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Adult Children of the Incarcerated: An Exploratory Study of Risks and Outcomes Among College Students

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ADULT CHILDREN OF THE INCARCERATED:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RISKS AND OUTCOMES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

BY

SHARI BREJERISCA GADSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Criminal Justice
in the
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
of
Georgia State University

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY
2012

ACCEPTANCE

This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Thesis Committee. It has been approved and accepted by all members of that committee, and it has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Criminal Justice in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies of Georgia State University.

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ABSTRACT

ADULT CHILDREN OF THE INCARCERATED:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RISKS AND OUTCOMES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

SHARI BREJERISCA GADSON

DECEMBER 2011

Committee Chair: Dr. Lisa R. Muftic

Major Department: Criminal Justice

To date, research concerning children affected by parental incarceration has focused primarily on children that are eighteen years of age and younger. The effects of parental incarceration on adults that are eighteen years of age and older has remained unexamined. The purpose of this exploratory study is to explore the outcomes of young adult college students that have been affected by parental incarceration. A sample of 345 undergraduate college students was surveyed at a sizeable University in the southeastern region of the United States to create a demographic and behavioral profile of college students affected by parental incarceration. It was hypothesized that college students affected by parental incarceration will have lower institutional grade point averages (GPA), higher accounts of criminal involvement, higher likelihoods of substance abuse, and lower levels of self-control than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. Results indicated that, the outcomes of college students affected by parental incarceration were comparable to college students not affected by parental incarceration.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States ranks as a world leader in mass incarceration rates largely due to the implementation of stricter sentencing laws starting in the 1960s (Foster & Hagan, 2009). While the primary purpose of sanctions has shifted from rehabilitation to incapacitation, the preferred sentence of choice, imprisonment, presents negative social implications for families of the incarcerated. Incarcerated parents represent over half of all state prison populations and nearly two-thirds of the federal prison population (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). While it is estimated that 1 in 43 American children have an incarcerated parent (Schirmer, Nellis, & Mauer, 2009), the actual number of children affected by parental incarceration remains unknown as there are no systematic methods for collecting this information at the local, state, or federal levels.

It is not difficult to imagine that the incarceration of a parent impacts the children he or she leaves behind. Literature concerning children of the incarcerated indicates that these children are at risk for internalizing behaviors (i.e., depression, anxiety, anger, guilt, embarrassment, and/or confusion), externalizing behaviors (i.e., attachment disorders, aggressive behavior, and/or antisocial behavior), low academic attainment, academic failure, perpetuation of crime, and eventual imprisonment (Adalist-Estrin, 2006; Dallaire, Ciccone, & Wilson, 2010; Hanlon, Carswell, & Rose, 2007; Johnson, 2006). The risks of mental health and behavioral problems are exacerbated among children of the incarcerated that already display significant problems prior to their parent's incarceration (Shedd, 2011; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011). As such, the unexpected effect of mass incarceration on the American family has presented criminal justice scholars with a new social phenomenon: the secondary victimization of children that have, or have had, an incarcerated parent.

It is also important to acknowledge that the children of incarcerated parents will eventually become adults. Therefore, there is a need to understand the long term effects of parental incarceration. The conferral of adulthood at eighteen usually signifies independence and individual training for a lifelong job or career. For many young adults that training begins in a college classroom as a student. Still, little is known about college students of the incarcerated and there remain many unanswered questions about them. Thus, there is a need to perform exploratory research to identify the characteristics of college students that have been exposed to parental incarceration, their levels of self-control, and their academic aptitude and achievements.

Existing literature on school aged children of the incarcerated indicates that they are at risk for academic failure, yet the literature stops short of identifying how long their risk of academic failure remains present (Dallaire, 2007; Dallaire et al., 2010; Hanlon et al., 2007; Poehlmann, 2005). Generally, at-risk students garner less knowledge during the academic school year and are more likely to drop out than other students. At-risk students display persistent patterns of academic under-achievement throughout high school that lead to high secondary school dropout rates (Levin, 1989; McMillian & Reed, 1994). Acceptance into college for at-risk students and, moreover, students of the incarcerated is a difficult feat at best that merely symbolizes entry into college. As such, there is no research that has examined this subset of population. Questions remain as to whether college students of the incarcerated will academically excel, academically fail, or drop out.

There exist a number of known unknowns about the impact parental incarceration has on college aged children (Wakefield & Wilderman, 2011). Research is needed to answer pertinent questions, such as what are the demographic characteristics of college students of the incarcerated? Are the academic outcomes of students of the incarcerated similar to students that

do not have an incarcerated parent? Are students of the incarcerated more likely to engage in criminal acts than students that are not affected by parental incarceration? Are students of the incarcerated more likely to engage in substance abuse than students that have not been affected by parental incarceration? Do students of the incarcerated display higher or lower levels of self-control than students not affected by parental incarceration?

Study Purpose

The purpose of this research is to provide a demographic profile of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration and identify the similarities and differences across students who have, or have had, an incarcerated parent and students that have not been impacted by parental incarceration. This study surveyed 345 college students at a sizeable university in the southeastern region of the United States to garner information related to demographic characteristics, levels of self-control, and academic outcomes among students of the incarcerated compared to students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. It is hypothesized that (1) students of the incarcerated will have lower grade point averages (GPA) than students not affected by parental incarceration; (2) students of the incarcerated will engage in criminal acts more than students that have not been affected by parental incarceration; (3) students of the incarcerated will engage in substance abuse more than students that have not been affected by parental incarceration; and (4) students of the incarcerated will have lower levels of self-control than students not affected by parental incarceration.

This research ultimately will provide information on the demographic characteristics of students that have experienced parental incarceration, their academic outcomes, risks for engagement in criminal acts, risks for engagement in substance abuse, and levels of self-control.

The field of research related to children of the incarcerated will be expanded by the exploration of student decision making and academic achievement among college students.

It is important to note that, to date, most research that has examined the impact of parental incarceration on children has relied largely upon the secondary accounts of incarcerated parents and caretakers. Further, this research has focused on minor children, not young adults. It is estimated that 37% of children will reach age 18 during their parent's term of incarceration (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Therefore, it is important to understand the longitudinal consequences of parental incarceration on young adults. What are the outcomes of young adults impacted by parental incarceration? Do they experience risks similar to children impacted by incarcerated parents that are under the age of 18? Are those risks increased or diminished after the age of 18? There is a need to expand the existing body of literature to include research regarding adult children of the incarcerated.

Finally, findings from this study will also add to scholarly literature by examining whether the relationship between individual student characteristics (i.e., age, gender, race, class, nationality, etc.), and educational outcomes are mediated by criminological theory (i.e., social control).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In less than two decades (1991-2007), the number of incarcerated offenders that have minor children increased by 80% (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Glaze and Maruschak's (2008) Bureau of Justice Statistics special report[1] on parents in prison and their minor children revealed that a large portion of inmates (i.e., 52% of state inmates and 64% of federal inmates) were parents and together had a combined total of 1.7 million minor children. As a result, there also has been a growing body of research concerning the secondary victimization of children impacted by parental incarceration. Existing literature on children of the incarcerated has focused primarily on children that are under the age of 18. Despite the innate aging of children of the incarcerated, there is an absence of literature concerning adult children/young adults of incarcerated parents that are over the age of 18. Fortunately, the growing body of research surrounding the children of the incarcerated has established a foundation for literary expansion towards research concerning adult children of the incarcerated.

A review of the literature on children of the incarcerated is presented to establish the existence of risk factors that are attributable to parental incarceration. Further, a review of literature regarding children impacted by parental incarceration allows for risk predictions to be drawn across the outcomes of adult children of the incarcerated. The current work expands upon existing literature to explore the connectedness of current/past parental imprisonment to student decision making processes and educational attainment.

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[1] Findings from Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008) are based on personal interviews with prisoners participating in the 2004 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities (SISFCF), which is comprised of two separate surveys. One survey is conducted at state adult correctional facilities and the other survey is conducted at federal correctional facilities. In the year 2004, the sample size of state prisoners totaled 14,499 and the sample size of federal prisoner's totaled 3,686.

Incarceration Trends

Mass incarceration in American society has experienced steady growth over the past forty years. U.S. incarceration rates have grown fourfold since the 1970s (Foster & Hagan, 2009; Travis 2005; Western, Pattillo, & Weiman, 2004) due in large part to sharp increases in the prison population between 1980 and 1990 as a result of the War on Crime and the War on Drugs (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). As a case in point, the federal and state imprisonment rate in 1980 was 138 per 100,000 residents and by 1999 that rate had risen to 476 per 100,000 residents (Foster & Hagan, 2006; Sabol, Courture, & Harrison, 2007). Although America's imprisonment binge has recently shown signs of slowing down the current incarceration rate remains 502 per 100,000 U.S. residents (Western et al., 2004).

In addition to growth, the overall prison population has changed; this is especially true when inmate gender is considered. Women are the fastest growing and least violent segment of the United States prison population (Petersilia, 2003). The number of women in federal institutions nearly doubled three years after the full implementation of the federal sentencing guidelines, and drug related incarceration of women rose 888% during the decade following the passage of mandatory sentencing (Mumola, 2000). Women represent 10% of the inmate population and experience an annual growth rate of 11.2% (BJS, 1997). Nearly two-thirds of incarcerated women are mothers (Mumola, 2000). Further, 70% of children impacted by incarceration were cared for by their mother prior to her incarceration (Mumola, 2000; Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, 2002). Male inmate population growth lags behind that of women at a rate of 6.1% annually; however, paternal incarceration has not been shown to impact a child's continuity of care to the extent that maternal incarceration does (Mackintosh, Myers, & Kennon, 2006). By far, a greater body of literature exists to document the effects of maternal

separation from children rather than paternal separation from children because mothers are more likely to be the primary caregiver at the time of incarceration and the impact of maternal incarceration tends to be greater than that of paternal incarceration (Hanlon et al., 2007; Mackintosh et al., 2006).

Social Implications

While rising prison populations are the most evident political implication of the War on Drugs and the War on Crime, the unacknowledged social effects of these policies experienced by families and children of the incarcerated are important as well. The physical separation imposed by incarceration severs the connectedness of familial and communal bonds. For instance, most U.S. inmates are parents whose incarceration impacts the continuity of care and overall sense of security amongst their children (Foster & Hagan, 2009; Hanlon et al., 2007; Mumola, 2000). Because most children affected by parental incarceration are minors, the impact of parental separation can cause anger, depression, anxiety, guilt, fear, worry, confusion, embarrassment, aggressive behaviors, antisocial behavior, and/or attachment disorders (Adalist-Estrin, 2006; Dallaire et al., 2010; Hanlon et al., 2007; Johnson, 2006).

Children within racial minority groups that experience high levels of mass imprisonment face the highest risk of having an incarcerated parent (Beck, 2000; Petit & Western, 2004). According to the 2010 U.S. Census data report, African-Americans comprise approximately 12.6% of the total population and Hispanics (of any race) comprise approximately 16.3% of the total population. African-Americans and Hispanics are both minorities in the general U.S. population and majorities in correctional facilities where they constitute two-thirds of the prison population (Petersilia, 2003). Approximately 7.5% of African-American children have an incarcerated parent and 2.3% of Hispanic children have an incarcerated parent, while only 1% of

white children have an incarcerated parent (Foster & Hagan, 2009). African-American children are 7.5% more likely than white children to have a parent in prison and Hispanic children are 2.5% more likely than white children to have a parent in prison (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). The result is that, African-American children face the greatest likelihood of being affected by parental incarceration and experiencing the associated risks.

Collateral Consequences on Children

Children of the incarcerated are the secondary victims of imprisonment and receive little to no attention from the criminal justice system outside the parameters of their own arrest and subsequent incarceration. Conservatively speaking, about 1.7 million children have an incarcerated parent (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Children of the incarcerated are five times more likely to engage in crime than their peers; which is compounded by increased risks/exposure to sexual abuse, substance abuse, poverty, and witnessing violence (Dallaire, 2007; Mosely 2008). While not all (or most) children of the incarcerated will become incarcerated, some evidence suggests that children who are affected by dual parental incarceration or sole maternal incarceration are at a much greater risk of being arrested themselves (Kruttschnitt, 2011; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011).

Home Disruption. Disruption in the home following parental incarceration presents familial changes that children are forced to cope with. Phillips and colleagues (2006) have identified incarceration and other forms of criminal justice system involvement as predictors of family instability. Children may suffer from numerous home disruptions following parental incarceration and they may risk[2] attachment disruptions, separation anxiety, chaotic family

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[2] Risk, promotive, and protective factors are associated with the developmental outcomes of children with an incarcerated parent (Dallaire, 2007). Risk factors are variables that are

environments, depression, pre-occupation with loss of their parent, and sadness (Dallaire et al., 2010; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002). Older children have exhibited negative behaviors, emotional reactions, poverty, and stressful life events following parental incarceration (Dallaire, 2007; Poehlmann, 2005). While child living arrangements vary depending on which parent is imprisoned, research indicates that children with incarcerated mothers are more likely to be affected by disruption in the home (Johnson, 2006).

Maternal Incarceration. Children with incarcerated mothers are the most vulnerable population within the context of children of incarcerated parents (Dallaire, 2007; National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2004). Children with incarcerated mothers are more likely to live with non-parental relatives and experience displacement from the home, whereas children with incarcerated fathers are more likely to be cared for by their mothers (Dallaire, 2007; Hanlon et al., 2007). Conservatively speaking, there are 160,000 to 200,000 children under the age of 18 in the U.S. with mothers that were the sole or primary caregiver prior to their incarceration (Hanlon et al., 2007). The vast majority of children (73%) with an incarcerated mother are displaced from the home. Among these children, approximately 55% will transition to the care of grandparents, 20% transition to fathers, 15% transition to other relatives or family friends, and 10% transition into the foster care system (Child Welfare League of America, 2005; Dallaire, 2007). While the transition of children affected by parental incarceration to the care of family

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positively related to negative outcomes and evidenced through stressful life-events. Protective factors are variables associated with decreased risk for a negative outcome in high risk populations, but not in low risk populations. Promotive factors are variables that are positively related to positive outcomes for all children, regardless of the child's level of risk, such as social support and connectedness to family and school (Dallaire, 2007, p. 16; Gutman, Sameroff, & Cole, 2003; Sameroff, Baldwin, Baldwin, & Seifer, 1998). Holistically, these factors are expected to not only illustrate variables associated with negative life course outcomes, but also attest to capable positive life course outcomes for children with incarcerated parents.

members diminishes the effects of home disruption following parental separation, initiation into the foster care system may exacerbate the effects of home disruption (Crumbley & Little, 1997).

Kinship Roles. Having an incarcerated parent (or parents) does not guarantee a child a life of hardship. The risks associated with parental incarceration can be mitigated by a child's social environment. Research indicates that a number of promotive and protective factors inclusive of social support and stable, continuous, and sensitive caregiving are positively associated with outcomes among children of the incarcerated (Dallaire, 2007; Hanlon et al., 2007). Kinship roles are one of these promotive and protective factors. Crumbley and Little (1997) stipulate that kinship care can minimize disruption in the lives of children following separation from a parent. As a case in point, maternal grandmothers are increasingly serving as surrogate caregivers to children with incarcerated mothers, particularly in urban African-American communities (Hanlon et al., 2007). African American children are more likely to reside with their grandparents than are White or Hispanic children (Hanlon, et. al, 2007, p. 351). Cultural values are mediated by kinship ties that help to maintain the family unit. Grandmothers will raise their grandchildren informally and without recognition from the state rather than see them go into the state foster care system for fear that they will be taken away from the family by an impersonal, culturally insensitive, and/or irreversible system[3] (Hanlon et al., 2007; Pebley & Rudkin, 1999).

The quality of familial relationships before and during parental incarceration may influence children's emotional and behavioral responses (Johnson, 2006). Children that were

---

[3] This distrust of the foster care system is not without good reason. Per the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, states may proceed with the termination of parental rights if children have been in foster care for 15 of the preceding 22 months, or if the court has determined that the child is an abandoned infant (Hagan & Coleman, 2001; Hanlon et al., 2007).

raised in safe and nurturing environments by a caretaker prior to parental incarceration have been shown to display minimal behavioral maladjustments following parental incarceration whereas children that were primarily raised by their parent have been shown to display significant behavioral maladjustments following parental incarceration (Johnson, 2006). For instance, Hanlon, O'Grady, Bennett-Sears, and Callaman (2004) examined self-reports of 88 imprisoned substance abusing African-American mothers and their children to determine the children's risks for developing physical and psychosocial problems. Although the children were residing in crime ridden neighborhoods with exposure to multiple risks factors including substance abuse and familial disruption, many were neither significantly maladjusted nor deviant; this was due to the incarcerated mother not having been the primary caregiver for the children prior to her incarceration. The maternal grandmother had assumed the responsibility of providing a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment that was satisfactory to the children, which mitigated the effects of parental incarceration and separation.

Developmental Timing. The age of the child at the time of parental incarceration and separation may exacerbate developmental risks. Children of the incarcerated may experience negative emotional and behavioral reactions and become disproportionately prone to delinquency at the onset of adolescence or young adulthood (Hanlon et al., 2007). Children are often confused and saddened by the loss of a parent(s) and long for the return of their parent(s) regardless of the quality of parenting providing prior to incarceration (Kruttschnitt, 2011). Adolescents exhibit emotional and psychological problems, conduct problems such as aggressive behavior, delinquency and criminal involvement following parental incarceration (Johnson, 2006). As older children, adolescents are more reflective about their parent(s) actions and how their lives have been affected by parental incarceration (Kruttschnitt, 2011). Adolescents impacted by

parental incarceration are at risk for deviant associations with gangs and delinquent peer subcultures. Further, adolescents of the incarcerated are at risk for severing ties to mainstream institutions such as schools (Dallaire, 2007).

Educational Effects. Consistent with their higher risk status, the intellectual outcomes of children of the incarcerated are compromised often resulting in poor school performance and academic failure (Dallaire, 2007; Kampfner, 1995; Myers, Smarsh, Amlund-Hagen, & Kennon, 1999; Poehlmanm, 2005). Discontinuous chaotic home environments are risk factors for poor academic achievement for school aged children, whereas a hopeful disposition and social support serve as protective factors against problematic socio-emotional outcomes for school aged children (Dallaire, 2007, p. 17).

Exposure to poverty, broken homes, cultural differences, and linguistic differences increase the likelihood that at-risk children will experience lower academic achievement, academic struggle, and high secondary school dropout rates (Dallaire et al., 2010; Kampfner, 1995; Levin, 1989; Myers et al., 1999). Demographically, at-risk children are concentrated immigrant groups, non-English speaking families, families headed by single mothers, and economically disadvantaged groups (Levin, 1989). Further, at-risk children, much like the majority of U.S prisoners, are racial minorities. It follows that the effects of parental incarceration may disproportionately impact the academic outcomes of children in racial minority groups given the unbalanced representation of minorities in prisons (Kruttschnitt, 2011).

At-risk children, hereafter referred to as at-risk students, begin school lagging behind other students in overall levels of academic achievement. During a period of schooling, at-risk students gain only about 7 months of academic achievement for each 10 month academic year.

By 6th grade they are 2 years behind their age appropriate grade level and by 12th grade they are 4 years behind grade level, if they stay in school that long (Levin, 1989). Dropout rates for at-risk populations are considerably higher than those of non-disadvantaged populations[4] (Rumberger, 1983). Even if disadvantaged students gain college entry their low achievement means that a higher proportion of them will experience academic failure and leave without a degree (Levin, 1989).

In conclusion, there is a modest body of research regarding children of the incarcerated. Existing literature indicates that children that have been affected by parental incarceration are at risk for low academic achievement and academic failure. Further, Dallaire and colleagues (2010) found that high school students also exhibit internalizing behaviors following parental incarceration, yet there exists no data on the outcomes of young adults affected by parental incarceration. This raises several questions. What are the demographic characteristics of young adults that are affected by parental incarceration? What are their academic outcomes? Do they experience risks similar to children that are under the age of 18? Are those risks increased or diminished after the age of 18? There is an urgent need to expand the body of literature to include data on the academic outcomes of young adults, including high school and college students that are affected by parental incarceration.

[4] The dropout rate for at-risk students is as high as 50% in large cities (National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics, 1984).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to provide a demographic profile of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration and to identify the similarities and differences across students who have, or have had, an incarcerated parent and students that have not been impacted by parental incarceration. Existing research indicates that children of the incarcerated are at risk of collateral intergenerational consequences that result from having had an incarcerated parent including internalizing behaviors, externalizing behaviors, academic failure, and the continuation of an intergenerational cycle of crime and incarceration (Dallaire et al., 2010; Foster & Hagan, 2009). It is not known, however, if adult children of the incarcerated face the same risks as their younger counterparts. The research questions presented below will allow comparisons to be drawn across college students that have been affected by parental incarceration and college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration.

Research Question One

What are the characteristics of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration?

To date, there has not been any empirical research that outlines the demographic characteristics of college age students that have been affected by parental incarceration. There is a need to understand which students are predominantly affected by parental incarceration in order to further this body of research. What is the primary racial background of students that have an incarcerated parent? What is the primary sex of students that have an incarcerated parent? What is the average age of students that have an incarcerated parent? Are students of the incarcerated more likely to be affected by paternal incarceration or maternal incarceration? What

was the average age of students at the time of parental incarceration? Are the demographic characteristics of students that have been affected by parental incarceration relatively similar to or different from the demographic characteristics of students that have not been affected by parental incarceration?

The collection of demographic characteristics across college students that have an incarcerated parent will allow researchers to identify vulnerable groups and generate targeted literature that expands this understudied body of research. Characteristics to be explored include the students' gender, race, and age at time of parental incarceration, the incarcerated parent's gender, offense, and length of incarceration, and identification of the primary caregiver and stability of home environment during the term of parental incarceration. There is not a directional hypothesis due to the exploratory nature of this research question.

Research Question Two

Are the academic outcomes of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration similar to the academic outcomes of college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration?

Prior research has indicated that grade school aged students that have an incarcerated parent are at an increased risk for low academic attainment and academic failure (Dallaire, 2006; Kampfner, 1995; Myers et al., 1999; Poehlmanm, 2005); however, there is no published research that has examined the level of academic attainment of college students impacted by parental incarceration. This study will examine whether the academic attainment outcomes of college students impacted by parental incarceration are lower than academic attainment outcomes of college students that have not been impacted by parental incarceration. Academic outcomes are

measured by institutional grade point averages (GPA). Based on the aforementioned literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> ***H2:*** College students affected by parental incarceration will have lower institutional grade point averages (GPA) than college students not affected by parental incarceration.

Research Question Three

Are college students of the incarcerated more likely to engage in criminal acts than college students that are not affected by parental incarceration?

Mosely (2008) found that children that have an incarcerated parent are five times more likely to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who were not impacted by parental incarceration. To date, no research has been conducted to determine if college students that have been affected by parental incarceration are more likely to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who have not been affected by parental incarceration. Self-reported involvement in crime will be examined to determine if college students that have been affected by parental incarceration engage in criminal behavior at a higher or lower rate than students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. Straus, DeVoe, and Mouradian's (2004) scale of criminal history will be used to measure three separate measurements of criminal involvement: theft of money, battery before the age of 15, and battery after the age of 15. As such, the following hypothesis will be tested:

> ***H3:*** College students that have been affected by parental incarceration will have engaged in criminal acts to a greater extent compared to college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration.

Research Question Four

Are college students that have been affected by parental incarceration more likely to abuse substances than students that have not been affected by parental incarceration?

While existing literature indicates that substance abuse increases the likelihood that children of the incarcerated will engage in criminal behavior (Dallaire, 2007; Mosely, 2008), it is unknown how likely children of the incarcerated are to actually abuse substances. Abuse of drugs and alcohol will be measured to determine if students that have had an incarcerated parent are more likely to engage in substance abuse. Kaufman-Kantor, Straus, Mouradian, DeVoe, and Pooler's (1989) scale for "excessive use" of alcohol or other mind altering drugs will be used to measure four indices of substance abuse: excessive alcohol usage, harshness of consumed drugs, over-dosage, and drug treatment. The following hypothesis will be tested:

> ***H4:*** College students that have been affected by parental incarceration will have a higher likelihood of having abused substances compared to college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration.

Research Question Five

Do college students that have been affected by parental incarceration display higher or lower levels of self-control than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration?

This research question is guided by Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) General Theory of Crime. In their theory, Gottfredson and Hirschi defined conformity as resulting from high self-control while deviance results from low self-control. Self-control is defined as an individual's propensity level of committing or refraining from deviant, criminal, or conformative acts under all circumstances (Akers & Sellers, 2009). Gottfredson and Hirschi assert that parents are

primary socializers and their role in a child's life is directly related to levels of self-control. Parents that are attached to their children, supervise them closely, recognize their lack of self-control, and punish deviant acts will help to socialize children into self-control (Akers & Sellers, 2009); however, ineffective or incomplete socialization, especially ineffective child rearing, produces low self-control in children. Although school and other social institutions contribute to socialization, familial influence on socialization sustains a greater impact.

Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime has important implications for children of the incarcerated. Individuals that have had an incarcerated parent may display lower levels of self-control due to disruption in the home following parental incarceration. Furthermore, ineffective or incomplete socialization as a result of parental incarceration and separation may impact the development of self-control. The impact of familial disorganization and failure of parental influence on a child's self-control may manifest into deviant or criminal behaviors.

Self-control will be measured across students that have been affected by parental incarceration and students that have not been affected by parental incarceration to determine if students that have been affected by parental incarceration display lower levels of self-control. Measurements of self-control will be conducted using Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, and Arneklev's (1993) scale of self-control, which measures the six dimensions of self-control identified in Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime. Based on of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) General Theory of Crime, the following hypothesis will be tested:

> ***H5:*** College students that have been affected by parental incarceration will have lower levels of self-control than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration.

These research questions will allow for a better understanding of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration. The comparisons and contrasts that are made across college students that have been affected by parental incarceration and college students that have not been affected by incarcerated parents will provide useful data for the expansion of that body of literature related to children of the incarcerated.

CHAPTER IV

DATA

Approval was granted from the Institutional Review Board at a sizable university in the southeastern United States for research to be conducted with human subjects during the academic year 2010-2011. A purposive method of sampling was used to survey three cohorts of students, both male and female, registered in undergraduate criminal justice courses during the fall semester 2010. The original data was utilized to provide a demographic profile of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration and identify the similarities and differences across students who have, or have had, an incarcerated parent and students that have not been impacted by parental incarceration. Each student participant completed a single self-administered questionnaire.

Purposive sampling was initiated through email correspondence to three criminal justice professors that instructed large undergraduate courses during the 2010 fall semester. Respectively, the courses maintained an enrollment size of approximately 57, 45, and 280 students. The cumulative total of registrants rendered an anticipated sample of 382 participants. Criminal justice professors were emailed requesting 50 minutes of their classroom time to distribute surveys to students. The professors were notified that students would be asked to participate in a single 45 minute survey about student decision making and academic outcomes. Additionally, professors were asked to provide grade compensation in the form of extra credit to student participants. Once permission was granted for survey distribution, each professor provided a date that survey instruments could be distributed to the students during class time.

On agreed upon dates the researcher appeared at each professor's class to distribute survey instruments. Student participants were advised that research was being conducted to

explore student decision making and academic outcomes amongst college students. Students were informed that they were invited to participate in the research study because they were college students. The model consent form was read aloud to advise students of their rights as outlined by the university's Institutional Review Board. As such, participation was not mandatory. Students were informed that they had the right to change their minds and drop out of the survey at any time. Furthermore, students were allowed to skip questions or stop participating at any time during survey administration.

The survey was split into two parts. The first section was to be completed by all students. Students were asked questions regarding socialization, socio-demographics, and academic outcomes. The second section was to be completed by students that have (or have had) an incarcerated parent only. Students were asked to identify which parent was incarcerated and provide information regarding their social situation during that term of their parent's incarceration.

A large sample of students was targeted to enhance the response rate amongst students that have (or have had) an incarcerated parent. In all, 382 students were sought to participate in the survey. It was anticipated that this would provide a large sample size of students that have an incarcerated parent (sample of interest) and a robust number of students not affected by parental incarceration (control group). A combined total of 345 students completed the survey (90% response rate). Of survey completers, 45 (13%) respondents indicated that they have (or have had) an incarcerated parent. The remaining 300 (87%) respondents indicated that they did not have an incarcerated parent.

Sample

The sample is comprised of 345 students enrolled at a state university in southeastern United States during the fall semester of 2010. There were four cases that were removed due to extensive missing values on the survey instrument. Therefore, the final sample size used for statistical analysis in this study consisted of 341 students. The sample was comprised of 46 students (13%) that self-reported having an incarcerated parent and 295 students (87%) that self-reported never having a parent who had been incarcerated.

In terms of demographics, there were 191 female participants (56%) and 150 male participants (44%). African Americans were highly representative in the sample. There were 137 African-American participants (40%), followed by 102 Whites (30%), and 59 Asians (17%). Small amounts of students from other racial backgrounds contributed to the sample size including 14 Hispanic (4%), three American Indian (1%), and 24 students identifying as "other" (7%). The sample was comprised of 115 juniors (34%), 108 sophomores (32%), 82 seniors (24%), and 35 freshman (10%). The mean participant age was 23 (SD=6, range 17-59). The mean GPA was 3.11 (SD=0.52, range .79- 4.24). Respondents were largely from the United States (n=339; 86%).

For comparative purposes, student population data was obtained from the university's office of institutional research common data set for 2010-2011. The common data set contained institutional enrollment data that was reported in October 2010 for undergraduate and graduate students along the categories of gender, degree-seeking status, race, and nationality. Table 1 displays the comparative demographics across the sample and the university population of undergraduates. Overall, the sample was comparable to the university population. It should be noted that the university common data set (2010-2011) did not provide population data for

student year in college. Therefore, sample data could not be compared to university population data on the variable year in college.

Females were more representative than males in the sample and in the population. Females comprised of 56% of the study sample compared to 60% of the university population. Males comprised 44% of the study sample compared to 40% of the university population. Representation of White students and African-American students was relatively similarly across the university population and the sample. White students comprised 37% of the university population and 30% of the sample. African American students comprised 35% of the university population and 41% of the sample. Variations in the representation of African American students across the sample and the university population (±6) are not expected to yield results that are more reflective of African American students. Asian students and other students (race unknown) were slightly more representative in the sample than the overall university population. Asian students comprised 17% of the sample compared to 11% of the university population. Students that self-identified as "other" comprised 7% of the sample compared to 1% of self-identifying "other" students in the university population. Variations in the representation of Asian students and other students across the sample and the university population were so slight (±6) that the results are not anticipated to be largely affected by the increase of Asian students and other students in the sample. Hispanic students were slightly more representative in the population (7%) than in the sample (4%). American Indians students reflected comparative representation across the sample (1%) and population (0.24%).

Student country of origin rendered slightly divergent results across the sample and university population. A considerable amount of the sample was comprised of U.S. citizens (86%), while the 2010 university population reported that 98% of the undergraduate student

body were students with American citizenship. The percentile difference across nonresident students in the sample and in the population (±12) is not expected to impact the significance of any resulting data. The sample remains largely composed of students from the United States.

Table 1
Comparative Demographics

Undergraduate College Students		
Variable	Sample (N=341)	University Population (N=23,486)
Age in Years (mean)	23	unknown
Gender		
Male	150 (44%)	9,480 (40%)
Female	191 (56%)	14,006 (60%)
Race		
White	102 (30%)	8,596 (37%)
African American	137 (40%)	8,276 (35%)
Hispanic	14 (4%)	1,707 (7%)
Asian	59 (17%)	2,565 (11%)
American Indian	3 (1%)	56 (0.24%)
Other	24 (7%)	338 (1%)
Year in College		
Freshman	35 (10%)	unknown
Sophomore	108 (32%)	unknown
Junior	115 (34%)	unknown
Senior	82 (24%)	unknown
Country of Origin		
United States	292 (86%)	23,078 (98%)
Other Country	47 (14%)	408 (2%)

Measures

Independent Variables

This study explores the similarities amongst students with an incarcerated parent and students without an incarcerated parent. Parental incarceration history serves as the independent variable across all comparisons. Survey participants were presented with a question regarding parental incarceration, to which they responded “Yes=1” if they had or currently have an incarcerated parent and “No=0” if they did not have an incarcerated parent. There were 45 students that reported having a parent that was incarcerated (13%). The remaining 295 students (87%) reported that they have never had an incarcerated parent.

Dependent Variables

The current study examines the dependent variables of self-control, academic attainment, substance abuse, and criminal history for observed measurements of variation between students with an incarcerated parent and students without an incarcerated parent.

Self-Control. Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, and Arneklev's (1993) scale of Self-Control was utilized to measure the six dimensions of self-control noted in Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) General Theory of Crime[5]. Prior research that has operationalized self-control utilizing the Likert scale has shown low levels in self-control to be a significant predictor of criminal and delinquent behavior (Longshore, Turner, & Stein, 1996; Pratt & Cullen, 2000; Unnever, Cullen, & Pratt, 2003). Students were presented with 24 questions (Table 2) concerning self-centeredness, risk-taking, temper, physicality, impulsivity, and ignoring to which responses were coded using a five-point Likert scale with one indicating “strongly disagree” and five indicating “strongly agree”. Lower scores are indicative of higher levels of self-control while higher scores represent

[5] Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, and Arneklev’s measurements of self-control differ from Gottfredson and Hirschi’s measurements of self-control.

lower levels of self-control. Overall, students had moderate levels of self-control (M= 2.57; SD=1.7).

Table 2
Self-Control Scale

Item	Mean	SD
I often do things that other people think are dangerous.	2.59	1.18
I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal.	2.54	1.2
I frequently try to avoid projects that I know will be difficult.	2.57	1.13
When things get complicated, I tend to quit or withdraw.	2.06	1.07
I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky.	3.41	1.14
I'm not very sympathetic to other people when they are having problems.	2.06	1.27
Sometimes I will take a risk just for the fun of it.	3.01	1.26
I don't devote much thought and effort to preparing for the future.	1.80	1.1
I sometimes find it exciting to do things for which I might get in trouble.	2.41	1.28
Excitement and adventure are more important to me than security.	2.11	1.12
When I'm really angry, other people stay away from me.	2.51	1.22
I almost always feel better when I am on the move than when I am sitting and thinking.	3.19	1.23
I'm more concerned with what happens to me in the short run than in the long run.	2.03	1.1
I like to get out and do things more than like to read or contemplate ideas.	3.35	1.15
I dislike really hard tasks that stretch my abilities to the limit.	2.35	1.07
I seem to have more energy and a greater need for activity than most other people my age.	2.95	1.09
The things in life that are the easiest to do bring me the most pleasure.	2.66	1.11
If things I do upset people, it's their problem not mine.	2.17	1.13
I am able to control my actions.	4.25	0.99
I will try to get the things I want even when I know it's causing problems for other people.	2.24	1.09
I lose my temper easily.	2.28	1.28
Often when I'm angry at people I feel more like hurting them than talking to them about why I am angry.	2.10	1.26
When I have a serious disagreement with someone, it's usually hard for me to talk calmly about it without getting upset.	2.55	1.35
If I had a choice, I would always rather do something physical than something mental.	2.57	1.2
Self-Control Scale	2.57	1.17

Academic Attainment. Grade point averages (GPA) were utilized to measure student academic attainment. Students were asked to self-report their current collegiate GPA. Standard GPA values are bound between 0.00- 4.00 (where 4.00 is an "A" and 0.00 is a F). Student grade point averages ranged from 0.79 to 4.24. The average GPA among this sample is 3.11 (SD=0.52).

Criminal Involvement. Straus, DeVoe, and Mouradian's (2004) scale of criminal history was utilized to measure three separate measurements of criminal involvement: involvement in property crime, early onset of crime, and late onset of crime. Students were presented with three questions (Table 3) regarding criminal history, to which responses were coded using a four-point Likert scale with one indicating "strongly disagree" and four indicating "strongly agree". Each response was later dichotomized to reflect whether or not a student had ever engaged in property crime (1=Yes, 0=No), physical violence before the age of 15 (1=Yes, 0=No), or physical violence after the age of 15 (1=Yes, 0=No). The dichotomized responses allowed for easier statistical analysis of students that either engaged in a criminal act or did not engage in a criminal act.

Overall, few students self-reported having been criminally involved. On the first measure of criminal involvement ("I stole money from anyone, including family"), only one-quarter (26%) of the participants reported having committed a property crime. On the second measure of criminal involvement, early onset of physical violence ("Before age 15, I physically attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them"), less than a quarter of students (22%) indicated that they had committed battery before the age of 15. On the third measure of criminal involvement, physical violence after age 15 ("Since age 15, I have physically attacked someone

with the idea of seriously hurting them"), less than a quarter (17%) of students admitted having committed battery since the age of 15.

Table 3
Criminal Involvement Measurements

Item	Yes	No
I stole money (from anyone, including family)	26%	72%
Before age 15, I physically attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them.	22%	77%
Since age 15, I have physically attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them.	17%	82%

Substance Abuse. Kaufman-Kantor, Straus, Mouradian, DeVoe, and Pooler's (1989) scale for "excessive use" of alcohol or other mind altering drugs was used to measure four indices of substance abuse: excessive alcohol usage, harshness of consumed drugs, over-dosage, and drug treatment (Table 4) regarding substance abuse, to which responses were coded using a four-point Likert scale with one indicating "strongly disagree" and four indicating "strongly agree". Each individual question was later dichotomized for optimal statistical analysis. Responses of "1=strongly disagree" and "2=disagree" were categorized as "No". Responses of "3=agree" and "4-strongly agree" were categorized as "Yes".

Overall, most students self-reported that they had not abused substances. The first measurement (I sometimes drink enough to feel really high or drunk) was the most divided measurement on the substance abuse scale. Approximately half (48%) of participants reported having drank enough to feel really high or drunk. On the second measurement (In the past, I used coke crack, or harder drugs (like uppers, heroin, opiates) more than once or twice), less than a

quarter (16%) of students reported having overdosed on drugs or having a severe health problem because of taking drugs. On the third measurement (I have overdosed on drugs or had a severe health problem because of taking drugs), less than a quarter (7%) of students reported having overdosed on drugs or having a severe health problem because of taking drugs. On the fourth measurement (I have been treated for a drug problem), less than a quarter (10%) of students reported having been treated for a drug problem.

Table 4
Substance Abuse Scale

Item	Yes	No
I sometimes drink enough to feel really high or drunk.	48%	51%
In the past, I used coke crack, or harder drugs (like uppers, heroin, opiates) more than once or twice.	16%	84%
I have overdosed on drugs or had a severe health problem because of taking drugs.	7%	92%
I have been treated for a drug problem.	10%	90%

Plan of Analysis

Variables elicited from student demographics, self-control, academic attainment (GPA), criminal involvement, and substance abuse will be measured using Chi Square tests and Independent sample t-tests to determine how similar or different college students of the incarcerated are from college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. Chi Square tests measure the strength of correlation (relationship) between variables. Independent sample t-tests measure the differences across the mean of variables.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

To date, little is known about college students of the incarcerated. Existing research concerning the effects of parental incarceration on children under the age of 18 indicates that they are an at-risk group (Adalist-Estrin, 2006; Dallaire et al., 2010; Hanlon et al., 2007; Johnson, 2006). There is a need to understand if the risks associated with having a parent incarcerated transmit from childhood to young adulthood. The goal of this study is to identify the similarities and differences across students that have, or have had, an incarcerated parent and students that have not been impacted by parental incarceration. The study will provide information on the demographic characteristics of students that have experienced parental incarceration, their academic outcomes, risks for engagement in criminal acts, risks for engagement in substance abuse, and levels of self-control.

Demographic Profile of Students Affected by Parental Incarceration

The first research question sought to identify a demographic profile of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration and compare that profile to the profile of students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. This study found that students of the incarcerated were primarily African American females in their early 20s that had an incarcerated father. On average, students were 10 years of age (SD=5.52; n=24) at the time of paternal incarceration and the term of incarceration lasted for 5.55 years (SD=5). Students largely indicated that the mother was the primary caregiver during their parent's term of incarceration (70.6%), followed by "other persons" (11.8%), biological grandmother only (8.8%), aunt and/or uncle (5.9%), and biological grandparents (2.9%; n=34). Students were asked to rank the stability of their home environment during their parent's term of incarceration

on a scale of 1-10, with higher numbers representing more stability. The average rating of the home environment was an 8.23 (SD=2.29; n=39), indicating that most students resided in a stable home during the time of their parent's incarceration.

Comparisons were then made between students of the incarcerated and students not affected by parental incarceration to identify similarities and differences across both groups of students. A directional hypothesis was not established due to the exploratory nature of this research question. Chi Square tests were performed on the categorical independent variables (i.e., race and gender) and an independent t-test was performed on the continuous variable (i.e., age) to determine if there were any significant relationships between the selected independent variables and parental incarceration. Table 5 presents the findings for research question one.

The first variable to be examined was student race. As shown in Table 5, students affected by parental incarceration were more likely to be African American (67%) than students not affected by parental incarceration (37%). On the other hand, students not affected by parental incarceration were more likely to be White (32% compared to 20% of students of the incarcerated) or Asian (19% compared to 7% of students of the incarcerated). These differences were statistically significant ($x^2(5) = 18.98$, $p < .01$).

The second variable to be examined was student gender. Gender make-up was comparable across students affected by parental incarceration and students not affected by parental incarceration and no statistically significant differences were found. Overall there were more females (61% of students of the incarcerated and 56% of students not affected by parental incarceration) than males (39% of students of the incarcerated and 44% of students not affected by parental incarceration) in the study sample.

The third variable to be examined was age. The Independent sample t-test yielded no significant differences across the mean ages for both groups of students. Overall, students were in their early twenties with the average age of students affected by parental incarceration was 22.7 years (SD=7.2). Comparatively, the average age of students not affected by parental incarceration was 22.6 years (SD=5.8).

Table 5

Demographic Characteristics of College Students That Have Been Affected by Parental Incarceration and College Students That Have Not Been Affected by Parental Incarceration

Variables	SIP	≠ SIP	Test Statistic
Race[1]			
African-American	67%	37%	$x^2(5) = 18.98$*
White	20%	32%	
Hispanic	7%	4%	
Asian	7%	19%	
American Indian	0%	1%	
Other	0%	8%	
Gender[2]			
Male	39%	44%	$x^2(1) = .51$
Female	61%	56%	
Mean Current Age (SD)	22.7 (7.2)	22.6 (5.8)	$t(334) = -0.09$

Note: SIP = Students of the Incarcerated. ≠SIP = Students not affected by parental incarceration.

[1] = SIP (n=45); ≠ SIP (n=294)

[2] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (291)

p < .01*, two-tailed

Academic Performance

The second research question identified how similar the academic outcomes of students affected by parental incarceration are to students that are not affected by parental incarceration. Academic outcomes were measured by institutional grade point averages (GPA). It was hypothesized that college students affected by parental incarceration will have lower institutional grade point averages (GPA) than college students not affected by parental incarceration. An independent t-test was performed on the continuous variable (i.e., GPA) to determine if there was a significant relationship between GPA and parental incarceration. Table 6 presents the findings for research question two.

The independent sample t-test yielded no significant differences across the mean GPA of both student groups. Overall, students displayed relatively successful academic outcomes as measured by individual GPA with students affected by incarceration holding average GPAs of 3.0 (SD= .73) and students not affected by parental incarceration holding average GPAs of 3.1 (SD= .48).

Table 6

Academic Outcomes of Students Affected by Parental Incarceration and Students Not Affected by Parental Incarceration

Variables	SIP	≠SIP	Test Statistic
Mean GPA (SD)	3.0 (.73)	3.1 (.48)	$t(316) = 1.28$

Note: SIP = Students of the Incarcerated. ≠SIP = Students not affected by parental incarceration.

Criminality

The third research question identified if college students of the incarcerated were more likely to have engaged in criminal acts than college students that are not affected by parental incarceration. It was hypothesized that college students that have been affected by parental incarceration will have engaged in criminal acts to a greater extent than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. Chi Square tests were performed on the categorical independent variables (i.e., stole money, early onset violence, violence) to determine if there were any significant relationships between the selected independent variables and parental incarceration. Table 7 presents the findings for research question three.

The first variable to be examined was whether students had engaged in property crime. Specifically, students were asked if they had ever stole money from anyone, including family members. As shown in Table 7, students of the incarcerated were more likely (37%) than students not affected by parental incarceration (25%) to have stolen money. This difference was statistically significant ($x^2(1) = 3.25$, $p < .05$).

The second variable to be examined was whether students had engaged in violence at an early age. Specifically, students were asked if they had ever physically attacked someone before the age of 15 with the idea of seriously hurting them. As shown in Table 7, students of the incarcerated were more likely (41%) than students not affected by parental incarceration (19%) to have an early onset of violence. This difference was statistically significant ($x^2(1) = 11.73$, $p < .001$).

The third variable to be examined was violence perpetration at an older age. Specifically, students were asked if they had ever physically attacked someone since the age of 15 with the idea of seriously hurting them. As shown in Table 7, students of the incarcerated were more

likely (28%) than students not affected by parental incarceration (16%) to display physical violence since the age of 15. This difference was statistically significant ($x^2(1) = 4.27$, $p < .05$).

Table 7

Engagement in Criminal Acts by Students of the Incarcerated and Students Not Affected by Parental Incarceration

Variables	SIP	≠ SIP	Test Statistic
Stole Money[1]	37%	25%	$x^2(1) = 3.25$*
Violent (Early Onset)[2]	41%	19%	$x^2(1) = 11.73$***
Violent[3]	28%	16%	$x^2(1) = 4.27$*

Note: SIP = Students of the Incarcerated. ≠SIP = Students not affected by parental incarceration.

[1] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (n=291)

[2] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (n=292)

[3] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (n=291)

p < .001***, p < .01**, p < .05*, one-tailed

Alcohol/Substance Abuse

The fourth research question sought to identify if college students of the incarcerated were more likely to abuse substances than college students that are not affected by parental incarceration. It was hypothesized that college students of the incarcerated will have a higher likelihood of substance abuse than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. Chi Square tests were performed on the categorical independent variables (i.e.,

alcohol/substance abuse, hard drug use, overdosed/severe health problem, drug treatment) to determine if there were any significant relationships between the selected independent variables and parental incarceration. Table 8 presents the findings for research question four.

The first variable to be examined was whether students engaged in Alcohol/Substance Abuse. Specifically, students were asked if they sometimes drink enough to feel really high or drunk. Chi Square test results yielded no significant relationship between alcohol/substance abuse and parental incarceration. The likelihood of alcohol/substance abuse was similar across student groups with approximately half of each student group (46% of students of the incarcerated and 49% of students not affected by parental incarceration) having abused alcohol/substance(s) in the past.

The second variable to be examined was whether students engaged in hard drug use. Specifically, students were asked if they had ever used coke, crack, or harder drugs (i.e. uppers, heroin, or opiates) more than once or in the past. Chi Square test results yielded no significant relationship between hard drug use and parental incarceration. Overall, a relatively small percentage of students had engaged in hard drug use with 15% of students of the incarcerated and 16% of students not affected by parental incarceration reporting past hard drug use.

The third variable to be examined was whether students had ever overdosed or had a severe health problem related to drug use. Results from a Chi Square test yielded no significant relationship between past overdose or a severe health problem and parental incarceration. Overall, past overdose or a severe health problem was comparatively low among students of the incarcerated (9%) and students not affected by parental incarceration (7%).

The fourth variable to be examined was whether students had ever completed drug treatment. Specifically, students were asked if they had ever been treated for a drug problem. Chi Square test results yielded no significant relationship between drug treatment and parental incarceration. Low involvement with drug treatment was similarly noted across students of the incarcerated (13%) and students not affected by parental incarceration (10%).

Table 8

Substance abuse by Students of the Incarcerated and Students Not Affected by Parental Incarceration

Variables	SIP	≠SIP	Test Statistic
Alcohol/Substance Abuse[1]	46%	49%	$x^2(1) = 0.18$
Hard Drug Use[2]	15%	16%	$x^2(1) = 0.01$
Overdosed/Severe Health Problem[3]	9%	7%	$x^2(1) = 0.14$
Drug Treatment[4]	13%	10%	$x^2(1) = 0.55$

Note: SIP = Students of the Incarcerated. ≠SIP = Students not affected by parental incarceration.

[1] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (n=294)

[2] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (n=294)

[3] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (n=293)

[4] = SIP (n=46); ≠ SIP (n=294)

one-tailed

Self-Control

Research Question five sought to identify if students of the incarcerated display higher or lower levels of self-control than students that are not affected by parental incarceration. It was hypothesized that college students of the incarcerated will have lower levels of self-control than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. An independent t-test was performed on the continuous variable (i.e., self-control) to determine if there was a significant relationship between individual levels of self-control and parental incarceration. Table 9 presents the findings for research question five.

The independent sample t-test yielded no significant difference across the mean self-control score for students of the incarcerated and students not affected by parental incarceration. Students of the incarcerated showed comparable and moderate levels of self-control 2.56 (SD= .58) to students not affected by parental incarceration 2.58 (SD= .56).

Table 9

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Levels of Self-Control across Students Affected by Parental Incarceration and Students Not Affected by Parental Incarceration

Variables	SIP	≠SIP	Test Statistic
LSC Scale	2.56 (.58)	2.58 (.56)	$t(46) = .155$

Note: SIP = Students of the Incarcerated. ≠SIP = Students not affected by parental incarceration.

In conclusion, students of the incarcerated were primarily identified as 23 year old African-American females affected by incarcerated fathers. The average student was 10 years old at the time of the father's incarceration, which lasted on average five and a half years. Students of the incarcerated were largely cared for by their mothers during the term of incarceration and reportedly had a stable home environment. Comparisons made between students of the incarcerated and students not affected by parental incarceration resulted in divergent findings across both groups of students. Students of the incarcerated were more likely to be African-American while students not affected by parental incarceration were more likely to be White or Asian. Gender was comparable across both groups of students with females being more representative in the overall study sample. Students of the incarcerated and students not affected by parental incarceration were on average 23 years of age and had a 3.0 GPA. In regard to criminality, students of the incarcerated were more likely to engage in criminal behavior as evidenced by having had stolen money, violence at an early age, and violence at a late age. Past substance abuse and levels of self-control were comparable across both groups of students. Findings from this study will be examined in light of the larger body of literature on children of the incarcerated to determine if adults of the incarcerated face similar risks as children of the incarcerated. Further, study limitations will be identified and recommendations concerning college students of the incarcerated will follow.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Mass incarceration policies in the United States have resulted in surging prison populations that have increased the number of children impacted by parental incarceration. This is especially troubling because children of the incarcerated are at risk for internalizing behaviors, externalizing behaviors, low academic attainment, academic failure, commission of crime, and subsequent imprisonment (Adalist-Estrin, 2006; Dallaire et al., 2010; Hanlon et al., 2007; Johnson, 2006). In light of this, it is fairly easy to assume that children of the incarcerated may have little to look forward to as they approach adulthood. In fact, extant literature concerning their outcomes makes a convincing argument that these children are quite likely to follow in their parents' footsteps (replicating mistakes, wrongdoings, regrets, punishment and eventual incarceration).

Existing literature on children of the incarcerated has focused principally on children that are under the age of 18. It is estimated that one-third of children affected by parental incarceration will reach the age of 18 during their parent's term of incarceration but there still exist a number of known "unknowns" about the intergenerational impact of parental incarceration (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008; Gottschalk, 2011). Therefore, it is imperative that the body of research concerning children of the incarcerated be expanded to include literature on the longitudinal outcomes of young adults that have been affected by parental incarceration.

The goal of this study is to expand the aforementioned body of literature on children of the incarcerated by exploring the outcomes of young adults affected by parental incarceration. Specifically, this study set out to create a demographic and behavioral profile of college students

affected by parental incarceration. Exploratory research was conducted to answer questions such as what are the demographic characteristics of students of the incarcerated? Are the academic outcomes of students of the incarcerated similar to those of students that do not have an incarcerated parent? Are students of the incarcerated more likely to have higher levels of criminality than students that are not affected by parental incarceration? Are students of the incarcerated more likely to abuse substances than students that have not been affected by parental incarceration? Do students of the incarcerated have differential levels of self-control than students not affected by parental incarceration?

A purposive sampling method was used to survey 345 male and female undergraduate college students at a sizeable university in the southeastern region of the United States during the fall semester of 2010. Students completed a 10 page pencil and paper survey that asked a variety of questions related to demographics, behaviors, and parental incarceration. Data from the study was analyzed using Chi-Square and independent sample t-tests to determine statistically significant relationships. Findings from the study are used to answer five pertinent research questions (demographic profile, academic outcomes, criminal behavior, alcohol/substance abuse, self-control) concerning the similarities and differences across college students affected by parental incarceration and college students not affected by parental incarceration.

Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of college students impacted by parental incarceration were identified. Results indicate that within the current sample the typical student impacted by parental incarceration is a 23 year old African-American female who was raised by her mother. Except for race (the typical student not impacted by parental incarceration was a White female),

demographically students were quite similar. For instance, the current age of students is comparable across both groups. Furthermore, study results indicate that students of the incarcerated are age commensurate with their level of academic attainment. In other words, having an incarcerated parent did not appear to disrupt the student's academic career.

Gender commonalities are also noted across both groups of students. Females exceed males in the sample and in the university population, which may suggest that females are pursuing post-secondary education at a higher rate than males. Furthermore, females comprise almost two-thirds of the students surveyed that have been impacted by parent incarceration. Females may be academically surpassing males affected by parental incarceration. Additionally, there may be mediating factors that have been formed in the lives of female students. Male children of the incarcerated may experience low rates of college enrollment, high rates of college dropout, and/or may be affected by extraneous factors such as deviant sub-cultures that prevent them from obtaining a college education. More research is needed to explore the phenomena of female college students of the incarcerated outnumbering male college students of the incarcerated. Future research may indicate that females, particularly in the African-American community, have better academic outcomes than males and therefore are more likely to experience academic success in college.

Like two-thirds of the U.S. prison population, most students in the sample that were impacted by parental incarceration are African-American (Petersilia, 2003). The findings are highly suggestive that students' race is related to that of the incarcerated population. This research supports literature from Glaze and Maruschak (2008) who assert that African-American children face the greatest likelihood of being affected by parental incarceration.

Questions were also asked about the students' home environment during their parent's term of incarceration. Most students of the incarcerated indicated that they were 10 years old at the time of parental incarceration. More research is needed to explore if the age at the time of parental incarceration buffers the effects of incarceration and assists students in maintaining age to grade level performance.

Paternal incarceration affects more college students than maternal incarceration. The prevalence of incarcerated fathers is not surprising considering the fact that the male imprisonment rate is fourteen times higher than the imprisonment rate for females across state and federal jurisdictions (West, Sabol, & Greenman, 2010). African-American men constitute two-thirds of the prison population (Petersilia, 2003), and face a higher probability of becoming incarcerated over their lifetime than any other racial group. In fact, imprisonment is generally regarded as a normal detour in the life of an African-American male (Pettit & Western, 2004). Despite this, the father's term of incarceration does not appear to have had a negative influence on the students' academic career. Rather, students presently show academic success in college. These findings are consistent with existing literature, which indicates that the effects of paternal incarceration are not as harmful as maternal incarceration due to the maternal role that most women play in their children's lives. Nevertheless, paternal incarceration should not be assumed to have no effect on students because of its diminished impact on their academic outcomes.

Incarceration inflicts social changes across entire communities that families are forced to accept. It is estimated that a large number of families in the African-American community are cared for by single mothers (Salem, Zimmerman, & Notaro, 1998). The prevalence of female headed households in the African-American community signals a forced normality amid the epidemic of absent and incarcerated fathers; however, researchers caution that the familial

structure is not to be interpreted as an indication of future delinquency (Salem et al., 1998). In a study conducted by Salem, Zimmerman, and Notaro (1998), the structure of female headed families was not related to the psychosocial outcomes of African American youth. Rather, extended family support and involvement of the nonresident father are credited with significantly altering the experience of youth living in a single mother household. Youth that receive support from extended family and maintain a relationship with non-resident fathers may be able to develop resiliency amid the risks associated with a female headed household.

Dallaire (2007) and Hanlon and colleagues (2007) found that mothers were most likely to care for children during paternal incarceration. That finding was substantiated in the current study as college students reported maternal caretakers during the father's term of incarceration. The majority of students affected by paternal incarceration and cared for by their mothers were African-American females. Research has shown that single mothers in African-American communities are capable of developing strong family units in the absence of a resident father (Salem et al., 1998). The father's state of incarceration does not imply a fatalistic outcome on a student's life. Further, paternal incarceration may not have had a discernible effect on a student if absenteeism was evident prior to the term of incarceration. Students indicated that their caretakers are capable of providing a safe and nurturing environment. The mothers are able to establish protective factors that enabled children to become successful adults in the absence of fathers.

Existing literature indicates that many incarcerated parents are sentenced to two or more years in prison (Hanlon et al., 2007). The length of paternal incarceration for college students in this study is consistent with noted incarceration ranges for parents. In this study, students indicated that their father's term of incarceration lasted on average five and a half years, which

exceeds the minimum amount of time that incarcerated parents are shown to serve in prison. Despite the extended absence, students are able to maintain academic performance during and/or after the parent's term of incarceration and through the formative years of their life.

Academic Outcomes

Academic outcomes were compared across students affected by parental incarceration and students not affected by parental incarceration. Academic outcomes, as measured by cumulative grade point averages, were comparable across student groups. Students affected by parental incarceration and students not affected by parental incarceration reported having an average 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale). This was somewhat unexpected as existing literature concerning children of the incarcerated indicates that they are at risk for academic failure and low academic achievement (Adalist-Estrin, 2006; Dallaire et al., 2010; Hanlon et al., 2007; Johnson, 2006). Research by Levin (1989) indicates that even if at-risk students gain entry into college a higher proportion of them will experience academic failure, academic struggle, and dropout due to existing patterns of low academic achievement. The comparative grade point averages across both groups may be related to the level of educational attainment demonstrated by students of the incarcerated. Students affected by parental incarceration in this study have graduated from high school, gained admission into college, and demonstrated a commitment to academic achievement. They have defied the odds by establishing strong academic performance at the collegiate level.

Criminal Behavior

Criminality was examined across college students of the incarcerated and college students not affected by parental incarceration. It was hypothesized that college students that

have been affected by parental incarceration will have engaged in criminal acts to a greater extent than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. The hypothesis was supported by research findings. Specifically, students of the incarcerated were more likely to have engaged in criminal behavior compared to their student colleagues. Existing literature by Mosely (2008) indicates that children of the incarcerated are five times more likely to engage in criminal behavior than their peers that are not affected by parental incarceration. These findings suggest that the risk for criminality among children of the incarcerated remains present through young adulthood. Further, because the age of students of the incarcerated is commensurate with their educational level it does not appear that they have committed serious crimes that warrant extended periods of incarceration. More research is needed to identify why students of the incarcerated engage in higher levels of criminality.

Alcohol/Substance Use

Past alcohol/substance abuse was examined across college students affected by parental incarceration and college students not affected by parental incarceration. It was hypothesized that college students that have been affected by parental incarceration will have a higher likelihood of having abused substances compared to college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. This hypothesis was not supported. Past substance abuse was comparable across both groups of students. Approximately fifty percent of students affected by parental incarceration and students not affected by parental incarceration reported alcohol and/or substance abuse. Abuse of alcohol and/or other substances may be related to the fact that study participants were college students. Research by Engs and Hanson (1988) indicates that drinking among college students in not a new occurrence. National studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s showed that eighty percent of college students drank. Subsequent national surveys in the

1980s revealed that the proportion of college students that drank had risen slightly and varied from eighty to ninety-nine percent depending on the geographic location of the college. Substance abuse may be explained by both groups of students socially engaging in drug/alcohol usage during collegiate years.

Self-Control

Levels of self-control across students of the incarcerated and students not affected by parental incarceration were tested to determine if significant differences were present. It was hypothesized that college students that have been affected by parental incarceration will have lower levels of self-control than college students that have not been affected by parental incarceration. This hypothesis was not supported. In the General Theory of Crime, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) asserted that parents are primary socializers and their role in a child's life is directly related to levels of self-control within their child; conformity results from high self-control while deviance results from low self-control. Findings indicate that the levels of self-control are similar across both groups of students and that students of the incarcerated were not affected by their parent's term of incarceration. The incarcerated parent may not have been present in the student's life and therefore imposed no effects on levels of self-control or the caretaker may have socialized the student in the direction of conformity. More research is needed to measure the influence of caretakers and/or mentors on levels of self-control among children of the incarcerated.

Limitations

The study was designed to provide an accurate representation of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration, however, limitations do exist. The first limitation

concerns the sample size. The study surveyed 345 undergraduate students at a sizeable university in the southeastern region of the United States. The sample size constituted approximately one and a half percent of the university population (N=23,486). Generalizations of this study's results may be limited because of the small sample size, which may not be representative of the larger university population. Further, students in the sample were all registered in criminal justice courses. The survey was not distributed to students registered in courses outside of the Department of Criminal Justice. The students sampled may represent students that want to learn more about the criminal justice system to the exclusion of students that do not want to take criminal justice classes. Subsequent research concerning college students of incarcerated parents should target students registered in courses outside the Department of Criminal Justice to determine if different findings are obtained.

The second limitation concerns the method of statistical analysis utilized to develop findings. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, variables were measured utilizing Chi Square tests and independent sample t-tests to determine the strength of correlation (relationship) and differences across the mean of variables, respectively. The tests could not control for variables or determine likely causes of an outcome.

The last limitation was that all students who reported having, or having had, an incarcerated parent were grouped together. There were no differentiations made across students whose parents were incarcerated in jail versus students whose parents were incarcerated in prison. The location of parental incarceration may impact outcomes amongst students of the incarcerated. Most inmates are disproportionally from urban areas (Massoglia & Warner, 2011). Whereas parents that are incarcerated in jails typically remain closer in distance to their families and experience a shorter period of incarceration, parents incarcerated in prisons serve longer

sentences and are housed in rural areas that are further distances from their home. Incarceration of a parent in a distant prison may impose difficulties for family members to readily visit and maintain close ties (Massoglia & Warner, 2011). The limitations presented may impact the validity and generalizability of study findings.

The limitations could be remedied by increasing the sample size of survey participants and utilizing an advanced form of statistical analysis such as regression analysis, which identifies the causal effect of a variable. Future sampling should be conducted throughout departments in the university so that students are targeted outside of the criminal justice and social sciences arena. Lastly, findings concerning students of the incarcerated should be examined along the categories of students affected by parents in jails and students affected by parents in prisons so that research is obtained on the outcomes of college students affected by varying terms of parental incarceration. Variations in parental terms of incarceration may point to differential outcomes amongst children of the incarcerated.

Future Research

The existing body of literature concerning children of the incarcerated has primarily focused on children under the age of 18 through secondary accounts of incarcerated parents and caretakers. This study sought to expand the body of research concerning children by examining the academic and social outcomes of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration. The exploratory design of this study allowed for demographic characteristics of college students affected by parental incarceration to be identified and measurements to be drawn across the outcomes of students of the incarcerated and students not affected by parental

incarceration. The presented findings establish a basis for future researchers to expand upon this work in a number of directions.

College students of the incarcerated were identified primarily as African-American females affected by paternal incarceration that were raised by their mothers. Research is needed on the factors that contribute to academic success among females affected by paternal incarceration. Are females solely influenced by their mothers to excel academically or were there other mentorship roles present? Were females impacted by their father's term of incarceration or did their father serve as an anti-mentor?[6] Further research may suggest that females that are raised by single mothers have better outcomes due to gender similarities across the parent and child. Research should also explore the presence of siblings to examine gender group variations and outcomes across all children of the incarcerated to determine if college students of the incarcerated faired similarly or differently than their siblings.

It is to be noted that study findings are not representative of all adult children of the incarcerated. The study findings reflect a segment of adult children of the incarcerated that have enrolled in college and demonstrated academic excellence. Further, the outcomes of adult children that have been affected by parental incarceration in this study cannot be generalized across all adult children of the incarcerated. The dearth of male students in the study sample implies that more research is needed to investigate the outcomes of males affected by parental incarceration. It is unknown if males affected by parental incarceration are enrolling in college, dropping out of college, or succumbing to the risks associated with parental incarceration during

[6] An anti-mentor teaches one what not to do, generally by example.

childhood. Research on males of the incarcerated will allow comparisons and contrasts to be drawn across gender on children of the incarcerated.

Subsequent research is needed to explore the impact of maternal incarceration on education. Existing research indicates that maternal incarceration is more impacting on children than paternal incarceration (Hanlon et al., 2007; Mackintosh et al., 2006). Are students affected by maternal incarceration experiencing similar academic outcomes to students affected by paternal incarceration? Are they enrolling in college? Snowball sampling is suggested in minority communities to gather information on children of the incarcerated that are not enrolled in college. Interviews may prove successful in gaining further insight on their outcomes.

Conclusion

Students of the incarcerated are not a sum of risks and negative outcomes related to their parent's state of incarceration. Whereas existing literature on children of the incarcerated aged 18 and younger suggests that children have a fatalistic prediction on their future, findings from this study have highlighted the positive outcomes that follow college students of the incarcerated over age 18. Students of the incarcerated show no discernible differences from their peers outside of prior criminal involvement. They are a testament of personal achievement exceeding presumed risks.

This study has contributed needed data to the field concerning children of the incarcerated. Identification has been made of the demographic characteristics of college students that have been affected by parental incarceration. The study also presented data on the demonstrated academic achievement of students affected by parental incarceration. Findings from this study may enable groups vulnerable to parental incarceration to be identified and/or

targeted for assistance. Overall, criminality is the primary area of concern involving students of the incarcerated. Significant findings regarding the likelihood that students affected by parental incarceration have engaged in criminal activity indicate that there needs to be conscious movement to intervene in their lives before destructive behaviors are developed. The study findings are further substantiated by daunting literature, which predicts that children of the incarcerated are five times more likely to engage in criminal behavior than their peers that did not have an incarcerated parent (Mosely, 2008). The criminal justice system cannot be relied upon to bring attention to the risks faced by children, young adults, or students of the incarcerated when it exercises judicial authority over their parents. It is imperative that communities, churches, and civic groups, particularly in minority communities, advocate on behalf of children affected by parental incarceration to bring this phenomena to the forefront of social consciousness. Lastly, civic groups are charged with targeting programs to children and/or young adults of the incarcerated (particularly in the areas of education and productive citizenship) to increase the probability that all children and/or young adults of the incarcerated will demonstrate comparable outcomes to their peers that have not been affected by parental incarceration.

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