all that the things are bad. This country helps every
country it can, not say that's wrong but can't take
care of home that's bad.

This diverse attitude reflecting concern for community and race issues may further mirror the very struggle that was being experienced by their communities and families: how to survive, prosper, and/or live within changing educational, cultural, societal, social, local, state, and national priorities, focus, and attitudes. Thus, the informants' familial environment, educational background, and direct observation and experiences of the effects of these changes would influence their perception of their life-world and its effect on their fate.

Therefore, like the previous variant responses, the following four reflections about poverty, in their lives and the life of the community, paint a picture of anger and rejection on the one end and an awareness of the wider world and community on the other end. A 30-year-old indicated that he thought poverty was "both a black versus white and white versus black issue" when he wrote:

Yes, I see that the whites holds the same thing
against black. I see a lot of it coming from my
society because of the drugs. Because the blacks
can't take care of their responsibility doing drugs.

One of his fellow informants, 34 years of age, answered in the affirmative to the questions on whites against blacks in terms of poverty, expanding on his response by stating:

Whites control blacks to maintain their
financial status.

On the side of wider society awareness, other informants had different opinions about the existence of poverty or its effects on black males. A smaller number indicated they did not think poverty created hopelessness in society among black males. Most of those who differed in their opinions on this issue just answered one word to the five specific questions on poverty, "no" and

did not elaborate in writing or verbally. However, the following two informants briefly expanded on their no answers. One individual stated:

I don't think so, I think hopelessness comes from
giving up on a goal you set for yourself, or for
those who never set them.

One of his peers also elaborated by saying:

We have to look at the big picture. Some of us want
to get out and get education and good jobs. Some
want the fast life and money. Some want whatever the
federal government gives.

As indicated previously, family circumstances can have an effect on attitude. Thus, in presenting the informants' account of their life-world experiences and their perceptions of influences on their life and fate, their perception of family life cannot be ignored. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the 30-44 year old age group experienced a different societal attitude about family and community life. There existed a growing public recognition of differences between discipline and abuse. Additionally, the concept of appropriate relationships within a family was being debated at a national level. Thus, these informants' words, often not stated until the follow-up interviews for this study, reflect a stronger awareness about familial and community behavior towards them as being either judged right or wrong.

Regarding familial abuse, this group was not verbal about actual experience. Only two informants responded in words during follow-up interviews. One 38 year-old informant spoke during the follow-up session about sexual abuse in his background by saying about his parents:

They would talk to us as if this was how they showed
us love...How could a penis shoved in my mouth be
love? How could my mother sleeping with me and
foundling me be love? I became confused.

At this point several of this informants' peers began to nod in agreement and continued to do so as this informant continued to say:

...I became angered, is that what a father or
mother does to his or her child? I never married
and I was afraid to bring a child into this world for
fear I would be the same as my parents.

One more of this informant group, 41 years of age, also verbally remarked:

We never talked about close relatives who made
us do things we did not want to do...you know
respect thy elder...

This 41 year old informant's comments harken back to his older counterparts in the age group of 45 to 60 who also spoke about respecting elders and authority no matter what the behavior. However, in general, these 30 to 44 year old informants were not forthcoming in any further recounting of experiences as to understanding their fate in relationship to familial abuse. Thus, the recounting of these experiences are presented as part of the overall attitudinal changes that many of these informants experienced when compared to their older counterparts.

In contrast, this informant group was verbal about what they perceived as societal abuse against them individually, against their peers, and against their communities. Their words about racism, inequality, drugs, oppressive social policies, gangs, and biased police, courts, and the criminal justice system also reflect feelings of rejection and anger over what they saw as an

abusive relationship between society and black males. There are continued reflections on what many of these informants see as purposive actions by society and society's institutions to perpetuate the continuance of economic and social superiority over blacks.

Thus, distrust, suspicion, and discouragement are now reflected in these words. Further, as with their older counterparts, there is a keen awareness of the disparities, contradictions, and inconsistencies these informants feel exist in relationships between society and black males.

For example, as stated, drugs and gangs were part of the expanding changes taking place in the communities where these informants were raised. As larger towns became cities, their urban problems began to flow outward to smaller communities. The experience of these 30-44 year old informants regarding drugs and gangs was more direct than those of their older counterparts. For the most part, the 45-60 year old informants only heard about these problems while living in rural areas and then being exposed to the effects of these two destructive changes only after they became adults.

These informants may have experienced gangs and the resultant problems more directly than their older counterparts. Nevertheless, those informants who chose to expand on answers to the questionnaire and in follow-up interviews defined their experience of gangs as either a more benign environment than their younger counterparts or, were like their older counterparts in respecting family opinions and values regarding gangs. For example, a 30 year old informant wrote that he did not get involved with gangs because:

I know that a crowd causes trouble and I've
never wanted this.

One of his fellow informants, 37 years old, stated:

I came from small town and liked independent thinking.
If you are in a gang you have to think and do as others.

Family influence is shown in a more direct way in a 39-year-old answer to the questionnaire as he wrote:

I was brought up not to run in a gang, but to survive
on my own. I don't see a future in gang belonging,
They are either dead or in jail also.

A 42-year-old commented on the values involved with gangs and on his upbringing when he stated:

I couldn't do somethings that they do to people and
I don't do what people tell me to do anyway because
I was raised better than that way.

Thus, these informants reflect their perceptions of how their communities' and families' continued to try to keep values in their children's lives in spite of changes taking place in their environments. In spite of the movement of this often destructive advancement to outlying counties and towns of the gang situation, some individuals did not see their involvement with groups as being the same. They felt their groups were different then gangs as they were described in media and by other community members. For example, one 39 year old described his involvement with "gangs" as just friends hanging together when he wrote:

The group of men that I was part of was a few young kids
who just liked to hang together. After a while the police
started to call us a gang but if it had been white boys hanging
together they would not have been called gang, it was because
we were black boys and therefore it had to be a gang.

This informant also reflects what he sees as the inconsistency in treatment from society regarding black males. Some of his fellow informants' words also speak about not being

involved with gangs in their younger years. However, they do speak about gangs and the influence on their current life-world, being inmates in prison. These informants, thus, give a beginning reflection on another difference between themselves and their younger counterparts – the younger counterparts are more directly involved with gangs, some violently and some prior to coming to prison. This difference will be highlighted in the findings of the younger informants. Thus, the words of the 30–44 year old informants reflect their perception of that difference and how it affected their involvement with gangs only after they became adults and had been put in prison. For example, one informant wrote and stated in follow-up interviews:

If you belong to a gang in prison, you are protected
from other prisoners by the members of the gang
which you join.

One of his 30-year-old peers stated:

We older inmates often join gangs to protect ourselves
against the younger, more violent inmate coming into
the prison, as these guys already belong to gangs and
many seek to continue their activities, violent and
non-violent, in prison.

Another peer, in his early forties, added:

I did not belong to gangs because I wanted to avoid
trouble and did not want to take orders from others.
But, in here, in prison sometimes belonging to a
gang is the only way in which we can survive.

This same group of informants had strong words regarding what they perceived as abuse of not only themselves and their black male peers, but of their communities, when responding to

questions and statements regarding drugs. The words of many of these informants reflect their feelings of dismay and anger over watching the expansion of drugs into their communities and the destructive effects that were the result for them, their peers, and their communities. For example, a 33-year-old informant pointedly refers to these issues and feelings when he answered the question on the questionnaire about how to fix society and its treatment of black males. He wrote:

I would be sure that first homeless and bedridden
Would be housed and a full health care and life insurance
coverage. Rehabilitate the community and found the weak
spots and drug areas and completely shut them down. Offer
jobs to people unemployed to help rebuild run down and old
houses and neighborhoods. Blacks, especially males, don't get
these kinds of programs in full, usually its just a little bit here
and a little bit there doled out by the government in answer to
specific complaints.

This informant also refers to an idea brought up in the words of other informants, including those of younger counterparts – that government policies aren't meant to lift people up, especially when they are done in a crisis oriented, hit and miss concept, as this informant evidently had experienced in his community. His words are appealing for a more holistic approach to community help and planning that would help everyone, not just whites, but everyone. Thus, he also reflects a feeling of rejection by society in this informant's perception that "blacks, especially black males" are desperately treated in regards to these kinds of programs.

Others of this informant's 30-44 year old group were more direct and personal in how they had experienced and/or perceived the destructiveness of drugs for their communities' and their own relationships with selves and with society. For example, a 42-year-old informant stated on the questionnaire:

I know drugs isn't for blacks or for anyone. It makes you do things to harm someone or even kill and steal, lie, and I cheat for it. Its just bad if its around society at all, and there is plenty in the neighborhoods of blacks.

This informant also refers to neighborhoods as having drug problems. Yet, this informant does not directly comment about why there is so much drug use in black communities. Another informant's words mirror a more direct suspicion and distrust of society and its institutions when it comes to drugs and the black communities. For example, a 34-year-old respondent voiced his feelings of distrust, suspicion, anger, and rejection when he wrote:

My feelings are as follows. At a very young age society dealt me a raw deal in flooding my neighborhood with drugs and liquor stores on every corner. So I felt it was the right thing to do, due to the fact it was in front of me. The schools were not teaching us about our history instead they give us false information in telling us the white version of history. I feel I was cheated of my history and therefore I lost interst in school and learned the way of the world! I became a thug! I got hooked on drugs and began to steal for my habit. I went on for two years and I ended up locked up. Bottom line, the white man is the reason I am here!

Another of his peers, 31 years of age, also expressed anger and distrust when he wrote:

I have read statistics where it stated when it came to
drug use, whites were the biggest consumers of illegal
drugs. They are the main ones coming into black
communities sponsoring the drug trade.

This theme of distrust, anger, and rejection also speaks to a failed relationship, including one of education and communication, with society and its institutions. For example, a 36-year-old stated:

I believe that if the government wants to stop drugs
from coming into this country they could, because theres
only about 6-10 points, ways to get into this country.
It would not be hard to stop drugs if they wanted to.

The words of the 45-60 year old informants referenced anger, disappointment, rejection, and dismay over what they perceived as disparities between the American Dream as taught to them by their parents and what these older informants experienced as adults. In this younger 30-44 year old informant group there were some who were evidently taught the same quest for an American Dream by their 45-60 year old parents. Thus, in answering questions on victimization, community and societal abuse, and drugs, some informants referred to their feelings of anger, disappointment, rejection, and dismay and the effects of these inconsistencies towards black males in American society on their personal life-world and fate. For example one 36 year old explained his perception of victimization as part of how he grew up in society and what his parents led him to expect when he wrote:

Our parents pushed us to buy into the white culture
and become vested, including jobs, marriages, mortgages,

and all that went with that white lifestyle. Society led us to believe that through hard work we could achieve the American Dream.

Another informant was even more vocal in his anger when he commented:

We were sucked into the role of victim and into the role of committing crimes in order to be accepted into white society and to 'have it all' like the white, we ended up being put in positions of committing crimes of what the courts call passion and violence and the social workers call personal destruction, white society just saw us as another black man to take advantage of and to set up.

A 41-year-old informant reflected all of these perceptions of anger, dismay, disappointment, rejection, and distrust of society when he talked about drugs in the black community during a follow-up session. He perceived that drugs are just one more result of blacks being told they should want what the whites have. He stated that:

We became addicted to wanting all of this. As long as we have the money no one questions it, however, when something happens that is catastrophic everyone knows you are in trouble.

In line with the perception that addictions like drugs are one way in which they and their peers responded to these feelings, a 36 year old informant brings in the aspect of drugs being a popular source for quick, easy money. This informant discussed this perception when he wrote his answer to the question on how he became a criminal offender. He wrote:

Probably became one when I was young. I didn't have

a lot personally. Also in school and growing up I was not popular. So when I didn't go overseas to play programmed B-Ball, due to a leg injury, I was angry. I started selling drugs. I had plenty of money to buy What I wanted, when I wanted it. For some stupid Reason I was looked up to by others at this point.

Other informants in this group also spoke to what they perceived as being addicted to money. While they speak about their addictions, their words mirror earlier informant words on living up to what their peers and others in society kept telling them was a normal situation for goals and aspirations. For example, one 38-year-old informant stated in follow-up session:

We were encouraged by many of our brothers to live a life of excess. It became normal to be in debt or buying beyond what money we had, normal to want the nicest and most expensive car on the block.

One of his peers, a 35-year-old informant, added:

We're addicted to many things – booze, drugs, cigarettes, women, compulsive buying, money – however greed, the biggest addiction, is our downfall.

These themes of wanting the best, the American Dream, are clear parts of the perceptions of this informant group, and of their older counter-parts. Similarly, like some of their older counter-parts, some of this 30-44 year old informant group were less directly critical of society and its relationship with them, and more aware of their own perception of choices that they made in

their lives. For example, a 32-year-old told his story about how he became a criminal offender and how drugs were a factor in his life. He wrote:

Well, my mom was killed in a car wreck in May 1968 and
Her mom who raised me died in August 1982, and my baby
sister had to raise my baby brother and I. We lived in country
then and soon moved into town and that's when problems
started. Got introduced to partying and drinking and I started
drinking in 1983 quite in 1984 got a job, bought a car, met a
nice girl. We stayed together 7 years and then she got killed in
a car wreck by drunk driver. I started drinking heavy and could
not stop, I was addicted,
and ended up being arrested for DWI and other kinds of trouble
to support my booze. And here I am.

One of his peers, 42 years of age, also reflected on his own personal involvement with drugs and his criminal fate. He wrote:

I was 17 years old when I committed my first crime. I think at
that time that I was influenced by drinking, more so than just
wanting to just do something or just to get into trouble. I guess
it is safe to say that unemployment played a part in my crime
life. I think that being addicted to alcohol and years later
addicted to drugs and the fact that this led me to being
unemployed, and because of the many wrong choices I made.
This is what influenced and led me into becoming an offender, a
criminal offender.

As with their older counter-parts, the words of this 30-44 year old informant group describe life-worlds that are not in isolation, but in constant interaction between the individual and his environment. Their words give the reader a picture of this interaction within the context of family, groups, community and society, culture, and major or significant events that surrounded this interaction. These informants' perceptions of those interactions are often honest and open. The older group, 45-60 years of age, presented perceptions and stories that reflected all the feelings discussed in the analysis, but were not often in the open. Yet, most of the older group appeared to remain cautiously hopeful about the future of their interaction with society. This 30-44 year old group's words engender a picture of a group with less optimism, and more ambivalence, and in some cases, more a lack of expectation that their interactions with society will be much different in their futures. Their words show a group of individuals whose understanding of the life-world in which they grew up and became adults represents failed interactions with their environment. Further, their words also suggest a perception that this environment placed them in the middle between the old life-world and values of their parents and the volatile cynical world of their younger counter-parts. Their strong feelings about the failed interaction with society are strongly reflected in their words on racism, inequality, and what they perceive as a biased society and its police, courts, and criminal justice system. For many of these individuals, this cross between ambivalence, pessimism, and alienation appears to describe their understanding of their fate.

This picture of their understanding of their fate is presented in the words of a 36-year-old informant who wrote:

Higher numbers of black men are incarcerated because
blacks don't get the opportunity to get help for drug
problems like whites or rich society, because they

can't afford those programs. And in every black neighborhood there's a liquor store and on the other side of the creek the whites don't have liquor stores in their neighborhoods.

One of his peers perceived his fate in political terms, calling himself a 'political prisoner' of society as he wrote:

As an inmate I'm being used as someone's political stepping stone. Because the D.O.C. is all politics and these get tough on crime policies over the last few years is due to see which politician has the toughest stance on crime.

Another aspect of the contextual environment of these informants is brought out in this informant's words. During the 1970's when a more conservative environment began to take shape, fighting crime became a political football at all levels of society. It was during this time that the debate between punitive punishment for criminals and rehabilitation began in earnest. Thus, the words of these informants reflect their perception of their fates being affected by these changes. They refer to oppressive social policies regarding criminal justice system as being used to control people rather than help them. For example, one 36 year old stated in follow-up interview sessions that:

All races commit crime equally but because our justice system is so racist and oppressive, it is like it is practicing apartheid.

Another informant 39 years of age, also commented on his perception of disparity in the system and his dismay over the connection to poverty.

Well, there are a lot of crimes being committed and
other races are persecuted less than blacks because
most blacks can not afford legal representation.

One of his peers voiced agreement with these feelings as he wrote about high numbers of black males in jails and prisons. He stated:

The reasons are when get in trouble black
men do not have family and financial support to pay
for attorneys – equal attorney representation. 13%
of the population is blacks. Probably crime by other
races as much percentage wise but with greater
financial base, thus get better representation
lesser sentences – easier times to learn from mistakes.
Also single parent homes do not have parental
guidance therefore may be more susceptible to criminal
activity,....

As these informants reflect on their perception of their fate, they openly question disparities in laws they see as purposely oppressive to blacks. While their words are different, the feelings of disappointment dismay, anger, and rejection by society found in the words of their older counterparts remain as a picture that they draw of themselves and their interaction with United States society. For example, some of these informants question the fairness of drug laws and the disparity of sentencing. One informant, 39 years old, talked about this subject in his written answer on racism, when he wrote:

They have laws for crack and powder – if I get caught
with kilo of powder, I get off – with crack I get 10 to life –
the majority of cocaine is brought in by whites – this law
shows the racism goin on – the law and senate doesn't
do studies on people in the community.

During a follow-up interview session, several informants nodded their heads as if in agreement when one of their peers commented about differences in sentencing issues. He indicated:

If a white and black is together and you do the same
crime the white gets less time than the black. They
talk to you as if you are not human.

One of their peers had also written the same sentiments when he said:

Yes that is true. However, I've done federal time
as well as state now the laws are made a little more
harsh for crack cocaine than power cocaine because that drug
is more popular in the hoods of the blacks.

A 31-year-old informant simply agreed by stating:

I feel it is just that those who get caught are treated
unjustly.

In the perception of these informants, the disparities that they continue to be dismayed and angered about reach into all areas of interaction between themselves and society. Thus, there has also been concern about how society's authorities do not make laws or policy based on studies done in the communities affected by these laws or policies. Further, concern is expressed about the contradictions that arise in the justice system between those with money and

those without. Another example is the following answer given by a 36-year-old informant to questions about the high numbers of blacks in prison:

It's a double standard. A white guy is arrested for something and he gets less or no time. They, blacks, don't have enough money for a good lawyer. Blacks don't have financial means to afford competent lawyers, therefore they are left with a public defender. Once released I want to have savings so if my child were to get in trouble he can have a good lawyer and not have to use a public defender. Plus, there are a lot of white collar crimes that black males do not commit.

A 32-year-old informant further expanded on this perception of contradiction in the justice system when he wrote about his conception of how the criminal justice system treated him:

I didn't deserve 26 months for DWI where in the court hearing the police officer never even showed up in court. When I went to court my court appointed lawyer promised me if I got time it wouldn't exceed 12 months and the DA said that there was no sobriety test done on me and I said it was and the judge gave me 26 months and I appealed and my court appointed attorney said for the court to appoint me someone else and the judge sent me up here until June 2000 with no possibility of parole or early release.

Well, as I said before I was given 26 months for my

3rd DWI, I had 2 in 1992. My white friend has had 11
and 3 in the past 5 years and he only got 3 months. He's
going home already and I've been here since August 1998
and won't get out until year 2000. Never had a wreck
and only had one speeding ticket in 1985.

In analyzing the words of these informants, ages 30-44, one cannot escape the effects of social problems such as racism, inequality, poverty, drugs, and gangs. Nor can one escape the beliefs, ideas, and perceptions these informants have about how these problems have influenced their life-world and, thus, their individual fate as black males. The older group, 45-60, had a story which could be traced through decades of United States history that had major sweeping shifts and transitions in environmental, social, and national policy and interaction with this country's citizens, especially its black males. This generation of informants, 30-44, saw the results of these shifts and transitions. They lived through the modifications and adjustments that United States citizens and their communities tried to make to fit into these changes. During these informants' lives the United States and the world continued to make transitions on a consistent basis, thus effecting these informants' life worlds regularly. However, in these informants' perception of this society and their understanding of their fate within this society, they perceived that the basic interaction between blacks and white society had not improved that much. This can be read in their words that continue to describe their experience of living in this society. For example, a 39-year-old informant answered the questions on the high number of black men incarcerated by writing:

Yes, there are higher numbers of blacks in prison. Because
blacks were underprivileged and had to survive differently
from their white counterparts such as selling drugs or

stealing and without the money to pay good lawyers
and jobs once your're put on probation you're fighting
a losing battle.

A 36-year-old gave his experience of living in prisons with overwhelming black
numbers when he wrote:

I've been on twenty-two prison units in North Carolina
and all but two in the Western area of the state was
easily more blacks than other races.

More blacks are given time on being convicted. Other
races especially whites seem to get off easier. Blacks
get more time for crimes against whites than whites
against blacks.

When the crime is committed against white's it results
in stiffer prison sentences.

One of his peers, 32 year of age, described how he perceived his treatment by the justice system
and within society.

I have been threatened, I have been refused jobs
because of my color. One of the main reasons I'm
in prison is because most white judges see me
as dangerous and want to put me away for
life. Even though if they met me they would
see that I am not the person perceived in their
minds.

Another peer, 31 years of age, voiced his perceptions about how blacks are treated within the criminal justice system when he talked about how he would change the world:

I would seek to see out higher crimes such as
white collar crimes and things of that nature.

Blacks are prosecuted for petty crimes while
whites in high level positions are not targeted
at all.

As indicated earlier, the first group of informants, ages 45-60, told stories of perceptions of life and fate that could be recounted in a more complete story format. This 30-44 age group of informants centered mostly on perceptions of their interactions as black males with society and, how those interactions influenced their fates. While all informants' words were collected in the same manner, through semi-structured interview questions and follow-up interview sessions, the informants chose how they wished to voice their understanding of their fate. The 45-60 year olds' words and descriptions told a story from young age to adulthood. However, this group of 30-44 year olds' words did not lay out a rough chronology but described a general set of interactions and transactions that took place between themselves and their society. Thus, these informants continued to voice understandings of their fate as being a direct result of those interactions and transactions. Consequently, the presentation of the following words from these informants encompass all the factors and feelings which have been thus far presented. For example, one 31-year-old informant wrote:

Racism is very much alive in this society. This
society is built on white supremacy, whereas the
whites are the privileged members of this system,

while the blacks are the Achilles heel or crutch
of this nation.

Another 31 year old describes the feelings of rejection and dehumanization he feels when treated unjustly:

I have been made to feel like I should be glad to accept
Second best.

A 44 year old informant who grew up in a rural area of North Carolina that struggled to come to grips with the changes also talked about the feelings of anger and rejection he felt when he stated:

I was the first black child to enter an all white school in
my area. Those people hated me and they let me
know it every day.
I have been refused jobs, turned away from hospitals,
and shot at by people because of my skin color.

One of his 42-year-old peers commented, in follow up sessions, about his experience in early life as he described an incident when he was a teenager:

I know that racism is there because I see it all the time.
I have had guns pointed at me by the police when I was
only 16 years old, living in Charlotte. I had just went
around the corner from the house to go to the
store for father and two police came up and jumped
out of the car and pulled guns on us.

As the words of these informants continue, their general perceptions bring out their pessimism about black males' interactions with society, focusing on the distrust of society towards black

males, lack of exceptions for anything different in their interactions, and discouragement. For example, one informant stated:

Yes I am a victim. Since you are incarcerated society
feels that you will always indulge in criminal activity.
I feel this would make me a victim.

A 30-year-old peer wrote that he agreed he was a victim:

Because black male is not given the opportunity
that he deserves because of education and his
criminal history.

Another 30-year-old peer continued this line of understanding of his and his peers' fate by writing:

Lack of education that blacks receives, from the
government they know nothing else but the street life.

A 36 year old informant perceived that the anger and rejection he felt, and he assumed some of his peers felt, would create hostility that affects the choices one makes:

If someone comes up under privileged and thy're not
given any help to succeed in society, some give up and
develop a hate and distrust for society so they resort to crime.

Rejection by society is a constant theme throughout most of the responses for the entire informant population of this study. For example, 31 year old answered the question about black males' incarceration numbers by writing:

We don't have but limited opportunity – can only go
so far – always going to be oppressed in some state

or form. After all most of the time black males
commit crimes to provide for their families.

Some of the informants used stronger language to depict their perceptions of being rejected by
society. One informant who was on intensive parole commented:

I was and still am given very little respect; they
treat me as if I am less than the white man.

One of his 32-year-old peers wrote:

Black men are treated like they are animals, a threat or
that we owe them something. I have been called names,
had bottles thrown, treated like a murderer in the court
system. We are treated like a threat to society. Blacks are
looked at like we are expected to commit a crime sooner or later.

A 31-year-old informant admitted that in his earlier life his experience with this kind of rejection
was not prominent. However, he described this rejection when he became a member of the high
numbers of incarcerated black males, when he stated:.

Myself, I've never personally had experience with
racism until I entered....In here they look at
us as less than human – we should be shot and
killed like some bear or something.

One 42 year old was a little less cynical in his depiction of society's interactions with black
males and, thus, his words reflect his own experience and understanding of his interaction with
society:

First I would like to say and hope that I am not racist myself.
I truly hate that blacks, white and every other color on

the face of God world cannot get along together and live
together. Yes in my home town whites have better jobs
at times, which in terms is less unemployed .

Yes, more blacks end up in jail than whites. But things are
getting better.

Earlier in the analysis and presentation of the words of this 30-44 year old informant group, the perception was presented that laws and policies were made by the community to keep people down and not lift them up, thus continuing to perpetuate some of the social problems talked about by these informants. This perception is in the words of the following presentations. Included in the presentation of these words are the continued patterns of understanding of fate as being ruled by failed interactions with society resulting in anger, rejection, dismay doubt, suspicion, distrust, and pessimism. For example, a 39-year-old reflected on laws as being oppressive to blacks when he wrote:

In my community – society makes laws that are racist and
stop the progress of black male – keep em down cause
they might find out something. If reverse with blacks in
power and whites on bottom then whites would holler too.
mentality of whites is laws without Ku Klux Klan robes.

One 36 years old informant pointed to differences in communication as a form of oppression by referring to the lack of education he felt was missing for many black males. His words reflect his perception that this lack of education is one factor that keeps black males from obtaining fair and equal opportunities. He wrote:

Most black men will not get a real fair opportunity, most
lack the same educational opportunities of whites and they
can't communicate with society enough to get a real opportunity.

A 32 year old peer includes the government itself as being against blacks and thus perpetuating
laws and policies that continue to keep blacks, and even poor whites, down. He wrote:

I feel it's the government against blacks and poor whites
that the government feels they have no place in
society for us so they throw the ones they can into
prison and get paid for them and then let the rest
of them suffer.

The theme of lack of or different levels of education can be heard in the words of other
informants in this group in their description of their perceptions on racism and oppressive
policies and laws. One 30-year-old informant wrote:

It's both ways, so blacks are prejudice of whites because
they can't get ahead in society and they blame Caucasians.
And some Caucasians are either prejudice of blacks from
growing up, or are in fear of some blacks because of their
place in society.

A 31-year-old informant stated:

Blacks are taught in this society that they are inferior while
Whites are taught that they are superior, both sides are
not getting taught properly when it comes to other people.

A 30-year-old peer tried to connect his perception to all history of black people in this country
with his words:

It's all ways been this way because blacks are the ones
that came out of slavery and some blacks feel that they
are being pushed around by the laws that the white
man sets.

Black men are stereotyped mostly as being savage,
criminal, and thugs with nothing positive to add
to this society., I have been standing at a bus stop
and certain people would pull up to the light and
hook their door window's [lock their door and windows]
I never saw them do that to a white person standing
at a bus stop.

The remaining words of these 30-44 year old informants come from individuals who say a lot
with their words. They cover the gamut of anger, rejection, dehumanization, perceptions of the
government against them, and how these issues effect their perception of their life-world and
their understanding of not just their fate, but also of their black male peers. One 38 year old
wrote:

Racism is something that ignorant people use to make
excuses for a life that they do not agree with. The sad
part about it is that the extreme racist doesn't have a
complete understanding of his/her own background
because if they did they would keep their racism in check.

A 34-year-old informant wrote:

I feel that the black man in society has very little help in the
community because of poor paying jobs and no job available

and to be able to survive in the community you do what it takes to provide for your family. I feel that we are treated poorly and there is no justice of equal for the black man. I feel that society treatment with unfairness as a direct result of my actions causing me to be imprisoned. I feel that society knows the solutions to every problem and won't deal with it. I feel like society could have helped me instead of putting me in here. I often feel that it is designed for the black man to be in prison, to control the black population.

If you have slavery for almost 210 years and you just all of a sudden do away with slavery how can you expect a race to catch up with another. I look at my situation with my father who is at less than a second grade level and can barely write his name, then I look at this father who was probably a slave and his father couldn't teach him, thus how could he teach me.

There were three informants who gave answers without all the strong feelings of anger and resentment portrayed by their peers. This was their way of coming to understand their fate.

For example, one informant wrote:

I am not a victim because I can live and do better for myself by this experience. I also could accept the role of victim but I refuse to. I have been incarcerated 10 times and I am hoping I will not come back again.

This time I have accepted myself as an addict and I can move on with my life. I really have to push for

change in all areas of my life. A lot of things about prison life are negative but I have learned to look past them and do what I need to do to maintain a positive outlook, goals, and projects. I will not give up because my life is on the line.

A 39-year-old peer wrote:

I made the choice to do the things I did and being incarcerated ain't nobody's fault but mine. I've had good jobs, good home environment, well schooled, and I know right from wrong, poor judgement was my only down fall and drinking has been the worst judgement call I made, if by chance I could have left the booze alone not telling what position I'd be in now definitely not in prison! So its my fault that I made the decision to pick a bottle and drink when I knew what the consequences would be.

In addition, a 42-year-old wrote:

I could be a victim of society because I am incarcerated and really not know. When I say no I don't feel like I'm a victim of society because I'm in prison I would like to feel like I'm here because I made a lots of wrong decisions which was bad mistake. I choose wrong instead of choosing what was right. And this is the say I had to

pay society for my wrong. I cannot really say that I'm a
a victim of society and it be the truth because in our
society today I have golden opportunity in almost
everything.

The words of these 30-44 year old informants have presented description after description of their perception of a dis-satisfaction with relationships of the society with black males. They appear to be questioning where the social order of society is headed. This groups' parents were of the same age group as the 45-60 year old informants. This 30-44 year old group may be reflecting on their own experience of a life-world that is disturbing to them. However, this group also indicated that their parents and their communities tried to hold on to older values and ideas in spite of the changes that were taking place and spreading to some of the once rural locations. Thus, they could also be reflecting from their families' and communities' observations of the transactions and interactions that took place. Their words may mirror the reality of their environment, a constantly changing world which fights and debates between the "old values" of their parents time and the ongoing challenging and questioning of the current environment in which these 30-44 year olds grew up and now find themselves. However, in spite of this pessimism and questioning of the social order, these 30-44 year old informants do not show the fatalism and extreme cynicism that we will see in the words of some of the younger 17-29 years of age informants.

Younger Informants

17-29 year olds

As indicated in the introduction of this chapter, the younger informants ranged in age from 17 to 29 years of age. This put their birth years between 1970 and 1982, with their growing into adulthood in the mid-1980's to the-mid 1990's. The older informants all came

from North Carolina. However, this younger group of informants was split between North Carolina and South Carolina. The mid-1980's saw Ronald Reagan as President and eight years of continued conservative turns in social and racial issues. This was the beginning of attempts to reverse many policies seen by those in power as to liberal, including how this nation addressed crime. During this time, our citizens saw the growth of "lock them up and throw away the key" mentality and "get tough on crime" became the watchword. This was also when the beginnings of debates began about how our nation's social welfare system could be reformed. As this group moved into the 1990's with those born in 1982 becoming teenagers, welfare reform became a reality, as did many other social program reforms. During the 80's and 90's, the rising cost of living highlighted the expanding gap between rich and poor.

North Carolina Younger Informants

The North Carolina young group now lived in counties and towns which were full fledged suburbs of Charlotte, NC, a growing area with urban sprawl beginning to worry many in the area. Race relations could still be tense, especially in dealing with anything having to do with criminal activity. However, this area was trying to build an image of a Southern metropolitan area that had moved beyond the racial tensions of the 50's, 60's, and early 70's. These younger North Carolina informants now faced the full effects of drugs, gangs, tensions with the criminal justice system, and dwindling resources for social programs. In addition, the greater Charlotte and Mecklenburg County area was like many modern day cities, they were trying to attract business to come to their area and provide jobs, and this included contacts with foreign business.

The North Carolina younger informants often experienced the same contradictions that their older counterparts in North Carolina. Thus, many of these individuals experienced the

same dehumanization and rejection as their grandparents and parents. For example, a 27-year-old in North Carolina wrote:

With a lack of respect society as a whole has
dehumanized black men to the point where we are
perceived as hopeless.

Another 28-year-old NC informant voiced the same distrust of society as was heard in the 30-44 year old informant group of North Carolina. When he answered questions regarding black males and incarceration, he wrote:

With black males growing up its like a society has
set them up to fail or succeed with stumbling blocks –
a question of which way to go – crimes being committed
on black youth while they grow up – it seems they
never get to find who they are before they are going
to prison – society – blacks males commit crime
due to lack of education.

One of his 19-year-old peers agreed with him when he wrote:

Poor people who could not educate their children
so they grew up looking for a chance to steal to
survive.

The words of the younger informant groups describe their perceptions of life-worlds that represent contemporary United States social order, and, this social order is what these individuals lived within as they move into the 21st century. The North Carolina group was less verbal than their older counterparts about family issues and other contextual issues that were an influence on their actions. However, there was indication that many of these North Carolina

informants did not live in the same community and family environment as had their parents. They were living within the resultant modifications of the environmental and social order of which their parents saw the beginning. The 1980's and 1990's was a time in which the nuclear family became less and less the norm, while the growth of single parent families became more prominent. This was highlighted during these years by the focus on single parent families on welfare. Communities had suffered the destruction and/or blight that the growth of violence and the loss of jobs often bring to communities in this modern time. Therefore, these young informants only saw the results of the massive changes and modifications in and to the social, political, and economic order that their grandparents and parents had lived through. Nonetheless, there was still anger in words of informants. For example, a 19 year-old answered questions regarding the interaction of black males with society by writing:

Yes, they are hindered on interacting with society.

Anger is instilled in many, especially the young.

They learn the way of crime to survive without

Parental strength and guidance.

In the words of a 26-year-old peer, we hear and sense the feelings of rejection and dismay over the conditions of the community in which he lived. He wrote:

How I became a criminal is simply put, due to the
influence of my surroundings, the feelings of loneliness
and not fitting in, not be accepted! Being exposed
to any and all types of criminality, it was easy to
succumb to a world like that.

These younger informants from North Carolina also were living the same disparities in treatment by the law and the criminal justice system that was found in the words of their 30-44 year old

counterparts. The 17-29 year old informants also perceived that the laws and policies were made to be unjust to “keep the status quo” of white over black, or at least of the haves over the have-nots. For example, a 29-year-old informant wrote:

Legally if some one is arrested for selling crack in
white areas, he gets greater and more intense
sentences than if cocaine were to be sold in the same
white areas, cocaine is white usage and crack is
considered black usage.

A 27 year old informant addresses these same perceptions on his fate, but also adds reference to the same topic that was brought up in the words of older counterparts – references to black and poor neighborhoods left to fend for themselves and/or set up for busts of one kind or another. He also refers to the disparity between the average person who is caught versus the bigger, often white, individual behind crime, or those who make money off crime. He wrote

I look at it like laws are set up against black
males and poor people. Guns are not made in
these neighborhoods. Targeting little man instead
of man at the top.

A 26 year old peer writes:

I mean money can buy you out if you know the
right people. Blacks commit crimes for many
reasons. But don't know or have what it takes
to talk with people to get out of it. I think
the white man commits more crimes, you just
don't hear about it because of the money.

Many of the younger informants from North and South Carolina expressed the same feelings of victimization, anger, distrust, and lack of expectation, as did their older counterparts in North Carolina. However, the South Carolina group was more cynical than most of the North Carolina younger informants. The North Carolina group's words of discouragement, dejection, doubt, suspicion, and lack of expectation came out when they discussed things like whether they saw themselves as a victim and when reflecting on drugs and gangs. One of the strongest presentations of these feelings came from a 26 year old informant describing how he felt about the system which incarcerated him and, in his perception, was still taking advantage of him.

During the follow-up interview sessions he stated:

Yes, I'm just another black male, the system
can make money off of. They, the system,
makes money all kinds of ways, which makes me
feel victimized. To see a doctor it costs me five
dollars etc., they make you go to the government
to get grants. You as a person by the time you go
back to society you don't know where to start.
Instead of helping they force something else on
You that won't benefit you when your time is up!

This group also tried to voice the need for help in their communities. For example, a 28 year old informant wrote about the issue of drugs. His concern is for the disparity in treatment by society towards those who are white versus those who are black and/or poor in his answer to questions about imagining himself as president, and what would he do as president. He stated that he would make better schools, rehabilitation of the prison system, and drug addicts when he wrote:

Drugs is a major problem inside and outside prison.

We must set up self help programs in all communities and show people they can make a difference. This is especially true in black neighborhoods, where expensive recovery programs like the whites go to are not available for those on limited income, working poor, or poor.

One of his 29-year-old peers reflected on his understanding of his fate in terms of drugs when he stated:

All my criminal offenses were driving offenses. I either under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or driving while licenses were revoked.

Another peer, 28 years old, talked about the impact of drugs on his fate:

I will say I became an offender due to my doing little silly things and doing crazy things, most little things. Most of these things I probably would not have done had I not been involved in drugs. Once I got caught for smoking pot in the wrong places.

Another peer indicated that he now knows why he became incarcerated. His perception was that he got in trouble:

By smoking refers as a teenager, than becoming blown to far and getting involved in heavy drug stuff as I got older and that led to selling drugs and getting busted numerous times.

These younger North Carolina informants did not have a long life-world history from which to compare with their words. However, there is a hint about family life and/or the lack of it in some of their words about gangs. For example, one 24 year old wrote:

My mother was a strong source in keeping me away
from gangs and other such influences.

Another 26 year old peer mirrors the feelings of wanting to belong in a world that apparently rejects him and, also, of living in a life-world where one needs to be protected in one's own community when he wrote about gangs:

It was being a part of something. To have an extended
family or shall I say friends and associates. A place
to get together with others your age and build some
kind of protection as well.

Protection is the focus of another 24-year-old describing what gangs meant to him.

It meant you had somebody watching your back and
Keeping you from being a full victim of the street.

The violent world in which some of these young informants lived is reflected very clearly in their words about gangs. This is the same world of violence we will see reflected in the more intense words of the South Carolina younger informants. For example, a North Carolina 26-year-old informant described the meaning and feeling of being in a gang to him when he wrote on his questionnaire:

It was like it was something we just did. Some guys
started out hanging out and drinking, smoking,
killing, no meaning it was just something to do. I

was just following the leader. That would be the
one with the power and guns. If you wanted to
get in you followed the leader.

A fellow 27-year-old informant stated:

I was the leader of my gang. I had power, you listened
when I spoke. I am not a member of a gang now,
I thank God I was caught as I was out of control.

Like their older counterparts, there were some in this group who did not reflect the anger
and rejection with the same intensity as heard in the words of their peers. For example, a 26-
year-old stated:

No I am a victim of myself and greed. I did
what I wanted and I am paying for it now.

A 24 year old informant answering questions about feeling like a victim, said "no" and then
elaborated:

Some people may feel that way, but for me no,
I know what I did, yet I guess in some ways
I do blame society. It is hard for me to explain.
Some people, well a lot of society don't know
the actual situation about a person's case and
what he did to get here. And they think that since
he committed a crime he don't deserve to receive
friendship or the love has been nurtured with.

Another 29 year old provided perceptions on a mixed experience with the interaction between
himself as a black male and society. He wrote:

Society treats black men for the most part, like they need to be treated. However, some people are afraid of black men. Some are indifferent and hateful towards black me. I have been treated in all of the above ways. Since I try to be serious and considerate I normally get treated with respect by all I meet. But, since I've been in prison this time I've been lied to about things and I think it is due to the fact that people are looking at my past record and making critical judgements against me.

While some of the older informants talked about abuse and their perception of whether it affected their lives and fate, the younger North Carolina informants were very reticent to speak of abuse beyond the concept of racism and inequality. Thus only two individuals in follow-up sessions spoke to this issue. One individual, a 27 year old, only spoke about it in terms of abuse he did or did not see in prison:

Please sir if we talk about the rape and abuse we
Experience in prison we face death.

One 26-year-old peer indicated:

Yes, there is abuse behind the walls from fellow prisoners and from correction officers. However, we are still in here and must deal with life here, you will be leaving. Please don't ask us anything but be aware if the truth were known about how we are treated, I would hope someone, somewhere would do something, or are we just throw aways or does all society feel we get what we deserve.

These last two informant responses were the only words written or spoken about abuse in any form for this informant group. As indicated earlier, the available raw data for this younger North Carolina group, are limited and thus, a complete analysis and interpretation is very sketchy in comparison to their older counterparts. Thus, the words of the younger North Carolina informants were hard to pin down as to attitudes of the future. They seemed to have a lower level of blighted hope than did the South Carolina group.

South Carolina Younger Informants

The South Carolina younger informants lived in a county outside of Charlotte, NC. Therefore, this county had ties to the Charlotte area for jobs. Thus, the urban problems that plagued Charlotte could also be found in this community. Nonetheless, in this group's perception, York County fought to retain its small town and rural county nature. These perceived attitudes and behaviors included social, economic, and political relations. Thus, this group of informants lived in an area where the gap between rich, poor and between the races was more prominent than in North Carolina. This group faced many of the same issues as their North Carolina counterparts. However, racism and inequality was more out in the open in terms of relationships between the races in York County, South Carolina. For example, in answering questions on racism and inequality, one informant wrote:

This community is pro-white and anti-black.

As his fellow informants answered the same questions, their words suggest anger and feelings of rejection. A 17-year-old wrote:

We just hang out with our hommies, they

Accept us, white society does not.

One of his 18-year-old peers explained:

The police just want us off the streets.

A 20-year-old described his experience of racism in this community by writing:

When whites see us walking the streets they
look all the doors whites look at us as if it is
meant for us to rob and steal.

A 27-year-old spoke about the idea of racism being black against white or white against blacks with an answer that suggested the separation of groups that existed in this community. He wrote:

We all want to see our own to succeed first,
then who cares.

As a reader can see by the brief words presented thus far, this group was not extremely verbal in responding to the questionnaire. This South Carolina younger informant group did not participate in follow-up interview sessions. However, the extended responses that were obtained reflected a higher intensity in their attitudes and feelings than with any of their North Carolina counterparts in the study. For example, the questionnaire asked questions regarding poverty and crime, and these informants' words reflect their perceptions of how poverty influenced their lives. In these words, there are feelings of hunger, desperation, hopelessness, and anger. For example, one informant answered the question about poverty leading to hopelessness by writing:

Yes, it does! In 1989, I made athlete of the year
In Gastonia County, Most Valuable athlete in 2
sports, etc. The only problem was I came from
a poor family and a single parent who was on
drugs. I had no support at all. I was the best
in sports and poverty created nothing but
hopelessness.

One of his peers simply stated his perception of desperation by writing:

One cannot work, think, or do anything on
an empty stomach.

This theme of desperation continues in the words of another young informant as he also acknowledges his anger by writing:

Poverty at home makes me angry and desperate.
I end up going and trying to get something to eat
for brothers and sisters, I go out and steal.

Some of the South Carolina younger informants did not put any kind of extended explanation down on paper to explain yes or no answers to questions. However, in answering the question about why they became criminals, some answers contained references to other contextual factors in the questionnaire. For example, one informant related his understanding of his fate and included poverty as one factor. He wrote:

I became a criminal offender because of poverty within
my family. No one was working at home, we were poor.
Peer pressure influenced me yes, and led me to commit
crimes, but at least by house breaking I could at least
sell things that I had stolen then have money for
clothes and food.

In this informant's words, the feelings of desperation and discouragement are also present. While he admits he gave into peer pressure, he places his perception of fate squarely in the idea of his and his family's inability to be useful in their community and society. Thus, many of these informants expressed perceptions of inequality as part of the factors that help them understand their fate.

The South Carolina younger informants expressed a perception of being treated unfairly by society from the day they were born. They looked on their communities and the institutions with which they dealt in terms of whites getting more than what blacks received. Their words reflect the continuation of feelings of anger, rejection, and hopelessness. For example, one 19 year old wrote:

We never given a chance for education
equal with whites.

One of the oldest of the South Carolina younger informants responded with his perception of what this unfair treatment has done to his community when he wrote:

We live and lived in places of discontent,
disparity, and misery.

In addition to the feelings brought out by these informants' words thus far, there is also a perception on their part of how they view the relationships between themselves and their communities and society; this view is one of separation and alienation. A 22-year-old described this perception as he wrote:

We live in our society – black, and they live
in theirs – the white society.

One 24 year old wrote his perception that society's attitudes towards black males was one of looking down on them. Thus, this perception of an attitude provides the reader with one part of this informant's understanding of his fate. He expressed anger and resentment when he wrote:

Society treats a black man as being ignorant.
We may not have had a lot of schooling but
we aren't ignorant.

Another informant, 20 years old, also spoke about unfair treatment by society. His words give an impression of a society that remains fixed in stereotypes about black males. This informant sees the stereotypes, of having money or athletic ability as black males' only worth, as being a key to his understanding of himself and his fate. He wrote:

No one is out to help the black man, well may be just a few, but not many. Other than that unless you win a lottery or join the NBA, NFL, that the only opportunity we have, and all the hommies know that. The only way this would change is if we had been able to get more education.

These younger informants expressed a great deal of cynicism in their words on all factors asked about in the questionnaire. For example, one 27 year old stated his perception of the relationship between himself and society as a failed interaction within an environment of unequal treatment.

He wrote:

Without experience you can't get this job, with a bad wrap sheet you can't get this job. Being black can mean you're not the one for this job. Or you're not qualified. In a job interview a black male being interviewed might be told that they'll get back with him and they never do – while white man is interviewed and is given the job even when both had the same qualifications.

As they wrote answers to questions about biased courts, police, and the criminal justice system, some of these informants also gave a picture of unequal treatment and thus, feelings of distrust,

lack of expectation, discouragement, rejection, and lack of hope. For example, one 19 year old wrote:

The courts have us convicted before trial
So we look to jail rather than anything normal.

One of his peers, 17 years of age, wrote:

A white will always get probation, while a black
goes down. When I was in court, there were four
others in court on similar drug offenses, they
were white and even had prior records, this
was my first time, they got probation, I got jail.

Like their North Carolina counterparts, younger and older, these South Carolina informants also had concerns and/or strong attitudes about their communities and what they saw as a flawed relationship between the community and society. Some of these informants expressed this concern when answering questions about various factors on the questionnaire, especially oppressive policies, drugs, gangs, and unequal treatment from white society. While the following answer from a 29 year old was geared towards his understanding of how drugs played a part in his downfall, he also has words about his perception of how society treated his community and how that was a part of his fate. He wrote:

My feelings are as follows. At a very young age society
deal us a raw deal. It flooded my neighborhood with
drugs and liquor stores on every corner. So I felt it
was the thing to do due to the fact it was that the
schools were not teaching us about our history
instead they give us false information in telling

us the white discover American. Lie! I feel I
was cheated of my history. Therefore, I lost
interest in school and learn the way of the
world instead! I became a thug. I got hooked
on drugs and began to steal for my habit.
I went on for two years. Period and I ended
Up locked up. Bottom line, the white man is the
Reason I am here.

A 22-year-old described his feelings about his community:

My life is a prison without walls, my community
is a prison without walls, we are captives of our
place of living, and we are denied opportunity to
escape.

These informants also express the feelings that nothing will change. In contrast to their North Carolina age peers, their words reflect fatalism and dejection. For example, another informant, 22 years old, described his community's and his relationship with society in terms of the treatment received in one short sentence when he wrote:

This is a prison of no return.

One of their 24-year-old peers stated the same feelings with cynicism and hopelessness as he wrote:

I personally feel that there is no help for the
black male in my society. It is like being a crab
in a bucket, if they try to reach the top
there's always another crab to pull me back down.

Society looks down on us period!!! I'm pretty much the type who blends in wherever I go. If I'm around bankers, we talk banker talk. Drug dealers I talk their talk. It's like having two kinds of knowledge – book learning and street learning. Other than, white society don't want to be bothered with me, unless there's something for them to gain!

The issue of drugs was not one in which these informants offered much detail. Most just answered simply “drugs” when asked what they perceived as a major problem for their society. Nonetheless, in analyzing and interpreting the words presented one can interpret reference to drugs in the perceptions of some informants' understanding of their fate and of their concern for their communities. Reference to families can also be found in the informants' words about contextual factors from the questionnaire. One 20-year-old informant expresses his understanding of his fate in terms of lack of support or encouragement from his surroundings and the availability of drugs and fast money. In examining these words there is a hint that this 20-year-old's perception of lack of encouragement covered both family and community. He wrote:

School was never encouraged and flipping burgers was not our game when our homies made \$1000 to \$5000 weekly in drugs and even more in house breaking schemes or car thefts.

One of his peers, age 19, perceived his and his community's fate as one of victimization. He voiced this victimization in terms of this treatment always being there. In those words, a reader

can read lack of expectation that it will ever change. In writing about the environment of racism and inequality he stated:

This kind of victimization has gone on for a long time,
through my parents, my grandparents, and even their
parents.

Like their North Carolina young counterparts, the South Carolina younger informants experienced gangs within their communities. However, for many of the North Carolina informants, gangs were not as prominent a factor in their lives as they were for these South Carolina informants. For these informants their perception of gangs, and the words used to describe that association, mirror the distrust of society and the discouragement and rejection they feel within their families, communities, and society. Those who wrote about gang life indicated that gangs were their real homes and that these gangs validated their perception of reality and thus their fates. One 17 year old stated:

Gangs are our family, a group to hang out with.

Another 17 year old peer supported this idea and then connected gang membership with protection, possibly from home abuse, by writing:

Our homies are our protection against society
and sometimes our own homes.

A 21-year-old expresses the need to belong and to feel wanted, apparently something he did not get from his community or maybe even from his family. Thus, he also touches on the consistent patterns of feelings involved with alienation from and rejection by society:

In a gang you don't have to think for yourself but
you have to do things together as a group. If you
are in a gang its like you are in a team, there is

a spirit of togetherness. It made me feel important
to be in a gang.

Nonetheless, like their North Carolina counterparts, some of these informants acknowledged that gangs involved their members in active street violence. As one young informant wrote:

I became a gang-banger. I did rumbles with
other gangs to invade drug turfs. Our objective
was to keep others from being able to sell drugs.
We would get into their turf and work with their
buyers in any way we could.

One of his peers, 21 years old, wrote:

Every weekend we have to gang fight, fight with
other gangs. To me it meant nothing to belong
to a gang. You also went to prison for gang
fights if you belong to a gang.

This informant group had little hope for their future. As has been seen in the words of these informants thus far, they do not expect much to change for themselves or their communities. For many, especially those who are in gangs, there is fatalism about their future born of the reality of their existence. For example, an 18-year-old informant wrote:

We have little chance of living past 21. All the homies
I hung out with are dead.

In the words of these informants, for some, there have been hints at problems with the family. They lived in a community and society that saw the rise of single parent households in all levels of society. For the poor and those who saw themselves as experiencing racism, this often meant poor home care with little or no support from a society which they perceived looked

down upon them. For many of these individuals, the family life consisted of what scholars describe as dysfunctional. In some cases, there were single parents, absent parents, and abusive parents or caregivers. In general, like their counterparts in North Carolina, these informants were not forthcoming with details about their familial surroundings. However, in writing about their perception of their fate three informants did speak about abuse within the family and community. For example, a 22-year-old wrote that:

My mother was a prostitute by night and a drug dealer for a boyfriend who sexually abused my brothers and sisters, and who also threatened to kill our mother if any of us told.

One of his peers, an 18 year old, indicated that:

My mother not having any idea what was real and often terrorized us children.

And, finally, a 24 year old, stated, in a more concrete way, the effect of family and community life on his fate when he wrote:

Parents were either ineffective or absent or were drunk or high on drugs and beat us or sexually abused us. Home was not a place to be because it wasn't safe. Streets weren't safe either, but if you run with a group there is safety in numbers.

While these three responses raise some sensitive subjects regarding abuse, this study was not designed to study this particular issue. However, these responses are important because they lend some idea as to how these informants understand their life-worlds and their fate as part of the high numbers of incarcerated black males. Like the 30-44 year old and 17-29 year old

informants of North Carolina, this 17-29 year old South Carolina informant group did not lay out a clear chronological story of birth to jail/prison. Thus, one must read their words and look for the story of their understanding of their fate. For the South Carolina younger informants that fate is not seen as having any future. Their words continually point to a strong blighted hope and fatalism that the only thing left for them is more of the same that they have lived through thus far, prison, or death.

Summary Outcome of Findings

The narrative presentation of this study's findings is set up by age and location, focusing on the lived experiences of the informants. As such, it recounts the words of the informants, which are interpretations of their understanding of the circumstances that played a part in their actions and fate. The patterns of feelings and attitudes found throughout the findings included ambivalence, anger, feelings of disparity, pessimism, cynicism, distrust, lack of expectations, rejection, blighted hope, and fatalism. The narratives present how these feelings and attitudes were described by the informants and what life-world experience led them to these feelings. Thus, this recounting involves contextual accounts. In analyzing these informants' words, the differences in age and location have been highlighted to emphasize how these factors influenced the interaction of these informants with their families, within work experience, with the community in which they lived, and with society.

In analyzing the words of the informants who were of the ages 45-60 years of age, we were introduced to a group of individuals whose life-world was surrounded by core values born of the 1940's and 1950's. For example, their families consisted of immediate and extended family members that provided social and emotional support. Their words about respect for elders and the authority of discipline for their family mirror these core values. These people

cooperated in the upbringing of this informant group. These informants described rural environments where the problems of “the big cities” were only happenings one heard about.

As found in the findings narrative, these 45-60 year-old informants grew up during the time of the beginnings of the civil rights movement. This, and other sweeping changes, challenged these old core values and concepts. Yet, for these informants these changes came slower. As they became adults they were faced with the changing economic features of society that were taking place during their teenage to adult years. Social class was part of this change. They continued to experience segregation, inequality, and racism. Thus, their understanding of their fate encompassed not just their age, but the location in which they lived and the experiences of massive movements as they were played out in that environment. Their words reflect these experiences and the hopes that the civil rights movement brought into their lives. As they grew into adulthood, their words mirror the disappointment of remaining in the out-group within a growing area of North Carolina.

This group still hoped to see changes in society, however it was cautious hope. This group was protected from lives of fast money at an early age by family and community support. They only became engrossed in such criminal activities at later ages. In general, this informant group related their understanding of their fate in terms of violating how they were brought up and responding to the inconsistencies between what they were taught and the realities they faced as adults.

This same area of North Carolina is where the 30-44 year-old informants found themselves growing up. However, they were experiencing the consistent changes taking place in their neighborhoods, communities, and in society. This put them in the middle of an area in flux. Their words reflect the movement of gangs into their rural neighborhoods. Further, this group experienced the growing and widening gap between rich and poor, with the poor being

left further and further behind. Thus, they were experiencing the beginnings of the social problems that the contemporary scholars have dealt with for years. Though there were now supposed to be employment opportunities, these informants found themselves facing the same discrimination that had faced their parents. In spite of these contrasting environments, these informants still had a part of the familial and community support, although sometimes in smaller numbers. Thus, these informants related their understanding of their fate in terms of the growing gaps between poor and rich and, especially between poor blacks and the white society.

The younger informants faced a society that now was in the midst of less favorable economic times and a society that was fully challenging the idea of liberal social programs such as welfare and affirmative action. These informants related their continued anger, despair, and hopelessness over what they saw as a deteriorated relationship between themselves and the white society. In addition, this younger group of informants often experienced the large and growing underprivileged group of blacks living below the poverty level. Many of this group expressed the understanding that poverty had been in their lives since they were born. They further expressed the perception that hopelessness was a major part of their understanding of what drove them to criminal activity and their fate.

However, for this group of informants, location and environmental influences were important to understanding their words regarding their fate. The younger informants living in North Carolina had a less rigid form of discrimination and the area was now a growing metropolitan area. The younger informants living in South Carolina lived in a small town and county that apparently retained much of the stereotypical black and white relationship interaction from earlier years. They were exposed to drugs, gangs, and fast living and money from the beginnings of their lives. These younger South Carolina informants perceived their fate as doomed from the beginning and thus their words expressed fatalism.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of high numbers of black males within the United States prison system. This study sought to explore the question of how incarcerated black males perceived and understood their eventual fate. Thus, its objective was to document the impressions of a small number of black male inmates within the North and South Carolina criminal justice system. I asked the informants to give me a word picture of their understanding regarding their circumstances. This study was not aimed at finding the root causes of black male criminal activity in contemporary America. It was an exploratory study and the results touched on many aspects of the informants' life-world. The study's collection of raw data used a semi-structured questionnaire that centered on aspects of the environment of black males that have been documented in scholarly, social, cultural, and popular media. These included race, inequality, oppressive social policies, and poverty. The informants' words documented their perceptions of these aspects within the overall understanding of their fate. Out of the raw data collection came other specific environmental aspects that were integral to these informants' perception of their life-worlds. These included gangs, abuse by and of their families and communities, drugs, victimization, and biased courts, police, and criminal justice systems.

The findings reveal individuals who live in an environment that includes overlapping influences on their development, behavior, and actions. These influences included the individuals themselves with such aspects as inherited traits and tendencies, physiological and health issues, personal characteristics, physical appearance, race, and gender. Further, the findings show individuals who were actively involved with interactions and transactions with their environment. The general picture of the contextual nature of their environment included:

1. family – immediate and extended,
2. those people outside their family with whom they were in close contact – through work, church, neighborhoods, and social networks,
3. individuals and groups within their communities and the society with whom they came in contact – work organizations, church institutions, schools, social class status, employment situations, and their geographic location,
4. cultural aspects of their environment – values, norms, and customs of their immediate and extended families and of the wider society; attitudes, laws, and behaviors towards them by others in the society.
5. events that influenced all of their environmental aspects – wars, economic upheavals and changes, and social movements and their results on the environment

Thus, in examining the findings from this study it is beneficial to understanding the informants' perceptions of their fate to include awareness of the inter-relatedness of these contextual aspects with the person. Similarly, this synthesis of the findings can lead to an understanding of how the informants' experiences then lead them to understand their circumstances in the past and in the present. This study is the understanding that these words related – how their environment interacted with the time in history in which they grew up, leading to actions that brought them into the prison system. In general, their understanding of their fate is intricately involved with their skin color and the informants' interpretation and understanding of how that aspect played a part in their interactions with society as society moved from one change to another. Thus, these informants' words suggest that they perceived a life-word in which they have always been separated from the mainstream of the American way of life. Further, they suggest that in some way they have been betrayed, disappointed, or outright failed by the society in which they live.

The overall significance of the findings of this study rests in the presentation of the informants' words, thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and understandings without changes or any attempt to fit those words into preconceived notions about their world. As indicated in the methods chapter, past studies and theories about why someone is incarcerated have not included the perceptions and understandings from the informants themselves. These studies usually centered on one aspect of their life-world. This aspect was usually studied within the context of a particular theory regarding criminality. However, the findings of this study suggest that future studies could benefit from a holistic approach to studying the phenomenon of high numbers of black males within our nation's prison system. The approach would need to be multidimensional and cover social/political, cultural, and socioeconomic factors within various contexts. These contexts would need to include larger society and culture, the community, organizations, groups, and the family. Thus no one theory, observation, insight or research finding would be adequate to explain the phenomenon of high numbers of black males within the prison system. These findings suggest that ultimately what would be more appropriate would be a multi-discipline theory to explain a phenomenon such as the one this small exploratory study sought to examine. Thus, any approaches to solving these phenomena would have to be multifaceted to reflect the many and complex contextual, environmental, and individual aspects involved in the concerns about high numbers of black males incarcerated.

Due to time and financial constraints, this study was done as a small exploratory inquiry. Thus, it would be appropriate to do additional studies of the same phenomenon. For example, a larger random sampling of the population of incarcerated black males is warranted to ascertain the generalizability of this study's findings. It would also be important for studies to include larger random samples of the categories of informants used in this current study. These would include the age breakdown. Further, it would be important to future multi-dimension and multi-

faceted theories, and applications for more studies to be done with these age groups in various different locations. This would be important due to the findings of this study. The informants in this study were in southern states, each state with its own environmental and contextual responses to historical and social circumstances. Thus, larger random studies in various locals around the United States would more inclusively reflect the various environmental and contextual nature in which black males live, interact, act, and make decisions.

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APPENDIX A

LITERATURE SEARCH

On December 5, 1998, a literature search was performed using the following sources and categories. No relevant information was found. Mrs. Bridgett Sanders, Associate Professor of Library Science aided the researcher. Searches were performed from 1990 to the present, unless otherwise noted.

Databases: CINAHL (1993-1998), EBSCO - Master File Premier, Academic Search Full Text Elite, ERIC; FirstSearch - Dissertation Abstracts International; National Criminal Justice Reference Service; PsycINFO; Sociofile; UMI ProQuest Direct (1996-present); World News Connection.

Internet search engines: Excite, Highway 61, Hotbot, Lycos, Netscape, Webcrawler, Yahoo.

Search terms: alternatives to incarceration, black inmates, black mistrust, causes and/of black crime, criminal justice, inmates, inmate attitudes, inmate beliefs, inmate perceptions, inmates and phenomenological study, perceptions, phenomenology, phenomenology and inmates, phenomenology and prison, poverty, prisoner studies, prisoners and attitudes, social conditions, sentencing, surveys and inmates, surveys and prisons.

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

[The following statement will be read by the interviewer to the participants before the questionnaire is given out. In South Africa, the translator will also read this statement to the participants in their home language. The interviewer will have a scribe available for those who cannot read or write to assist in the administration of this instrument. The questionnaires, without this statement on it, will then be given to the participants on which to record their responses.]

[I am going to ask you a number of questions about your background and some past experiences. Specifically the questions are concerned with your involvement in activities that led to your arrest and incarceration. Please describe your experiences as fully and thoughtfully as you can. Some questions may be difficult to answer but there are no right or wrong responses. I am interested in your personal experiences and opinions. Sometimes I may seem to be asking you the same question twice. If this happens, please be patient as I am just trying to understand your point of view as clearly as I can. Please feel free to interrupt me at any point to ask any question you might have.]

[DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS]

1. What is your age? _____
2. If you live in South Africa, what is your home language?
3. If you live in the United States what is your race?
4. What is the level of your education? - please check all that apply:
 - _____ No formal schooling
 - _____ Home Schooled
 - _____ Completed primary school (Kindergarten - 6th grade)
 - _____ Completed middle school (7th - 9th grade)
 - _____ Completed high school (10th - 12th grade)
 - _____ Completed high school by exam (in United States that is called the GED)
 - _____ Have Vocational Training

_____ Have two years of college (in United States that is the
completion of an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science)

_____ Have 4 years of college (in United States that is
completion of a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science)

_____ Have a professional degree (Explain what that degree is)

5. What is your writing ability?

_____ I can write.

_____ I can't write.

_____ I have limited writing ability.

6. What is your reading ability?

_____ I can read.

_____ I can't read.

_____ I have limited reading ability.

7. Languages

What languages do you

Read

Write

Speak

8. What is your primary home language?

9. What is your criminal history?

Number of arrests in your life _____

Number of convictions in your life _____

Number of offenses committed _____

10. What is your Juvenile criminal history?

Number of arrests _____

Number of convictions _____

Number of offenses committed _____

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11. How does your society treat black men?
12. Describe your individual treatment as a black male within your society.
13. Do you believe the numbers of black men incarcerated are greater than the numbers of other individuals incarcerated?
14. If you answered yes to number 13 - Using your words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions, please explain why you feel the numbers of black men incarcerated are greater than the numbers of other individuals incarcerated?
15. If you answered no to number 13 - Using your words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions, please explain why you feel the numbers of black men incarcerated are not greater than the numbers of other individuals incarcerated?

16. Using your own feelings, thoughts, and opinions, please explain how you became a criminal offender - be sure to include all factors that you feel influenced you to become an offender.

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17. Some studies suggest that black males commit a majority of crimes in society. Do you agree?
18. Please explain your answer to number 17 using your feelings, thoughts, and opinions.
19. Does poverty create hopelessness in society among black males?
20. Using your feelings, thoughts, and opinions please describe your experience of racism within your society.
21. You are elected President for a day and are given total authority to restore peace, health, and tranquillity within the society you live. How would you do that?
22. Have you belonged to a gang sometime in your life?
23. If your answer was yes to number 22, using your words, thoughts, feelings and opinions, please describe the experience of belonging to a gang and what belonging meant to you.

24. If your answer to number 22 was no, using your words, thoughts, feelings and opinions, please describe why you did not belong to a gang and what not belonging meant to you.
25. What makes you feel secure in relationships and groups?
26. Are you still a member of a gang?
27. If yes, please explain your reasons for remaining in the gang.
28. If no, please explain your reasons for leaving the gang.
29. If you were never in a gang, please explain the reasons you remain a non member.
30. From your viewpoint, does racism exist in your society?
31. Do you believe that racism is a black against white issue?

32. Do you believe that racism is a white against black issue?
33. Using your words, please explain your answers to number 31 and number 32.

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- 34. From your viewpoint does poverty exist in your society?**
- 35. Do you believe that poverty is a black against white issue?**
- 36. Do you believe that poverty is a white against black issues?**
- 37. Using your words, please explain your answers to number 35 and number 36.**
- 38. Do you feel that you are a victim of society because you are incarcerated?**
- 39. Using your words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions, please explain your answer to number 38.**
- 40. Do you feel other factors of society will give black men real opportunity?**
- 41. Using your words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions, please explain your answer to number 40.**

42. What do you feel is the number one problem in your society?
43. Using your words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions please explain your answer to number 42.
44. Are you totally satisfied with your society's policy toward you?
45. Would you change your position in life?
46. Using your words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions please explain your answers to numbers 44 and 45.

[At this point the interviewer will read the following statements and ask if there are any closing questions.]

Thank you for your participation and if you have any additional comments please feel free to include them on the back of this page. As the researcher I will read each of your responses and then I will arrange a second interview with you if I feel there is a need for additional clarification of your responses so that I can fully understand your words, feelings, thoughts, and opinions. I thank you for your assistance and the respect you gave me in allowing me the chance to see your situation through your perception.

This survey is being done in South Africa and in the United States. The translators thank you for your assistance. It is my hope that this study, as part of my Ph.D. dissertation, done at the University of Cape Town, Sociology department, will contribute to positive and prescriptive research, dialogue and practical ideas regarding the respective societies.

APPENDIX C INFORMED CONSENT

Page 1 of 2

Dear Participant:

The following information is being provided to you in order that you will be as informed as possible about the research in which you have been asked to participate. If you have any questions regarding this information, or any aspects of this study, please feel free to ask the chief investigator of this project before you complete this form.

Chief Investigator

The chief investigator for this research project is Tyrone Busch. He is a graduate student at The University of Cape Town pursuing a Ph.D. He is a scholar, professor, consultant, and activist within the United States with interests in the black male experience in and out of prison. Mr. Busch has worked with various prisons within the United States and has helped to facilitate many programs for the inmate population.

Purpose & Benefits

The purpose of this research is to gather information about black males' decisions to participate in illegal activities. By participating in this study, you will have a personal opportunity to become more aware of events in your life. Your participation may also help to illustrate areas where further work might lead to useful programs for black males in prison.

Procedures

This study will involve an interview conducted in complete privacy and confidentiality. The interview will ask some background questions and focus in more depth about your decision to participate in an illegal activity. It will also ask questions regarding your feelings, thoughts, and opinions on social topics considered relevant to the purpose of this study. The interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

Safeguards

Your participation in this study is purely voluntary and is not related to any formal requirements of the prison or legal systems. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions and to discontinue your involvement in this study at any given time, for any or no reason, without being subjected to any prejudice on the part of the investigator or the prison or legal system.

The information obtained about you (as well as every other participant in this study) will be examined in terms of group findings. The reporting of any such findings shall remain

completely anonymous. Individual cases will not be reported, nor will any of the information obtained about you be released to any third parties.

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INFORMED CONSENT

Possible Risks

This study is designed to minimize potential risks to participants. If, at any time, you have any concerns, questions, or upsets, we will be available to discuss them and inform you of options for reducing them. You can contact me through the Sociology department at the University of Cape Town.

Summary Report

At the conclusion of this research project, a summary report containing the results and outcomes of the study will be made available to interested parties. If you would like to receive a copy, please indicate your interest on the next page.

Disclaimer

Participation in this study does not put subjects at risk for emotional or physical injury. However, it is the policy of The University of Cape Town that they will not provide compensation or medical care in the unlikely event injuries are incurred as a result of participation in this research project.

Signatures

I have explained the above components and conditions to this study. I have also provided an opportunity for this subject to ask questions and have attempted to provide satisfactory answers to any questions that have been asked in the course of this explanation.

Chief Investigator

Date

I have read the above information, have had the opportunity to ask questions about this information, and hereby acknowledge my voluntary participation in this study.

Research Participant

Date

University of Cape Town