

THESIS

CORRECTIONAL PERSONNEL ATTITUDES TOWARD CRIME CAUSATION:  
FREE WILL OR DETERMINISM?

Submitted by  
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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### CORRECTIONAL PERSONNEL ATTITUDES TOWARD CRIME CAUSATION: FREE WILL OR DETERMINISM?

For the past several decades interest in correctional personnel has grown steadily. However, little has been written on their attitudes toward crime causation. This study analyzes the results of a survey given to 271 correctional personnel. Using a free will/determinism dichotomy, correctional personnel attitudes toward crime causation are discussed. An analysis of the effects personal (e.g. age, gender) and occupational (e.g. years of correctional experience) characteristics have on predicting how personnel view crime causation is provided. Perceptions of correctional staff on how other members of the criminal justice system (e.g. police, society, judges, Department of Corrections) view crime causation is also discussed.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Many current criminal justice policy debates are tied to basic beliefs about the nature of human beings (Goldkamp 1987). Goddard (1997) discusses how ideological beliefs about crime causation affect policy outcomes. He states that “policy analysis in the field of criminal justice which does not pay significant attention to the role of policy debate about crime causation is likely, with some exceptions, to be flawed and inadequate” (Goddard 1997: 412). Although Goddard (1997) does not discuss ideological beliefs about crime in terms of a free will/determinism dichotomy or how correctional officers’ ideological positioning on crime causation affects institutional policies, it can clearly be applied here with a number of implications for correctional policy within institutions. Correctional officers often have the responsibility of implementing policies that are handed down by prison administrators, and since officers have the most contact with inmates, they are partly responsible for the success or failure of these policies. For these reasons, it is important to determine officers’ attitudes toward crime causation.

### **CLASSIFYING CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR**

Explanations for criminal behavior can be classified into two distinct types: 1) free will causation and 2) deterministic causation. In reality, contemporary beliefs



regarding crime causation most likely fall somewhere between these two extremes (Stroessner and Green 1990).<sup>1</sup> In addition to being polar opposites, there are a number of diverse interpretations of each of these explanations. Since this study dichotomizes the explanation of criminal behavior into either “free will” or “determinism,” no attempt will be made to explore the various shades and degrees of what constitutes free will and determinism.

## **HISTORY – FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM AS CAUSAL EXPLANATIONS**

Throughout history there have been continual shifts between these two explanations for crime causation, with one explanation usually dominating over the other for a given period of time. The dominant explanation has usually been responsible for the prevailing ideology underlying correctional and legal policies created and implemented during that time period.

All theoretical views of man can be seen as organized around one of two principles. The first principle considers man a responsible being who, although not outside the natural order, may make certain choices and bring about events as a prime cause of actively intervening in the world. The opposing view is that man is a complex machine, totally determined by internal and external forces; although he is perhaps quite sophisticated in complexity, he is no more capable of being a true causal agent than a computer. (Furlong 1981: 435)

Since the debate over free will and determinism has existed for centuries and has shaped the legal and penal system in place today, it is important to examine these two concepts in historical terms as they relate to criminal behavior and responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup>For the purpose of this study, explanations for criminal behavior are limited to either a free will reason or a deterministic reason. The study does not investigate if correctional personnel place themselves between these two extremes.

Before the eighteenth century Enlightenment, when religious ideology dominated beliefs about human nature, few people considered whether or not human beings were capable of making rational decisions, and whether or not individuals had any control over their lives. Human action was considered by many to be determined by something above and beyond the control of the individual. Explanations for physical and social events were often attributed to “god’s will.” It was futile to question what was happening in the world, since it was assumed that individuals had no control over changing the course of events. Criminal behavior was deemed as evil and the work of the devil (Cole and Smith 1998). This religious explanation emphasized that human beings, even deviants and criminals, were not capable of freely choosing their actions and could not therefore be held personally responsible for their crimes. Since the beginning of time, we have continually experienced shifts in the ideology behind punishment practices. Historically, punishment was primarily inflicted as a means to reform a criminal through physical punishment and was often excessive and cruel in nature (Tewksbury 1997). Sentences for crimes generally resulted in some sort of infliction of physical pain on the body. For example, the death penalty was a possible sentence for over 200 different crimes in England during the late nineteenth century (Tewksbury 1997). This basic assumption about human nature has been reflected in punishment ideologies (reasons why and how people have been and are punished) that have been dominant in the past, such as corporal versus capital punishment to get rid of the evil spirit within the individual.

The eighteenth century Enlightenment resulted in an influx of philosophers and theorists who were questioning the world as it existed and what was happening in it. One

issue Enlightenment thinkers pondered was what comprised human nature. With the Enlightenment came a change in the organization of the state as well as the rise of attributions to reason and rationality over passion. This in turn gave rise to a shift in the ideology behind punishment practices. According to Michael Ignatieff,

the new order was based on a strong state, an obsession with order, and a reliance on carceral punishment directed at the mind rather than the body in the belief that the criminal could be moulded to bring him back into the social consensus (as discussed in Semple 1993: 10).

Before the Enlightenment, people were punished through physical means because they were seen as being irrational and affected by their emotions and feelings rather than on rational calculation of the consequences that their actions would bring. It was assumed that quick and painful physical punishment would “correct” the criminal. There was no reason to inflict punishments that attempted to change criminal minds. Criminals were considered to be incapable of understanding the consequences of their actions. However, a shift occurred when rationality made its entrance as the governing element of human nature. It no longer made sense to continue punishing people in ways that were inconsistent with the belief in their rationality. The assumption was that physical punishment would not be adequate enough to return the criminal back into a rational, conforming member of society. With the influx of rationalistic thought, religious explanations for criminal behavior were no longer sufficient. It was not enough to attribute criminal behavior to the devil, as the individual was now assumed to be able to have the capacity to make his or her own rational decisions. Since the fundamental assumption of human nature had changed, so did the explanations given for crime and the

punishment of criminal behavior. Cesare Beccaria made one of the first attempts to explain crime in non-religious terms (Cole and Smith 1998). Beccaria's *Essay on Crime and Punishments* was published in 1764. In this work, Beccaria provides a set of principles for the reformation of the criminal legal system (Monachesi 1960). Within his essay Beccaria provides a rationale for why and how people should be punished, as well as what the purpose of punishment should be. He believed that the ultimate objective of punishment was deterrence. He also believed that punishment was an "educative process" (Monachesi 1960: 44), whereby an offender (and society) would learn from his or her mistakes and would be prevented from further harming society. Beccaria's basic principles regarding punishment assumed that people were rational human beings who had free will to choose their behaviors.

Other penal reformers at this time acquired Beccaria's principles and sought to "make criminal law and procedures more rational and consistent" (Cole and Smith 1998). The classical school of criminology was a result of this effort. The classical school believed that criminals were rational, decision-making individuals who made conscious choices. In addition, everyone was hedonistic. This meant that everyone was making a conscious choice to act after weighing how much pleasure or pain a particular act would bring. People would choose the course of action that would bring them the most pleasure (as they perceived it). Given the absence of pain or criminal punishment, everyone would choose the pleasure crime could provide. Further, proponents of this school believed that because criminals made rational decisions to commit crime, they could be deterred from such activity by the threat of swift, severe, and certain punishments.

In the 1870s the classical school's dominant influence was beginning to wane. A new school of thought for explaining crime and punishment arose and became dominant--positive criminology. The shift to this new ideology occurred partly as a result of the growing emphasis on the scientific method. "Science could help to reveal why offenders committed crimes and how they could be rehabilitated" (Cole and Smith 1998: 71). This change saw the return of determinism, albeit a modified version (i.e. non-religious), as a dominant explanation for criminal behavior.

The first explanations for criminal behavior were located in biology. The positivist school believed that criminals were sick or diseased and could be healed through various treatments once the cause of their individual sicknesses was identified. These beliefs eventually resulted in the medical model of corrections. The medical model endorsed rehabilitation as the way to "cure" the sickness that ails individuals who commit criminal offenses.

In addition to biology, the positivist school later incorporated notions that an individual's decision to commit a crime was based on sociological and psychological factors. This suggested a deterministic explanation for criminal behavior. The positivist school assumed that criminals were inherently different individuals, and that there were different reasons why individuals commit crimes. The individual did not make a conscious or rational choice to commit a crime. His or her actions were a response to, or a result of, the environment in which he or she inherited, grew up, or found themselves in.

The positive school of criminology maintains, on the contrary, that it is not the criminal who wills; in order to be a criminal it is rather necessary that the individual should find himself permanently or transitorily in such

personal, physical and moral conditions, and live in such an environment, which become for him a chain of cause and effect, externally and internally, that dispose him toward crime. (Ferri 1953: 134).

Essentially, the positivist school returned to a more deterministic explanation for criminal behavior, but the locus of determination was different. Instead of religious determinism, the focus had shifted to environmental (biological, psychological, sociological) determinism.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The above discussion has focused on the historical development of free will and determinism as explanations for crime and criminal behavior, as well as in providing justifications for different types of punishment. The debate over free will and deterministic explanations continues today. Sociological and criminological research has focused primarily on explaining the different definitions and types of free will and determinism as they relate to criminal behavior and responsibility (Agnew 1995; Akers 1990; Denno 1988).

One issue that is conspicuously missing from the literature on free will and determinism is how members of the criminal justice system view criminal behavior. For example, studies have examined police officer attitudes (Fielding and Fielding 1991) and probation officer attitudes (Stalans and Lurigio 1990) toward crime, but few if any have looked at what they perceive the causes of crime to be. Very little if anything has been written on how members of the correctional system view inmates and their behavior and their responsibility for these behaviors. This is despite the fact that it has been well established that correctional officers have considerable influence on inmates, both

positively and negatively (American Correctional Association 1966; Glaser 1969; Chang and Zastrow 1976; Weekes et al 1995).

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

For the past several decades, interest in correctional officers has grown steadily. While much has been written on officers' attitudes toward a wide variety of professional and occupational factors, little if anything has been written on correctional officer attitudes toward crime causation. Since correctional officers have an important influence on inmates, it is important to understand how they view the issue of crime causation. How an officer attributes crime causation may affect how he/she interacts with inmates on a daily basis, which may in turn affect inmates' adjustment to prison and post-prison life. In addition, this may affect inmates' successful reintegration into society.

Using the free will/determinism dichotomy as the two possible ideological explanations for criminal behavior, this study evaluates the attitudes of correctional personnel toward crime causation. The study also examines what effect personal characteristics of correctional personnel, such as age, gender, religious orientation, race/ethnicity, and number of years of correctional experience, have on predicting how they view crime causation.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the literature regarding correctional officer attitudes toward a variety of issues, with particular attention given to attitudes toward inmates, punishment ideologies, and rehabilitation and treatment programs. Since very little has been written on correctional officer attitudes toward crime causation, and nothing has been written on correctional officer attitudes on a free will/determinism

dichotomy, the literature review focuses on providing a background of various studies on correctional officer attitudes that have been done and the topics they have focused on.

Although the question of correctional officer attitudes on crime causation is relatively untouched in the literature, many of the independent variables to be considered here have been looked at in other studies. The literature review provides an overview of the relationship of personal characteristic variables, such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, religion and number of years of correctional experience, to various studies related to correctional officers.

Chapter Three describes the research hypotheses, data collection methods, research instrument, and methods of statistical analysis used in this study. This study analyzes the results of a survey of correctional personnel from four medium-security prisons in the mid-west on the issue of crime causation using the free will/determinism dichotomy. The questionnaire used in this study asked correctional personnel to indicate how they perceive the causes of crime, giving either a free will reason or a deterministic reason. It examines how correctional personnel overall perceive inmate criminality, and how they perceive others as viewing crime causation on the same free will/determinism dichotomy. The study looks at the relationship of age, gender, education, number of years of correctional experience, and religion to where correctional personnel place themselves on the free will/determinism dichotomy. The study also briefly examines the relationship between correctional officers and case workers, as two distinct personnel groups within the institution, in attributing free will or determinism reasons for inmate criminality.



Chapter Four presents the findings of this study. The findings related to the research hypotheses are discussed. Results of the percentage frequency distributions, cross tabulations, and discriminant analysis are presented and analyzed.

The fifth and final chapter includes a discussion and conclusions. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents a discussion of the findings and how they relate to current research findings in the literature.

The second section provides a comparison with Holbert and Unnithan's (1990) study of inmate self-perception. Holbert and Unnithan (1990) examined "the criminal self-perception of adult offenders, using the free will/determinism dichotomy" (43). They asked prison inmates to reflect on the causes of their own criminality, giving either a free will or a deterministic response. They also asked inmates to indicate their perception of how others (society/public, correctional officers, other inmates, police officers, Diagnostic and Evaluation staff psychologists and staff, judges, and the Department of Corrections) viewed their criminality.

The third section will look at the relationship between how inmates perceive custodial staff as viewing the causes of crime (as found in Holbert and Unnithan's (1990) study), and how these two groups indicate their views on crime. The relationship between how inmates perceive the causes of their own criminality and how correctional personnel perceive inmates as viewing their criminality will also be analyzed. The third section provides policy implications. Recommendations for future related research on correctional officer attitudes on crime causation will also be made and discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Front line correctional personnel have the most contact and interaction with inmates, and it has been well established that correctional officers have considerable influence on inmates, both positively and negatively (American Correctional Association 1966; Chang and Zastrow 1976; Glaser 1969; Weekes et al 1995). Researchers did not begin studying correctional officers in great detail until the 1960's. In the past two decades, more has been written on correctional officers as it becomes increasingly clear how important officers are in influencing both inmates and correctional policies. "It has been argued that the development of good relationships between COs [correctional officers] and inmates can be an important avenue for influencing offenders in pro-social ways" (Lariviere and Robinson 1996: 1). The influence of correctional officers is primarily due to the vast amount of time officers spend in contact with inmates.

### **HISTORY AND TYPES OF STUDIES ON CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS**

Previous studies have examined officers' attitudes toward their work environment (Jacobs 1978); professional and occupational orientation of correctional officers (Whitehead et al 1987; Bazemore and Dicker 1994); correctional orientation (such as support of rehabilitation) of correctional officers (Cullen et al 1989b) and prison wardens (Cullen et al 1993), and organizational commitment (Liou 1995). Although some studies

have examined correctional officer attitudes toward particular types of offenders, such as rapists within the prison (Eigenberg 1989), mentally ill inmates (Kropp 1989), and sex offenders (Weekes et al 1995), few have focused attention on attitudes toward the general population of inmates (Chang and Zastrow 1976; Jacobs 1978; Jacobs and Kraft 1978; Jurik 1985).

Other studies have examined how criminal justice professionals and members of the public view crime and inmates. Such studies include: police officer attitudes toward crime and punishment (Fielding and Fielding 1991); public attitudes toward punishment and treatment of offenders (Cullen et al 1985; Cullen et al 1988); probation officers' and laypersons' beliefs about crime and criminal sentencing (Stalans and Lurigio 1990). However, few, if any, studies have focused on correctional officer attitudes toward crime causation. Jacobs (1978), in his study of Illinois correctional officers, mentions one item on attitudes toward crime causation. Jacobs' (1978) study included a discussion of guards' response to the question: "why do inmates commit crimes?" (192). There were five options to choose from and respondents could give multiple responses. The options respondents could choose from and the percent indicating each option were: because they are poor (58 percent); because they come from broken homes (56 percent); because they freely choose to (55 percent); because they are sick or have mental problems (53 percent); and lastly, because they are born criminal (13 percent). Jacobs (1978) concludes that "Illinois guards also favor deterministic– sociological and psychological– explanations of crime causation" and that "respondents adopted a multicausal theory of criminality,

giving some support to all the social science theories of criminality and rejecting decisively only the theory that people are born to be criminals” (16).

Although Jacobs (1978) included the crime causation question, the theoretical and methodological issues connected with and the implications of his study must be considered. First, he distinguished between biological and social science theories. The deterministic explanation for crime causation includes biological, psychological and sociological theories. Respondents in Jacob’s (1978) study were given four deterministic choices and only one free will choice. Secondly, there is only a two percentage point difference between one of the deterministic options (because they are poor-58 percent) and the free will option (56 percent). The least indicated of the deterministic options-- because they are sick or have mental problems (53 percent)-- is three percentage points less than the free will option (56 percent). These percentages are fairly close. In addition, it is difficult to assess if guards really favor deterministic reasons over free will reasons. If we take the average of the three deterministic reasons as Jacobs (1978) classifies them, it is even more difficult to determine how guards attribute criminality. When these three reasons were averaged together, 55.7 percent of the respondents indicated a deterministic response, which is only 0.3 percent less than the percentage of respondents who indicated the free will choice. Therefore, Jacobs’ (1978) findings do not warrant a conclusion that correctional officers favor deterministic explanations. Since officers have the most contact with and influence on inmates, the issue of how officers view crime causation warrants greater attention.

## **ATTITUDES**

According to Ortet-Fabregat and Perez (1992), “social attitudes are related to opinions about the causes of antisocial behaviour and viewpoints about how to prevent and treat crime” (194). Attitudes are also often considered to be predictors of behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1992). In correctional institutions, where correctional officers and inmates are in constant contact, it is important to consider how officers’ attitudes toward the causes of crime affect their interaction with inmates, and how this interaction will directly or indirectly affect inmates. For example, Cullen et al (1985) found that the punitive attitudes toward inmates was highly correlated with how people attribute the causes of crime (in Langworthy and Whitehead 1986). If officers have negative attitudes towards inmates, it is possible they may behave negatively toward inmates. Studying the attitudes of correctional officers and other criminal justice professionals toward crime may contribute to the successful implementation of reintegrative and rehabilitation programs (Melvin et al 1985; Ortet-Fabregat 1992)

## **IDEOLOGY**

Philosophies and attitudes officers’ believe in are important in understanding their behavior towards inmates. Free will and determinism are part of larger ideological structures, namely political or “sociopolitical” (Carroll et al 1987: 107) ideologies. A number of studies have investigated the relationship between political ideology– liberal versus conservative– and attitudes towards crime and punishment. This section of the literature review will look at how the dichotomy of political ideologies can be connected to the philosophical dichotomy of crime causation.

## ***POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND CRIME CAUSATION***

According to Walter Miller (1973), “ideology and its consequences exert a powerful influence on the policies and procedures of those who conduct the enterprise of criminal justice, and the degree and kinds of influence go largely unrecognized” (142). Determining what ideologies correctional officers, as influential actors in the criminal justice system, adhere to, and the potential consequences of these ideological positions are is an essential part of investigating influences on inmates and policies in correctional institutions.

Miller (1973) distinguishes between two major ideological positions: the “right” and the “left”. The “right” ideological position is referred to as a politically conservative position, and the “left” as politically liberal. Underlying each position are certain assumptions about crime and criminals. Miller (1973) says that the ideology of the “right” assumes that individuals are responsible for their behaviors, that they have a “capacity to make choices between right and wrong” (144). He also states that this position is concerned with the issue of excessive leniency toward criminals.

The ideological left assumes that “crime is to a greater extent a product of external social pressures than of internally generated individual motives” (Miller 1973: 145). The left is also concerned with how criminal behavior is sanctioned. They are concerned with “overinstitutionalization,” which Miller (1973) defines as the dissatisfaction with the fact that criminals are too often sent to correctional institutions as punishment (144-145). Clearly, conservatives place the locus of criminal behavior within individual

responsibility while liberals place the locus of criminal behavior outside of the individual's control.

Miller (1973) hypothesizes that the majority of correctional employees, especially front line correctional officers, are more likely to align with the right because of their working-class background. Ollenburger (1986), in her study of the Scottish juvenile justice system, also makes this prediction. She uses classical criminology to "reflect a working class, or more accurately, a commonsense notion of justice" (1986: 373).

Ortet-Fabregat and Perez (1992) discuss the attitudinal differences between criminal justice professionals who adopt either the conservative or the liberal ideology. They suggest that those who adopt the conservative attitude believe that crime is a matter of individual free will, and as a result they are more likely to emphasize punishment for criminal behavior. Those who adopt the liberal attitude are more likely to believe that crime is a result of environmental and social [deterministic] influences.<sup>2</sup> Viney et al (1982), in their discussion of Nettler's (1959) research, conclude that officers who support a free will explanation "are more likely to recommend punishment for behavioral deviation than determinists" (939-940)

There are a number of conflicting findings with regard to how ideological beliefs affect attitudes toward crime. Viney et al (1982) found that those who believe in free will are not more likely than determinists to support punitive measures. Viney et al (1982) found that "determinists recommend more punitive measure for behavioral deviations"

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<sup>2</sup>For more complete discussions, see Kennedy and Homant 1986, and Ollenburger 1986).

than those who believe in free will (943). In a later study, Viney et al (1988) found that no differences exist in support for punishment between these two ideological positions.

Even though there are a few conflicting results, the vast majority of the research supports the idea that there is a difference in punitiveness between those who believe in free will and those who believe in determinism. It seems very likely that officers' ideological attitude on the locus of crime causation (either free will or determinism) will affect their behaviors toward inmates, as well as the internal workings of the correctional institution. Understanding the consequences of beliefs in free will or determinism (Viney et al 1982) may lead to a better understanding of officers' behaviors toward inmates. Officers who support a free will explanation for crime causation may have difficulty investing time and energy into treatment programs and policies. This type of internal conflict may produce stress and dissatisfaction for officers, and may lead to the failure of institutional programs and policies. As Teske and Williamson (1979) suggest, "since the officer is expected to favorably influence inmate participation in and acceptance of the treatment programs, it is only logical that he be placed in a situation such that he can defend and promote that program with all good conscience" (60). Therefore, understanding correctional officers' attitudes toward crime causation may lead to a better understanding of why some institutional policies and programs have failed. It could also result in more effective implementation of policies and programs.

## **PREDICTORS OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICER ATTITUDES**

Correctional officers are not only expected to support institutional policies, they are also considered to be largely responsible for the success or failure of these policies.



Again, this is primarily a result of the amount of time spent in interaction with inmates.

A number of studies have examined whether or not there are any variables that can predict how correctional officers will fall on a particular issue. Whitehead and Lindquist (1989) suggest that:

an attempt has been made to clarify officers' attitudes toward inmates and toward on-the-job interaction with inmates. If we assume that officers' attitudes have at least some impact on interaction patterns between officers and inmates (i.e., that some degree of consistency exists between officers' attitudes and their behavior), knowledge about the sources of such attitudes could be useful to researchers in regard to development of causal models, and to correctional managers in regard to recruitment and training of employees. (70)

The sources of attitudes that Whitehead and Lindquist (1989) refer to are operationalized as independent (predictor) variables. These variables usually fall into two categories: personal characteristics and job-related characteristics. The following section will review literature that has investigated the usefulness of predictor variables in explaining correctional officer attitudes.

## **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Personal characteristics constitutes one category of predictor variables. Several studies concerning correctional officers have looked at how personal characteristics affect correctional officers' perceptions of and attitudes toward their work environment and attitudes toward inmates. Personal characteristics examined in this study are: age, gender, race, religion, and education.

## **AGE**

Teske and Williamson (1979) found that age was related to officers' attitudes toward treatment programs. They drew a systematic random sample of correctional officers from the Texas Department of Corrections. Their research instrument was designed to measure correctional officer attitudes toward treatment programs, and to determine what variables could be used as independent variables. They found a positive relationship between age and attitudes toward treatment programs. The older the officer, the more positive he or she was in his or her attitude toward treatment programs.

Crouch and Alpert (1982) also found that age was significantly related to attitudes. They studied changes in punitive and aggressive attitudes of correctional officers over a period of six months. In their analysis, age was divided into categories of younger (18-21 years), middle (22-34 years), and older (35 and over) age groups. They found that age was a significant indicator of punitiveness between the younger and older age groups and middle and older groups, but was not significant between the youngest and middle groups. Crouch and Alpert (1982) found that the older group had significantly more tolerant attitudes toward inmates than the other two groups. They concluded that gender may have affected this finding. Approximately half of the older group was comprised of females. When they controlled for gender, they found that no significant relationship existed between age and attitudes toward inmates.

Jurik (1985) studied whether or not the interaction patterns between inmates and correctional officers was effected by race, gender, and education. She distributed a self-administered survey to state department officers in one western state. She found age to be

a significant indicator of attitudes toward inmates. Like Teske and Williamson (1979), Jurik's (1985) study revealed that more optimistic attitudes toward inmates were held by older officers. However, she found a problem with the age factor, although not to the extent that Crouch and Alpert (1982) did. She found that only when other predictor variables were held constant did the age factor become significant at the 0.05 level.

Toch and Klofas (1982) also found that age was a significant predictor of officer attitudes. They studied correctional officer attitudes toward job-related alienation and desire for job enrichment. Toch and Klofas (1982) administered 1739 questionnaires to officers in four maximum security prisons, of which 832 completed questionnaires were returned. Age was divided into five categories: Under 25, 25-30, 30-40, 40-50, and over 50. Within these age groups, they found that "officers tend to mellow with age" (1982: 41). They also found that young officers were more custody-oriented than other officers, and that the human-service orientation increased with age.

Arthur (1994) administered a questionnaire to black correctional line officers in the Georgia Department of Corrections in order to explore their attitudes toward three punishment ideologies-- rehabilitation, retribution, and deterrence. Arthur's (1994) study was unique in that a number of independent variables he identifies have primarily been used as dependent variables. For example, in addition to gender, age, education, and income, other independent variables included public perception, support for courts, support for capital punishment, support for drug war, and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was three-item variable that measured job satisfaction, job security, and opportunities for advancement. Within this framework, age was a significant factor in

officers' attitudes toward deterrence. Arthur (1994) also found that the deterrence ideology was more likely to be supported by officers who were forty years or older. Arthur (1994) found that retribution was more likely to be supported by officers who were under forty years of age.

Bazemore and Dicker (1994) were concerned with determining the sources of detention worker orientation. They distributed self-administered questionnaires to detention workers in two regional detention centers in a southeastern state. Age was divided into five categories: under 30, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and over. Their findings support those of Teske and Williamson (1979), Jurik (1985), and Toch and Klofas (1982). Bazemore and Dicker (1994) found that age was not related to treatment orientation, but was negatively related to punitiveness. Younger officers were more likely to support a punitive attitude toward inmates.

Liou (1995) studied the professional orientation and organizational commitment of juvenile detention workers from two southeastern regional metropolitan detention centers. Although Liou (1995) did not focus on adult correctional officers, the relevance of the findings are important for identifying variables that may predict officer attitudes. Age was divided into five categories: under 30, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 or over. Liou (1995) found that age was significantly related to attitudes toward both treatment and punishment. Age was positively correlated to treatment attitudes and negatively correlated to attitudes on punishment. In other words, older workers were more likely to exhibit treatment-related attitudes toward juveniles. Liou's (1995) findings corroborate

the conclusions made by Teske and Williamson (1979), Jurik (1985), and Toch and Klofas (1982).

Lariviere and Robinson (1996) found similar results in their study. They also considered a number of individual characteristics in their study of federal Canadian correctional officers. These characteristics were studied in relation to three attitudes: empathy, punitiveness, and rehabilitation. Age was divided into four categories: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, and 50 and over. Lariviere and Robinson (1996) found that as age increased, so did positive attitudes toward inmates. They found that 41 percent of officers in the 50 and over age category were empathetic toward inmates, while only eight percent of the 20-29 age group were empathetic. Lariviere and Robinson (1996) found that older officers were less punitive than younger officers. They found that 64 percent of officers 50 years old and 81.3 percent of 20-29 years old were classified as punitive. Similarly, older officers were more likely than younger officers to show slightly greater support of rehabilitation.

From the studies that have been conducted thus far, age has been found to be a predictor of attitudes. All studies, except for Crouch and Alpert's (1982) study, found that older officers (and detention workers in Liou's (1995) study) are more likely than younger officers to have more positive attitudes toward inmates. Teske and Williamson (1979), Jurik (1985), Toch and Klofas (1982), and Liou (1995) found that older officers are more likely than younger officers to support treatment and counseling, indicating positive attitudes towards inmates.

## ***GENDER***

Another variable that has been examined to determine its significance in predicting correctional officer attitudes is gender. Kassebaum et al (1964) administered a 28 item questionnaire to 4600 California Department of Corrections staff members (4062 were used in the analysis). They studied job-related attitudes of correctional officers toward such things as treatment programs, the effects of these programs, and inmate management. For 27 out of 28 items, Kassebaum et al (1964) found that gender was not a significant indicator of attitudes. The exception they found was related to treatment and security issues. Kassebaum et al (1964) found that women were more likely than men to “withhold treatment if security were affected” (106).

Crouch and Alpert (1982) also looked at the relationship of gender and officer attitudes. They found that gender was a strong predictor of attitudes on punitiveness and aggressiveness. When gender was controlled for, they found that female officers’ attitudes toward inmates changed over time within female units, and male officers’ attitudes toward inmates changed within men’s prisons. Crouch and Alpert (1982) found that “within this context, women guards become much more tolerant and nonpunitive over time, while their male counterparts become increasingly punitive and aggressive” (169-170).

Crouch and Alpert’s (1982) study has somewhat limited applicability due to the differences in men’s and women’s units within institutions. They discuss possible reasons for the gender difference in tolerant attitudes toward inmates, engaging in a lengthy discussion of the atmosphere and socialization in male versus female units.

However, they do not examine empirically the role that gender plays in the prediction of attitudes towards inmates as a whole. The comparison would be stronger if the effects of gender were looked at in men's prisons that employ both male and female guards.

However, since Crouch and Alpert (1982) separate gender of officers by male and female units, it is unclear whether or not gender is a predictor variable of correctional officer attitudes.

Jurik and Halembe (1984) also studied the effects of gender on correctional officer attitudes. They looked at the gender differences regarding attitudes toward working conditions and job satisfaction in men's prisons. Jurik and Halembe (1984) distributed a questionnaire to correctional officers in a medium-minimum institution in the west. They measured officers' punitive attitudes toward inmates. They found that gender was not a significant indicator of punitiveness toward inmates. In fact, Jurik and Halembe (1984) found that for all but one item (need for discretion on the job), there was no significant difference of attitudes between genders. However, a number of differences exist between background characteristics of officers (e.g. level of education, reasons for seeking employment in corrections and place of residence).

Jurik (1985) looked at the importance of individual and organizational factors in predicting officers' attitudes toward inmates. Consistent with a previous study with (Jurik and Halembe 1984), Jurik (1985) found that gender did not significantly influence officers' attitudes toward inmates. This finding was evident in both the bivariate correlation and multivariate analysis that were performed on the data.

Whitehead et al (1987) studied officer attitudes towards inmates using the Klofas-Toch professional orientation inventory. They mailed surveys to two groups of subjects in Alabama. The first group consisted of 258 correctional officers, and the second group consisted of 108 adult probation officers. They intended to look at gender differences as one predictor variable, but later omitted women from the study. Women were omitted because Whitehead et al (1987) felt there were too few women in the first group (approximately 10 percent) as well as in the total population of correctional officers in Alabama (approximately 8 percent). However, at one point in their analysis they do say that females were omitted “because there were no gender differences and because there were so few females” (479). There were no gender differences in attitudes toward inmates among correctional officers when women were included in the analysis.

Cullen, Link, Cullen, and Wolfe (1989a) investigated correctional officer attitudes toward job satisfaction. They found that gender was not related to attitudes toward job satisfaction. In addition, Cullen, Lutze, Link and Travis (1989b) used the same data set of 250 officers from a southern state as Cullen, Link, Cullen and Wolfe (1989a). They found that gender was not related to attitudes toward rehabilitation.

Bazemore and Dicker (1994) found conflicting results in their study. Gender was not found to be related to the treatment orientation, but was negatively related to punitiveness. Their findings indicated that punitiveness was more likely to be expressed by men than women. Liou’s (1995) study revealed similar findings. He found that punitive attitudes of detention workers was negatively correlated to gender.



Lariviere and Robinson (1996) found no significant gender differences in relation to both empathetic and punitive attitudes toward inmates. However, Lariviere and Robinson (1996) did find that “females were significantly more likely to support rehabilitating offenders than males” (13).

A majority of studies have concluded that gender has no effect on officers’ attitudes. Therefore, there is overwhelming evidence to support the conclusion that gender is not a significant factor in predicting correctional officer attitudes.

### ***RACE***

Researchers have also examined the significance of correctional officers’ race in predicting attitudes towards inmates. As previously mentioned, research on correctional officers began to flourish in the 1970s. Research in the 1970s began by looking at the differences between the race of correctional officers and the race of inmates. Significant racial differences were found to exist between officers and inmates among correctional populations. Questions arose over the racial composition of prison guards, and researchers began looking at the significance of antecedent variables on influencing correctional officer attitudes toward inmates. Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) reported that “prior research has suggested that race is related to fear and punitiveness” (587). Many correctional institutions began “emphasizing the hiring of minorities for prison work” (11) after racial and ethnic differences between prisoners and guards became of interest (Philliber 1987 in citing the work of Hawkins 1976, McEleney 1985, and Wicks 1980).

The primary objective of Jacobs and Kraft's (1978) study of prison guards was to "verify empirically the popularly held assumption that replacing veteran white rural prison guards with young black urban guards will significantly ameliorate tension, strain and conflict in the prison community" (304). They administered a questionnaire to 231 in-service guards at two Illinois correctional institutions. They wanted to compare the responses of black correctional officers to white correctional officers. The study measured officers' attitudes toward inmates, their job, the staff, the correctional system, and their commitment as an officer. They found, contrary to what they expected, that black officers showed less empathy than white officers toward inmates. In terms of attitudes toward rehabilitation and punitiveness, Jacobs and Kraft (1978) found that black officers indicate more punitive attitudes toward inmates. They found that while both black and white officers supported rehabilitation, black officers were more likely than white officers to perceive the purpose of imprisonment as punishment. In addition, Jacobs and Kraft (1978) found that black officers were less likely to believe that inmates were "decent people" (308). A significant finding of Jacobs and Kraft (1978) was that black officers tended to be more liberal than white officers. When officers were asked to indicate their political and social views, "fifty-seven percent of the blacks and twenty-five percent of the whites said either 'very' or 'somewhat' liberal; on the other hand, sixteen percent of the blacks and thirty-one percent of the whites described themselves as either 'very' or 'somewhat' conservative" (Jacobs and Kraft 1978: 307).

While Jacobs and Kraft (1978) found some differing attitudes between black and white officers, these differences were not in the "expected" direction. They also found

that no significant differences toward some attitudes existed between black and white officers. They found that no racial differences existed on the issue of the social distance between officers and inmates. Jacobs and Kraft (1978) also found that regardless of race, the majority of officers believed that “inmates try to take advantage of officers whenever they can” and “most inmates lack morals” (308). In addition, they found that most guards, regardless of race, did not believe that black guards “get along better with inmates” (Jacobs and Kraft 1978: 308).

Although Jacobs and Kraft (1978) found some differences in the attitudes of black and white officers, there were several similarities and a number of findings that were not in the expected direction. Based on these inconsistencies, they concluded that race did not have a significant influence on officer attitudes toward inmates, staff, correctional goals, or their occupation.

A number of other studies have looked at whether or not the racial background of correctional officers affects their attitudes toward inmates. In their study of correctional officer alienation, Toch and Klofas (1982) primarily focused on the differences between officers who worked in urban versus rural areas. They found that city-based officers were more likely to be minorities. Within this framework, they found that race was somewhat significant in predicting attitudes. They concluded that “black officers must be hired for reasons *other* than their presumed propensity to relate more closely to black inmates” (Toch and Klofas 1982: 43). As Toch and Klofas (1982) note in their article, this supports Jacobs and Kraft’s (1978) finding that black officers were not more likely than white officers to either identify with inmates or feel that inmates needed to be treated

more humanely. Toch and Klofas (1982) also found that race was an important indicator of job satisfaction. They found that urban minority officers were more likely to feel alienated than rural white officers. In Toch and Klofas's (1982) analysis, race had a significant influence on more than one scale of attitudes.

Crouch and Alpert (1982) looked at the affects of correctional officers' race in their study of the occupational socialization of correctional officers. They found, through analyses of variance and covariance, that race did not have a significant impact on officers' punitiveness or aggressiveness. However, Jurik's (1985) study of correctional officers clearly contradicts Jacobs and Kraft (1978) and Crouch and Alpert (1982). She found that officers with a minority group membership held more positive attitudes toward inmates.<sup>3</sup>

Whitehead et al (1987) replicated and tested the reliability of Toch and Klofas's (1982) professional orientation inventory. Whitehead et al (1987) concluded that race *could* be an important factor in assessing professional orientation. The indecisiveness of the statement is due to contradictions in Toch and Klofas's (1982) original studies. Toch and Klofas (1982) found that race was somewhat significant in terms of attitudes toward

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<sup>3</sup> Jurik (1985) discusses the possible reasons for the discrepancies found between her study and Jacobs and Kraft (1978). She says that the difference could have occurred because of the differences in the regional and institutional settings of the two studies. Jurik says that the disparities could have been a result of the inclusion of nonblack minority group members in her sample. She also indicated that the discrepancies could be a result of different data analysis techniques. A final explanation given by Jurik is that different operational definitions of the age and seniority variables could have effected the findings.

feelings of alienation in their jobs. However, they also concluded that race was not a significant factor in assessing officer attitudes toward inmates.

Whitehead and Lindquist (1989) also examined the effects of race on officers' attitudes toward inmates. In their heterogeneous sample, they found that, contrary to popular opinion, black officers indicated a preference for greater social distance between themselves and inmates, while white officers preferred less social distance. However, when separate regression analyses were performed, variance in attitudes could not be accounted for. Age of entry into corrections was a significant factor for white officers on attitudes toward social difference, but was not significant for black officers. In addition, security status was more important for black officers than white officers in influencing attitudes toward social distance.

Contrary to their expectations, Whitehead and Lindquist (1989) did not find that white officers were more negative than black officers, or that black officers were more likely to identify with inmates. An exception to this finding was on the issue of punitiveness. White officers showed more punitiveness than black officers. Their findings are in agreement with Toch and Klofas (1982). Toch and Klofas (1982) also found that black officers were not more likely than white officers to identify with inmates. However, Whitehead and Lindquist's (1989) findings contradict Jurik's (1985). As mentioned above, she found that minority officers were more positive than white officers toward inmates.

Cullen et al (1989b) studied correctional officer support for rehabilitation. They focused on whether or not personal characteristics were significant sources of support for

rehabilitation. They sent questionnaires to 250 line staff employed in a southern correctional system. Cullen et al (1989b) found that race was a significant influence on officers' support for rehabilitation. Black officers were more positive toward inmates; they were more likely than white officers to support treatment and rehabilitation.

One of the variables Cullen et al (1989b) examined in their study of job satisfaction was race. They found that race was statistically significant in levels of job satisfaction. Black officers were more likely than white officers to be less satisfied with prison work. This conclusion supported Toch and Klofas's (1982) finding that race had a significant influence on job satisfaction and alienation.

A recent study by Arthur (1994) considered the effects of race and correctional officer attitudes. In his study of the attitudes of black officers, Arthur (1994) found a number of significant influences on black correctional officers' support for rehabilitation: job satisfaction, social class, support for drug war, officers' perception of the public's perception of correctional officer roles, officers' perception of the courts. For example, officers who were satisfied with their job and who supported the war on drugs were more likely to support rehabilitation.

Bazemore and Dicker (1994) also examined whether or not race had an effect on officer attitudes toward inmates. They did not explain the specific effects of race on attitudes in their discussion. However, they did conclude that none of their independent variables, including race, were related to the treatment orientation. Bazemore and Dicker (1994) discussed factors that had significant influences on punitiveness in their study. They found that race was not a significant factor in predicting punitiveness and treatment.

The studies examined in this review report mixed findings on the effects of race on correctional officer attitudes. The literature clearly reveals that stereotypes about black officers do not hold up empirically. On one hand, Jacobs and Kraft (1978), Toch and Klofas (1982), Whitehead and Lindquist (1989), and Cullen et al (1989) found that contrary to popular beliefs, black officers are not more likely to identify with inmates or to show greater support for treatment. On the other hand, Jurik (1985) found that black officers are generally more positive than white officers toward inmates. Crouch and Alpert (1982), Klofas (1986), and Bazemore and Dicker (1994) found that race was not a significant factor at all, while Whitehead et al (1987) concluded that race could be a factor. Based on the conflicting evidence, it is unclear what effect race has on correctional officer attitudes.

### ***RELIGION***

Very few studies have looked at the effects of religion on correctional officer attitudes. The study by Teske and Williamson (1979) is the exception. In their study of Texas Department of Corrections officers, they examined the influences of officers' religious affiliations as one possible source of attitudes toward treatment. Although Teske and Williamson (1979) found that regular church attendance had a positive effect on officers' attitudes, they found that church denomination had no significant effect on attitudes toward treatment.

### ***EDUCATION***

A fifth variable that has been examined in terms of influencing correctional officer attitudes is education. Teske and Williamson (1979) found that level of education

was significant in influencing officers' attitudes toward treatment. Their study indicates that officers with higher levels of education tend to have more positive attitudes toward treatment.

Poole and Regoli (1980) found similar results in their study of role stress and custody orientation. Custody orientation is defined by Poole and Regoli (1980) as officers' commitment to security and the control of inmates. They also associate custodial orientation with officers' punitiveness toward inmates and inmate activities. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 144 correctional officers in a maximum-security penitentiary in a Midwestern state. They found that custody orientation is reduced as level of education increases. Liou (1995) concluded that education influences juvenile detention worker attitudes. This study found that education was positively related to treatment orientations. As education level increased, so did the officers' support for treatment.

Crouch and Alpert's findings conflict with Teske and Williamson (1979), Poole and Regoli (1980), and Liou (1995). Crouch and Alpert (1982) found that education was not a significant influence on changes in officers' attitudes toward punitiveness and aggression over a six month period. Jurik's (1985) study supports Crouch and Alpert's (1982) findings. Jurik (1985) also found that educational attainment was not a significant indicator (at the .05 level) of officer attitudes toward inmates. Jurik (1985) concluded that "in neither the bivariate nor the multivariate case did female or highly educated officers demonstrate significantly more positive attitudes toward inmates" (534).



Cullen et al (1989b) support the findings of Crouch and Alpert (1982) and Jurik (1985). Cullen et al (1989b) found that higher levels of education did not significantly influence officers' attitudes toward custody or rehabilitation orientations. Whitehead and Lindquist (1989) support these findings as well. In their study, education was not a significant influence on officers' attitudes toward inmates or toward interaction with inmates. Arthur (1994), in his study of black correctional officers, also found that education did not have a significant influence on correctional officer attitudes (1994). However, Bazemore and Dicker (1994) found contrasting evidence. In their study, education was "weakly related to both punishment and treatment orientation" (306).

As was the case with race, the results are mixed on the influence that education has on correctional officer attitudes toward inmates. Teske and Williamson (1979), Poole and Regoli (1980), Bazemore and Dicker (1994) and Liou (1995) found that as education level increases, so does officers' positiveness toward inmates and their support for treatment. Crouch and Alpert (1982), Jurik (1985), Cullen et al (1989b), Whitehead and Lindquist (1989), and Arthur (1994) concluded that education does not have a significant influence on officer attitudes.

### **JOB-RELATED/ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The second category of sources of attitudes toward inmates is job-related characteristics. There are a number of job-related characteristics that have been looked at to determine their significance in influencing officer attitudes. These include, but are not limited to, age at entry to corrections job, level of security classification, location of institution (located in an urban or a rural area), job classification, number of years of

correctional experience (seniority), rank, shift worked, and tenure. However, since the present study only examines the variables of “number of years of experience” and “nature of employment” (custodial or non-custodial staff) the literature review will not include a discussion of other variables mentioned.

### ***NUMBER OF YEARS OF CORRECTIONAL EXPERIENCE***

A number of studies have considered the relationship between number of years of correctional experiences and correctional officer attitudes toward inmates. Jacobs and Kraft's (1978) study revealed that no significant relationship existed between correctional seniority (number of years of correctional experience) and officers' attitudes toward inmates. However, Teske and Williamson (1979) found that as the length of service increases, so does an officers' negative attitudes toward treatment. Poole and Regoli (1980) support this finding as well. Poole and Regoli (1980) found that “as correctional experience increases, so does the emphasis on custodial functions” (219). Shamir and Drory (1980) also found number of years of experience to be a significant indicator of correctional officer attitudes. They found that number of years of experience was negatively related to officers' belief in rehabilitation.

Toch and Klofas (1982) found conflicting evidence in their study. They divided years of correctional experience into four categories: less than 5 years, 5 to 10 years, 11 to 19 years, and 20 years and over. Toch and Klofas (1982) found that 85 percent of officers with over 20 years of correctional experience felt that correctional officers should have compassion, while only 66 percent of officers with less than 5 years believe this. Although Toch and Klofas (1982) do not connect feelings of compassion with attitudes

toward treatment, it is possible to do so. If we assume that compassion is representative of treatment ideals, then Toch and Klofas's (1982) findings conflict with Teske and Williamson (1979), Poole and Regoli (1980), and Shamir and Drory (1980). According to Toch and Klofas's (1982) findings, older officers were not more punitive or supportive of custodial functions. They were slightly more likely than the rookie officers (less than five years) to support the idea that officer should be compassionate. According to this line of reasoning, Toch and Klofas' (1982) findings suggest that number of years of correctional experience is not a significant indicator of officer attitudes toward inmates.

Jurik's (1985) findings support those of Teske and Williamson (1979) and Poole and Regoli (1980). She found that a negative relationship existed between number of years of correctional employment and attitudes toward inmates. As years of experience increases, officers' positive attitudes toward inmates decreases, with an increase in custodial orientation.

Whitehead and Lindquist (1989) found that number of years of correctional experience was not significantly correlated to officer attitudes toward custody or treatment orientations. However, Bazemore and Dicker (1994) found that number of years in detention work is negatively related to support for treatment, although the relationship is weak. These findings are supported by Liou (1995), who found that tenure (number of years at the detention center) is a significant indicator of detention worker attitudes. Number of years at the center is negatively correlated with the treatment orientation.

Lariviere and Robinson (1996) also examined the significance of experience in influencing correctional officer attitudes. Experience was divided into four categories: less than 1 year on the job, 1-2 years, 2-3 years, and 25 years and up. The 25 years and up category was included as “a basis for comparison” (Lariviere and Robinson 1996: 15). The data from this study reveal that new recruits, with less than 1 year experience, are more empathetic (31 percent) than those with 1-2 years (17 percent) and 2-3 years experience (just over 20 percent), but that officers with 25 plus years of experience (57 percent) were far more empathetic. Similar results were found with attitudes toward rehabilitation. Seventy-eight percent of new recruits, 59.2 percent of officers with 1-2 years experience, and 74.1 percent of officers with 25 plus years of experience support rehabilitation. Attitudes toward punitiveness did not fit this pattern. New recruits and officers with 25 plus years of experience were less punitive than those with 1-2 and 2-3 years of experience.

Overall conclusions about the significance of number of years of correctional experience are mixed. Jacobs and Kraft (1978) and Whitehead and Lindquist (1989) found that education did not have a significant impact on officers’ attitudes. Teske and Williamson (1979), Poole and Regoli (1980), Shamir and Drory (1980), Jurik (1985), and Liou (1995) concluded that experience was significant and had a negative impact on officers’ (and detention workers’) attitudes. As experience increases, so do negative and custodial attitudes toward inmates. Toch and Klofas (1982) and Lariviere and Robinson (1996) found that experience was significant as well, but in the opposite direction. They found that as experience increases, so does positiveness toward inmates.

## **PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS**

A few studies have focused on correctional officer attitudes toward other members of the criminal justice system. Crouch and Alpert (1980) studied correctional officer attitudes toward police, lawyers, law and the judicial system. They conducted interviews and distributed questionnaires, containing eight hypothetical situations, to 231 officers from three state prisons in Washington. Crouch and Alpert (1980) found that correctional officers have relatively high regard for members of the criminal justice system as well as for the system itself. A little more than 90 percent reported having positive attitudes toward police (eight percent indicated “strongly positive” attitudes, and 86 percent indicated “positive” attitudes. Crouch and Alpert (1980) suggest that correctional officers’ positive attitudes toward police is largely a result of “perceived similarities between police and guard work. . . [because] police and guards work under society’s mandate that citizens be protected and offenders controlled” (230). Correctional officers are likely to perceive police officers as having attitudes similar to their own regarding crime causation.

Crouch and Alpert (1980) also found that slightly more than 50 percent of officers reported having positive attitudes toward lawyers. Correctional officer attitudes toward law and the judicial system are more positive than attitudes toward police and lawyers. Crouch and Alpert (1980) found that 31 percent of officers indicated “strongly positive” attitudes, and 68 percent indicated “positive” attitudes toward law and the judicial system.

Kauffman (1981) studied correctional officer attitudes toward fellow officers. Kauffman distributed questionnaires to officers at nine Connecticut correctional

institutions for men. He found that officers perceive their fellow officers as being less sympathetic toward inmates and treatment programs than they themselves are.

The differing perspectives of custodial and treatment staff toward inmates has also been studied. Kassebaum et al (1964) studied correctional staff attitudes toward their job and the institution. They found that “job differences are significant and reflect the characteristically observed distinction between uniformed custody staff and mental health treatment staff” (Kassebaum et al 1964: 102). They found that custody staff are more likely than treatment staff to hold pessimistic and negative attitudes toward inmates.

Piliavin (1966) suggests that within correctional institutions staff conflict “usually means the problems of relationship between educational and counseling personnel or between custodial and education personnel” (125). He suggests that one of the reasons for this conflict is over differing responsibilities of the groups. Piliavin (1966) says:

Custodial workers are concerned with maintaining control and this concern is reflected in their priorities of action in a given situation as well as in the considerations they express in planning and supervising inmates’ activities. On the other hand, treatment personnel tend to be concerned with mitigating the psychological or interpersonal problems of inmates.  
(127)

Custodial and non-security staff have different objectives within correctional institutions, and this can often cause tensions and conflict in the daily interaction between these two groups.

Brown et al (1971) studied the differences between custodial and treatment staff in two different settings—rehabilitative and custodial-oriented institutions. They found that the type of institution is an important factor in distinguishing between custody and

treatment staff attitudes toward inmates. Brown et al (1971) found that “custodial staff at the more custody-oriented institution viewed inmates as significantly more active and antisocial than did the treatment staff at the same institution” (327). They also found that it was the treatment staff, rather than the custodial staff, at the more rehabilitative institution who were more likely to view inmates as antisocial, active and aggressive. It is clear from Brown et al’s (1971) study that not only do attitudes toward inmates differ between custody staff and treatment staff, but that their attitudes largely depend on the type of institutional setting they are working in.

Chang and Zastrow (1976) examined correctional officer attitudes toward inmates, as well as inmates’ attitudes toward officers. They constructed a questionnaire to measure attitudes and perceptions, using “the semantic differential scale suggested by Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum” (Chang and Zastrow 1976: 92). Chang and Zastrow (1976) found that security guards ranked prison inmates very low, meaning they have “fairly negative perceptions of inmates” (96).

This chapter has provided a summary of the literature available on correctional officer attitudes. Particular attention has been given to studies that have examined the effects of demographic variables and job-related characteristics have on predicting correctional officer attitudes. In addition, an overview has been given of the research findings that have explored correctional officer attitudes toward views of other members of the criminal justice system.

The next chapter will provide a discussion of the methods used to analyze the variables considered in this study. Three sets of variables related to correctional officer

attitudes will be examined: demographic variables, job-related characteristics, and perceptions of the attitudes of others. The demographic variables to be examined are: age, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and education. Job-related characteristics included in this study are number of years of correctional experience and nature of employment (security staff or non-security staff). This study will also examine correctional personnel attitudes toward the following: society (general public), correctional officers, unit case workers, inmates, police officers, Diagnostic and Evaluation staff psychologists, judges, and the Department of Corrections.



### **CHAPTER THREE: HYPOTHESES, METHODS, AND DATA**

This chapter presents the methods used in this study. First, the purpose of the research is discussed, and the method of data collection is described. Both the dependent and independent variables are described, and the hypotheses are identified and explained. Finally, the statistics used for analyzing the data will be discussed, as well as their possible limitations.

#### **PURPOSE**

The primary objective of this study is to explore correctional officer attitudes toward crime causation using a free will/determinism dichotomy for explanations of causation. In addition, the study analyzes how antecedent variables are associated with attitudes toward crime causation.

#### **DATA COLLECTION**

The data used in this study were collected in 1993, by Fred Holbert (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and Prabha Unnithan (Colorado State University). The study included a two page survey questionnaire (shown in the Appendix), instructions, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope that was given to each participant. The survey questionnaire was processed only at the discretion of the respondents, who could refuse to respond to the questionnaire. Consent of the respondents was granted or refused based on that decision.

In addition, anonymity of the participants was ensured in the original research, as well as in the present study. No identifying information (e.g. names, employee numbers, social security numbers), was included on the questionnaire.

## **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The questionnaire (see the Appendix) was divided into three parts and consisted of seventeen items. Part I (items one through seven) asked participants to respond to questions relating to background characteristics. The first five questions related to personal characteristics: age, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and college education. The next two questions consisted of job-related characteristics: current position within the institution and years of correctional experience.

Part II (items eight and nine) asked respondents to indicate their attitudes toward crime causation (the reason why offenders commit crime). There were two possible choices: Reason A-- "offenders deliberately commit crimes on their own free will. They consciously choose to commit a crime" and Reason B-- "offenders commit crimes for reasons beyond their control such as mental problems, biological defects, poverty, broken homes, poor education, etc." If respondents chose Reason B, they were asked to rank three reasons why the individual might commit crimes: physical/biological reasons, psychological/mental illness reasons, and social/economic reasons.<sup>4</sup>

Part III (items ten through seventeen) asked respondents to indicate their perceptions of what others believe is the reason why offenders commit crime.

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<sup>4</sup>In an effort to maintain an element of simplicity, this particular item was not analyzed in this study.

Respondents were asked their perception of the attributions for crime causation by the following groups of people: society or the general public, correctional officers, unit case workers, inmates, police officers, Diagnostic and Evaluation psychologists and staff, judges, and the Department of Corrections.

## **POPULATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 271 correctional line employees completed and returned the questionnaire anonymously. All participants were correctional line employees from one of four adult male correctional institutions operated by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services: the State Penitentiary, the Lincoln Correctional Center/Diagnostic and Evaluation Center (Lincoln), the Omaha Correctional Center, and the Hastings Correctional Center.

The study population is described in Table 3.1. Of the 268 participants that reported their gender, approximately 81 percent are male. Ages of participants range from 21 to 66 years of age, with a mean age of 37 years. The population is also predominantly white. Nearly 88 percent indicated their race as Caucasian American. Approximately 95 percent indicated their religion to be of Christian origin. Just under 64 percent of the respondents were Protestant, while approximately 31 percent were Catholic. The majority of the respondents had some college education. Approximately 45 percent indicated they had some college. Nearly 41 percent indicated they at least had a college degree. Approximately 62 percent of the respondents are correctional officers, and 25 percent are unit case workers. The average number of years of correctional experience is 7.62 years.

**TABLE 3.1**  
**VARIABLE DISTRIBUTION**

<b><i>VARIABLE</i></b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b><i>PERCENT</i></b>
<b><i>AGE</i></b>	267	$\bar{x}$ = 37.037 years s = 9.703
<b><i>GENDER</i></b>		
Male	220	81.2
Female	51	18.8
<b><i>RACE</i></b>		
Caucasian	237	87.5
Non-Caucasian	34	12.5
<b><i>RELIGION</i></b>		
Christian	246	94.3
Non-Christian or other	15	5.7
<b><i>EDUCATION</i></b>		
High School	38	14.1
Some College	122	45.4
College degree or beyond	109	40.5
<b><i>JOB CLASSIFICATION</i></b>		
Security staff	164	60.5
Non-Security staff	107	39.5
<b><i>CORRECTIONAL EXPERIENCE</i></b>	271	$\bar{x}$ = 7.254 years s = 5.894
<b><i>CRIME CAUSATION</i></b>		
Free will	164	61.7
Determinism	102	38.3
<b><i>SOCIETY BELIEVES</i></b>		
Free Will	196	73.4
Determinism	63	23.6
Both responses	8	3.0
<b><i>CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS BELIEVE</i></b>		
Free Will	208	77.6
Determinism	45	16.8
Both responses	15	5.6
<b><i>UNIT CASE WORKERS BELIEVE</i></b>		
Free Will	164	61.9
Determinism	83	31.3
Both responses	18	6.8
<b><i>INMATES BELIEVE</i></b>		
Free Will	66	24.6
Determinism	192	71.6
Both responses	10	3.7
<b><i>POLICE OFFICERS BELIEVE</i></b>		
Free Will	215	81.1
Determinism	38	14.3
Both responses	12	4.5
<b><i>DIAGNOSTIC &amp; EVALUATION STAFF BELIEVE</i></b>		
Free Will	93	35.2
Determinism	157	59.5
Both responses	14	5.2
<b><i>JUDGES BELIEVE</i></b>		
Free Will	151	57.4
Determinism	96	36.5
Both responses	16	6.1
<b><i>DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS BELIEVE</i></b>		
Free Will	144	54.8
Determinism	100	38.0
Both responses	19	7.2

## **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

The dependent variable in this study-- the individual attitudes of correctional personnel toward crime-- was determined by the officers' response to the item "crime causation" in Part II of the questionnaire. The dependent variable was measured as a dichotomy. Respondents could indicate either free will or determinism as the reason why offenders commit crime.

## **INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

There were two categories of independent variables used in this study: personal characteristics and job-related characteristics.<sup>5</sup>

### ***PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS***

This study examines a number of personal characteristics that could act as predictors of correctional personnel attitudes toward crime causation. The personal characteristics examined in this study were age, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and education. Data on respondents' age and gender were obtained by using the self-reported data on the questionnaire. Data on respondent's race/ethnicity were also obtained from self report, but in this case respondents were given choices: African American, Asian American, Caucasian American, Hispanic American, Native American, and Other. Respondents were asked to specify their race/ethnicity if they checked Other.

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<sup>5</sup>

All variables except for age, experience and education were measured as dichotomies. Age and experience were measured at the ratio level. Education was measured as an ordinal variable: those with a high school diploma (no college), received a value of 0; respondents with some college received a value of 1; and respondents with a college degree or beyond (indicating some graduate work) received a value of 2.

Respondents were asked to indicate their religion, given a number of choices. The choices for religion were: Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Native American, Protestant, and Other. Respondents were asked to specify religion if they checked Other, although this was not used in the analysis.

Respondent's level of education was also obtained in the questionnaire using the following categories. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of undergraduate education by indicating one of the following: none, less than one year, one year, two years, three years, four years, and college degree. Respondents were also asked to indicate their undergraduate major given the following choices: arts/music, education, science/engineering, social science, agriculture, and business. In addition to undergraduate education, respondents were asked to indicate their graduate education and graduate major (if any). Choices for graduate education were: one year, two years, masters degree, and study beyond masters. The choices for indicating graduate major were the same as they were for undergraduate major. However, this was also not used in the analysis.

### ***JOB-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS***

There were two job-related characteristics examined in this study: position in the institution and number of years of correctional experience. "Current position" in the institution referred to the type of job respondents have in the institution. Data for this variable was obtained by asking respondents to indicate which position they held in the institution. Possible choices were: unit case workers, unit manager, unit case manager, and correctional officers. In addition, if the respondent indicated that he or she was a

correctional officer, they were asked to indicate their rank as one of the following: officer, corporal, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, or major.

The variable “current position” was recoded into a dichotomous variable: correctional officers and other personnel. Unit case workers, unit managers, and unit case managers were recoded into “other personnel.” This simplified the analysis and made comparisons between the attitudes of correctional officers and other line correctional employees more manageable.

The second job-related characteristic is number of years of correctional experience. Data for this variable were obtained by asking respondents to write in the number of years they have in correctional experience.

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

While some of the hypotheses in this study have been tested in other studies as shown in Chapter Two, none have applied them to correctional personnel attitudes toward crime causation on the free will/determinism dichotomy. The nature and direction of Hypothesis One through Nine were derived from previous research findings as discussed in Chapter Two.

*Hypothesis 1:* Correctional personnel will be more likely to attribute the causes of crime to free will reasons than to deterministic reasons. Frequency distributions will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 2:* Older personnel will be more likely than younger personnel to attribute crime to free will reasons. This hypothesis will be tested using cross-tabulations.

*Hypothesis 3:* There will be no gender difference in attitudes toward crime causation.

Cross-tabulations will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 4:* Caucasian personnel will be more likely than other personnel to attribute crime to free will reasons. Cross-tabulations will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 5:* Religious denomination will not have an effect on correctional personnel attitudes toward crime. This hypothesis will be tested using cross-tabulations.

*Hypothesis 6:* Correctional personnel with less education will be more likely than other personnel to attribute crime to free will reasons. This hypothesis will be tested using cross-tabulations.

*Hypothesis 7:* Correctional personnel with less experience will be more likely than other officers to attribute crime to free will reasons. Cross-tabulations will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 8:* Correctional officers are more likely than other correctional personnel to attribute crime to free will. Cross-tabulations will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 9:* Correctional personnel will view other correctional officers as perceiving crime as a result of free will. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 10:* Correctional personnel will view police officers as perceiving crime as a result of free will. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.

The following hypotheses are primarily speculative, and are not based on previous research.

*Hypothesis 11:* Correctional personnel will view society/general public as perceiving crime as a result of free will. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.



*Hypothesis 12:* Correctional personnel will view inmates as perceiving crime as a result of determinism. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 13:* Correctional personnel will view unit case workers as perceiving crime as a result of determinism. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 14:* Correctional personnel will view Judges as perceiving crime as a result of determinism. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 15:* Correctional personnel will view Diagnostic and Evaluation psychologists and staff as perceiving crime as a result of determinism. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 16:* Correctional personnel will view the Department of Corrections as perceiving crime as a result of determinism. Frequencies will be used to test this hypothesis.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were analyzed in three ways: 1) with percentage frequency distributions, 2) cross tabulations and 3) with discriminant analysis. Percentage frequency distributions and cross tabulations were used to analyze how correctional personnel view crime causation and how they perceive others as thinking about crime causation. Percentage frequencies will be used to test Hypotheses One and Nine through Sixteen. The dependent variable, attitudes toward crime causation, was measured as a dichotomous variable, with crime causation due either to free will or determinism.

The chi-square test of significance was used with the cross tabulations to determine whether or not the hypotheses should be rejected or retained. The measure of

association used in this study is phi. The value of phi can range between zero (0) and one (1), with zero meaning no association, and one being a perfect association. Although minus signs may occur in the output, the signs have no meaning. Cross tabulations and associated statistics will be used to test Hypotheses Two through Eight.

The third method used to analyze the data is discriminant analysis. It provides a method for determining which independent variables are significantly related to the dependent variable, both separately and jointly. It allows for the identification of variables that are best able to predict correctional personnel attitudes toward crime as falling into either the free will or determinism group. In order to use discriminant analysis, the basic units of analysis must be mutually exclusive, which is the case in this study. The dependent variable— attitudes toward crime causation— is measured as a dichotomous variable. Discriminant analysis provides a method for simultaneously analyzing the relationship between two or more groups with several different variables (Klecka 1980). Discriminant analysis generally assumes that the independent variables can be measured at the interval or ratio level. However, this assumption can be violated and still produce acceptable results if the variables are recoded into dummy variables (Hedderson 1991). Discriminant analysis was also used for practical reasons. Since this study includes a comparison with Holbert and Unnithan's (1990) study, discriminant analysis was used to make the comparison more uniform. Holbert and Unnithan (1990) used discriminant analysis in their study of inmate self-perception and their views regarding correctional officer attitudes toward crime.

## COMPARISON

The study includes a comparison with Holbert and Unnithan's (1990) study of inmate self-perception. Holbert and Unnithan's study "investigated the criminal self-perception of adult offenders, using the free will/determinism dichotomy" (1990: 43). They asked prison inmates to reflect on the causes of their own criminality, giving either a free will or a deterministic response. They asked inmates to indicate their perception of how others (society/public, correctional officers, other inmates, police officers, Diagnostic and Evaluation psychologists and staff, judges, and the Department of Corrections) viewed their criminality.

The relationship between how inmates perceived custodial staff (correctional officers) as viewing the causes of crime (as found in Holbert and Unnithan's study) will be compared with the attitudes custodial staff have towards the causes of crime. The relationship between how inmates perceive the causes of their own criminality and how correctional personnel perceive inmates as viewing their criminality is also analyzed.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The primary objective of this chapter is to present findings to hypotheses and research questions. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis. The findings will be reported as each hypothesis is presented. Next, the results of discriminant analysis and the discriminant function are provided. A brief description of the significance of these results is also presented in each case.

### RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTS

Hypothesis One states that “*Correctional personnel will be more likely to attribute the causes of crime to free will reasons than to deterministic reasons.*” This was substantiated. The majority of correctional personnel (60 percent) view criminality as a result of free will. Only 37.6 percent support determinism as the cause of crime.<sup>6</sup>

The second hypothesis states that “*Older personnel will be more likely than younger personnel to attribute crime to free will reasons.*” The results of the relevant cross tabulations are presented in Table 4.1. Fifty-nine percent of respondents under 39 years of age and 66 percent of those over 40 indicate a free will response. This is not a very large difference. The chi-square value of 1.334 and the related significance of 0.248

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<sup>6</sup>Refer to Table 3.1 for all hypotheses involving frequencies.

indicate that the null hypothesis of no difference should be retained. In addition, the phi value of 0.071 indicates almost no association between these two variables.

**TABLE 4.1**  
**AGE AND CRIME CAUSATION**

		<u>RESPONDENT'S AGE</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
		<u>UNDER 39</u>	<u>40 AND OVER</u>	
<b>CAUSES OF CRIME</b>	<b>DETERMINISM</b>	64 41.0%	36 34.0%	100 38.2%
	<b>FREE WILL</b>	92 59.0%	70 66.0%	162 61.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>		156 100%	106 100%	262 100%

$\chi^2 = 1.334$      $df = 1$      $p = .248$   
Phi = .071

The third hypothesis states that *“There will be no gender difference in attitudes toward crime causation.”* This null hypothesis is supported by the data. The results of cross tabulations are presented in Table 4.2. Of the female respondents, 62.8 percent believed in the free will explanation and 56.9 percent of the male respondents indicated free will, which is not a statistically significant difference. The chi-square value of 0.613 and related significance of 0.434 further indicates that there is no difference between these variables. In addition, the value of phi is -0.048, indicating almost no association between gender and attitudes toward crime causation.

The fourth hypothesis states that *“Caucasian personnel will be more likely than other personnel to attribute crime to free will reasons.”* This hypothesis is supported weakly and the relevant data are presented in Table 4.3. Of the Caucasian respondents,

65.4 percent believed in free will, while only 34.4 percent of Non-Caucasian respondents believed in free will. The chi-square value of 11.450 indicates that the null hypothesis of no difference should be rejected. In addition, the results are significant at the 0.001 level. The value of phi (-0.207) indicates a moderately weak association between these two variables.

**TABLE 4.2**  
**GENDER AND CRIME CAUSATION**

	<u>RESPONDENT'S GENDER</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	
<b>CAUSES OF CRIME</b> <b>DETERMINISM</b>	80 37.2%	22 43.1%	102 38.3%
<b>FREE WILL</b>	135 62.8%	29 56.9%	164 61.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	215 100%	51 100%	266 100%

$\chi^2 = .613$        $df = 1$     $p = .434$   
Phi = -.048

**TABLE 4.3**  
**RACE AND CRIME CAUSATION**

	<u>RESPONDENT'S RACE</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>CAUCASIAN</u>	<u>NON-CAUCASIAN</u>	
<b>CAUSE OF CRIME</b> <b>DETERMINISM</b>	81 34.6%	21 65.6%	102 38.3%
<b>FREE WILL</b>	153 65.4%	11 34.4%	164 61.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	234 100%	32 100%	266 100%

$\chi^2 = 11.450$        $df = 1$     $p = .001$   
Phi = -.207

The fifth hypothesis states that “*Religious denomination will not have an effect on correctional personnel attitudes toward crime.*” The results of the cross tabulations are presented in Table 4.4. The data confirm this null hypothesis. Nearly 62 percent of the Christian respondents indicated free will, while 57 percent of the Non-Christian respondents indicated free will as the cause of crime. The chi-square value of 0.090, with a related significance of 0.765 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between these two variables. The phi value of 0.019 gives further evidence that there is virtually no association between these two variables.

**TABLE 4.4**  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND CRIME CAUSATION**

CAUSE OF CRIME		<u>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
		<u>NON-CHRISTIAN OR OTHER</u>	<u>CHRISTIAN</u>	
	DETERMINISM	6 42.9%	94 38.8%	100 39.1%
	FREE WILL	8 57.1%	148 61.2%	156 60.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>		14 100%	242 100%	256 100%

$\chi^2 = .090$        $df = 1$     $p = .765$   
Phi = .019

The sixth hypothesis is that “*Correctional personnel with less education will be more likely than other personnel to attribute crime to free will reasons.*” The data do not support this hypothesis. The results of cross tabulations are presented in Table 4.5. Only 52.6 percent of those with a high school education attribute crime to free will, while 69.2

percent of those with a college degree or beyond attribute crime to free will. The chi-square value of 4.859, with a related significance of 0.088, indicates that the small differences that do occur between these variables are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In addition, the phi value of 0.136 indicates an extremely weak association between education and attitudes toward crime causation.

**TABLE 4.5**  
**EDUCATION AND CRIME CAUSATION**

		<u>LEVEL OF EDUCATION</u>			<u>TOTAL</u>
		<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>	<u>SOME COLLEGE</u>	<u>COLLEGE DEGREE OR BEYOND</u>	
<b>CAUSE OF CRIME</b>	<b>DETERMINISM</b>	18 47.4%	51 42.9%	33 30.8%	102 38.6
	<b>FREE WILL</b>	20 52.6%	68 57.1%	74 69.2%	162 61.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>		38 100%	119 100%	107 100%	264 100%

$\chi^2 = 4.859$      $df = 2$      $p = .088$   
Phi = .136

Hypothesis Seven states that *“Correctional personnel with less experience will be more likely than other personnel to attribute crime to free will reasons.”* This hypothesis was not supported by the data, as indicated by the results presented in Table 4.6. Nearly 59 percent of correctional personnel with under twelve years of experience attribute crime to free will, while approximately 74 percent of those with over twelve years experience attribute crime causation to free will causation. These results are not in the expected direction (as predicted in earlier literature), but are nonetheless significant. The chi-



square value of 4.421 with a related significance of 0.036 indicates that the results are statistically significant. The phi value of 0.129 contributes further evidence that there is a relatively weak association between number of years of correctional experience and attitudes toward crime causation. Given these findings, the hypothesis should be revised to state that correctional personnel with more experience are more likely than other personnel to attribute crime to free will.

**TABLE 4.6**  
**EXPERIENCE AND CRIME CAUSATION**

	<u>NUMBER OF YEARS EXPERIENCE</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>12 YEARS OR LESS</u>	<u>12.1 YEARS OR MORE</u>	
<b>CAUSE OF CRIME</b>			
<b>DETERMINISM</b>	88 41.5%	14 25.9%	102 38.3%
<b>FREE WILL</b>	124 58.5%	40 74.1%	164 61.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	212 100%	54 100%	266 100%

$\chi^2 = 4.421$      $df = 1$      $p = .036$   
Phi = .129

Hypothesis Eight states that *“Correctional officers are more likely than other correctional personnel to attribute crime causation to free will.”* This hypothesis is not supported by the data. The results of cross tabulations are presented in Table 4.7. Approximately 60 percent of correctional officers believe that free will is the primary cause of crime, while approximately 67 percent of non-security staff believe in free will. A chi-square value of 1.590 with a related significance of 0.207 indicates that the results

**TABLE 4.7**  
**JOB CLASSIFICATION**

	<u>JOB CLASSIFICATION</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>NON-SECURITY</u>	<u>SECURITY</u>	
<b>DETERMINISM</b>	35	67	102
<b>CAUSE OF</b>	33.7%	41.4%	38.3%
<b>CRIME</b>			
<b>FREE WILL</b>	69	95	164
	66.3%	58.6%	61.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	104	162	266
	100%	100%	100%

$\chi^2 = 1.590$      $df = 1$      $p = .207$   
Phi = -.077

are not statistically significant. The phi value, -0.077, indicates almost no association between these variables.

Hypothesis Nine states that “*Correctional personnel will view other correctional officers as perceiving crime as a result of free will.*” This hypothesis was supported by the data. Approximately 76 percent of correctional officers in this study perceive other correctional officers as attributing crime to free will.

Hypothesis Ten states that “*Correctional personnel will view police officers as perceiving crime as a result of free will.*” This hypothesis is supported by the data. A vast majority, nearly 80 percent, of correctional personnel perceive the police as supporting a free will explanation for crime.

Hypothesis Eleven states that “*Correctional personnel will view society (the general public) as perceiving crime as a result of free will.*” This hypothesis was

substantiated. When a frequency distribution was constructed for this variable, 73.4 percent of the respondents perceive society as believing in free will.

Hypothesis Twelve states that “*Correctional personnel will view inmates as perceiving crime as a result of determinism.*” This hypothesis was supported by the data. Approximately 71 percent of respondents believed that inmates perceive their own criminality as a result of determinism.

Hypothesis Thirteen states that “*Correctional personnel will view unit case workers as perceiving crime as a result of determinism.*” This hypothesis was not supported when a frequency distribution was obtained. Just under 62 percent of the respondents believe that unit case workers attribute crime to free will.

Hypothesis Fourteen states that “*Correctional personnel will view judges as perceiving crime as a result of determinism.*” This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Only 36.5 percent of respondents believed that judges perceived crime as a result of determinism.

Hypothesis Fifteen states that “*Correctional personnel will view Diagnostic and Evaluation psychologists and staff as perceiving crime as a result of determinism.*” This hypothesis was supported. Nearly 60 percent of correctional personnel believe that the Diagnostic and Evaluation staff view crime as a result of determinism.

Hypothesis Sixteen states that “*Correctional personnel will view the Department of Corrections as perceiving crime as a result of determinism.*” This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Only 38 percent believed that the Department of corrections perceived crime as a result of determinism.

## **DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS**

Discriminant analysis was performed in two stages. In the first stage, the variables were considered independently. In the second stage, the variables were considered together, in order to explain how all of the independent variables together accounted for the variance in the dependent variables. When discriminant analysis was performed, 52 cases were excluded. Cases were excluded because of missing or out-of-range group codes, or because they contained missing responses on one or more of the independent variables.

The group means and standard deviations of the predictor variables on both the free will and determinism groups are displayed in Table 4.8. For variables measured as dichotomies, the mean is the proportion of cases with a value of one (1) (Holbert and Unnithan 1990). Caucasian respondents were slightly more likely to be free will believers. Correctional personnel who have more experience are slightly more likely than their fellow officers to believe in free will. For example, the mean number of years of experience for those belonging to the free will group was approximately 8 years. The mean number of years experience for determinists was only 5.3 years.

Table 4.8 also gives an indication of the importance of the predictor variables related to the perceptions of significant others' attitudes. There is also an indication of the ability of these variables to distinguish between those who believe that crime can be explained by free will and those who believe crime is best explained by determinism. The exception is the perceived attitudes held by inmates. The mean for the determinist group on this variable, 0.68750, was close to the mean for the free will group, 0.75540.

The significance of the equality of group means is presented in Table 4.9. This table shows how significant the independent variables are in differentiating between the free will group and the determinism group. The two statistics used in this part of the analysis were Wilks' Lambda and the F test. The maximum value of Wilks' lambda is 1. It is an inverse statistic (Klecka 1980). A value of one (1) or close to one (1) occurs when there is no difference between the group means (Norusis 1985). This means that the variable in question is not a good predictor of attitudes. It is clear from the output displayed in Table 4.9 that there is virtually no variability between free will believers and determinists in terms of religious identification. Religion does not discriminate well between the free will and determinism groups. This statistic further shows that the variables that have a significant amount of within-group variability are views of case workers and views of correctional officers. Views of police and views of the Department of Corrections also have fairly significant within-group variability.

The second statistic used in completing this section of the analysis was the F statistic and its related significance. The F statistic shows that at the 0.05 level, nine variables are found to be statistically significant. Views of correctional officers, views of case workers, views of police, views of Diagnostic and Evaluation staff, views of judges, and views of the Department of Corrections are all significant at the 0.0000 level.

**TABLE 4.8**  
**GROUP MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON**  
**PREDICTOR VARIABLES<sup>7</sup> (N = 219)**

<i><b>VARIABLE</b></i>	<i><b>DETERMINISM</b></i>		<i><b>FREE WILL</b></i>	
	<i><math>\bar{x}</math></i>	<i>s.d.</i>	<i><math>\bar{x}</math></i>	<i>s.d</i>
Age	34.12500	8.99420	37.53237	9.34702
Gender	0.26250	0.44277	0.17986	0.38546
Race	0.21250	0.41166	0.07194	0.25933
Religion	0.95000	0.21932	0.94964	0.21948
Education	1.22500	0.69309	1.33094	0.67447
Job classification	0.67500	0.47133	0.57554	0.49605
Experience	5.31200	4.70432	8.07993	6.21915
Views of society	0.22500	0.42022	0.23022	0.42249
Views of correctional officers	0.42500	0.49746	0.04317	0.20396
Views of case workers	0.67500	0.47133	0.14388	0.35224
Views of inmates	0.68750	0.46644	0.75540	0.43141
Views of police	0.32500	0.47133	0.03597	0.18689
Views of Diagnostic & Evaluation staff	0.82500	0.38236	0.47482	0.50117
Views of judges	0.57500	0.49746	0.24460	0.43141
Views of Department of Corrections	0.66250	0.47584	0.24460	0.43141

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<sup>7</sup> 52 Cases were excluded from the analysis due to one or more missing responses on discriminating variables.

**TABLE 4.9**  
**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EQUALITY OF GROUP MEANS**

<i><b>VARIABLE</b></i>	<i><b>WILKS' LAMBDA</b></i>	<i><b>F</b></i>	<i><b>SIGNIFICANCE</b></i>
Age	0.96903	6.9347	0.0091
Gender	0.99046	2.0910	0.1496
Race	0.95762	9.6032	0.0022
Religion	1.00000	0.0001	0.9907
Education	0.99437	1.2276	0.2691
Job classification	0.99034	2.1162	0.1472
Experience	0.94796	11.9134	0.0007
Views of society	0.99996	0.0078	0.9298
View of correctional officers	0.77357	63.5192	0.0000
View of case workers	0.70766	89.6427	0.0000
View of inmates	0.99457	1.1848	0.2776
View of police	0.84061	41.1466	0.0000
View of Diagnostic & Evaluation staff	0.88126	29.2381	0.0000
View of judges	0.89084	26.5907	0.0000
View of Department of Corrections	0.83090	44.1631	0.0000

Respondent's age, race and number of years of experience were significant at the 0.0091, 0.0022, and 0.0007 levels respectively. Once again, the most important discriminating variables are the perceptions of others' attitudes toward crime causation.

## **DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION ANALYSIS**

The second stage of the analysis was to run the discriminant function with a stepwise analysis. Discriminant function was used to provide additional understanding of where correctional personnel place themselves on the free will/determinism dichotomy. It contributes to understanding how demographic variables, job-related characteristics, and perceptions of the views of other members of the criminal justice system affect correctional personnel's attitudes toward crime causation. The discriminant function also gives an indication of which of the three sets of independent variables (demographic, job-related characteristics, and perceptions of the views of others), when considered together, are the best predictors of correctional personnel attitudes toward crime causation (on the free will/determinism dichotomy). This procedure was used to determine which variable accounted for the most variance in the dependent variable when all of the variables were considered together. A stepwise method, using the "analysis" subcommand, allows for a control over "the order in which variables are considered for entry" by specifying an inclusion level (Norusis 1985). This procedure considers the designated sets of variables for inclusion in the analysis in a particular sequence. Entering variables in this manner allows for certain sets of variables to have the first chance at accounting for the variance followed by others in a logical or theoretically valid sequence. The demographic



variables were entered first, followed by the job-related variables and “views of others,” respectively.

This stepwise approach also removes variables that do not meet the specified inclusion level. The inclusion level at step one is one (1), since no variables are included in the analysis. According to Norusis (1985), “the first variable included in the analysis has the largest acceptable value for the selection criterion” (93). As each variable is considered for inclusion, the values of all other variables are re-evaluated to determine if they meet the removal criterion (Norusis 1985). Variables that account for some of the residual variance early in the process may be removed later, after other variables are entered into the analysis.

The effects of this sequential consideration of variables is summarized in Table 4.10. The only demographic variable to contribute to the reduction in residual variance is race. Race accounted for approximately 5 percent of the variance. Age was included in the analysis in step two, but was removed in step seven. Age was removed after the “views of others” set of variables was entered.

The occupational variable of experience accounted for another 5 percent of the variance. The variables accounting for the most reduction in residual variance are perceptions of case workers, correctional officers, and judges. Together, these three variables accounted for 32 percent of the variance. In totality, then, the discriminant function accounted for approximately 42 percent of the variance.

One statistic that can be used to estimate the importance of the discriminant analysis is the eigenvalue. The eigenvalue has a lowest possible value of zero, but has no

upper limit value. A value of zero (0) means that the “discriminant analysis had no discriminating value, whereas an eigenvalue about 0.40 is considered excellent” (Hedderston 1991: 146).

Another important statistic used at this stage of the analysis is the canonical correlation. The canonical correlation provides “a measure for how well the function discriminates between groups on a scale that ranges from 0.0 to 1.0” (Hedderston 1991: 146). The eigenvalue and the canonical correlation measures reported at this stage tell us how well these five variables discriminate between the free will and the determinism groups. The eigenvalue of 0.6732 and the canonical correlation value of 0.6343 indicate that the 5 variables left at this step of the analysis have good discriminating value.

The final step in the analysis was to determine the standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients of the five discriminating variables. The results of this step are presented in Table 4.11. This procedure tells us which of these five variables had the most influence on the discriminant function.<sup>8</sup> The variable with the largest effect on where correctional personnel place themselves on the free will/determinism dichotomy is views of case workers (0.55065). The second is views of correctional officers, followed by respondent’s race, views of judges, and number of years of correctional experience.

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<sup>8</sup> In discriminant analysis, the signs associated with the coefficients have no meaning.

**TABLE 4.10****SUMMARY OF DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS**

<i>Step</i>	<i>Variable Entered</i>	<i>Wilks' Lambda</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Residual Variance</i>
I.	Race	0.95762	0.0022	0.95485
II.	Age	0.92923	0.0004	0.92475
III.	Experience	0.90959	0.0001	0.90400
IV.	Views of case workers	0.65534	0.0000	0.64024
V.	Views of correctional officers	0.61620	0.0000	0.60043
VI.	Views of judges	0.59400	0.0000	0.58165
VII.	Age was removed			

Eigenvalue = 0.6732

Canonical Correlation = 0.6343

**TABLE 4.11****STANDARDIZED CANONICAL DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION COEFFICIENT  
OF SIX VARIABLES**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficients</i>
Race	0.36240
Experience	-0.23177
Views of case workers	0.55065
Views of correctional officers	0.42445
Views of judges	0.30390

## **CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The primary objective of this study was to explore correctional personnel attitudes toward free will and determinism as the two possible explanations for crime causation. The study has also examined how correctional personnel perceive other members of the criminal justice system as perceiving the causes of crime on this same dichotomy. This study has examined a number of related studies, presented the hypotheses to be examined, provided a discussion of the methods used to examine and analyze the independent variables, and presented the findings related to each research hypothesis using frequencies, cross-tabulations, and the results of discriminant analysis.

Chapter Two presented a review of research studies that have examined the effects of age, gender, race, religion, education, experience, and job classification on correctional personnel attitudes. The research findings as presented in Chapter Three, in conjunction with the literature findings on these variables, are discussed. An in-depth analysis of the hypothesis results will be presented. The possible limitations of this study and area of future research will be explained. Potential policy implications will also be presented.

## DISCUSSION

Of the sixteen hypotheses presented in Chapter Three, seven were not supported by the data. Many findings in this study contradicted the majority of earlier research findings as presented in Chapter Three.

Age was found not to be a good predictor of officer attitudes toward inmates in this study. According to a few of the previous studies that have looked at the effects of age on correctional officer attitudes, older officers are more likely to support treatment-related programs and counseling objectives. This would suggest that older officers are more deterministic in their beliefs, given that rehabilitation programs seek to change the immediate environment of the offender. The findings from this study contradict previous research. There was virtually no difference between the mean age for the free will and determinism group. This study assumed that older officers would be more likely to attribute crime to free will, while younger officers would be more likely to attribute crime to determinism. However, this study found, like Jacobs and Kraft (1978) and Whitehead and Lindquist (1989), that age was not a significant predictor of correctional officer attitudes.

These results may be affected by the makeup of the sample. The fact that the sample includes officers from four different institutions may have resulted in age not being a good predictor of attitudes.<sup>9</sup> It is possible that the mean ages of correctional personnel differs in each of these institutions. The results may have been different if the

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<sup>9</sup>For a more complete discussion on the effects of institutional environment on correctional personnel attitudes, see Brown et al 1971.

type of institution was controlled for. Although it can not be substantiated in this study, it is possible that older officers in the penitentiary have negative attitudes toward inmates, but that older officers from the Diagnostic and Evaluation Center and the Hastings facility do not follow this same pattern.

This study found that level of education was not a good predictor of correctional personnel attitudes. In addition, level of education was found to have a moderately weak association with attitudes toward crime causation ( $\phi = 0.136$ ). The relationship, although weak, did not occur in the expected direction. This study expected a majority of personnel with less education to attribute crime to free will. However, the results in Table 4.5 reveal that as education increases, so do attitudes that crime causation is due to free will.

One possible explanation for these results is an intervening variable. It is highly likely that those with more education are also older personnel. This would then be a logical result, since older personnel were found to be more likely than younger personnel to attribute crime to free will.

The findings regarding the number of years of correctional experience are contradictory within this study. On the one hand, the findings were not in the expected direction and did not support the hypothesis that officers with less experience would be more likely to attribute crime causation to free will. Those with more years of experience were slightly more likely to believe that free will is the primary cause of crime. On the other hand, number of years of correctional experience was found not to be a good

predictor of officer attitudes. The group means for the free will group and determinism groups were very similar.

The research findings on the effects of experience on attitudes are not consistent with each other. Some studies have concluded that experience is not an important indicator of attitudes. A number of studies have concluded that as experience increases, so do officers' positiveness towards inmates. However, a number of studies have also found that as experience increases, so do officers' negative attitudes toward inmates.

The hypothesis that correctional officers would be more likely than other personnel (non-security) to attribute crime to free will was not supported by the data. This could be explained by the inclusion of the different institutions in the sample. Brown et al (1971) studied how the attitudes of officers and non-security staff differed depending on what type of institution they were assigned to. Non-security staff in a high-security level institution may have different attitudes than those in a lower-security level institution. Controlling for the type of institution in future studies may reduce this contradiction.

The hypothesis that correctional personnel will view unit case workers as attributing crime to determinism was not supported by the data. This could be explained by the make-up of the sample. As mentioned earlier, tensions exist between security and non-security staff. These two groups often have differing conceptions about what the other believes. If non-security staff are more likely to believe that unit case workers are more likely to attribute crime to free will, then it is possible that including non-security staff in this particular analysis may have caused spurious results.

Another hypothesis that was not supported by the data was the perceptions of the attitudes of judges. Correctional officers participating in this study believed that Judges attribute crime to free will. There are a number of explanations for why correctional personnel perceive judges as attributing crime to free will. Correctional officers spend most of their time in some sort of interaction with inmates. Through these interactions, officers may come to believe that the inmates they are in contact with deserve to be in prison, and that judges were justified in sending them there. Another explanation could be that correctional officers align themselves with judges, much like they do with police officers. Correctional officers may feel that judges must believe in free will in order to impose the sentences they do. Perhaps officers feel that at the very least judges must believe in free will to some extent, otherwise they wouldn't be able to do their job effectively.

Based on the literature regarding the interaction of security staff with non-security staff, it was expected that correctional personnel would perceive unit case workers as attributing crime to determinism. However, this assumption was not supported by the data. Over 60 percent of participants in this study perceive unit case workers as attributing crime causation to free will. In addition, views of case workers was found to be the best predictor of correctional officer officers. Officers belonging to the free will group were more likely to perceive case workers as having a deterministic view of crime causation. Officers belonging to the deterministic group were more likely to perceive unit case workers as believing in free will.



It is also possible that officers belonging to the determinism group believe themselves to hold more positive attitudes toward inmates and their chances for rehabilitation than their colleagues. Officers believing in determinism may view their colleagues as believing more strongly in free will than they themselves do. This line of reasoning is consistent with Kauffman (19881) who says that correctional officers often believe themselves to be less punitive than their fellow officers. Toch and Klofas (1982) found that officers “consistently assume that the majority [of their peers are] more custody oriented (less job enrichment oriented) than they are” (42).

The hypothesis related to perceptions of the Department of Corrections was also not supported by the data. Since many correctional institutions still implement and maintain a variety of rehabilitation programs and psychiatric requirements, it was assumed that officers would perceive the Department of Corrections as believing in determinism. It was plausible to believe that correctional officers would feel that if the Department of Corrections believed enough in the power of these programs, it would logically follow that they would believe in determinism. However, this was found not to be true. A vast majority of officers participating in this study believed that the Department of Corrections attributes crime causation to free will.

Officers may perceive the Department of Corrections as attributing crime to free will in order to justify their own position within the institution. Officers may wish to believe that their employer has the same philosophy about crime as they do. In addition, officers may feel that the Department of Corrections must believe in free will based on the very nature of correctional institutions. If the Department of Corrections believed in

determinism and rehabilitation, why would security guards be necessary? There would be fewer “penal” institutions, less emphasis on security and more emphasis on rehabilitation programs.

Officers belonging to the determinist group believe more strongly than those in the free will group that the Department of Corrections attributes crime causation to free will. If we assume that those belonging to the determinism group are also more likely to support treatment and rehabilitation programs and services, then it seems justified that they would perceive the Department of Corrections in this manner. One responsibility of the Department of Corrections is to ensure the safety of society and the safety of other inmates and staff within the institution. Therefore, security concerns often take precedent over treatment and rehabilitation needs. Those in the determinism group may feel that the policies implemented by the Department of Corrections are not very oriented toward treatment and rehabilitation.

One particularly interesting findings is that officers belonging to the determinism group are more likely to view others as perceiving crime causation to be a result of free will, while those in the free will group are more likely to view others as perceiving crime causation as due to determinism. The only variable that does not fit into this pattern is views of inmates. Both groups strongly believe that inmates attribute their own criminality to free will. One explanation for this finding could be a result of officers’ misperceptions of their fellow officers. Kauffman (1981) found that officers tend to hold more negative views of their fellow officers than they believe themselves to hold. He found that officers “underestimate the proportion of their fellow officers who hold

attitudes sympathetic toward inmates and treatment” (285). Those belonging to the determinism group in this study may be underestimating the positive attitudes held by their fellow officers and other members of the criminal justice system.

### **COMPARISON WITH HOLBERT AND UNNITHAN (1990)**

Holbert and Unnithan’s (1990) study “investigated the criminal self-perception of adult offenders, using the free will/determinism dichotomy.” They asked prison inmates to reflect on the causes of their own criminality, giving either a free will or a deterministic response. They also asked inmates to indicate their perception of how others (society/public, correctional officers, other inmates, police officers, Diagnostic and Evaluation psychologists and staff, judges, and the Department of Corrections) viewed their criminality.

Holbert and Unnithan (1990) found that inmates are almost equally split on indicating their perceptions of their own criminality. Nearly 48 percent of inmates attribute their criminality to free will and 52.2 percent attribute their criminality to deterministic factors beyond their control. The current study found that correctional officers perceive inmates’ as attributing their own criminality to more deterministic reasons. There is some discrepancies across perceived attitudes and self-placement on the free will/determinism dichotomy.

Holbert and Unnithan (1990) found that when inmates were asked to indicate how others view their criminality, they perceive that “the police, the general public, judges, the Department of Corrections, and custodial staff (in that order) were . . . more likely to

view criminality as self-chosen.” However, inmates perceive that treatment staff were “least likely of all to consider crime as due to free will” (Holbert and Unnithan 1990: 47).

In this study, 59.9 percent of correctional officers attribute crime to free will reasons, while 67.6 percent of non-security staff believe that crime is a result of free will. In addition, a smaller percentage of security staff believe in free will than in determinism as the explanation for crime. While inmates may perceive non-security staff as the least likely to consider crime to be a result of free will, the reverse is actually true. Non-security staff are more likely than security staff to believe in the free will explanation. Both Holbert and Unnithan’s inmate respondents and the correctional personnel in this study perceive society, the police, judges, the Department of Corrections, and correctional officers as more likely to attribute crime to free will reasons.

Like the present study, Holbert and Unnithan (1990) found that the most discriminating variables were those relating to the perceptions of significant others. The two most important variables in their study were views of treatment staff and views of custodial staff. The two most important discriminating variables in this study were views of case workers and views of correctional officers. Age was the only demographic variable that had any significance in their study. In the current study, race was the only demographic variable that had any significant discriminating value.

Holbert and Unnithan (1990) also found that inmates perceive the police, society, judges, the Department of Corrections, and custodial staff as viewing criminality as self-chosen (free will) (47). The current study found that those in the determinism group were more likely to perceive society, correctional officers, case workers, police, Diagnostic and

Evaluation staff, judges, and the Department of Corrections as attributing crime to free will. It is possible that officers belonging to the determinism group have more affinity with inmates. Determinists may be more likely to have similar views with inmates, since determinists believe, like inmates, that crime is outside of the individual's control. In addition, determinists may be more skeptical of the criminal justice system and its members than those in the free will group, especially given the conflict between security and treatment within in correctional institutions.

## **LIMITATIONS**

One limitation to this study is that the sample was drawn from four correctional institutions in Nebraska. It is possible that prisons in the Midwest have a different philosophy regarding inmates and inmate responsibility than prisons in other parts of the United States.

Another limitation could be that the study focused only on personnel working in all male correctional institutions. Perhaps both male and female officers working with male inmates have more negative views of inmates than officers working with female inmates or in institutions housing both men and women.

This study included female officers working in male prisons. This may pose a problem for a couple of reasons. Women working in all-male inmate institutions may face interactional difficulties with both inmates and their male coworkers. Women may feel that they have to adopt the perceived views of their coworkers in order to be accepted. For example, if women officers believe that their male counterparts have negative attitudes toward inmates and are punitive rather than treatment oriented, women

officers may feel they have to accept these same attitudes in order to eliminate on-the-job stress resulting from tensions with male officers.

Social desirability in responses may also be an issue. Kauffman (1981) speculated that his findings could have been a result of officers being sensitive about the negative images held by society regarding correctional officers, and therefore may have wanted to give more positive images of officers by giving a socially desirable response. Officers may feel as if they need to reinforce to the public (and the researchers in this case) that their primary responsibility is security and control. Officers may feel as if they need to project attitudes that more closely resemble a security orientation rather than a treatment orientation.

Officers who experience role stress tend to have more punitive and negative attitudes towards inmates (Hepburn and Albonetti 1980; Poole and Regoli 1980; Shamir and Drory 1981; Cullen et al 1989b). Officers participating in this study may have given more free will responses if they were feeling role stress or role ambiguity. In addition, Poole and Regoli (1980) suggest that officers tend to fall back on and increase their commitment to their custody and security responsibilities when they experience role stress. Officers in this study who attribute crime causation to free will may have been experiencing role stress, which may have altered their responses on the questionnaire.

In addition, officers may feel that the general public expects them to have punitive attitudes towards inmates. Officers may feel that they need to reflect the larger voices of society. Members of the general public have been calling for tougher crime legislation, harsher sentences and less parole (Berliner 1994; Owens 1995). Officers may feel that

they need to “show” the public that they are following this line of thinking. They may feel that they need to justify the security aspect of their job and thereby distinguish themselves from the non-security staff by taking a firm stance against determinism and other factors that might suggest rehabilitation over custody.

Other limitations to this study revolve around individual personalities of the officers. As mentioned earlier, Ajzen and Fishbein (1992) contend that behaviors are often an extension of attitudes. If we consider an officer’s (individual) written responses on a questionnaire as a form of behavior, then we must explore what motivates these actions. How an officer responded to the questionnaire used in this study may have much to do with their own mentality and ways of thinking. If an officer has had a number of bad experiences or violent encounters with inmates in the past, they may have projected feelings associated with these events into their answers. They may have thought about a specific event where they felt the inmate made a deliberate choice to act out or be violent within the institution. This may have caused the officer to attribute crime causation to free will. The reverse may also be true. If an officer has really gotten to know an inmate and the inmate’s particular story about the circumstances surrounding the commission of their crime, it is possible that the officer would see crime as a result of determinism and respond accordingly on the questionnaire.

In relation to the above issues, the media may also play a role in how officers responded to the questionnaire. If a particularly violent crime, such as the murder of Polly Klaas, takes place and the media inundates the nation with the details surrounding the crime, officers may take a negative attitude toward criminals in general, or may begin

to believe more and more that crime is a result of free choice. They may then project this attitude onto inmates. It is also possible that how officers respond to a question on crime causation is colored by what crime they are thinking about. Officers who responded to the questionnaire may have been thinking about different crimes. Some may have answered the questionnaire thinking about serial murderers. Others may have been thinking about a young teenager from the inner city who is poor and has been in and out of foster care all of his or her life. Officers thinking about the later situation may be more inclined to view crime causation as a result of determinism rather than free will.

The results may be further complicated because of the mixture of correctional facilities from which the sample was drawn. Bazemore and Dicker (1994) suggest that the attitudes of officers toward inmates may be affected by the environment of the correctional facility. The type of institution where officers are assigned may affect their views of inmates. Smith and Hepburn (1979) found that both security and non-security staff in minimum security prisons have more punitive attitudes than staff in medium and maximum security prisons. Toch and Klofas (1982) found that prisons located in urban-metro areas tended to be more custody oriented than the more rural prisons included in their study. Brown et al (1971) provide further evidence for this potential problems. They found that security and non-security staff differ in attitudes toward inmates depending on which institutional setting they are assigned to. Officers in a more rehabilitation setting have different attitudes toward inmates than officers in a more custodial setting. Since this study included officers from four different types of institutions, it is possible that the results have limited applicability. Officers from the



Diagnostic and Evaluation Center might hold very different views about inmates than officers working at the State Penitentiary. In addition, Hepburn and Albonetti (1980) argued that the size of the correctional organization may have an affect on role conflict among security and non-security staff. Size of the organization may also affect the professional orientation held by correctional officers. Officers at smaller institutions may be more likely to attribute crime to free will than officers at larger institutions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

One suggestion for future research is to control for institutional effects. Since the type and size of the correctional institution may affect the attitudes that officers have towards inmates, it may be useful to study a group of similar organizations (in terms of security level, emphasis on rehabilitation, and size). It may also be useful to include questions related to officers' perceptions of the institution they are assigned to. This may also provide evidence for the reasons behind officer attitudes toward inmates, rather than just studying the attitudes themselves.

In conjunction with this recommendation, it may also be useful to compare correctional officer attitudes across the United States by sampling from two different regions but within similar institutions. For example, officers from two Midwestern penitentiaries and two southern penitentiaries could be compared in terms of the attitudes of officers. It is possible that different regions of the nation hold different attitudes toward crime causation and inmate responsibility.

It is also possible to replicate this study with correctional officers who are assigned to women's correctional facilities. This study examined officer attitudes toward

male inmates. It cannot be assumed that officers who interact with male inmates will have the same attitudes toward female inmates. It would be beneficial to the field of criminal justice to examine the differences (or similarities) between officers who interact with male inmates and those who interact with female inmates. This would be especially pertinent given the rise in criminal acts committed by women over the past two decades.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are two major policy implications that arise as a result of the findings presented in this study: 1) the necessity of understanding attitudes in order to create and implement effective institutional policies and 2) modifications to correctional personnel training routines.

This study has provided empirical evidence that correctional personnel have fairly decisive views regarding inmates and crime causation. If we assume that attitudes can lead to behaviors that affect the interaction between correctional personnel and inmates, then we need to understand the attitudes that correctional personnel have towards inmates. As previously mentioned, front line correctional personnel often have a significant influence on inmates and on the success or failure of institutional policies. If correctional officers believe that crime causation is due primarily to an individual's free will choice, it is possible that officers may react negatively to rehabilitation-oriented policies. This may cause an indirect (or perhaps even a direct) failure of such policies, since officers have an influence on inmates. In order to provide higher success rates of institutional policies, correctional institutions may need to look more closely at the attitudes of the staff they are hiring.

The results of this study indicate that there are differences in how correctional officers and non-security staff view each other, inmates, and other members of the criminal justice system. It is possible that adding workshops to training routines for new personnel on the importance that officers have in the success of both inmates and institutional policies may lead to better work attitudes and less job alienation and feelings of hostility. If officers are made to feel that they play an important part in the success or failure of inmates, they may be more willing to work at ensuring the success of institutional policies, especially those focusing on rehabilitation or treatment.

Both the literature and the results found in this study indicate that differences, perhaps tensions, exist between security and non-security staff. It would seem, then, to be beneficial to include team-building workshops into the training process as well. Security staff need to understand what the role of the non-security staff is, and how important that role is in the success of the inmate. Security staff also need to hear from administrators and non-security staff what their expected role is in implementing and carrying out these programs. Officers' feelings of role-conflict may be reduced if they know exactly what is expected of them, and how they are to go about fulfilling their end of the bargain.

In addition, non-security staff need to understand the perspective of the security officers and the stresses they deal with on a daily basis. Quite obviously, the objectives of these two positions are different: the primary goal of the security staff is to control the inmates and secure the facility, while the primary goal of the non-security staff is treatment and rehabilitation. Non-security staff should understand the role-conflict that security officers are experiencing when these two institutional objectives come in

conflict. Efforts could be made to reduce this conflict by ensuring a greater understanding between these two types of staff, as well as teaching them how to communicate effectively regarding their objectives.

Since officers have the most contact with inmates, it may also be beneficial to include security officers in the development of institutional policies. This would benefit the institution, the officers, and the inmates. The institution might see a higher success rate with regard to the implementation of institutional policies. Officers may be more willing to actively participate in the programs if they feel they have some control and input into how these programs are to be carried out. The officers may experience greater job satisfaction and less job stress if they feel they are part of the planning process. Inmates will benefit from successful programs that work toward ensuring both their success within the institution as well as after being released into the community.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to examine correctional officer attitudes toward crime using a free will/determinism dichotomy. Using discriminant analysis, this study also explored which variables provided the best predictable effect on where correctional personnel would place themselves on this same dichotomy. An overview of the literature relevant to correctional personnel attitudes has been given. The significance of the results found in this study and an explanation of how the results of this study compare to the findings represented in the literature review have been provided. The possible limitations and policy implications have also been presented.

In conclusion, an overview of the significant findings is presented. This study found that the majority of correctional personnel (60 percent) view criminality as a result of free will. In addition, correctional personnel are fairly decisive on their perceptions of the attitudes of significant others in the criminal justice system. Correctional personnel overwhelmingly perceive society, correctional officers, unit case workers, and police officers as supporting the free will explanation of crime. While they perceive judges and the Department of Corrections as attributing crime to free will as well, there is slightly less consensus than with the other variables. Nearly 56 percent perceive judges as supporting a free will explanation. Just over half perceive the Department of Corrections as supporting the free will explanation of crime causation.

Correctional personnel perceive two groups of people as attributing crime to determinism— inmates and the Diagnostic and Evaluation staff. Correctional personnel overwhelmingly believe that inmates perceive their criminality as a result of determinism— 70.8 percent. Fifty-eight percent of those responding to how the Diagnostic and Evaluation staff perceive crime causation believe that the staff attribute crime to determinism reasons. In addition, the best predictors of where correctional personnel would place themselves on the free will/determinism dichotomy centered around their perceptions of the views of others, particularly views of case workers and views of correctional officers.

Front-line correctional personnel serve an important function in society, especially within correctional institutions. They must protect and control all persons within the institutions, as well as assist in the implementation of treatment programs and other

institutional policies. This study has demonstrated the importance of understanding correctional personnel attitudes toward crime causation. Understanding how they attribute crime causation may affect their daily interaction with inmates, as well as in the success or failure of institutional policies.

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**APPENDIX:**  
**(Survey Questionnaire)**

Please mark choice in appropriate boxes.

Part I

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender:

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female

3. Race/Ethnic:

- ☐ African American  
☐ Asian American  
☐ Caucasian American  
☐ Hispanic American  
☐ Native American  
☐ Other? \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify)

4. Religion:

- ☐ Catholic  
☐ Jewish  
☐ Muslim  
☐ Native American  
☐ Protestant  
☐ Other? \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify)

5. Years correctional  
experience \_\_\_\_\_

6. Current position:

- ☐ Unit Case Worker  
☐ Unit manager  
☐ Unit Case Manager  
☐ Correctional Officer

(if correctional officer  
please indicate rank)

- ☐ Officer  
☐ Corporal  
☐ Lieutenant  
☐ Captain  
☐ Major

7. College education:

Undergraduate  
Education

- ☐ none  
☐ less than one year  
☐ one year  
☐ two years  
☐ three years  
☐ four years  
☐ college degree

Undergraduate Major

- ☐ Arts/Music  
☐ Education  
☐ Science/Engineering  
☐ Social Science  
☐ Agriculture  
☐ Business

Graduate Education

- ☐ one year  
☐ two years  
☐ masters degree  
☐ study beyond masters

Graduate Major

- ☐ Arts/Music  
☐ Education  
☐ Science/Engineering  
☐ Social Science  
☐ Agriculture  
☐ Business

(Please complete reverse side)

## Part II

8. For the purpose of this study it is assumed that Offenders commit crimes for one of two reasons. Please check the reason below which is closest to your opinion.

☐ Reason A

Offenders deliberately commit crimes on their own free-will. They consciously choose to commit a crime.

☐ Reason B

Offenders commit crimes for reasons beyond their control such as mental problems, biological defects, poverty, broken homes, poor education etc.

9. If you chose reason B, rank in order of importance the following three reasons why you think persons might commit crimes. Mark (1) for most important. Mark (2) for somewhat important. Mark (3) for least important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical/Biological Reasons
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psychological/Mental Illness Reasons
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social/Economic Reasons

## Part III

Considering Reasons A and B again, check either A or B on each item below according to how you think others believe.

- |   |                            |                            |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 10. <u>Society</u> , or the <u>general public</u> , believes offenders commit crimes for reasons. . . . . | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |
| 11. <u>Correctional Officers</u> believe offenders commit crimes for reason. . . . .                      | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |
| 12. <u>Unit case workers</u> believe offenders commit crimes for reason. . . . .                          | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |
| 13. The <u>inmates</u> here believe offenders commit crimes for reason. . . . .                           | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |
| 14. <u>Police officers</u> believe offenders commit crimes for reason. . . . .                            | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |
| 15. The <u>D&amp;E psychologists and staff</u> believes offenders commit crimes for reason. . . . .       | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |
| 16. <u>Judges</u> believe offenders commit crimes for reason. . . . .                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |
| 17. The <u>Department of Corrections</u> believes offenders commit crimes for reason. . . . .             | <input type="checkbox"/> A | <input type="checkbox"/> B |

Thank you for your help!