The Collateral Consequence of the War on Drugs: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Experience of Daughters who Experienced Paternal Incarceration as a Result of the War on Drugs

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Abstract

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The purpose of the current study was to examine the lived experience of adult daughters whom had fathers incarcerated when they were in middle childhood as a result of a drug related offense. According to statistics, the United States criminal justice system currently houses nearly 2.3 million individuals, an increase of nearly 500 percent in the last 30 years. While African-Americans make up approximately 13 percent of the current population in the United States, they make up nearly half of the incarcerated population. Many believe that the War on Drugs has contributed to the increase in the numbers of individuals incarcerated and to the sentencing disparities which exist. In 1980, approximately 41,000 individuals were incarcerated due to a drug related offense and estimates indicate that this number is now nearly half a million.

With the staggering numbers of individuals who are currently incarcerated, many have begun to examine the collateral consequence of incarceration which is the effect on family members. Research conducted relating to family members has focused on the physical, behavioral, as well as psychological effects of the incarceration on the family member. A primary area of study related to how incarceration impacts families has focused on children of incarcerated parents and statistics estimate that nearly ten million children have experienced having a parent incarcerated at some point in their lives. In addition, approximately 90 percent of incarcerated parents are fathers and Black children are eight or nine times more likely than White children to have an incarcerated parent. Minimal research exists which allows the child to share
The experience in their own words and no research exists specifically examining the experience of children solely impacted by the War on Drugs. The current study was exploratory in nature and examined the experience of and effects of paternal incarceration as experienced by daughters whose fathers were incarcerated when they were in middle childhood as a result of a drug related offense. Interviews were conducted with 10 participants and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was utilized to analyze the collected data. IPA is a type of qualitative data analysis which provides in depth examination of human lived experience. During the analysis five superordinate themes were identified which included The Need for Transparency- “I just wanted to know the truth”, The Broken Family Unit- The Father’s Absence, The Stain of Incarceration – “Life was never the same”, Buffers and Barriers to Adjustment, and Becoming Independent – Fear of Relying on Others. In addition, subthemes were identified within the superordinate themes which captured the uniqueness of the participant experience of paternal incarceration. Results revealed some similarities in experience and also confirmed how different the experience of individuals can be who experience paternal incarceration. Implications for practice are also discussed.
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Dedication

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Many associate the history and evolution of the United States as being filled with prosperity, opportunities for freedom, independence and new beginnings. In the book, *The Epic of America*, Adams (1931) describes the “American Dream” as being the “dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” (Adams, 1931, pg. 214). His ideas were inspired by the Declaration of Independence which boasts that “all men are created equal.” The reality is that the history of the United States is filled with examples of unequal and unfair treatment. While not an exhaustive list, examples of inequitable and unfair treatment include legal slavery (Berlin, 2003; Horton & Horton, 2004); the removal and relocation of Native Americans (Ehle, 1988); Japanese American Internment Camps during World War II (Robinson, 2001); and Jim Crow Laws which enforced legal racial segregation (Alexander, 2010; Provine, 2007). All of the above occurrences mentioned, depict examples in United States history in which people were treated unfairly and discriminated against as a result of membership in a particular racial or ethnic group.

The Emancipation Proclamation and the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the constitution all formally contributed to abolish the institution of slavery and indentured servitude (Blackmon, 2008); except being a punishment for the conviction of a crime (Gilmore, 2000). While fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth amendments were meant to bring about equality, other laws were also created at this time that reinforced some of the previous held inequalities. An example of these types of laws can be seen in the Black Codes. The Black Codes were laws that placed harsh restrictions on Black citizens in the South. Though there was some variation in these laws across states, these laws ultimately served to disenfranchise Blacks and
keep them at the same status they were before the Civil War, one of “bondage” (Weatherspoon, 2006) and unfair and unequal treatment. For example, the Black Codes prohibited Blacks from voting, denied equal educational opportunities, and placed restrictions on travel, property ownership, and marriage (Wilson, 1965). While some may associate the Black Codes as solely existing during the post-Civil War era, some comparisons have been made between the Black Codes and the current status of African-American males in America who are imprisoned (Weatherspoon, 2006). These individuals are part of “an institutional system where mass numbers of individuals are involuntary placed in servitude for extended periods or life” (Weatherspoon, 2006, p. 599).

According to Alexander (2010), there are currently more African Americans under correctional control today, in prison, jail, on probation or on parole than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the civil war began (Alexander, 2010). These individuals lose the right to vote, to travel freely, to obtain financial aid for education, to gain meaningful employment, and are often punished more harshly than Whites who commit similar crimes, and are housed in deplorable conditions (Weatherspoon, 2006). These individuals are removed from their families and their communities and often treated as less than. Upon release, these individuals often experience various forms of discrimination and disenfranchisement (Alexander, 2010; Lebel, 2011; Weatherspoon, 2006). Because of the systematic disenfranchisement, some scholars are now referring to aspects of the United States Criminal Justice system, specifically mass incarceration, as the New Jim Crow, one of legalized discrimination (Alexander, 2010). To understand what has contributed to viewing the era of mass incarceration as the New Jim Crow, the following section will review the current state of the incarceration, particularly the rates of arrest and
incarceration in the United States and what has contributed to the increased rates since the 1970’s.

It is estimated that in the past 30 years, the incarceration rates in the United States have increased by 500 percent (Sentencing Project, 2014). According to the 2010 Bureau of Justice Statistics, there were approximately 1.6 million individuals incarcerated, with close to five million on parole or probation (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010). Mauer (2011) estimates that the actual number of individuals incarcerated in 2010 was close to 2.3 million and he refers to incarceration rates as individuals who are currently being held in federal and state prisons and local and county jails in the United States. Of the estimated 2.3 million individuals that were incarcerated in 2010, nearly 900,000 are African Americans (BJS, 2010; Mauer, 2011) despite the higher rates of arrest of Whites (BJS, 2010). More recent statistics reflect a decrease in the incarcerated population in the United States, however the number of individuals incarcerated in the United States remains the highest in the world. Bureau of Justice Statistics obtained at the end of 2013 indicated that approximately 1.57 million individuals were incarcerated (BJS, 2013). Many argue that these numbers are not accurate as they do not take in to consideration individuals who cycled through the criminal justice system for less than a year. Additional estimates indicate that the true current number of incarcerated in the United States is closer to 2.2 million (Sentencing Project, 2014). Despite the suggested decline in the incarcerated population racial disparities continue to exist as Blacks make up 13 percent of the current population in the United States and make up nearly half of the current incarcerated population (Riley, 2014). Mauer (2013) indicates that 1 in 3 African American males born will go to prison at some point in his life time; for Latino males this number is 1 in 6 and for White males the rate is 1 in 17.
Despite declines in violent crimes throughout the 1990’s, the prison population has continued to grow as a result of greater use of incarceration for minor offenses, specifically, drug offenses (Alexander, 2010; Lyons & Pettit, 2011). According to Stevenson (2011), the “criminalization of possession and illegal use of drugs compounded by mandatory sentencing and lengthy prison sanctions for low-level drug use has become the primary cause of mass incarceration (pp. 3)” and the enforcement of these drug policies has been described as being racially discriminatory (Alexander 2010; Stevenson, 2011). Currently, nearly a half million individuals who are incarcerated in the United States in state or federal prisons or local jails are a result of a drug offense (Jarecki, Shopsin, & St. John, 2012; Stevenson, 2011), an increase from approximately 41,000 in 1980. This increase is related to the War on Drugs initiative launched by President Reagan. Some have referred to the War on Drugs as a “War on Blacks” as a result of the sentencing disparities (Nunn, 2002). According to the ACLU, African Americans make up 35% of those arrested for drug possession, 55% of those convicted and 74% of those currently incarcerated (ACLU, 2014). Browning, Miller, and Spruance (2001) noted that Black men were thirteen times more likely than White men to be charged with drug related offenses.

The sentencing disparity often referenced in the War on Drugs is related to the harsher sentences provided to individuals for crack cocaine compared to powder cocaine. Statistics indicate that more than 80% of the individuals sentenced for crack-cocaine have been African Americans (Porter & Wright, 2011). Mandatory minimums require judges to enforce the minimum sentence despite extenuating circumstances, the minor role that the individual may have had in the offense or the individual having no prior criminal history. These laws, particularly the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, were said to originally have been created to catch drug kingpins however the majority of arrests and convictions have been low-level offenders
(Kleiman & Hawdon, 2011). Mass Incarceration and the racial disparities related to the War on Drugs have been recently addressed in the Obama administration. Attorney General, Eric Holder, acknowledged the disparity present in the rates of incarceration and has made efforts to decrease the sentencing for drug offences, particularly a decrease in the use of mandatory minimums for low-level drug offenders (Department of Justice, 2013). As of April 2014, new federal drug sentencing guidelines went into effect lowering the federal guidelines for sentencing in drug related offenses. These changes were made retroactive on November 1, 2014, providing the opportunity for those currently incarcerated to benefit from the new legislation (Drug Policy Alliance, 2014).

It is important to note that while many believe that unfair treatment and discrimination has contributed to the disproportionate number of people of color, particularly Black males, being incarcerated, many reject the idea that the legal system racially discriminates (Frazier & Bock, 1982; Kleck 1981; Liddell, 1998) and believe that these individuals are to blame and describe them as “the cultural architects of their own disadvantage” (Bobo & Smith, 1998). Additionally some scholars believe that Blacks commit crimes at higher rates thus resulting in their higher rates of incarceration (Crutchfield, Bridges, & Pitchford, 1994). According to the ACLU (2012), many of the policies viewed as discriminatory have “placed communities of color in fear and created a racially biased system of law enforcement that casts entire communities as suspect.” This statement emphasizes the broader impact of these policies, not just the affect that it has on the individual being discriminated against, but also the individuals within the community in which this treatment, often unfair, takes place.

Genty (2002) described family separation as one of the most serious collateral consequences associated with incarceration. The family members which may be negatively
impacted by incarceration, or the removal and confinement of a loved one, includes spouses and significant others, siblings, children, parents, grandparents, and members of the extended family. The incarceration of a family member can be a stressful experience (Braman, 2007; Green, Ensminger, Robertson, & Hee-Soon, 2006; Harman, Smith, & Egan, 2007) and the stress may be exacerbated by an array of reactions that the individual may experience including, but not limited to, separation anxiety, loneliness, guilt, sadness, anger, resentment, shame, stigma, and fear (Clay, 2005). Additional consequences and effects of incarceration that have been identified in the research include the health of family members, maintaining familial attachments, marital dissolution (Massoglia, Remster, & King, 2011) and increased financial burden (Lynch & Sabol, 2004).

It should be noted that the incarceration of a family member does not always result in negative outcomes and can result in benefits for the family of the incarcerated individual (Fishman, 1990; Lynch & Sabol, 2004). Individuals who experience abuse or trauma by the hand of the family member may feel relief and even joy at their family member’s removal from the community and more specifically their home. Some research suggests that children experience improvements in their wellbeing when parents who they have conflict with are removed from the home (Videon 2002; Wheaton 1990). Despite the positive or negative effect associated, incarceration results in separation or loss and may contribute to economic, psychological, and interpersonal difficulties for the family members (Boss, 2004; King, 1993) who remain in the community.

Currently the majority of literature exploring the collateral consequences of incarceration has focused on children whom have an incarcerated parent (Meek, 2008). With the number of incarcerated individuals estimated to be 2.2 million, some statistics estimate that more than 2.7
million children have parents that are currently in prison (Krupat, Gaynes, & Lincroft, 2011) and additional statistics indicate that up to 10 million (Arditti, 2003) or even 12 million (Bates, Lawrence-Wills, & Hairston, 2003) children have at least one parent who has been under some form of criminal justice supervision (Arditti, 2003). Data about children of incarcerated parents is currently lacking and this is due to the fact that this information, about children or dependents, is not regularly collected once an individual enters the criminal justice system. Children of incarcerated parents have been described as casualties of the war on drugs and other “get tough” policies in the United States (Craigie, 2011). Additionally, with the disproportionate rates of incarceration for Blacks as compared to Whites, children of color also disproportionately feel the impact (Genty, 2002; Wildeman, 2013). Statistics indicate that nearly 1.5 million with an incarcerated father are Black. Some indicate that nine times more black children are likely to have an incarcerated parent (Mumola, 2000). Glaze and Maruschak (2008) indicated that Black children are eight times more likely and Hispanic children are three times more likely to have an incarcerated parent than White children.

Research has indicated that the incarceration of a parent, and subsequent separation can be detrimental, challenging, and may even be considered a traumatic event for some children (Genty, 2002; Hairston, 2007; Kampfner, 1995; Sharp et al., 1998). Specifically, researchers have described children experiencing emotional, behavioral, and psychological problems including anxiety, depression, hypervigilance, shame/guilty, anger/aggression, increased hostility, academic and behavioral problems and, stigma (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Arditti, 2003; Arditti, 2005; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Braman, 2004; Dressler, 1992; Johnston, 1995; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2001; Williams, 2007) as a result of having an incarcerated parent. According to Wakefield and Wildeman (2011) despite the research which has been conducted regarding the
impact of parental incarceration on children, the extent of how this experience actually impacts “poor” outcomes and if the effect is lasting continues to remain unclear and is an area worthy of further research (Murray & Farrington, 2008; Wakefield and Uggen, 2010).

Some scholars have conducted research differentiating the effect the incarceration has on the child based on if it is maternal (Cho, 2010; Dallaire, 2007; Huebner & Gustafon; 2007; Poehlmann, 2005; Trice & Brewster, 2004; Williams, 2007; Young & Smith, 2000) or paternal (Alexander, 2005; Geller et al., 2012; Ivy, 2011; Perry & Bright, 2012; Swisher & Roetger, 2012; Washington, 2012; Wilbur et al., 2007; Yocum & Nath, 2011) incarceration. While some scholars believe that maternal incarceration is more disruptive for a child (Murray & Murray, 2010), others indicate that further examination in to the “unique effects” of paternal incarceration is necessary because it lacks in comparison to the research which has been conducted regarding the effects of maternal incarceration (Alexander, 2005; Currence & Johnson, 2003; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2001). For example, Dallaire, (2007) conducted a study that concluded that adult children of incarcerated mothers were more likely to be incarcerated themselves than adult children of incarcerated fathers. In a later study by Aaron and Dallaire (2010), no significant differences were found in a child’s delinquency based on maternal versus paternal incarceration.

According to Parke and Clarke-Stewart (2001), fathers account for approximately 90% of the incarcerated parents and they tend to serve longer sentences than incarcerated mothers. Ivy (2011) conducted a qualitative ethnographic study that examined the effects of paternal incarceration and made implications regarding the possible long term effects. The inquiry in to this phenomenon was fueled by the “speculation” Ivy noticed in the literature regarding the different responses children have to paternal incarceration however there was not empirical evidence to support this speculation. Ivy (2011) interviewed three adult males and concluded that
having an incarcerated father contributed to increased relationship difficulties and engagement in aggressive and deviant behaviors. While some research has examined how the incarceration of fathers has affected their sons, this research appears to be minimal and the majority has occurred outside of the United States (Murray & Farrington, 2008; 2005). To date, there does not appear to be any research which exists that explores the specific experience and long term effects of having an incarcerated father for daughters; specifically from their perspective.

Like Ivy (2011), many other scholars have implied that the impact of having an incarcerated parent has an adverse and lasting effect (Poehlmann, 2005; Murray & Murray, 2010), but minimal research has been conducted which explicitly highlights the possible long term effects (Murray & Farrington, 2008; 2005), particularly from the child’s point of view or perspective. The majority of the research on children of incarcerated parents has focused on the experience of young children and adolescents (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012), thus making it difficult to determine the possible lasting effect of parental incarceration. Additionally, much of the research conducted was based on data collected is largely based on behavioral observations or impressions from caregivers of these children (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). For example, in a study conducted by Huebner & Gustafson (2007), they indicated that there were long term effects of maternal incarceration. They based their findings on the involvement of the adult child in the criminal justice system rather than based on the individuals reported experience. Some researchers believe that some of the gaps in the current literature, particularly related to understanding the effects of parental incarceration, can only be addressed by conducting a longitudinal study (Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2001; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011).

The current study is exploratory in nature and addresses some current gaps which exist in the literature regarding the effects of having an incarcerated parent, specifically one who was
incarcerated as a result of a drug offense, which is said to have contributed to the increase in the numbers of individuals incarcerated in the United States (Alexander, 2010). The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of and effects of paternal incarceration, as experienced by daughters when they were children, specifically if the incarceration occurred during middle childhood. This study provides information regarding not only the effects of incarceration, but also the possible long term or lasting effects of incarceration. As mental health professionals providing services in this “Era of Mass Incarceration” it is important to be aware of the range of reactions an individual may experience as a result of paternal incarceration.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

In the 1970’s, statistics indicated that there were fewer than 350,000 individuals incarcerated in the United States. Currently, the United States prison system is the largest in the world with over 2.3 million individuals currently incarcerated in jails and prisons (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010). Many believe that this dramatic increase is the result of “get tough” policies including those associated with the War on Drugs. With the dramatic increase in the number of individuals currently incarcerated, scholars have begun to examine the experience of family members of the incarcerated; including children of incarcerated parents, intimate partners of the incarcerated, and parents of the incarcerated, however this research is not exhaustive. The research examining the impact of incarceration on family members has tended to focus on the physical, behavioral, as well as psychological effects of the incarceration on the family member.

A primary area of study related to how incarceration impacts families has focused on children of incarcerated parents. Statistics estimate that ten million children have experienced having a parent incarcerated at some point in their lives (Arditti, 2003; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Simmons, 2000). Research indicates that children of incarcerated parents often exhibit behavioral problems, academic difficulties, and emotional and psychological distress (Bendheim-Thoman, 2008; Bloom, 1995; Boswell & Wedge, 2002; Geller et al., 2012; Johnston, 1995; Kampfner, 1995; Murray & Farrington, 2008; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Wildeman, 2009).

The literature review to follow will examine the literature that currently exists regarding children of incarcerated parents. The review will first discuss incarceration and the factors which have contributed to the current state of incarceration. The literature regarding children of
incarcerated parents will examine the literature regarding maternal as well as paternal incarceration. The literature review will also highlight limitations in the literature which contribute to the purpose of the proposed study which will focus on the experience of adult children of the incarcerated, specifically daughters.

**Incarceration**

Incarceration means “to put in prison” or “to subject to confinement” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2012). Throughout history in the United States, individuals have been subjected to mass incarceration in jails and prison whether it is “the criminally adjudicated, as well as the indigent, homeless, and mentally ill” (Verro, 2010, p. 31). While prisons and jails are both vehicles of incarceration, jails tend to be locally administered while prisons tend to be administered on a state or federal level (Verro, 2010). While Bureau of Justice statistics (2010) indicate that over 2.3 million Americans are currently incarcerated, additional statistics (Solomon et al., 2008) indicate that each year, “U.S. jails process an estimated 12 million admissions and releases. That translates into 34,000 people released from jails each day and 230,000 released each week” (Solomon et al., 2008, p. XV). These statistics contribute to the reality of the massive numbers of individuals who are and will continue to be affected by the criminal justice system.

Statistics also indicate that nearly 500,000 individuals whom are currently incarcerated have been charged with a drug offense, and their incarceration is part of the War on Drugs initiative. In a recent documentary, *The House I Live In*, the War on Drugs is described as being a violation of human rights and includes the voices and experiences of various individuals who are aware and feel the effect of the War on Drugs including, but not limited to, family members,
the incarcerated individuals, judges, senators, and narcotics officers. According to this documentary, “at every stage of the process in the War on Drugs, Black Americans are disproportionately represented” (Jarecki, Shopsin, & St. John, 2012). Statistics indicate that Whites and Blacks use drugs at similar rates however Black people are ten times more likely to be sent to prison to serve mandatory minimums for drug offenses (“About Sentencing,” 2012; Jarecki, Shopsin, & St. John, 2012).

Mandatory sentences, more commonly referred to as “mandatory minimums,” are sentencing guidelines, which operate on the federal and state level, created by Congress and state legislatures which require a person convicted of a particular crime to serve a minimum number of years with no parole (“Federal Mandatory Minimums”, 2012). Mandatory minimums exist for various crimes; however most exist in relation to drug offenses. In the context of the War on Drugs, the minimum sentence varies based on weight and type of drug whether it is LSD, marijuana, crack cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, or PCP. The sentencing disparity which arises in the War on Drugs that has contributed to the disproportionate rates of incarceration of Blacks compared to Whites is the difference in sentencing for crack cocaine compared to powder cocaine. According to Mauer (2006), “because crack is generally marketed in small doses, it was initially heavily distributed in many low-income minority neighborhoods” (p. 21). Under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, possession or distribution of 5 grams of crack cocaine, the equivalent of 2 sugar packets, can result in a mandatory minimum sentence of 5 years and 50 grams could result in 10 years (Frontline, 2013; Mauer 2011). The same five-year term was also enacted for sale of powder cocaine, but at a threshold of 500 grams, or 100 times the quantity of crack cocaine. Despite the passing of the Fair Sentencing Act in 2010, which “reduced the sentencing disparity between offenses for crack and powder cocaine from 100:1 to
18:1,” (ACLU, 2013) the damage has already been done. Another noteworthy charge subject to mandatory minimums that has resulted in many convictions, the increase in the number of individuals currently incarcerated, and considered to be unjust is conspiracy. This charge was also a result of an Anti-Drug Law, which was passed by Congress in 1988, and indicated that mandatory minimum sentences would also be applied to anyone that was considered to be a member of a drug trafficking conspiracy.

Attention has continued to increase over time on the disparities reflected in legislation related to the War on Drugs and how it has increased the prison population. As of April 2014, the US Sentencing Commission voted to reduce the federal drug sentencing guidelines moving forward by two levels and this change was also applied retroactively as of July 2014; estimates indicate that nearly 46,000 individuals currently incarcerated may now be eligible for reduced sentences (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2014). These modifications officially went in to effect on November 1, 2014. The U.S. Commission indicated that this modification has been made to address the problem of over-incarceration, specifically on the federal level (2014).

When an individual is incarcerated it is important to realize that they are not the only one who suffers from the consequences of incarceration. Many individuals who are incarcerated leave behind family members in the community. The possible consequences, including but not limited to issues related to mental health, go far beyond the individual whom is incarcerated and may affect the daily lives of relatives and friends (Comfort, 2007). According to Naser and Visher (2006):

One-quarter of prisoners are married, about half (55 percent) are parents, and 44 percent lived with at least some of their children before incarceration. Almost one-quarter of
inmate parents have three or more children, and the majority of these children are under age 10. (p. 21)

King (1993) addressed the disproportionate number of African American men currently incarcerated, as compared to their White counterparts, and suggested that with the rates continuing to rise, incarceration could “become the most significant factor contributing to the dissolution and break down of African American families.” While African Americans make up nearly 13 percent of the population in the United States, they make up nearly half of the population that is currently incarcerated and as a result, African American families are more likely to experience financial hardship, emotional and psychological distress, and strain on familial relationships (King, 1993; Western & Wildeman, 2009). King (1993) indicates that some of the emotional and psychological distress which is experienced by family members, particularly children of incarcerated parents, could be a result of the social stigma related to having an incarcerated parent. With African American families being affected by incarceration at higher rates, King (1993) utilizes these rates to make implications for the importance of implementing programs and services for families experiencing incarceration that may need additional emotional and practical resources to cope with having an incarcerated family member.

Researchers in various disciplines, including but not limited to law, sociology, and public policy, are actively examining the “transformative effects” of incarceration not solely on the incarcerated individual, but also on their families, significant others, and communities (Comfort, 2007). While research on the experiences of family members affected by incarceration does exist, it continues to be limited especially given the fact that over 2.3 million people are currently incarcerated (BJS, 2011). The proposed study seeks to further the research that exists regarding the impact of incarceration on children of the incarcerated; statistics estimate that nearly 2.7
millions of children have an incarcerated parent (The Osborne Association, 2011). According to Kjellstrand (2009), children will experience parental incarceration differently and this difference can be based on various factors, including but not limited to:

The degree to which, or duration that, a child was in contact with the parent prior to the parent’s incarceration, the level of disruption the incarceration causes, the subsequent caregiving relationship and environment, the number of times and duration that a parent is incarcerated, the amount/type of contact with the inmate parent during incarceration, the age of the child at the time of incarceration, and characteristics unique to the child such as gender, temperament, locus of control, and IQ. (p. 23)

The following section will first examine literature that speaks generally to the effect of parental incarceration. This section will be followed by literature that specifically examines the effect of maternal or paternal incarceration.

**Children of Incarcerated Parents**

Nesmith and Ruhland (2008) conducted a study that explored the effect of incarceration on children of incarcerated parents. Prior to this study, no research had been conducted which examined this effect from the perspective of the child; most had been based on data collected in the form of behavioral observations from adults in the child’s life. While Nesmith and Ruhland wanted to explore the negative outcomes associated with parental incarceration, they were also interested in identifying protective factors or variables that contributed to their success despite experiencing adversity. Participants included 34 children between the ages of 8 and 17, 21 boys and 13 girls, and their respective caregivers. The majority of child participants were African American (62%) and the charges related to the parental arrest included, but were not limited to,
drug offenses, robbery/theft, and homicide. Of the 34 participants, 2 participants reported having an incarcerated mother; so the findings predominantly reflect the experience of children with an incarcerated father. A semi-structured protocol was utilized which inquired about demographic information pertaining to the child, caregiver, and incarcerated parent; the facts regarding the parents incarceration; social, family, school, and personal changes that occurred as a result of the incarceration’ and coping mechanisms employed and support received.

Five themes were noted in the results of the Nesmith and Ruhland’s study which included social challenges, awareness and attention to adult needs, the caregiver as gatekeeper to the child-parent relationship, conception of prisons and feelings of fairness, and resiliency. The majority of participants experienced social stigma which was reflected in their belief that negative assumptions were made about them for having an incarcerated father and often debated whether they should reveal this information or keep it private and subsequently experienced feelings of isolation. Many participants reported assuming additional responsibilities in light of their father’s incarceration to help alleviate the burden and stress they perceived their caregivers to be experiencing. Despite reports of anger, isolation, social stigma, disappointment and worry associated with their father’s incarceration, many reported feeling supported as well as utilizing coping mechanisms such as extracurricular involvement. The effect of the paternal incarceration seemed to be influenced by their caregiver. This study began an important exploration in to the experience of parental incarceration as told by the child. Areas that could be further explored include if these experiences varied by the gender of the child as well as if the effects discussed by children would be long term or long lasting.

In another study, Foster and Hagan (2009) examined data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (The Add Health Survey) in order to examine if there were causal
effects of parental imprisonment on children. Data was collected with the Add Survey in three waves, the first being in 1995 and the last in 2002. The sample was adolescents between seventh and twelfth grade from 132 schools nationally. Of all survey completers, fifteen percent reported having a father who had served time in prison. Propensity analyses were conducted with the data. Results indicated that father’s imprisonment had a negative influence on the child’s educational attainment reflected in less years of education completed and lower cumulative GPA’s. Foster and Hagan (2009) attributed the educational strain of these students as being a result of their parent’s incarceration and the stigma associated with their incarceration. Like previously mentioned studies, a limitation of this study is that the alleged stigma has not been directly measured so it is unclear how the stigma has contributed to educational strain. Additionally, because survey data was utilized, children were not directly assessed for other outcomes associated with parental incarceration.

Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper, and Mincy (2009) longitudinally examined how the incarceration of parents may impact child well-being based on survey information collected through the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study. They focused on the economic, residential, and developmental risks that these children experience as a result of having an incarcerated parent. In addition, the study examined comparisons in well-being based on having an incarcerated mother, father, or both parents or neither. The researchers in this study hypothesized that parental incarceration would result in significant disadvantages for the children and their families, controlling for parent’s race/ethnicity, age at child’s birth, educational attainment, parent’s impulsivity, and family mental health history.

Data for the above mentioned study contained 4,898 participants and was collected between the years of 1998 and 2000 through the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study
and focuses on children living in 20 urban cities in the United States with high rates of poverty. Mothers and fathers were interviewed during multiple time periods; immediately after child’s birth (mothers within 24 hours of the birth), and at one and three years after birth. Data collected at year three, indicated that forty-two percent of surveyed fathers and seven percent of surveyed mothers had experienced incarceration. The Fragile Family data includes information about families in general and not solely those affected by incarceration. The survey provided to families includes demographic and background information, socioeconomic information, and child and family outcome measures. Child development outcomes included child physical health information provided by primary caregivers, child behavioral problems measured by the Child Behavior Checklist, and child cognitive development measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test given at age three.

A series of regression models and analyses were utilized to analyze the Fragile Families data for this study. Results indicated that fathers and mothers with incarceration history perform worse in the labor market. This contributes to the child’s experience of residential instability such as moving more frequently than those children whose parents have not experienced incarceration. This instability increases with the incarceration of both parents. Results also indicated that children with incarcerated fathers are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems which were reflected in higher scores on the child behavior checklist, specifically on the aggressive behavior subscale. While this difference was found, it was not statistically significant. This difference was primarily found in boys rather than girls when groups were compared of incarcerated and non-incarcerated parents. Despite initial expectations, no significant results were found regarding the relationship between parental incarceration child health, verbal ability, anxiety/depression, or withdrawal. A limitation of this study is that the data utilized in this study
was not collected for the purposes utilized in the present analysis of the data. While some of the information collected was helpful, specific query was not made surrounding the impact of the parent’s incarceration on the child’s development and behavior.

In another longitudinal study, Kjellstrand (2009) examined the impact of parental incarceration on the externalizing behaviors of adolescents, specifically those considered disruptive, aggressive, or defiant. In addition, potential mediators, including familial social advantage, parent’s health, and parenting quality play, were also examined. Kjellstrand (2009) conducted secondary analyses on longitudinal data of 671 children and families, collected between 1991 and 2008, from the Linking Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT) project. The LIFT project was a 10-week prevention program designed to reduce conduct problems in children. While data in the LIFT project were gathered on the children for 14 years in a cohort sequential design, Kjellstrand was primarily interested in the effect of parental incarceration which occurred during the child’s first 10 years of life. While various measures were utilized for the principal study, Kjellstrand’s selected to utilize data collected from measures which assessed parental incarceration, social advantage of family, parent health, effective parenting, and child adjustment.

Of the initial 671 families, approximately 69 families had at least one parent incarcerated during the child’s first 10 years; 22 families had a mother who was incarcerated, 55 had a father incarcerated, and 8 families had a mother and father whom had been incarcerated. Parental incarceration ranged from one day to 22.5 years. Kjellstrand utilized bivariate analyses to first look at the differences in the sample between families with an incarcerated parent and those without. Kjellstrand utilized AMOS to create conceptual models to examine the relationship between the variables of interest. Overall results of the study indicated that parental incarceration
was related to higher levels of externalizing behaviors and delinquency in children. These levels were significantly higher, grades 5th, 8th, and 10th for children whose parents were incarcerated. These levels were particularly significant for children in grade 10. With this particular finding, Kjellstrand emphasized the potential lasting effect of parental incarceration on children throughout their lives, despite their parental incarceration occurring early in life, specifically within the first 10 years. Furthermore, these associations were mediated by the family's social advantage, the parents' health, and parenting strategies utilized. The results emphasized the protective role that a family's social advantage, parent health, and effective parenting skills may have when it comes to youth externalizing behaviors and delinquency for children, particularly those with incarcerated parents.

In a study conducted by Aaron and Dallaire (2010), the researchers observed how parental incarceration may affect family dynamics as well as the delinquency of their children. Previous research indicates that children of incarcerated parents may have difficulties not only in coping with the loss, but may also struggle with social stigma and also a loss of financial and social support as a result of the incarceration (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Arditti, 2003; Arditti, 2005). Hypotheses of this study regarding children exposed to parental incarceration included that children of incarcerated or previously incarcerated parents would report exposure to more risk experiences than children who did not have a incarcerated parent, families with an incarcerated parent would experience more negative family processes, and children who experienced parental incarceration would exhibit more delinquency than their peers (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010, p. 1473). Participants for this study were recruited through a neighborhood based intervention program entitled Children-At-Risk (CAR) whose goal was to prevent drug use, delinquency, and other problematic behaviors exhibited by at-risk youth. Participants were
divided into a control group and a treatment group; the treatment group received additional support and resources including case management and neighborhood services. The data for the study was collected at two time points and assessed the following: parental absence, children in home, parental unemployment, parental drug use, family financial problems, risk index score, parental incarceration, family environment, older sibling delinquency, family victimization, and youth delinquency. Parent reports of the above areas were also collected. Results of this study indicate that the delinquent behavior of the child could be predicted by a history of parental incarceration (i.e. “Does the youth get into fights?”). It should be noted that reports of the child’s delinquent behavior was collected from the parent. Additionally, children of incarcerated parents are more likely to be “ethnic minorities,” to have delinquent siblings, more likely to have parents who did not complete high school, and are more likely to experience poor family processes. Aaron and Dallaire (2007) found no significant differences for children of incarcerated mothers or fathers. Implications for this study indicate the importance in providing programs to families which aid in reducing the families’ maladjustment or coping with the incarceration of a parent. A limitation of this study was that the findings were based on archival data, thus follow-up with the participants was not possible.

In a dissertation study, Posley (2011) conducted interviews with eleven children of incarcerated parents who ranged in age from 16 to 19. Of these eleven participants, ten identified as African American and one identified as European American; six were daughters of someone incarcerated and five were sons of someone incarcerated. Participants had either a mother or father whom had been incarcerated, and in some cases both parents. The length of incarceration ranged from three to eighteen years and the offense primarily mentioned was murder and participant ages at the onset of incarceration ranged from age 2 to 18. The majority of
participants reported personal experiences of being arrested and incarcerated in a Juvenile Detention Center. In addition, approximately half of the participants were struggling academically which was reflected in their being at least one or two years in school. Participants were recruited through an organization which provides services to children of the incarcerated. This was a phenomenological study with the purpose of not only providing participants with the opportunity to share about their experience of having an incarcerated parent, but to also identify and examine the effects parental incarceration. Posley sought to answer multiple questions in the course of completing these interviews. The primary question was “How do adolescents describe their experiences as child of incarcerated parents? (p. 145)” followed by the secondary questions which include the following:

How do children of incarcerated parents describe their experiences with shame, anger, guilt, and other problematic emotions to include sadness, abandonment, loneliness, and depression? How do children of incarcerated parents feel about visiting and communicating with their parents in prison? How do children of incarcerated parents feel about their families and the caregivers with whom they live while their parents are incarcerated? (p. 145)

To analyze the data collected, Posley initially identified themes and subsequent codes. The six themes which were identified from the coded transcripts included emotions, identity, loss, communication, family support, and academics. Results revealed that the majority of participants experienced psychological distress as a result of their parent’s incarceration. Despite the range of feelings and emotions expressed by participants (loss, anger, embarrassment, shame, sadness) the majority of participants expressed wanting to develop a relationship with their incarcerated parent. Posley stressed the importance of those providing social services to
individuals impacted by incarceration, particularly children of incarcerated parents, to be aware of the complexity and range of emotions experienced by these individuals. Due to the complexity of the emotions, it is necessary to focus on the individuals experience as they describe.

While some believe that “maternal incarceration tends to cause more disruption for children than paternal incarceration and may lead to greater risk for insecure attachment and psychopathology (Murray & Murray, 2010, p. 289),” some research has been conducted which specifically examines the “unique effect” of paternal incarceration. The proposed study will focus on the experience of children who have experienced paternal incarceration.

**Paternal Incarceration.** Research on the collateral effects of incarceration has found a father’s incarceration is related to family disruption and negative psychological and behavioral outcomes in children (Harper and McLanahan, 2002; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Waller and Swisher, 2006; Wildeman, 2010). Fathers currently account for approximately 90% of parents whom are currently incarcerated (Parke & Stewart, 2011). Additionally, Parke & Stewart indicated that fathers tend to be incarcerated for longer sentences than mothers resulting in increased difficulties to maintain father-child relationships (Gadsden & Rethemeyer, 2001).

Wilbur and colleagues (2007) conducted a study examining the socio-emotional effects of paternal incarceration. In this study, the researchers examined longitudinal data for school aged children between ages 6 and 11. Data was initially collected on these children upon birth at a local Boston Hospital; all were recruited as a result of “intrauterine cocaine exposure.” Of the 252 participants in the data set, approximately 31 met criteria. The sample was predominantly Black (84%). The caregivers of the children in the data set were interviewed when the children were age 6, 8.5, 9.5, and 11. Interview questions inquired about the incarceration of the child’s biological parent and the caregiver’s impression of the child’s behavior and emotional state. In
addition to interview data, the children in the study completed assessment measures which inquired about their depressive symptoms as well as exposure to violence. The result of these inquiries were compared to the results of participants whom did not have a father incarcerated. Results indicated that children whose fathers were incarcerated experienced higher rates of depressive symptoms as measured by the CDI (Children’s Depressive Inventory). Based on caregiver response on the CBCL (Child Behavior Checklist), children of incarcerated fathers exhibit more externalizing behaviors. Additionally, results indicated that boys with incarcerated fathers exhibited more externalizing behaviors compared to the girls which exhibited more internalizing behaviors based on caregiver responses. This study made implications regarding the negative effects of parental incarceration. Additionally, this study reported on some of the differences that existed within the sample based on the gender of the child whose father was incarcerated. It would be beneficial to further this exploration, but allowing the child to report their distress qualitatively to get additional information regarding the effect of their father’s incarceration.

The following study (Ivy, 2011) is one of three studies located which examine the effects of paternal incarceration specific to sons. The other 2 studies which have been conducted were outside of the United States (Murray & Farrington, 2005; 2008). An additional unique aspect to these studies is that they examine the long term effects of incarceration. Ivy’s (2011) study is unique because the data he collected is qualitative; participants were given the opportunity to discuss their experience of having an incarcerated father and how they believe their father’s incarceration has contributed to their interpersonal difficulties as well as their delinquency. To date, no research has been conducted specifically exploring the experience of daughters’ of incarcerated fathers and the possible long term effects.
Ivy (2011) conducted a qualitative ethnographic study regarding the effects of paternal incarceration, but unlike others studies, the participants in the study were adults whose fathers were incarcerated when they were children. Ivy noted a problem that existed in much of the literature related to incarceration and families, there appears to be an “abundance of speculation regarding the different responses children have to paternal incarceration, but very little empirical evidence available from research directly focused on the children (pg. 32).” It was hypothesized that participants would experience significant psychological challenges (i.e. lower self-concept and negative behavioral reactions) as a result losing a parent to incarceration.

Participants were recruited through probation officers and an intervention program within a nonprofit organization. A total of three Male participants, 1-White and 2-Black were interviewed for approximately 60 minutes. During the interview, participants were asked questions that which would elicit how they believe they were impacted by their father’s incarceration.

In analyzing the qualitative data, each participant reported difficulties in developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships with peers as children and as adults. All participants reported the inability to maintain healthy dating relationships; one participant had been arrested and convicted of domestic violence. All participants reported some form of behavioral difficulties during adolescence; including alcohol and drug use, increased aggression, truancy, teen parent, and gang affiliation. Participants also reported using drugs and alcohol to cope with stress and feelings of isolation. Ivy believed that the disruption resulting from the father’s incarceration contributed to participant reports of difficulty developing and interpersonal relationships, aggressive behavior, and their engagement in deviant behavior. Despite the small
sample size, Ivy obtained rich data from male adult participants whom were able to reflect on their experience in having an incarcerated father and how this has impacted them across time.

As previously mentioned, children of color are disproportionately affected, as compared to Whites, by having an incarcerated parent, more specifically an incarcerated father. Wakefield and Wildeman (2011), inquired about how mass incarceration may also influence racial disparities “not just among adult men, but also among their children.” Wakefield and Wildeman (2011) examined data from the Project on Human Health Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) and the Fragile Family and Child WellBeing Study (FFCW); both of which are data collected for children, adolescents, and their caregivers. Both include measures of paternal incarceration as well as childhood behavioral and mental health problems.

Results of analyses conducted by Wakefield and Wildeman (2011) indicated that children experiencing paternal incarceration exhibited increased aggression and other behavioral problems. Overall, externalizing (i.e. aggression) and internalizing problems (i.e. depression and anxiety) increased for this group and overall well-being was worse. Wakefield and Wildeman also noted that this population is often at the most risk for being impacted by imprisonment because of the presence of other variables or “preexisting disadvantages.”

Gellar and colleagues (2012) examined how parental incarceration, specifically paternal, affected child development in 3,000 urban children. Data utilized for analyses was collected through the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study. This data set includes multiple indicators of incarceration history, child development, demographic, socioeconomic, and parent behavioral measures. Child behavioral problems were assessed with the Child Behavioral Checklist which assesses for aggressive behavior and internalizing problems. Internalizing
problems are determined with scores on anxious/depressive and withdrawn subscales. Intellectual ability is also assessed for children in this data set.

Results indicated that children of incarcerated fathers scored higher on the measure of aggression and attention problems. Additionally, these children have lower levels of verbal ability than their peers. Internalizing problems were not found to be significantly related to the father’s incarceration. Attention problems were more salient for children whose fathers were recently incarcerated. Gellar and colleagues also examined covariates that may contribute to the findings of this study. Some of these variables included mother’s history of incarceration, educational history of parents, parent behavioral patterns (i.e. substance use; impulsivity), parent employment, economic status, family history of depression, and parent intelligence. Despite controlling for some of these covariates, regression models continued to reveal an effect of the child’s well-being and parental incarceration. Geller and colleagues (2012) compared this model to a model where father absence is a result of other reasons besides incarceration. Results indicated that the effects of a father’s absence as a result of incarceration is significantly different from other forms of absence. This data contributes to the research which indicates that the well-being of family members, specifically children in this study is affected by a parent’s incarceration.

The above literature speaks about the possible effects of incarceration on children, including those impacted by paternal incarceration. Geller and colleagues (2011) note that the effect of paternal incarceration may have minimal impact if the child had minimal interaction with their father prior to the incarceration. The current study will include participants who resided with their father prior to his incarceration.
The next section will explore literature related to single-parent households which, as mentioned above, may be a result in many cases to parental incarceration. Since the 1980’s, incarceration has been identified as a factor which contributes to single parent households (Mather, 2010).

**Single – Parent Household**

The number of single parent households has steadily increased since the 1960’s. According to statistics, it is currently more likely than not for children to live in a single parent household. Since 1960, the percentage of single parent families has nearly tripled, and this percentage disproportionately impacts families of color, particularly Black and Latino families (Barajas, 2011). As of 2010, this number was nearly twenty-four percent (Mather, 2010).

According to Gillette and Gundmunson, the effect may be even more negative for children whose fathers were once present. Their departure likely led to more “destabilizing events” including a change in income or previously accessible resources (2013).

Lu and colleagues (2010) also address the historical context which may contribute to father involvement, particularly related to Black fathers. They address father involvement in the context of slavery and how Black fathers were often not allowed to nurture and protect their children. They imply that this legacy may continue or contribute to the father absence experienced in the Black Community today. This may be related to Alexander’s (2010) argument comparing incarceration to being the New Jim Crow. While single father households are steadily increasing, single mother households continue to account for the majority of single parent households. It should be noted that the long term or lasting effects and outcomes of growing up in a single parent household are often difficult to determine as minimal research has looked at the change or effect over time (Barajas, 2011).
Father Absence

Early literature regarding father absence focused on father absence as a result of death or divorce. More recent literature takes into account other factors contributing to father absence including incarceration and also changes in the traditional family structure including individuals opting out of marriage as well as same-sex marriages (La Guardia, Nelson, & Lertora, 2014).

According to Lu and colleagues (2010), paternal involvement during middle childhood is crucial as it is associated with increased academic achievement and less behavioral related problems. Middle childhood is considered a period of important developmental change for individuals and is “marked by several types of advances in learning and understanding” (Eccles, 1999). According to a study conducted by Magnuson & Berger (2010), children who transition into single parent homes during middle childhood experienced increased behavioral problems and decreased achievement.

Additional implications which have been made regarding the outcomes for children who grow up in single parent households, particularly those where the father is absent, include negative developmental outcomes (Deleire & Kalil, 2002; Lu et al., 2011), psychological distress (Last, 2009; Nielsen, 2014), delinquency (Antecol & Bedard, 2005), and promiscuous behavior (primarily daughters) (Antecol & Bedard, 2005; Ellis, Schlomer, Tilley, & Butler, 2012; Johnson, 2013; Nielsen, 2014).

In a study by Brody and colleagues (2002) examined child competence and psychological adjustment for African-American children who live in single parent households. They conducted a longitudinal study that occurred in three waves with all children being 11 years old at the first wave. Researchers initially recruited 150 African American single mothers who participated in the first wave. During each wave, mothers completed a series of self-report
measures which assessed psychological functioning, self-esteem, optimism, level of support/involvement in the parent/child relationship, and parent knowledge about various areas of child’s life. Mothers were also asked to recall conversations which they have had with their children regarding school, religion, and prosocial behavior. During wave two and three, data was also collected from teachers at their child’s school which assessed self-regulation, academic competence, social competence, and psychological adjustment. Brody and colleagues utilized structural equational modeling to examine their data. The results indicate that the child outcomes, specifically competence and adjustment (measured through self-regulation), were related to the mother’s processes and level of functioning despite the father’s absence.

Nixon, Greene, and Hogan (2012) conducted a study which examined the relationship between single mothers and their children. Participants included 35 families, with children ranging in age from 8 to 17 years old. The father’s role was peripheral in all of the families interviewed and he did not currently reside in the household. Some participants (n=21) endorsed history of having the father in the household however in all cases the father departure prior to the child turning 3 years old. Interviews were conducted with the mother and with the children. Children were asked questions related to their relationship with their mother and their feelings regarding growing up in a single parent household. Mothers were asked similar questions. Interviews were transcribed and coded by the research team.

Results of the study conducted by Nixon, Green, and Hogan (2012) implied how the mother child relationship is negotiated in a single parent household. Themes identified were related to interdependence. The majority of child participants addressed close emotional bonds with their mothers and often feeling like it was “just the two of us.” This relationship was often described as intense and exclusive. Results also revealed that in some instances, children take on
a more adult role in the form of household responsibilities which in turn may blur the boundaries of the parent/child relationship. Implications of this study stressed the importance of providers to be aware of the adultification of children which may take place in single parent households.

While the above mentioned studies imply some of the negative effects which may arise when the father is not present in the household, Barajas (2011) highlights the strength and resiliency exhibited by children who grow up in households where the father is absent. Barajas conducted a review of the literature and addressed for the need of more research to address the resiliency and developmental strengths of children who thrive in single parent households. Barajas called for more research to examine why some individuals from high risk backgrounds succeed while others fail (2011).

Some literature indicates that the effects of a fathers absence is typically felt more for sons due to assumptions that fathers are less involved with daughters (Geller et al., 2012; Lundberg, McLanahan and Rose 2007) and tend to spend more time with their sons (Pleck, 1997). The father-daughter relationship tends to be the least studied relationship of studied familial relationships (Allgood, Beckert, & Peterson, 2012; Krampe & Newton, 2012).

**Father-Daughter Relationship**

Much of the research regarding the importance of the father-daughter relationship focuses on it in the context of the father’s absence. According to Coley (2003), daughters who have “disconnected” relationships with their fathers may experience more negative outcomes related to academic achievement, self-esteem, life satisfaction, psychological well-being and/or, romantic relationships.

In a study conducted by Allgood, Beckert, and Peterson (2012), they examined the retrospective reports of how daughters perceive their fathers involvement in their life and how
this affected their psychological well-being and psychosocial development. They based their conceptualization of father’s involvement on Lamb’s three-part model which includes engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. Allgood and colleagues highlighted how limited research actually exists from the perspective of the child, and often relies on the report of the parent or caregiver. Ninety-nine participants participated in the study and all were between the ages of 18 and 21 which is considered emerging adulthood. The majority of participants in the study were White (97%) and all lived with their father during adolescence. Participants were asked to complete a series of self-report measures which assessed the participant’s retrospective perception of their father’s actual involvement in their life as well as how they wished they had been, the affective quality of fathering, a self-esteem measure, and a measure of psychological wellness and distress.

Results of the study conducted by Allgood and colleagues indicated that self-esteem and life satisfaction was higher for participants who perceived a nurturing and involved father. No significant relationship was found between psychological distress and paternal involvement and nurturing which contradicts the findings of many studies. Allgood and colleagues indicated that the discrepancy may be related to participants being asked to retrospectively examine their experience which may not be related to their current level of distress. Some limitations of the study conducted Allgood and colleagues include the lack of diversity in the sample. Additionally the demographic information collected was limited and no information was collected related to the overall home environment or other factors which may have impacted the experience of the participants. The current study will similarly examine the retrospective experience of daughters.

In another study, conducted by Gillette & Gudmunson (2014), they examined how father absence might affect educational attainment specifically for African-American women. The
study took place in four waves. Data was collected from participants when they were between grades 7 and 12, the second wave one year later, the third wave six years later, and the final wave when participants were between the ages of 24 and 34. Data was collected through the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Information collected from participants included demographic information, duration of father’s absence, parent income, menarche, age of first sexual intercourse, educational expectations, and educational attainment.

Results indicated that the longer the father’s absence the more likely that the child would experience lower educational attainment, lower income households, and more economic stress. Additionally, participants who experienced father absence at any time during their childhood were more likely to reach menarche earlier than other participants, have their first sexual encounter at earlier ages, and had lower educational expectations as adolescents.
Statement of Purpose

There is some indication that there may be collateral consequence experienced by family members of the incarcerated. While the literature indicates that this consequence effects family members as a whole, many of the studies focus on one type of family member (i.e. children of incarcerated parents, spouses of the incarcerated). The above review examined literature related to incarceration and the collateral consequence that may exist for family members, specifically for children experiencing incarceration. The literature describes children often exhibiting externalizing and internalizing behaviors including, including but not limited to, increased delinquency and psychological and emotional difficulties such as symptoms of anxiety and depression. Some research has indicated that these effects may vary based on if the child experiences maternal or paternal incarceration. Additionally some studies identify differences in findings based on the gender of the child. Many gaps in the literature exist particularly related to the possible long term effects of having an incarcerated parent. The proposed study seeks to expand on existing research examining the collateral consequence of incarceration experienced by children of the incarcerated. Minimal research exists in which children report the experience of having an incarcerated parent from their own perspective and minimal research highlights the long term effects of incarceration from the child’s perspective. In the current study, adult offspring, specifically daughters, were interviewed whose parents, specifically fathers, were incarcerated when they were children, specifically during middle childhood. Participants were provided the opportunity to describe the experience in their own words. The current study focused on the experience of daughters, as no research currently exists exploring the specific experience of adult daughters who have experienced paternal incarceration. Based on the findings of previous research, inquiries were made surrounding the possible stigma experienced...
or the perception of discrimination as this may also affect how adult daughters experienced their father’s incarceration. Without having a more in depth understanding of what these family members experience, it is difficult as mental health professionals to provide the most effective support services when working individuals affected by this phenomenon.
Research Questions

The primary research question in the current study will be focused on understanding the lived experience of adult daughters whose fathers were or are currently incarcerated as a result of the War on Drugs. Additionally, secondary questions were asked in order to provide a more in-depth exploration of the experience and to assess if other possible factors contributed to how participants experience or understand their father’s incarceration. The following research objectives served as a guide for the current study:

Primary Research Question

1) How do adult daughters who had a father incarcerated during middle childhood think and feel about their experience of their father’s incarceration?
   a. How does the daughter’s experience or reaction to her father’s incarceration change over time?

Secondary Research Questions

2) To what extent can participant accounts be attributed to their experience of stigma as a result of their father’s incarceration?

3) To what extent can participant accounts of their experience of and their reactions to their father’s incarceration be explained by their perception of racism and/or discrimination as it relates to the War on Drugs?
Chapter 3

Methods

The qualitative research methodology utilized for the current study was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is a method of qualitative analysis, with roots in health psychology, which allows for an in depth examination of human lived experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The purpose of utilizing IPA is to conduct human lived experience examination in a way that allows for the experience to be expressed in its own terms, rather than in an attempt to fit the experience in to a predefined system. IPA allows an individual to discuss how they have made sense of their experience of a phenomenon as well as an exploration of the meanings which they have attached to these experiences (Cassidy, Reunolds, Naylor, & De Souza, 2010; Smith, 2004). Smith and colleagues (1999) describe utilizing IPA as a means for the researcher to get an “insider perspective” of the phenomenon. IPA has been applauded as an analysis which has given voice to groups whom are often under researched. (Cassidy et al., 2010). IPA is based on multiple theoretical perspectives which include phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography.

Phenomenology is focused on understanding the meaning of a phenomenon or a "lived experience" (Richards & Morse, 2007) for several individuals (Creswell, 2007). This type of research allows the “universal essence” related to the phenomenon, including the individual’s perceptions and feelings, of what they experienced and how they experienced it (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology arose from the work of German mathematician and philosopher, Edmund Husserl, who believed that experience, is the root of all knowledge (Giorgi, 2009). Clark Moustakas is considered the founder of phenomenological research.
Moustakas believed that research should focus on the “wholeness of experience” and to acquire understanding of the essences of experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Simon, 2011).

Phenomenology also has links to constructivist theory. Researchers operating from a social constructivist worldview are often concerned with the participants understanding of the world based on their personal views and experiences (Creswell, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005). Social Constructivists posit that an individual’s knowledge or understanding of reality is directly influenced by their own experience (Furman et al., 2003). Furman and colleagues (2003) also note the importance of context in seeking understanding of an individual’s thoughts, feelings and behaviors. From a social constructivist point of view, the researcher also acknowledges that their own background shapes the interpretation (Creswell, 2007).

Hermeneutics is defined as the theory or practice of interpretation (Cresswell, 2007; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Van Manen, 1990). Historically, hermeneutics was utilized to interpret historical texts. The hermeneutic circle should also be mentioned when discussing IPA. The hermeneutic circle is a theory which suggests that the sum is related to its parts, specifically “to understand any given part, you look to the whole; to understand the whole, you look to the parts” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 28). This theory implies that you cannot truly understand a person’s experience of a particular phenomenon without careful examination of the whole and each of the parts including the various contexts (i.e. cultural and historical) in which the phenomenon occurs. The key theorists within hermeneutics include Schleiermacher, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Schleiermacher indicated that hermeneutics should be a holistic process which should include interpretation on a psychological as well as grammatical level (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). He highlighted that the interpretation is not a systematic process and often requires the use of intuition. Schleiermacher believed that if done correctly, the
individual interpreting the work will likely understand the work even better than the author (Van Manen, 1990). Heidegger was a proponent of connecting hermeneutics to phenomenology which was reflected in his belief that phenomenology should primarily be an interpretative task. Heidegger believed that interpretation is often required because the meaning of a phenomenon may be hidden (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). He emphasized the fore-structure which always exists, meaning that the analyst often brings their own preconception to the interpretation which is often based on their own experience. Gadamer was another well-known writer of hermeneutics who noted the importance of history and tradition on the interpretive process. Similar to Heidegger, Gadamer emphasized the importance of fore-structure and acknowledging our preconceptions in advance.

Idiography emphasizes investigating individual experience in depth and in detail in order to reach a unique understanding of the experience for that particular individual, or specific people in a specific context (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). According to Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, this is contradictory to most psychological research, often described as nomothetic inquiry, which tends to focus on making generalizations at the population level (2009). In the context of idiography, an in depth and detailed analysis which is systematic is necessary in order to reach an understanding regarding the particular phenomenon being explored. Idiography highlights the use of caution when attempting to make generalizations about a specific phenomenon. In order to engage in this type of analysis successfully and make these generalizations, a small sample size is often recommended.
Participants

Studies utilizing IPA recommend purposeful sampling of between 3 and 6 participants. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), this is an appropriate range which will allow for “the development of meaningful points of similarity and difference between participants” (p. 51). Purposeful sampling is the selecting of participants who can provide information which will lead to further understanding of the phenomenon which is being studied (Creswell, 2007). In the current study, purposeful sampling was utilized to select participants based on their meeting specific criteria regarding the phenomenon being studied.

A total of ten participants participated in the current study, including the two participants interviewed to pilot the interview guide. The requirements for inclusion in the current study were that participants identified as Black women, at least eighteen years of age, and had a father whom had been incarcerated when they were a child for a drug related offense. Furthermore, participant’s age at the time of their father’s incarceration was during middle childhood (age 6 to 12) and that they resided with their father prior to his incarceration. It was particularly difficult to recruit participants with the above mentioned criteria as statistics indicate that only 37% of incarcerated fathers actually resided with their children prior to their incarceration (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Middle childhood was utilized as study criteria because it is considered a time which is particularly important in social and emotional, physical, and mental development (Debord, 2006). Initial criteria also indicated that the participants father should currently incarcerated, however this criterion was modified based on the outcomes of the pilot interviews which were conducted.
The principal investigator was contacted by thirty-nine potential participants, the majority of which were not responsive after multiple attempts by the principal investigator; after they had initiated personal communication with the principal investigator via phone and/or email. The principal investigator created a google email address and phone number solely for the current study to be utilized in communicating with participants. In addition, some potential participants were ruled out for not meeting study criteria for participants such as their fathers incarceration was not drug related, they did not reside with their father prior to his incarceration, and demographic criteria including age at time of incarceration and race/ethnicity.

Participants in the current study were all women, all identified as Black, and all had fathers who were currently or had been incarcerated for a drug related charges during their middle childhood, between the age of 6 and 12. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 36, with the average age being 28 (See Table 1). Seven participants had fathers whom had been released, 2 participants had subsequently rearrested for another drug related offense after their release, and 1 participants father is currently deceased. Their ethnicities included, African American (n=7), African (n=1), and Afro-Latino (n=2). While participants were primarily residing in New York City (n=5,), participants interviewed also resided in Washington D.C. (n=2), Philadelphia (n=2), and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (n=1). Regarding religious affiliation, five participants identified as Christian, one as Baptist, one as Christian-Baptist, one as Spiritual, one as religious, and one as non-religious. For highest level of education completed, three participants received their high school diploma/GED, three had received their Associate’s Degree, two with Bachelor’s degrees and two with Master’s level degrees. Seven participants reported currently being single, two are in serious relationships, and one reported being married. Regarding their own arrest and/or
incarceration, four of participants had experienced their own arrest with only one participant whose arrest resulted in incarceration.

Procedure

Pilot Interviews

The purpose of a pilot study, or interviews, is to conduct a smaller version of the proposed study in order to determine if there are any problems in the proposed design which can be modified prior to the execution of the study (Kvale, 2007; Kim, 2010; Turner, 2010). The pilot study allows the researchers the opportunity to assess the feasibility of the proposed study, to test the interview protocol, reassess recruitment strategies, and further clarification of the studies focus (Kim, 2010; Taylor, 2010). Two pilot interviews were conducted for the current study.

The recruitment of participants for the pilot interview revealed the difficulty with accessing participants who fit the criteria initially outlined for the current study, particularly those who resided with their father prior to his incarceration and age of participant when father was incarcerated. Additionally, initial criteria also indicated that father’s should currently be incarcerated; this criterion was modified based on the outcome of pilot interviews.

While the principal investigator was contacted by many potential participants, after initial screening on the telephone, potential participants were eventually ruled out for not meeting study criteria; primarily race, their age when father was initially incarcerated, and the type of offense committed by their father resulting in his incarceration. One of the two participants interviewed met all criteria for the proposed study. The second participant who was a pilot interview met all criteria except her father was not currently incarcerated. Upon reviewing the transcripts and
themes identified for the pilot interviews, many similarities existed in the responses of the participants for the pilot interview. The pilot interviews further clarified the study objective and revealed that a father’s current incarceration is not particularly what is important. The pilot interview revealed that it is primarily important for the father to have been incarcerated during middle childhood, what are known as the critical ages of development, in order for participants to speak to the experience of not having their father around during that time and to consider how that may continue to have an impact on their life. Therefore the criteria of the current study began to include participants who had a father incarcerated as a child; however they may or may not continue to be incarcerated in their adulthood.

The pilot study confirmed the estimated length of participation for the study which was 60 to 90 minutes. After completion of the pilot interview it became clear that the ordering of the questions posed to participants may vary depending on their response to previously asked questions. For example some participants would speak about visiting their father when asked about how they were impacted by their father’s incarceration and while others would speak to the emotional effect. This realization led to more flexibility in the administering of the protocol during the interview.

Additionally, based on feedback from both pilot interviewees, the principal investigator began to disclose about her interest in the topic and the reason for the interest, particularly related to personal experience with having an incarcerated family member at the beginning of the interview. The principal investigator disclosed this information at the end of the pilot interviews.

Finally, the principal investigator also chose to directly inquire with participants about their experience of the interview and what it was like speaking about their experience of having
an incarcerated parent. While this was not initially included, the participants in the pilot interview shared their experience without being directly asked:

Thank you for doing this, thank you for giving this particular community a voice.

Because we haven’t had, not that I’ve seen, I haven't seen any research or anything like that. Trying to give us a voice.

The second pilot interview participant expressed similar sentiments:

I just hope that you take this information, because I feel good that I was able to share this experience. Because I feel like I would never have a chance to talk about that, ever. Then I meet you and I'm like, "Wow there's a chance to talk about that." It was a blessing to meet you and just to get that off my shoulder, because I really couldn't talk to my fiancé about it.

In quantitative research, data collected in pilot studies is often not utilized due to concerns related to contamination; this is less of a concern in qualitative data thus pilot interview data is often used in main study (Collins, 2010; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The main concern tends to be if major modifications were made to the measure utilized after the pilot interview, then the pilot data may not be accurate. No major modifications were made to the semi-structured interview protocol thus the pilot interview data was utilized in analysis related to the current study.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through multiple organizations and agencies which provide support and resources to children of incarcerated parents. The principal investigator contacted
Directors and staff within these agencies regarding the recruitment of participants who meet study criteria (Appendix I). While some organizations were not responsive, in some cases, the principal investigator was able to post recruitment flyers (Appendix II) within the organization and in other cases emails were distributed to potential participants by organization staff. The principal investigator also placed flyers in the community at areas with heavy foot traffic. Additionally, the principal investigator received IRB approval to place flyers at local universities in the Northeast. Participants were also recruited through snowballing. The principal investigator provided information regarding the criteria of the study to a network of peers who may work with or know individuals who meet study criteria. While additional participants expressed an interest in participating in the current study, it was not feasible due to participant location and the investigator preference to conduct interviews in person. This also limited the organizations that were selected to recruit participants.

**Data Collection**

Once potential participants for the current study were identified, they were first spoken to by phone to insure that they met all criteria for the current study. Five potential participants were ruled out of the current study because they did not meet study demographic criteria including race and/or age. All interviews were conducted in person by the principal investigator between spring and fall of 2014. Interviews were conducted in public facilities such as libraries which also provided a private space to conduct interviews to insure participant privacy. Participants were initially provided with a consent form (Appendix III) and participant rights (Appendix IV) which explained the nature of the current study which was to examine the experience of adult daughters whom had fathers incarcerated when they were children. Questions asked would explore the potential behavioral, psychological, and emotional effects in addition to potential
long term effects. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they can choose to discontinue participation at any time. All participants consented to being audio recorded and written permission was received by each participant. Participants were informed that their identity will remain anonymous and that their identity would not be associated with the collected data. Pseudonyms were created for each participant so that their real name is not affiliated with any of their data. After reviewing the consent form, participants were provided with the opportunity to ask questions for additional clarification. All participants agreed to be contacted in the future if a follow-up interview was needed for additional information or clarity. Initially, one participant was contacted for further clarification about her experience. After the data analysis began, attempts were made to contact six of participants for follow-up. After initial completion of the data analysis, the principal investigator contacted participants in order to ask subsequent questions to increase the principal investigator’s understanding of the participant’s experience of this phenomenon (see table 1 to see follow up questions asked to participants). For example, “Leah” was contacted and asked for clarifying questions regarding some of her comments regarding the shift in how she views her father’s incarceration given new knowledge she has acquired through her pursuit of higher education. While attempts were made to contact six participants, the principal investigator was only able to reach four participants. One participant did not respond to several voice messages left by the investigator and the others phone is no longer in service.

Participants were also provided with contact information for mental health resources and support services in the case they wanted to speak to someone for additional support (Appendix VII).
The consent form also included a section regarding the principal investigator’s responsibility as a mandated reporter. One participant reported suicidal ideation. Upon inquiry and assessment it was determined that she was expressing passive suicidal ideation and did not have plan or intent. She spoke about her motivation to live, particularly to provide for her children. She indicated that her passive suicidal ideation was most salient during her adolescence when she felt “null and void” and that her life was not functioning. Despite her suicidal ideation not being current, like all participants, she was provided with mental health resources in her community and encouraged to utilize these resources in the case that she begins experiencing a similar void again.

Once consent was received, participants were asked to complete a personal data sheet (Appendix V), prior to participating in the semi-structured interview (Appendix VI).

**Research Assistants.** Research assistants were recruited prior to the data collection process beginning. These individuals were compensated at an hourly rate for their assistance with recruitment, interview tracking, and transcribing. A research assistant accompanied the principal investigator on each interview to track the interview process, ensuring that all questions are asked, and to manage the logistical aspects of the interview, including managing the tape recorder.

Three research assistants were identified whom were all graduate students and identified as Black women, one of whom was Afro-Latina, for the purpose of matching the gender and race of the participant. The primary investigator chose to match participants on gender and race based on research which indicates that African Americans prefer to see therapists of their same race (Helms & Carter, 1991; Wintersteen, Mensinger, & Diamond, 2005). While the interview
The process is different than ongoing therapy, the questions posed to participant’s elicited sensitive information which made it necessary to provide a setting where participants could be as comfortable as possible.

Upon interview completion, the principal investigator and the research assistant whom attended the interview would discuss their experience of the interview and aspects of the interview which stood out including potential themes.

**Instruments**

**Personal Data Sheet.** The personal data sheet (Appendix V) which will collect information about participant race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and marital status. Participants were asked to provide their age when their father was incarcerated. Additionally, information was collected regarding their incarcerated father. Participants were asked about their father’s age, race, gender, the length of the sentence they were given, the anticipated release, and how long they have or were currently been incarcerated. Studies mentioned in the above literature indicate that these variables may contribute to the variation in outcomes experienced by family members of the incarcerated. This form was completed by participants independently however the principal investigator was in the room and provided the opportunity for participants to ask any questions. Some participants had difficulty recalling some information asked including, the ages of their siblings during their fathers incarceration and specific information regarding other family members whom had experienced incarceration.

**Semi-Structured Interview Guide.** A semi-structured interview guide was created by the principal investigator for the current study (Appendix VI). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) recommend that approximately 10 interview questions should be prepared with potential probes.
The current study had eleven questions and all interview questions were open ended with prepared probes, for elaboration and clarification. Questions created were based upon the proposed studies research questions. The proposed questions were presented to the principal investigator’s dissertation committee and recommendations for revisions were provided to enhance the clarity and strength of the proposed questions. A semi-structured protocol is appropriate when the researcher has some knowledge of the study topic in order to develop questions and to frame the discussion (Richards & Morse, 2007). All interview participants were asked the questions in the protocol however follow-up questions varied based on the participant response to posed questions. The research assistant who accompanied the principal investigator aided in ensuring that all relevant questions on the interview guide were asked. A research assistant attended all interviews except one due to transportation related difficulties.

**Data Transcription.** Upon interview completion, interviews were transcribed verbatim by the principal investigator, research assistants, and a professional transcribing service. Verbatim transcripts are recommended as it limits the likelihood of researcher bias (Lacey & Luff, 2001). Smith, Flowers, & Larkin (2009) reiterate the importance of verbatim transcripts which include information regarding moments of silence, non-verbal utterances including laughter and tears, and any hesitation to response.

**Data Analysis**

According to Van Manen (1990), an expert in Hermeneutical phenomenology, many researchers identify a phenomenon or “abiding concern” of great interest to them (Creswell, 2007). It is important for researchers utilizing qualitative methodology to identify assumptions and biases that they possess, particularly since it may impact the interpretations made by the
researcher, particularly during the data analytic phase of the research. Additionally, it is important that researchers whom engage in this type of research to reflect on their personal experiences as it relates to the topic or phenomenon being researched Creswell, 2007; (Moustakas, 1994; Richards & Morse, 2007). As mentioned by Heidegger, an analyst “brings their own fore-conception (prior experiences, assumptions, preconceptions) to the encounter, and cannot help but look at any new stimulus in the light of their own prior experience” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, pg. 25). Heidegger emphasized the importance of bracketing which is the researcher’s attempt to isolate their personal experiences to ensure that the participant experience remains the focus of the study (Cresswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

**Researcher Worldview/Stance**

My eldest brother is currently incarcerated and has been for the last 15 years. He was charged with conspiracy to sell crack-cocaine and was sentenced as direct result of legislation under the War on Drugs. I remember being 15 and getting the phone call from my mother after she left the court house; she said 265 months. I initially thought, months? That can’t be too bad, right? I later realized that my brother would be out of sight for the next 22 years. As a teenager, I couldn’t comprehend what this meant for me and for my family. He had been arrested before, but his time away was always brief. The thought of 22 years shook me and I was devastated about not being able to see or speak to my brother whenever I wanted to.

His incarceration had a silencing effect on my family, which was further exacerbated by the public nature of his arrest. I grew up in a small town where news traveled quickly and it was no secret, especially in a community where we were one of a few black families, that my brother
had been arrested and subsequently incarcerated. It was not only something we did not speak with people outside of our family about; it is something we did not even speak about with each other. I found myself creating defenses to keep people at a distance so that they would not ask questions or wonder if I was okay. I found that when you smile, do well in school, and are actively engaged, that no one asks questions or even wonders if you are okay or not. For myself, the first time I spoke publicly about my brother’s incarceration was in 2009 during the first year of my doctoral program in a practicum class which required me to explore who I am, the experiences that have shaped me, and how it can impact my work with clients. There are many people who are close to my family whom have no knowledge about my brother’s incarceration and merely think he chooses to reside in the state of Louisiana and not that he is incarcerated there. While I continue to communicate with my brother, by letter, phone, and occasional visits (once every other year), my brother has missed 15 years of birthdays, holidays, births, weddings, graduations, and funerals. His absence is always felt on these occasions where our family traditionally gathers. His incarceration has been difficult for me. I perceive the shame and guilt my mother has felt over the years as being reflected in her constantly wondering what she could have done differently in order to change the outcome for my brother. To buffer her guilt, I have found myself striving for success over the years, wanting to prove to her that she is a great mother, that she did what she could do, and that it’s not her fault. My brother’s incarceration has also financially impacted my family which is reflected in the selling of my childhood home and my mother’s filing for bankruptcy in attempt to do anything she could to save my brother. As I have begun to open up about the negative impact my brother’s incarceration had on myself, I find that my immediate family members and I have begun to speak about it more. I realize that while we did not verbalize many of these reactions for years, we all had our own internal process
to manage our reactions. We have discussed the emotional effect, including sadness and anger, of his incarceration. We have tried to buffer the effects by seeing the positive in the situation and realizing things could be worse. As I have begun to learn more about how my family members have experienced my brothers incarceration, my curiosity surrounding this phenomenon has increased, thus fueling my interest to explore this phenomenon in more depth and further understand the experiences of others as it relates to this phenomenon.

While I have noticed the negative impact that my brother’s incarceration has had on my family, it is important for me to acknowledge that this may not be the experience of others, particularly as I engage in research which will examine how others experience this phenomenon.

**Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

As mentioned above, IPA was utilized to conduct an in depth and detailed analysis of the data collected for the current study. Thematic Analysis was another form of qualitative analysis considered for the current study. It is a procedure which enables the researcher to identify, analyze, and report patterns and/or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), both implicit and explicit. The principal investigator ultimately chose IPA due its ability to not only focus on possible patterns or meaning across participants, but also the focus on the unique characteristics of individual participants. IPA is focused on understanding the individual experience and how they make sense of what they have experienced. This emphasis is linked to the idiographic emphasis of IPA. IPA provides the space for multiple realities of the same phenomenon to be reported. Additionally, similarities of the experience within and across participants will be reported. While there is not a single method for conducting IPA, the principal investigator utilized the method outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) to conduct IPA which
includes six steps, reading and re-reading, initial noting, developing themes, searching for connections across themes, moving to the next case, and looking for patterns across cases.

The principal investigator practiced IPA with transcript samples made available by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). These practice analyses allowed the investigator to become accustomed to the level of analyses which was expected and recommended when utilizing IPA. Of primary importance when engaging in IPA is to allow the focus to remain on how the participant makes sense of their own experience and that during this process the analysis allows the investigator to also look at the possible shared experiences across participants (Cassidy, Reynolds, Naylor, & Souza, 2010). The initial focus should be on examination of the first transcript in depth prior to moving along to the subsequent transcripts.

**Step 1: Reading and Re-reading.** Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) recommend the researchers' immersion and active engagement in the collected data. Once the transcripts for the current study were transcribed, the principal investigator reviewed the transcripts while listening to the audio recorded interview for each participant multiple times to insure accuracy as well as to become familiar with the collected data. Another main purpose of reading and re-reading is to assist the researcher in slowing down the analysis process and ensuring that each individual receives their own focus during the process rather than the researcher’s attempt to quickly summarize each transcript. During the first step it was helpful to make notes regarding potentially important text or themes. The researcher began making notes in the margins of transcripts during the first step of IPA.

**Step 2: Initial Noting.** Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) recommended that the noting on transcripts take place in three parts which include descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual
comments. The descriptive comments are based on the initial reading of the transcript and tend to be the content presented at face-value (see Appendix VIII). These comments tend to be simple, key words, which essentially describe the participant’s experience of the phenomenon. This process is similar to the inductive approach of thematic analysis which is also referred to as the “ground up” (Creswell, 2007) or “bottom up” (Braun & Clark, 2006) approach which means that the themes were directly linked to the collected data. The linguistic comments take in to consideration the language choice made by participants. This can range from word choice to examining moments of pause, laughter and, tears. In the current study, many moments occurred where participant laughter was examined in the context of their discussing difficult content. Finally, according to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), the third level of comments, the conceptual comments, begin to be identified. It is as this point that the researcher began the interpretive process. The interpretations made by the principal investigator may be influenced by their own experience and knowledge; thus it is important for the researcher to constantly remind him or herself that the analysis should remain focused on the participant and not the self. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) emphasize the possibility that the interpretations may lead you away from the original content which presented by the participant. All of these comments and notes are then utilized to identify themes.

**Step 3: Developing Themes.** Themes identified are considered as patterns which come from within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), both implicit and explicit. The researcher revisited the initial transcript once all descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments were identified. The possible themes were documented in the margin of the transcript. While themes are initially ordered chronologically, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) indicate how important it is to keep in mind the hermeneutic circle at this point; specifically how the whole relates to the parts and
how the parts relates to the whole. This means that as the principal investigator examined each interview transcript, parts of the transcript were examined in isolation and then brought back together through the analysis and the writing of the findings.

**Step 4: Searching for Connections across Themes.** Once a concrete list of themes was identified for each participant, the researcher began to think about or identify how these themes might fit together. Per the recommendation of Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), the researcher printed out all identified themes for the first participant, “Karen” and then attempted to examine how each might be related to each other. To assist with this process, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin suggest the potential utilization of abstraction and polarization (2009).

**Abstraction.** Abstraction is a process of identifying patterns which might exist across potential themes which results in the creation of “superordinate” themes. Superordinate themes define or label a cluster of themes. The smaller themes, within the superordinate themes, are labeled as subthemes in the current study. For example, in the current study, there are multiple themes related experiencing paternal incarceration, specifically related to the changes they experienced as a result of the incarceration, including but not limited to, emotional and behavioral changes and financial difficulties. These themes were grouped together under the superordinate title: “My life will never be the same.”

**Polarization.** Polarization refers to the polarities of themes which might exist. For example, in the current study, participants spoke about the positive and negative effects and emotions related to having a father who was incarcerated during their childhood. For example while some participants reported feelings of sadness and confusion, others voiced feeling relief
about their father’s incarceration. Polarization allows the researcher the opportunity to examine the differences across participants rather than solely being focused on the similarities.

**Step 5: Moving to the Next Case.** Once themes, both superordinate and subthemes were identified for the first transcript, the subsequent transcripts were reviewed. The above process mentioned process was repeated with each transcript and while new themes were inevitably identified, it should be noted that the themes identified in the initial transcript will likely influence the process moving forward.

**Step 6: Identifying Patterns across Cases.** Cross-case analysis was conducted and included in the examination of cases and the identification of similarities, differences, and possible patterns across the transcripts. While participants commonly shared the superordinate themes, it was common for the subthemes to represent the unique idiosyncrasies of each participant. IPA is considered a cyclical process, and when necessary the researchers returned to the earlier stages to increase the depth of the analyses.

**Validity.** The validity, or credibility and trustworthiness, of qualitative research are often questioned. Validity refers to if the study “accurately reflect the situation and certain in the sense that research findings are supported by the evidence” (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2002). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) recommend Yardley’s criteria of validity when conducting IPA research. Yardley (2000) presents four criteria which can be used to examine the validity of qualitative research. The four criteria include assessing if the qualitative research conducted demonstrates sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance; all criteria can be demonstrated in various ways and there is the possibility for multiple criteria to be met through specific behaviors exhibited by the researcher.
**Sensitivity to Context.** Sensitivity to context in a qualitative study can be demonstrated in multiple ways and often begins early in the research process. It is important for the researcher to show sensitivity to “the socio-cultural milieu in which the study is situated, the existing literature on the topic, and the material obtained from participants” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; p. 180). According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) the selection of IPA is the researcher displaying sensitivity to context given the idiographic nature of this analysis. The principal investigator of the current study displayed sensitivity to context through the development of rapport and showing empathy to each participant during the interview process. Part of the development of rapport with participants was related to the principal investigator’s disclosure regarding personal experiences which have contributed to an interest in the current study. The principal investigator also exhibited sensitivity to context through emersion in the collected data to strive to understand how each participant has made meaning of having an incarcerated father. Finally, the researcher thoroughly examined the literature prior to and after data was collected and analyzed to ensure that relevant literature was included.

**Commitment and Rigour.** Yardley notes that commitment can be revealed through the researcher’s attentiveness to each participant during the data collection process and the time, attentiveness, and care exhibited during the data analysis process. Commitment was exhibited in the current study through conducting in-person interviews with each participant and providing the time and space for them to explore their experience of the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, attempts to contact participants for additional information and for clarity regarding their responses exhibited commitment. Rigour in a study indicates that the study was completed thoroughly. Rigour was exhibited through the careful selection and interviewing of participants whose experience will answer the research questions posed. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009)
also discuss to the importance of a homogenous sample which contributes to the rigour of the study. The current study was fairly homogenous and interviewed participants of the same gender, who all had their fathers incarcerated during the same stage of childhood and all as a result of a drug related offense.

**Transparency and Coherence.** Transparency is primarily reflected in the clarity of the write-up and explanation of the research process, from the beginning to the end. Coherence refers to the clear presentation of the study and is an aspect of validity which can only be determined by the readers of study. Coherence also refers to how closely a study which claims to be IPA follows the correct process. The principal investigator followed closely the steps outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin to complete IPA analysis.

**Impact and Importance.** Impact and importance is determined by the outcome of the study, specifically if the study provides important and useful information to the field of study. The results of the current study reveals information specific to a population which has not been studied in this way previously. It adds to the literature regarding children of incarcerated parents and provides the participants with a voice which has minimally been afforded to them before.

As discussed earlier, the principal investigator of the current study has experienced the incarceration of a family member. The principal investigator acknowledged how personal experiences may contribute to data gathering and data analysis in the current study. The superordinate themes and subthemes identified in the current study were based on the accounts of each participant as well as further interpretation of the “whole” interview by the principal investigator.
Chapter 4

Results

A total of ten participants were interviewed for the current study. The results section is divided into two parts. Prior to presenting the results of the analyses, the participant portraits, with pseudonyms, are provided. The participant portraits’ serve to preserve the idiographic nature of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA); they provide additional insight into each participant’s context and contributes to further the understanding of the uniqueness of each participant’s experience of paternal incarceration. The portraits will be followed by the results of the IPA. Superordinate themes will be presented with the corresponding subthemes that were identified. As mentioned previously, the superordinate themes are broader themes which cluster a series of subthemes that are related to participant responses. As mentioned by Smith and Osborn (2008), themes identified should be based on their ability to capture the experience rather than based on their prevalence in the data.

Participant Portraits

Participant A (Pilot Interview 1). “Karen” arrived early to the interview. As I sat in the room preparing for the interview, she knocked on the door. She initially avoided eye contact and seemed hesitant to enter the room. She came in with several bags and noted that she had just come from work. As the interview began she seemed to become more comfortable. Her eye contact became regular and she was hypervocal at times. She is a 29 year old Black woman who is currently single and never married. She is a Christian and spoke about regular church attendance. She completed high school and is currently a nurse’s aide. Her father was arrested and incarcerated when she was eight years old. He received a 20 year sentence for a drug related
offense. She remained living with her mother after her father’s incarceration however her mother began to receive government assistance to supplement their living expenses. Karen, her mother, and her two younger siblings, relocated at least four different times due to the financial constraints which they experienced. The memories she did share about her father often returned to his regularly walking she and her siblings to and from school. She described him as their protector. She and her mother and siblings visited her father regularly, but over time the visits decreased and her parents did not remain together. She was arrested on one occasion and served no jail time for marijuana possession. Karen spoke positively about her relationship with her father prior to his incarceration. She noted that she did witness domestic violence between her father and mother. She currently is in communication with her father, but describes it as being minimal; primarily on birthdays, holidays, or other special occasions which arise. The communication usually takes place over the phone and she physically sees her father once or twice per year. She spoke about how their relationship was never the same after his incarceration. Despite her visits to her father while he was incarcerated she indicated that their relationship was never the same after his incarceration. The quality of their interactions decreased over time and she found herself getting used to his not being around and not being there at important times in her life, both good and bad, including birthdays, holidays, graduations, and funerals.

Participant B (Pilot Interview 2). “Jessica” was extremely friendly and smiled and hugged me after I introduced myself in the lobby where we met. She was forthcoming and expressive during the interview and everything she said was emphasized with dramatic hand movements. She is 34 year old Black woman who is currently single and never married and expressed no intent of ever getting married. She describes herself as being a Christian. She has a
Bachelor’s degree in Communications and is currently employed as an Administrative Assistant. She was six years old when her father was arrested and incarcerated for a drug related offense. Her father was sentenced to 25 years in federal prison. Jessica and her father did not have a close relationship with her father prior to his incarceration and she did not visit him during his incarceration. She now assumed that her father’s time away from home when she was a child was related to his engagement in the “hustle” which she later described as illegal means of making money. She noted that they were unable to visit her father because he was placed in a federal prison which was too far for her and her mother to travel to. She occasionally exchanged letters with her father and telephone communication was minimal due to the expense of the phone calls. Since his release, she notes that she and her father have been trying to build a close relationship and to make up for lost time. She describes frequent communication and spending as much time with him as she can.

Participant 1. “Leah” immediately expressed her excitement about participating in the current study. She spoke at length about her experience and expressed appreciation for having the space to do so. Despite speaking about difficult content at times, Leah kept a smile on her face throughout the interview. She is a 22 year old Black woman. She has never been married, however is currently in a dating relationship. She describes her religious affiliation as being a Believer. She is currently enrolled in a Master’s degree program in Social Work and currently mentors young girls who have an incarcerated parent. Her father was arrested and incarcerated when she was seven years old and served five years in prison for drug related charges. Leah noted that she was not told the truth regarding where her father had been until she was an adult. Prior to her father’s arrest she lived with her mother and father. After her father’s incarceration she continued to reside with her mother however they had to move on multiple occasions,
eventually out of the state, due to the financial strain which occurred subsequent to her father’s incarceration. Leah describes herself as someone who has gone against the odds and has found success despite her childhood experience. Her father is not currently incarcerated and they communicate minimally. She indicated that she speaks to him about once per month and that he often tries to help her financially which she describes as an attempt for him to “make up” for the time he was away.

Participant 2. “Maria” arrived and appeared younger than her stated age. Her affect was expressive, however when speaking specifically about her father she spoke in an angry tone. She occasionally spoke words in Spanish, which she translated for the interviewer, however she noted that she felt like the words in Spanish truly captured what she was feeling and experiencing. She is a 20 year old woman who describes herself as being Afro-Dominican. She has never been married, however is currently in a dating relationship. She describes being spiritual and does not ascribe to any specific religion. She is currently working on her bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a minor in Latino Studies. Her father was arrested and incarcerated for drug-related charges when she was 11 years old. Her father’s sentence was reduced to five years, due to his cooperation with federal agents. She described minimal contact with her father prior to his incarceration due to his frequent visits to the Dominican Republic. After her father’s incarceration she continued to reside with her mother and younger sister. She began working seasonally, during the holidays, at the age of 14 to assist with the expenses at home, however now that she is away at college she holds an administrative work study position. Her father was recently arrested again however she was unaware of what the arrest was for. Maria was uncertain of what his sentence would be, but noted that since he had violated his parole the sentence would likely be lengthy. She reported “not caring” despite her angry tone,
and indicated that her anger was related to the pain that she felt her father’s latest arrest would cause her younger sister.

**Participant 3.** “Nicole” arrived late and expressed being nervous at the beginning of the interview. She was apologetic for her tardiness and attributed it to a child-care related issue. She presented as shy throughout the interview which was reflected in her minimal eye contact and her regularly looking at her hands or at the ground. She is a 35 year old Black woman. She is currently single and has two children and describes herself as non-religious. She spoke briefly about the father of her children and how he has not provided financially for their children. Nicole received an Associate’s degree in Business Administration and is currently employed as an office clerk, a position which she has held for the last six years. Her father was incarcerated when she was eight years old for drug related charges and racketeering. He was incarcerated for 14 years. She continued to reside with her mother and her older sister after her father’s incarceration. She indicated that her family moved after her father’s incarceration, but she attributed the relocation to the poor condition of the apartment rather than her father’s incarceration. She did describe some financial difficulties at home which required her mother having to work longer hours and eventually obtain a second job. Nicole’s father died in 2012. She speaks about difficulties connecting with her father prior to his incarceration, during his incarceration, and after his incarceration. While she lived with her father prior to his incarceration, she noted that he was often “too busy” to spend quality time with her or her sister. She did not visit her father during his incarceration due to the distance of the facility which he was placed as well as the financial strain which she and her family were experiencing. After her father was released, she described attempting to spend time with him on multiple occasions. The
times which she did spend with him, she reported that he often appeared under the influence and that he battled with substance use subsequent to his incarceration.

**Participant 4.** Tanya arrived on time to the interview. She expressed not feeling well and apologized in advance if she had to excuse herself. At that time, Tanya reported being pregnant with her first child. The interviewer expressed congratulations however Tanya then expressed some concerns related to her pregnancy and her being a good mother. She spoke briefly about the domestic violence she witnessed between her parents at this point, which was prior to the formal interview beginning. She is a 34 year old Black woman of Nigerian descent and is currently in a dating relationship. She is a Christian. She is not employed and is working on her Associates degree in Liberal Arts. Her father was incarcerated when she was 11 years old and the length of her father’s sentence was unknown. While she is aware that he is no longer incarcerated, she was not certain when he was released. He had also been previously arrested for domestic violence charges. She described an occasion where she had to provide a statement to the police regarding her father’s abuse. At age 27, Tanya was arrested on one occasion for a driving with a suspended license. She never served time in jail for this offense. She spoke positively of her father prior to his incarceration despite her witnessing his being physically violent towards her mother. She spoke about the time she spent with her father prior to his incarceration and described them as being “fun times.” Her relationship with her father changed during and after his incarceration due to her not seeing him or speaking with him while he was incarcerated. She expressed not having any current relationship with her father.

**Participant 5.** “Rachel” arrived an hour late to the scheduled interview however she called the interviewer multiple times while she was on her way. She noted that she had got lost on the way. She arrived breathing heavily and noted that she had run from the bus stop. Rachel
was talkative and often had to be redirected to answer specific questions posed during the interview. After the principal investigator disclosed her own experience with familial incarceration, Rachel attempted to provide support and was apologetic that the investigator had an experience with having a family member incarcerated. She is a 29 year old Black woman of Latino descent and identified as a Christian. She currently resides with her significant other. She has seven children, however only has custody of two of her children. Three of her children have been removed by the State Children’s Services. She reported that two of her children died of unknown causes. She is not currently employed and depends on government assistance to financially support her family. Her father was arrested and incarcerated when she was 11 years old and has served approximately 18 years of a 25 year sentence for a drug related charge. She indicated that she believes domestic violence charges were also included in his sentencing, but she was not certain. Rachel’s fathers incarceration resulted in her being placed in foster care due to suspected neglect after her father’s arrest. She describes living in foster homes and group homes and multiple attempts at running away from these facilities. She also spoke about experiencing a hospitalization for mental health related issues in her adolescence. She described not being aware of what happened to her mother and that she has not been in communication with her since she was placed in a foster home. She rarely visited her father when she was a child after he was incarcerated and currently has no communication with her father. Rachel was arrested for assault on two occasions and has served a total of 2.5 years in jail. She also reports being a victim of domestic violence in multiple dating relationships which she has been in. During the interview, Rachel questioned the purpose of life and spoke about moments in the past where she contemplated suicide. She denied plan or intent and expressed wanting to be a good
mother to her children. She spoke about her own resilience given the traumas she has experienced in her life and expressed being proud of herself for not giving up on herself.

**Participant 6.** “Anna” arrived late for the interview. She was extremely apologetic and noted that she had contacted her job to indicate that she would be late because she wanted to be able to complete the interview. Her affect was somewhat blunted as she spoke about her experience of paternal incarceration. She is a 21 year old Black woman. She is currently single and is enrolled as a full time college student working on her Bachelor’s degree. She is also employed as a student fundraiser to help supplement college related expenses. She describes her religious affiliation as being Christian-Baptist. Both of her parents were arrested at the same time when she was 10 years old. She noted that this was their only arrest. She clearly recalls seeing both of her parents arrested. She resided with her Aunt until her mother was released almost two months later. She indicated that her father pleaded guilty and absorbed all charges so her mother could return home. She was uncertain of what his sentence was however he is currently released. She expressed being proud of her father for the life he is currently living and noted that he is an active member in a church ministry. She describes having a relatively good relationship with her father currently, but had no contact with him while he was incarcerated. She continued to reside with her mother after her father’s incarceration and her parents continued to reside together after he was released. Anna indicated that she has been arrested on one occasion, but did not report what her charge was and she denied serving any jail time.

**Participant 7.** “Terri” arrived on time and had an extremely positive attitude. She provided positive feedback to interviewer for being a “strong black woman with a purpose.” She noted that she had hopes of having her own business and spoke briefly about some of her business ventures prior to the interview beginning. She was open and appeared to be emotionally
impacted by some of the questions posed during the interview which was reflected in her occasionally becoming tearful. She is a 25 year old Black woman. She is currently single and employed as a sales associate. She completed her Bachelor’s degree and is currently in search of a long term employment position relevant to her degree. She describes her religious affiliation as being Christian. Her father was arrested and incarcerated when she was six years old for drug related charges. She was uncertain of the exact length of the sentence which her father received or the amount of time he had served. She indicated that her mother was financially independent in the relationship, thus, after her father’s incarceration there were no major changes or financial disruption within the household. Prior to her father’s incarceration she described him as being generous and often being spoiled by him. She and her father communicated primarily through letters. She and her mother would visit, however they were not regular visits due to the added expense of traveling. While her father was previously released, he is currently incarcerated again for drug related charges. Since his most recent incarceration, Terri has had no communication with her father. She expressed being disappointed with him and that he “knew better” than to commit an offense which would result in another incarceration. She expressed concern about his current physical health and about his being able to get adequate healthcare while incarcerated.

**Participant 8.** “Kim” was pleasant during the interview. She maintained regular eye contact and actively engaged in the interview process. She often inquired if she had provided sufficient information in response to questions which she was asked. She is a 36 year old Black woman. She is currently married and has two children. She received her Master’s degree and is currently employed as a teacher. Her religious affiliation is Baptist. Her father was arrested and incarcerated when she was six years old for drug related charges and he was received an eight year sentence. She continued to reside with her mother after her father’s incarceration however
she and her mother relocated to be closer to family who could provide additional support. She did not know that her father was incarcerated because she was told by family members that he was on a “vacation”. She reported realizing at a later age, approximately four years later, that her father was actually in prison. She did not visit her father or have any communication with him while he was incarcerated. She was primarily raised by her mother and step-father. Kim indicated that despite the lack of communication, as an adult, she and her father have developed a close relationship and she describes him as one of her best friends. She expressed hesitation to have her own children because she is concerned that they might have an experience similar to hers; growing up without their father present. She became tearful when speaking about her own children and after wiping her tears, she described feeling like she had just been interviewed on Oprah.

**Superordinate Themes and Subthemes**

During the analysis of qualitative data the following superordinate themes were identified when examining the experience of adult daughters who experienced paternal incarceration during middle childhood. The themes identified not only speak to the immediate effects, but also the long term effects of paternal incarceration. A total of five superordinate themes were identified: *The Need for Transparency*—“I just wanted to know the truth”, *The Broken Family Unit*—the father’s absence, *The Stain of Incarceration*—“Life was never the same”, *Buffers and Barriers to Adjustment*, and *Becoming Independent – Fear of Relying on Others*. The subthemes which identified are also identified and explored below. Areas of divergence and difference, among participant responses, will also be noted as the results are presented. Participant anonymity is maintained through the presentation of results with the use of the previously mentioned pseudonyms.
Superordinate Theme 1 – The Need for Transparency – “I just wanted to know the truth”. This theme explores the general impact of the father’s incarceration and the participant’s confusion related to the abruptness of their father’s disappearance. While all participants eventually discovered that their fathers were incarcerated for drug related charges, many were not aware of the specific charges and all were uncertain to some degree regarding the length of the sentence received. Terri was the only participant who indicated that she was informed right away that her father had been incarcerated. The subthemes highlighted within this superordinate theme include where did he go?, did he love me?, and the visitation process.

Subtheme 1.1 - Where did he go? Many participants spoke about their father’s sudden disappearance, the subsequent confusion they experienced, and the lack of knowledge which they were provided by their mothers or other family members regarding his disappearance. While Anna’s experience is unique, as both her parents were initially arrested, she described her confusion in the moment. Despite seeing what happened, at the age of 10 what was happening was still unclear to her:

So I really was thinking as a kid, "What’s going on, this is a mistake." I remember my sister crying because they took them away and just trying to like not cry in front of her.

Karen also spoke to the confusion and abruptness of her father’s departure:

For me personally being eight I had no idea what was going on. I didn’t know where he went, all I knew is that dad was living with us one day and then he wasn’t. I had no idea what was going on.

Leah’s father was arrested and incarcerated when she was seven years old. She describes having to wait until she was an adult to be informed about her father’s whereabouts:
I remember never really knowing why dad disappeared, never really knowing what his charges were or what happened until I got older. When I started to ask questions my mom still skipped around, it was like, "Dad didn’t do some great things, or make the best decisions." I never really knew until I got older and I was able to have these adult conversations with my mom and dad, and my family to figure out what happened.

Kim was not only not told about her father’s whereabouts she reported consistently being lied to about where her father was:

I was really young. I was living with my mom, we were in an area Hudson, New York. I just know that he was gone and then we were gone. He was there and then he wasn’t, and then we moved to the Bronx. It was constant questions like, "Why are we moving." I remember specifically. Then he was like completely out of my life. If I asked about it I get a lot of, "He's on vacation." My mom never really told me anything, this was stuff coming from my aunts and stuff on my dad's side. That he was on vacation, he was away for a while, he would be back. It wasn’t until I was probably about 10 that I really realized what was going on.

In questioning her father’s incarceration and disappearance, Nicole clearly speaks about how finding out the truth about her father’s incarceration would have helped her achieve closure:

“I, I wanted some type of closure um to find out. Because my mom she, yeah she talked about him, and stuff like that, then when I talked to his family they told me a different story, [voice slightly raises] even on my mom’s side they told me a different story. [voice returns to normal] So I just wanted to know the truth, [voice slightly raises] what
happened. Like, you know, as a teenager you’re curious by nature and I just wanted to know the truth.

Additionally, Rachel speaks about wanting an apology from her father’s for how his sudden disappearance changed her life.

“…he hurt me and my brother, but I could of at least get a sorry, I didn’t get nothing. I got less than nothing; I got just mute and nothing at all. So when you’re getting mute and nothing at all how do you think I feel, fucked up. I'm not about to kiss your ass, hell to the no. I'm going to do what it got to do keep on moving keep standing.

Subtheme 1.2 - Did he love me? The abruptness of their father’s disappearance due to his incarceration resulted in two participants questioning their fathers love for them. Leah spoke specifically to how her father’s absence contributed to her thinking this way:

My dad's the most important person in my life who's the one man who's supposed to love me, I felt like he didn’t because he wasn’t there to physically love me.

Rachel also spoke about the impact of her father’s absence on her beliefs about his love for her:

One of the main questions that I wanted to ask my father was, did he love me. And why didn’t he love me enough, why didn’t he have enough determination and love to stay and put a stop to what was going on, he didn’t.

Subtheme 1.3 – The Visitation Process. Approximately half of the participants in the current study spoke about visiting their father while he was incarcerated. These participants discussed their experience with visitation and all expressed some confusion about the visitation process. They wondered why they were treated negatively by prison staff at times and wondered
why certain rules were implemented. As children, they questioned or wondered about why they were being searched, why their physical contact with their father was kept to a minimum, and why their fathers were dressed the way he was. Maria reflected on one of her experiences which contributed to her confusion:

Like why can’t I just have some information. Because sometimes you don’t even question why you don’t chew gum while you are visiting. You know what I’m saying. You just kind of do what you are told. And when you ask a question. You have this guard that is being so aggressive and so like, why. I don’t understand. You get to go home to your family after this and you are giving me such a hard time. At least answer my question as to why I can’t chew gum. Like something small like that.

Jessica also speaks to her experience of visiting her father, and even further questioning why he could not leave with her:

I remember going to visit him in an orange jumpsuit. I didn’t really know what that was about but I remember thinking, "Oh dad can't come home with us I knew that." When we go we have to go through all these security points, we finally get to see dad. Sometimes it's behind the glass with that little telephone thing, sometimes he's actually able to come out. There's definitely a limit to how much touching you can do, how long you can hug them for etc. I do remember that having limits on that and not understanding why can't dad come home with us. I don’t get it.

Superordinate Theme 2 – The Broken Family Unit – The Father’s Absence. The next superordinate theme identified relates to the family unit which was no longer considered whole,
by participants, without their father present. In general, regarding the family unit, Leah believed that there was a lack of consideration for families when the fathers were removed and sentenced:

I don’t think it's particularly fair because I think when they sentence people they don’t think about their families at all. And how when you're sentencing one person you're sentencing the entire family, and everybody that they're in connection with. Not only did my father do time, but I did time. My brothers and my sisters did time, my mom did time, we all did time. I don’t think that the criminal justice system recognizes that, nor do I think that they even care.

Kim also implied that not growing up within a two-parent family has contributed strongly to her current feelings related to having a family unit:

Then that leads me to think about too, the fact that I have an issue with needing a family unit. As many times as there's been in my life that I feel like maybe this marriage could have been dissolved, I fight to keep it together for them (referring to her children; becomes tearful).

The subthemes identified include, holding on to positive memories of father prior to his incarceration, preservation of the father, and parentification of the child.

Subtheme 2.1 - Memories of father prior to his incarceration – The good and the bad.

All participants reflected on memories with their father prior to his incarceration. Many of the reported memories were positive and happy memories which were not only reflected in the content of what was said by participants, but also their affect when describing these moments. Anna reported the following:
Before it was very good. I was at that age where I didn’t have the teenage smart mouth yet so it was pretty friendly. He was a good dad. I remember him making breakfast every morning. Big breakfasts, I love them. Remember we used to freestyle rap in the mornings sometimes and I still do it now as a result.

Terri describes her father positively and the way in which he provided for her prior to his incarceration:

He was always really generous; he spoiled me. I was always going to get anything I wanted. I used to always take advantage of the fact that he wasn’t there. So, whenever he came home, he’d be like, “Do you need anything?” I’d have these demands of him. This is when I was little. I had a lot of Barbie’s, so I’d be like, “Yeah, get me this Barbie, I want that.” I would try to take advantage of the situation and he would just melt like putty in my hand. So, my father, he was good to me for the most part. He was good to me.

Leah shares similar positive memories of not only her father, but memories of the family unit:

I remember before my dad left it was like a family, we all lived together. It was me, my mom, my dad. We live in Yonkers so I remember we lived in this beautiful high rise building, it was just a really nice apartment with really nice stuff. I remember he would give me every color Tims (type of shoe) they ever had, always regular Tims, I didn’t like those shoes. Sometimes my mom would go to work, and my dad would take care of me. I never forget one time he cooked me breakfast, and this whole time I didn’t know dad could cook, I was like, "Dad can cook, okay that's cool."

While participants spoke to the positive memories of their father, approximately six participants also discussed the domestic violence which they witnessed in the home prior their fathers
incarceration. This contributed to some participant’s reports that they experienced relief subsequent to their father’s incarceration. While Nicole reported witnessing domestic violence on multiple occasions, she shared one particular experience:

They was fighting over money. The fight was about money, his drug use. It was a combination of both so. I remember seeing that, then when I asked my mom about it she said no, they was wrestling. [chuckles] Lying, but I knew it was a lie but I just kept quiet, because you know at that time, [voice slightly raises] you get the backhand [imitates smack].

Terri also reveals her experience of experiencing domestic violence and how it contributed to some of the feelings she experienced after father was incarcerated:

And he started losing his mind and doing drugs. So, he became kind of violent and abusive towards my mom and I witnessed it. I witnessed this vulgar man. So, I kind of didn’t regret when he was away because I didn’t like anyone messing with my mother. I was always more protective of my mother.

**Subtheme 2.2 - Preservation of Father – It’s not all his fault.** While participants acknowledged their fathers wrong doings contributed to their arrest and incarceration; it seems that all the blame was not placed on their fathers. In some cases participants spoke about things which they felt could have been handled differently in their father’s case or services which they felt could have been helpful. For example, Nicole noted the following:

But the drug charges, the drugs, they should have put him in a special program instead of prison, because it doesn’t even help, you know.
Additionally, some participants were able to empathize with their father for his experience rather than solely blame him. Jessica says the following regarding some insight in to her father’s experience:

    Just as a man knowing that you left your family, and you weren’t there to provide for them. I can only imagine how hard that might be, just feeling emasculated a little bit like, "I can't take care of my family, and they were struggling because of me." I can only think of what kind of guilt, what kind of burden he carries around with him and I never even consider that before. I was just thinking about my pain, my struggle, and not realizing that he also went through something too, that was a pain and struggle for him too.

Tanya also empathized with her father’s experience and the lasting impact it likely had on him:

    I feel so bad for him because I know he had such a hard life. Things he's been through, being in and out of jail, just being homeless and not taking care of himself, especially after he divorced my Mom completely. It's like his status is fucked up, excuse me my language.

Despite the negative implications that her father’s incarceration could have, Leah refused to see her father as a criminal:

    I think that's something important to recognize too that incarceration doesn't equal criminal, incarceration doesn't equal bad person, incarceration doesn't mean that you're going to have this messed up life and never ever be successful. Incarceration for me just mean unfortunate circumstance that you happen to have to have serve time for. I think that's important to know. He's not a criminal in my eyes, if anything he will always be just my dad.
Additionally, many participants addressed the systemic and racial issues which they believe contributed to their father’s arrest and incarceration rather than solely attributing the blame to their father. For example, Leah noted the following:

I see it's like, yeah my dad shouldn't have done those things, but there's also a lot of systemic things happening that pushed him to do those things. Because black men aren’t given that opportunity to really thrive in society or communities in general. So this is the option that they have and they chose it, and they get punished for it. Then we just look at the whole war on drugs is it really war on drugs, or is it war on our people, specifically our men.

Similarly to Leah, Terri spoke to the systemic issues which she believes contributed to the choices which her father made:

So, these are sort of the things that are structured in America’s social system, even in there, that kind of steers the black man in the wrong way, that makes him want to go out there and do crime. “Why not chase this fast money where I'm independent? I can make my own money. I don’t have to listen to some kind of hierarchy with the white man that’s got me hitting this glass ceiling I can't get above.”

**Subtheme 2.3 - Parentification of the Child.** With their fathers arrest and subsequent incarceration, some participants discussed new responsibilities which they assumed once their father was gone to help out in the home which contributed to participants having to grow up quickly. Anna describes her experience:

Because I am the oldest in my family. And like I’ve been my mom’s partner in life. So, I’ve felt this weight of like carrying my family.
Maria also describes increased responsibility and providing more of a support to her mother when her father left:

Me and my mom talked a lot more. You know, my dad wasn’t there to have a conversation with about and I think that helped me educationally, just growing up. Sometimes when you have just good conversations with your mom about things, you know, current events, news it kind of helps you mature. Did a lot more reading and cleaning around the house definitely because he wasn’t there also to help out with some of the chores. So we kind of all filled in his role in our own ways.

Jessica also spoke about assuming more responsibility at home after her father was incarcerated:

I mean I know I was getting older and my mom was probably going to teach me how to cook and clean eventually, but it’s weird now that I think about it, I was the one always taking out the trash…my dad always used to do that. Even if he was home for 10 minutes, he took the trash out.

Karen spoke specifically about having to take more of an active role in the lives of her younger siblings as she got older.

My dad used to walk us to school and then all of a sudden I have to make sure the younger ones got to school. I’m the protector now, I had to make sure no one fucked with them and knew what would happen to them if they did.

Karen later continued on and attributed her one arrest as being a result of her trying to help take care of her family:
Yeah I got arrested for possession, but we needed money. It’s funny mom had no idea where I was gettin money to give her, but I think she was just kinda glad I could help out. It’s not like the bills stopped when my dad went away, i think it got worse cause you know he needed money to for the commissary or whatever they call it.

**Superordinate Theme 3 – The Stain of Incarceration – “Life was never the same”**.

This superordinate theme includes the exploration of the changes which participants experienced subsequent to their fathers incarceration. It also includes participant insight in to how their father’s incarceration affected them emotionally, physically and behaviorally. The specific subthemes identified within this superordinate theme include financial strain, striving for success, and emotional and behavioral change.

**Subtheme 3.1- Financial Strain.** Participants spoke about the changes which occurred within their household as a result of their father’s absence. While some described their mother being able to maintain the household, they noted the impact of the absence of one income in a previously two income home. Leah shared the following:

It became a little hard to live here and be able to survive. I remember we did move into a one bedroom apartment, in the same building too, but I just definitely remember there was a lot of struggling. I didn’t always particularly see it, but I could feel it because I knew there was sometimes when my mom was like, "Okay." She would always figure things out and she never stressed out. She always knew things were going to get paid unless she was just going to figure her way out.

Tanya also speaks about her experience:
Sometimes we'd stay in hotels. There was a lot of moving for lack of paying rent. Lack of funds, and just him not even bringing anything into the house. So yeah we did move a lot. We did. We'd be stable for a little while, always just a year and then we'd have to move.

Kim also speaks to how her father’s incarceration changed her living situation due to decreased financial support:

We lived on four, my grandmom lived on three, so there were days that we had to send extension cords down into my grandmom's house to get electricity to light up the house. Financially we were doing really, really bad.

**Subtheme 3.2- Emotional and Behavioral Reaction.** In light of some of the stain, or negative impact, which participants experienced as a result of their fathers incarceration, some speak to the emotional reaction which they have and what made the experience more difficult. Karen described the following emotional reaction:

Pretty sad. I didn’t really think of them as much in high school just because he was back and things came back to normal. But during that time it was very hard especially seeing my mom cry. That was definitely the hardest part. I think it was hard for me also because we had to give the dog away. Just any really major extra responsibilities around the house kind of had to go. So that kind of made things worse but it was pretty sad. It was pretty sad. It was kind of like we were counting down the days till when he’d be back.

Similarly, Anna describes her experience and how the nature of the arrest contributed to her emotional response:
Also, a little feeling of embarrassment because I had a lot of friends and we lived in a cul-de-sac. So it was like a little dead end circle and we called it, the circle. We used to play every day and I knew all my neighbors and so it was like, "Oh my gosh this is such a public thing, early in the morning, people might not have left for work yet, it looks like my parents are criminals because they’re taking them away," so also, that feeling.

Rachel’s comments revealed her anger towards her father. Rachel was placed in foster care subsequent to her father’s incarceration:

I don’t write my dad, I don’t want to write him, I don’t have anything to say, because you weren’t there when I needed you. You were not there when I needed you the most. You weren’t there for my brother. I literally couldn't function.

Additionally, some participants spoke about the changes in their behavior which they noticed subsequent to their father’s incarceration. The relationship may not be causational, but there is a correlation for the timing of some of these changes and the father’s incarceration. For example, Jessica noted:

Academically, from kindergarten I’ve always been a straight A student and that never changed. Behaviorally, I don’t know if it was as a result of him being incarcerated but my behavior definitely got a little worse in terms of, I was a little more aggressive.

Subtheme 3.3- Striving for Success – Not wanting to be judged for father’s mistakes.

During this theme, participants spoke about their concern that they will be judged or treated differently as a result of their father’s crimes and the process of realizing that their fathers crime is not a reflection of them. For example, Terri noted that, “Because of the absence of my father? I think as a child, I was just always trying to prove myself as something.” She continued to say:
I just didn’t like people questioning me that didn’t know me. Like, if I said my dad was in jail, they would be like, “Why is he in jail?” It left them room to judge me off of my father’s mistakes. I didn’t want to be associated with that negative energy.

Maria speaks to her eventually becoming aware that her father’s crimes were not for her to bear:

It’s affected me like in my conscious self now, a little less, just because I’ve been able to realize that it’s not about me. And his mistakes are not my mistakes. Um, and like…now I’m more comfortable with those stereotypes that are associated with when people find out that like, my dad has been in prison or has been in prison. Um…not as—it hasn’t affected me as much since I realized that.

Moreso, participants speak about how this experience has contributed to their career path, and efforts to succeed and make a difference. For example, Leah indicated:

I honestly don’t know if I would be in a school social worker if my dad was incarcerated. Because it just raised so many questions for me about the system that we live in, the system that we operate in. The society that we operate in and why.

While many participants described being motivated to well because of their fathers mistakes, so that they can stand separately from his offense, Tanya spoke about how her father’s offense negatively impacted her motivation:

For me sometimes I feel dis-motivated, I feel like I have an excuse to mess up because my Dad messed up. I feel like I can take my time sometimes. My Mom is totally the opposite and when I talk to her I feel motivated, I feel I want to achieve more right away. But when I look at my Dad, because I see that I have seen that in my life, imbalance,
balance, that I kind of got used to, accepted that into my life. I kind of got used to and accepted that into my life where I want to be balanced and imbalanced and I want to go to school but not finish right away or something. It’s like I am taking my time because I’m seeing that my Dad didn’t really do nothing and he got by. You can always get by if you don’t do anything too. But then my Mom tells me oh you need to do something to get by.

**Superordinate Theme 4 – Buffers and Barriers to Adjustment.** This superordinate theme refers to the variables which participants identified as being influential in how they coped with their father’s absence. The themes in this section include *Additional Support System, Mother’s Role, Disclosure, and Self-Reflection.*

**Subtheme 4.1- Additional Support System.** Participants speak about the additional support and help which they received after their father’s incarceration which was helpful. Kim spoke to family support above when she reflected on she and her mother needing to run an extension cord to her grandmother’s apartment so that they would have power. Additionally, some participants reflected on the help of their religious community, specifically their faith. Leah mentions the following:

I think also my faith too was really helpful in moving along and progressing. Because faith is something that you feel, it’s not something that's tangible that you can always see, but from faith you can see tangible results. That's just something that really kept me strong because there's some days there's things I cannot explain. Even now and even then there's things that I can't explain, but having the faith to know this is a part of my journey and that's cool has been really powerful.
Subtheme 4.2- Mother’s Role. Participants spoke about their mother’s presence after their father’s incarceration. The majority of participants spoke positively about their mother and the support which she provided to them. Terri revealed the following:

And my mother inspired me in that one moment, just like bringing me to a class and I said, “Ma, I want to go to a school like this,” because I was running all around the building when she was in computer class. I said, “Ma, I'm gonna use the bathroom.” I was everywhere. They had art in there. They had a big swimming pool. As we were leaving, I said, “Ma, I want to go to this school.” She yelled at me and she said, “No, you can do better than this. You can have better than this. You can be anything.”

While some participants spoke positively about their mother’s, some indicated that their mother’s did not facilitate communication between them and their father after his incarceration. Jessica speaks about never visiting her father in prison and Nicole shared finding letters from her father which her mother hid from her for years. Tanya also speaks about her father making attempts to call them at home, however her mother refused to accept his calls.

Subtheme 4.3- Disclosure. Participants discussed factors which contributed to their choosing to disclose or not disclose about their fathers incarceration and how to navigate conversations when the topic arises. For example, Kim spoke about factors which contributed to her choice to not disclose:

One of the other things is they hid so much from me, my nana and my papa did. My mom never really said too much, her big thing was she didn’t go with the vacation lie, she was the constant one to keep saying, "You realize things when you get older. It's just not the time now to try to explain these things to you." She
never bad mouthed my dad at all, not ever. Besides the comment that she made about the photo frame, I don’t ever remember her making a bad comment about him, but it just seemed like something we should be ashamed of.

Some participants spoke specifically about the usefulness of acquiring the knowledge in higher education to speak about their experience. She noted that the more she speaks about her experience the less distress she feels about it. Leah indicated:

I think there's always going to be a pain there. There's always going to be a little bit of pain there because it happened regardless of anything else, so there's always going to be a little bit of pain there. I think that as I grow older, as I continue to gain language for it, as I continue to talk more about it and explore how it's affected me, it gets smaller. It's like it gets smaller, it gets smaller. I'm able to learn that yeah that is a painful point in my life but I don’t have to translate that pain into other areas of my life either, and I don’t have to transfer that pain on to anybody else either.

Many participants spoke positively about their experience with disclosure during the interview process. They expressed appreciation for the space and spoke about the benefits of creating these spaces for families, specifically children, who have experienced having an incarcerated parent. For example, after the interview process, Karen noted:

Thank you for doing this, thank you for giving this particular community a voice.

Because we haven’t had, not that I've seen, I haven't seen any research or anything like that. Trying to give us a voice.

**Superordinate Theme 5 – Becoming Independent – Fear of Relying on Others.** This superordinate theme is connected to participant discussion of the independence they began to
develop subsequent to their father’s incarceration. Additionally, participants speak about how they engage in relationships and the related hesitancy they experience. The subthemes in this category are the *Inability to Trust/Fear of Abandonment* and exploring what could be helpful to others experiencing paternal incarceration.

First, regarding the development of independence, Terri speaks about how her perceived independence has negatively impacted her dating relationships:

…but when I go on dates, they say I'm too independent. It’s like threatening their manhood in a way, because when a man looks at a woman – maybe I'm in tune with a certain kind of masculine energy – but they want you to be in tune with that feminine energy. You can't seem too independent. They want to feel needed by you. If you’re doing everything for yourself, it’s like where do they fit in your life? It’s really intimidating I've noticed with some of the guys I've dated. But it’s hard for me to find a black man that doesn’t mind me being this independent and ambitious and wanting to go for it all.

**Subtheme 5.1- Inability to Trust/Fear of Abandonment.** Participants spoke about the difficulties they have with trusting others in both friendships and dating relationships. They described not knowing if others had their best interest in mind and also a concern related to being abandoned. Maria notes “no one is checking for me, like I’m checking for me.” Additionally, regarding general relationships, Kim indicated:

I really don’t trust people at all. At the end I think that's one of the biggest divides in my marriage. I constantly prepare in my mind that (husbands name) can just up and leave at
any point in time. It's just what it is. I have no faith at all that he'll stay around. I just don’t.

Jessica notes:

No when I was younger it wasn’t something, it didn’t really start until I was entering relationships. I just don’t have trust at all really, especially not for men at all.

Leah connects her fear of abandonment in relationships directly to her father’s disappearance and incarceration:

Yeah, I think especially relationship wise, I really had to check myself on a lot of stuff because of that. Because especially with my dad being gone and having no explanation or consistent contact, that defiantly left the feeling of abandonment. That’s something that I have to deal with too, and that hasn’t always been easy. That's translated into friendships or relationships, because sometimes I wouldn't rely on people as much because I didn’t have any clue whether they were going to be here to stay or go.

**Subtheme 5.2- What Could be Helpful?** Despite the independence voiced by participants, they note what they believe support services could have been helpful to them as a child and those that will be beneficial moving forward for children who have an incarcerated parent. Some of the recommended services include financial support, safe spaces within schools, and ongoing therapy.

Leah suggested ongoing therapy, spoke about her awareness as an adult about how she has been impacted by her father’s incarceration:
I don’t think as a child you realized why you're angry, or why you feel alone, or why you feel hurt, or why you're sad, all that comes in adulthood. And some people don’t even find it then. For me things open up as you begin to take psychology courses, go to therapy, and this and that and that, and you can actually get to a place where you can do some self-reflection. Then you can sit back and say, "Okay this is why I ...,

Maria also shared that having the language and a space to discuss her experience as a child would have been helpful:

I think that definitely that it would have been helpful to be able to process these things and be able to talk about them. Um but I didn’t know how to talk about it so I guess giving em the language, because language is such a great tool. Um, and providing people with a space to be able to talk about their feelings.

Participants also reported that it would have been beneficial to be connected with other individuals whom had experienced familial incarceration. This was also reflected in participant responses to principal investigator’s disclosure of her experience with incarceration. Additionally, when thinking about services that could be provided to children affected by paternal incarceration, multiple participants expressed that being informed about the process, including where there father was and why, what to expect when they visit him, why there father can only communicate through letters and occasional phone calls, specifics about the rules when visiting their father and why they exist, and what to expect when their father is released.
Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to explore the experience of adult daughters who had fathers incarcerated as a result of a drug related offense when they were children. As noted previously, research indicates that the incarceration of a parent, and subsequent separation can be detrimental, challenging, and may even be considered a traumatic event for some children (Genty, 2002; Hairston, 2007; Kampfner, 1995; Sharp et al., 1998). According to Morris (2006), children of incarcerated parents have been referred to as the “hidden victims” of incarceration. The majority of research which has been done has focused on young children whose parent is currently incarcerated (Meek, 2008) and has often been based on observation of the child by other adult figures (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Minimal research has been conducted which has provided a space for the child to speak to their own experience. Additionally, participants in the current study were able to reflect on their childhood and think about how the experience of paternal incarceration impacted them during those moments as well as how it continues to affect them. The current study provided results which will contribute to the current literature regarding the experience of children with incarcerated parents.

The current study provided the space for children of the incarcerated to describe in their own words how they have been impacted by paternal incarceration. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a type of qualitative analysis, provided participants with the opportunity to make meaning of their experience of having an incarcerated father and to identify the potential impact in their own terms. The discussion section will explore the summary of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and relevant literature. According to Smith,
Flowers, and Larkin (2009), while the results of the analysis may address literature previously referenced in the literature review, it is likely that the results will lead researcher in to new literature and or “unanticipated territory.” Additionally, implication for practice and recommendations for future research will be presented. It should be noted that this research does not make implications regarding generalizability of the above mentioned findings.

Summary of Results and Relevant Literature

The superordinate themes identified in the current study included The Need for Transparency- “I just wanted to know the truth”, The Broken Family Unit- The Father’s Absence, The Stain of Incarceration – “Life was never the same”, Buffers and Barriers to Adjustment, and Becoming Independent – Fear of Relying on Others. All of the superordinate themes and subthemes identified aid in answering the first research question of the current study which was to acquire information related to how daughters think and feel about their experience of paternal incarceration. The findings also support previous research by Kjellstrand (2009) which indicated that the experience of parental incarceration will likely be experienced differently by different individuals based on various factors.

The primary focus of the current study was to understand the lived experience of adult daughters whose fathers were incarcerated, during middle childhood, as a result of the War on Drugs. In addition, data was collected from participants who explored if they experienced the stigma of incarceration and if/how they thought race may have contributed to their fathers arrest and/or incarceration. The study supports findings from previous studies. Participants were not only able to reflect on their initial memories of their father’s incarceration, they also spoke to their experiences over time, and more recently. They spoke to not only the immediate effects, but
also the lasting or long term effects (Ivy, 2011; Murray & Murray, 2010; Poehlmann, 2005) of their father’s incarceration which have been suggested in previous research.

All participants in the current study resided with their father prior to his incarceration and research indicates that if a parent lived with and cared for their child prior to their incarceration (Geller et al., 2012), and was one of the child’s primary attachment figures then this separation can be considered traumatic and possibly have lasting effects (Makariev & Shaver, 2009). This impact can be even more detrimental and confusing for younger children (Branch & Brinson, 2007). Some researchers have described the loss of a parent, especially the sudden loss, as a result of incarceration as being an ambiguous (Arditti, 2003; Bocknek, Sanderson, and Britner; Morris, 2006). Perhaps the theory of ambiguous loss can explain the reaction experienced by participants, who expressed confusion about their father’s incarceration, wondering where did he go, and wanting more transparency from their mother or other family members.

The theory of ambiguous loss refers to a type of loss that individuals or families experience which is not concrete, seems unclear, and uncertain because of a lack of information, lack of closure, and finality which can result in “unending torment” (Boss, 2006; Betz & Thorngreen, 2006). According to Boss (2004) “ambiguous loss is the most stressful type of loss because it defies resolution and creates confused perceptions about who is in or out of a particular family.” This theory aids in understanding a loss which may be unresolvable and the perceptions, emotions, and behaviors often associated (Boss, 2004; Lee & Whiting, 2007). Research indicates that there are two types of ambiguous loss which families may experience, (Boss, 1999; Betz & Thorngreen, 2006), the first of which might apply to children of incarcerated parents, occurs when a person is physically absent yet psychologically present and
According to Boss (1999), examples of the first definition include children of divorced parents who live with one parent and a loved one who is missing or has been kidnapped. Boss (2004) includes incarceration as a catastrophic or unexpected type of ambiguous loss. While the person is not physically present, this does not prevent family members and loved ones from thinking about the person and their well-being. Boss (2007) describes a family member being deployed in the military as a type of ambiguous loss. Despite the anticipated reunion, the family will likely not be the same as they were prior to the deployment. Ambiguous losses often cause not only psychological distress, but also physical, emotional, behavioral and cognitive distress (Betz & Thorngreen, 2006). Betz and Thorngreen (2006) describe the experience of ambiguous loss as being like a rollercoaster with conflicting emotions because of the often unpredictable future and nature of the experience. It must be noted that ambiguous loss is not always a problem for every individual. It is possible that for families and individuals to experience ambiguous loss without negative outcomes (Boss, 2004).

Additionally, previous research regarding the how the child experiences loss is related to research on attachment. These results have often been linked to specifically to Bowlby’s attachment theory. Paternal incarceration could be an example of a circumstance which contributes to insecure attachment. According to Branch and Brinson (2007), in the context of loss, if a secure attachment remains after the loss of a primary caregiver then this attachment can buffer the negative effects often associated with the loss. This research is also supported by the findings of the current study. Many participants spoke about their relationship with their mother after their father’s incarceration and it seemed to buffer some of the negative effect of parental incarceration which has been implied by previous research. Literature related to children having this experience is often found regarding divorce. In a study conducted by Laumann-Billings and
Emery (2000), the results indicated that children of divorced parents reported having a more difficult childhood and endorsed questioning if their fathers loved them.

Visitation was also a topic discussed in multiple contexts in the current study. Some participants expressed confusion regarding their experience during visitation with their father, specifically related to the rules and regulations as well as wondering why their father could not come home with them. Researchers have noted that if the visits are not “child-friendly” they can result in a more emotionally distressing visit for the child, which ultimately causes more harm than good (Arditti, 2003; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Poehlmann, 2005). Arditti (2012) noted the positive effects of visitation are often experienced by the parent and that the experience of visitation can be traumatizing for the child. According to Christian (2009), some variables which make the jail or prison environment more distressing for children include experiencing or witnessing the attitudes and behaviors of correction staff, rude treatment, lengthy waits, body frisks, and no specific area and/or activities for young children. Some literature reported that many prisons do not provide a visiting environment which is conducive for close contact or for attachment to be maintained between the parent and child (Murray & Murray, 2010). In a study conducted by Arditti (2003), the confusion and “awkwardness” experienced by children visiting their incarcerated fathers increased with longer incarcerations and lengthy periods during communication. This information supports the findings of the current study regarding confusion related to the visitation process.

Visitation was described by Arditti (2012) as a paradox. While the research mentioned above addresses the distress which it may result in, some research indicates that visitation may serve as a buffer to the negative effects of incarceration (Arditti, 2012). Some researchers have implied that relationship maintenance is dependent upon the child being able to visit and
communicate with their parent while they are incarcerated (Geller et al., 2012). While many participants in the current study reported visiting their father while they were incarcerated, only two participants reported continuing to have a relationship with their father, one of which did not visit her father while he was incarcerated. Other researchers imply that the positive effects of visitation may depend on the child’s age and possibly that the contact should be regular (Arditti, 2012). While participants in the current study reported seeing their father, the contact was not regular in comparison to their contact with their father prior to the incarceration. Some participants described regular contact with their father as being visits and exchanged letters once per month.

Another superordinate theme identified implied the broken, or dissolved, family unit subsequent to paternal incarceration. Parental incarceration, in general, interrupts the relationship between parent and child and alters the family unit. According to Arditti and Savla (2015), incarceration creates involuntary single parent households which can negatively affect the family unit. Broken families have often been referenced in the context of divorced parents and research indicates that children who come from broken homes, while not experienced by all children of divorce are at greater risk for behavioral, psychological, and educational problems when compared to children with married parents (Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000). Similar comparisons have been made regarding the potential outcomes for children of incarcerated parents as compared to children who do not experience parental incarceration (Geller et al., 2009). Many participants in the current study addressed changes they noticed in their behavior subsequent to their fathers incarceration.

Many participants shared about positive memories they had with their father. If we consider the fathers incarceration as a loss, which was previously mentioned, then the
recollected positive memories in the context of grief and loss can contribute to an individual’s ability to regulate distressing feelings and/or mood (Rusting & DeHart, 2000). Perhaps the employment of this strategy served as a protective factor for some of the participants in the current study. As the results indicated, while some participants reflected positively on their experiences with their father prior to his incarceration, some participants also shared their experiences of witnessing domestic violence. According to Whitaker and colleagues (2006), the incarceration of fathers who are abusive or who engage in behaviors which effect the safety of the family unit may improve the child’s overall well-being and improve family function (Western and Wildeman, 2009).

Preservation of the father was a subtheme which arose that could be related to the participants sharing positive memories of their father, which was discussed above as a potential protective factor. Additionally, in the current study, participants described being able to empathize with their fathers, which the principal investigator interpreted as contributing to the participants preservation of their father’s image. Empathy refers to an individual’s ability to understand or see someone else’s experience in the way that they do. According to Dallaire and Zeman (2013), empathy can serve as a protective factor for children with incarcerated parents. They hypothesized that empathy exhibited in a child with an incarcerated parent could serve as a mediator to behavioral problems. No research currently exists which examines how a child’s ability to empathize with their incarcerated parent might contribute to how individuals interpret their parents incarceration or how it affects the relationship between the incarcerated parent and the child.

Another identified subtheme in the results related to the broken family unit was the parentified child. This phenomenon is common in the context of a sudden loss of a parent. The
parentified child refers to a child who fulfills a parent’s role in the family (Boszomenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973). The literature notes that there are two types of parentification. The first is emotional parentification and it occurs when a child provides emotional support to family members and the second is instrumental parentification and this occurs when a child assumes family tasks that are usually completed by adults (Black & Sleigh, 2013). Some participants reported increased responsibility in the household which occurred subsequent to their father’s incarceration. Anna and Maria spoke specifically about assuming more supportive roles to their mother after their father’s incarceration. This theme has also been explored in literature regarding the experience of children of divorce, particularly older children who take on a parental-type role. According to Codd (2008) the parentification of a child in the context of incarceration, specifically paternal, often occurs in the context of the mother’s needing to cope with additional day to day responsibilities including adjusting to life without a partner. In this context, the additional care which the child could benefit from is not only not provided; they are often faced with increased responsibilities. The parentification of the child can contribute to positive effects, including resiliency and positive adjustment, and negative effects including mood and personality disorders (Black & Sleigh, 2013).

The superordinate theme the stain of incarceration refers to the mark, or the effects, that participants reported experiencing due to their fathers’ incarceration. The subthemes identified in this section include financial strain, economic and behavioral reactions, and striving for success. Previously mentioned research has described children experiencing emotional, behavioral, and psychological problems including anxiety, depression, hypervigilance, shame/guilty, anger/aggression, increased hostility, economic disadvantage, academic and behavioral problems and, stigma (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Arditti, 2003; Arditti, 2005; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993;
Braman, 2004; Dressler, 1992; Geller, Garfinkel, & Western, 2009; Johnston, 1995; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2001; Williams, 2007) as a result of having an incarcerated parent. According to Hagan and Dinovitzer (1999), if the incarcerated parent contributed positively to the family unit prior to their incarceration this could result in strains which can vastly effect children.

A subtheme identified within this superordinate theme was related to the financial strain which participant families experienced a result of the father’s incarceration. According to Glaze and Maruschak (2010), over half of incarcerated fathers reported that they were the primary source of financial support for their children prior to their incarceration. Geller, Garfinkel, and Western (2009) noted the economic disadvantage which families face who are experiencing paternal incarceration in their study which examined data collected through the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study. The results discussed by Geller, Garfinkel, and Western (2009) highlight some of the experiences that the participants of the current study referenced when speaking about the changes which occurred in their lives, including but not limited to relocation, due to the financial strain their family experienced subsequent to their fathers incarceration.

Participants in the current study discussed the emotions which they exhibited and reflected on behavioral changes which they noticed in themselves subsequent to their father’s incarceration. According to King (1993) some of the emotional and psychological distress which is experienced by family members, particularly children of incarcerated parents, could also be related to the social stigma related to having an incarcerated parent. The qualitative data presented in the current study regarding emotional and behavioral reactions of children of incarceration, specifically paternal incarceration, is consistent with previously mentioned literature including, but not limited to Wilbur and colleagues (2007) and Ivy (2011). The results of the study conducted by Wilbur and colleagues noted that daughters of paternal incarceration
exhibited negative internalizing behaviors subsequent to their father’s incarceration, such as depression and other mood related outcomes. Additionally, results of the study conducted by Ivy (2011) indicated that all interviewed participants reported experiencing behavioral difficulties during adolescence; including academic related difficulties, alcohol and drug use, increased aggression, truancy, teen parent, and gang affiliation.

Some participants expressed concern about being judged or treated different as a result of their father’s mistakes, specifically his incarceration. These concerns imply participant concerns related to the stigma of incarceration. When stigmatization occurs, individuals within the stigmatized group may feel rejected or judged (Benson, Alarid, Burton, & Cullen, 2011). These individuals are often seen as “less than.” While family members of the incarcerated are not directly the holders of the stigmatized identity, it can possibly be assumed that as a result of the existing stigma related to incarceration, this may limit a family member’s interaction with others regarding the difficulties they are experiencing with ambiguous loss thus resulting in their feeling isolated. It seemed in the current study, while participants acknowledged the negative association related to their father’s incarceration, they actively sought out ways to succeed or to exhibit that they were not going to be damaged or plagued by their father’s incarceration.

According to Shih (2004), minimal research has been conducted regarding how holding a stigmatized identity can lead to empowerment which can contribute to the individual overcoming the stigma. Shih (2004) discusses the ability of the stigmatized individual to compensate for the stigmatized identity by fostering the development of skills, including social interaction skills and assertiveness, which will aid in their achieving goals. Additionally, Shih (2004) noted that many stigmatized individuals report that they acquire additional strength and learn from choosing to confront the difficulties which they experience as a result of the stigma they experience. Perhaps
this is theory accounts for the drive reported by some of the participants subsequent to their father’s incarceration, in wanting to ensure that they were not treated differently for having an incarcerated father.

Participants also addressed factors which they reported as helping with their adjustment to having an incarcerated father and their identification of variables which made it difficult at times. Participants mentioned receiving some additional support from the community and from family members subsequent to their father’s incarceration. Nesmith and Ruhland (2008) conducted a study which highlighted the protective factors which could reduce the effect of parental incarceration on adolescents. Some of the results of their study revealed that having a strong support system could alleviate some of the burden of parental incarceration. Additionally, Arditti (2005), identifies protective factors which could contribute to a child’s resilience related to having an incarcerated parent. Examples include economic and personal and community resources. Some of the participants in the current study spoke about the help which they received from extended family as well as community support including that received from faith-based organizations.

Participants also spoke about their role of their mother in the context of their father’s incarceration. As mentioned previously in the review of the literature, regarding mother-led single parent households, the results presented by Brody and colleagues (2002) indicated that the child outcomes, including adjustment were related to the mother’s processes and level of functioning despite the father’s absence.

Some participants described their mother’s role positively in the context of their father’s incarceration; some described their mothers as resilient and also as an inspiration and motivation
to them. According to Bowlby’s theory of attachment, if a child loses a primary attachment figure, the distress can be buffered if a secure attachment is developed or maintained with another loved one (Branch and Brinson, 2007). Perhaps this also provides clarity regarding the participant Rachel. She spoke about losing both primary attachment figures and ending up in the foster care system. She continues to report distress related to her life experiences; distress which researchers believe could have been buffered or alleviated with the presence of another strong attachment.

Additionally, some participants spoke about their mothers not bringing them to visit their fathers or accepting their father’s phone calls. It should be noted that this might not be intentional on the part of the mother as previous research indicates visitation and communication to incarcerated parents in general contributes to increased financial strain (Geller, Garfinkel, & Western, 2009). Geller, Garfinkel, & Western (2009) note the benefits of making visitation more accessible to families. This can be done by reducing the costs associated with visitation and communication.

Participants spoke about their willingness to discuss their father’s incarceration with others. The decision to disclose or not, was rooted in the messages, or lack of messages, which they had received about their father’s incarceration from their family. Participants spoke to the lack of information which they were initially provided about their father’s incarceration and sometimes his whereabouts. According to Dawson and colleagues (2013), “telling ‘the truth’ opens doors for further questions about prisons and creates a space to explore children’s wishes regarding parental contact and helps them deal with stigma.” Some participants also spoke about the healing power of eventually speaking about their experiences. If we consider the incarceration of a parent as a trauma, similar to Makariev & Shaver (2009), then speaking about
the trauma often results in the individual experiencing relief. This fact contributes to the
disability of supportive services, specifically mental health services being available to these
individuals. All participants reacted positively to their disclosure in response to their engagement
in the interview process.

Participants in the current study spoke about growing up quickly, or becoming
independent, and even as adults tending to rely on themselves to get their needs met. One
participant made specific reference to feeling like she was the only one out for her best interest.
Participants spoke about the difficulties they currently have as they engage in relationships, both
friendships and intimate relationships. This identified theme called inability to trust/fear of
abandonment is one which is prevalent in the literature related to how divorce impacts children.

Much of the divorce literature refers to Bowlby’s attachment theory in this context.
Contemporary attachment theory implies that early attachments in a child’s life will likely
manifest in to their adulthood (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Children with insecure attachment tend
to have lower levels of confidence, difficulties with problem solving, and may exhibit difficulties
relating to trusting others. Participants in the current study spoke to concerns of not being able to
depend on another person, when a person in their life whom they should be able to depend on
was not available to them. This insecure attachment to the father likely contributed to insecure
attachments in their adult life. This seems to be particularly salient for participants in their dating
relationships. As noted previously the insecure attachment to the father may be less meaningful
if the participant developed secure attachments subsequent to the father’s incarceration.

None of the participants in the current study intentionally sought out or received support
from any community based organizations regarding the incarceration of their father. As the
nuances of the experiences of children of the incarcerated has increased and continued to be
explored through research additional agencies have emerged with the specific task of providing support to this population. As the number of incarcerated individuals has increased, the number of organizations providing specialized services has increased. Organizations like the Girl Scouts and Sesame Street have contributed to starting a dialogue and creating an environment which decreases some of the stigma which children of the incarcerated might experience. For example, the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program, which began in 1992, while not a specific resource for participants of the current study, provides girls age 5 to 17 with resources to succeed despite having a mother who is currently incarcerated (GSA, 2015). Additionally, Sesame Street has aired programming and provides printed material regarding children and incarceration for children, caregivers and providers (Sesame Street, 2015).

Participants were also able to speak to the services which they believe would have been helpful to them and that they feel like could be helpful for children currently experiencing the incarceration of a parent. Some participants spoke about the importance of acquiring the proper language to speak about their father’s incarceration. They implied that at an early age, they didn’t even have the words to express what they were feeling regarding their experience and that with age and with exposure to these conversations they have become more comfortable with the dialogue. Providing them with words they can use is validating and helps them feel understood. Additional concerns which the participants reported having wanted assistance with, including information regarding visitation, safe spaces to speak with others impacted by incarceration, and financial supports are currently being provided to these populations. One problem might continue to be access and insuring that all families of the incarcerated are informed of the resources which might be available to them in their immediate areas and to make these resources more accessible. According to the National Resource Center on Children & Families of the
Incarcerated (2009), the lack of external resources likely contributes further to the burden and shame often associated with parental incarceration.

**Conclusions**

The current study sought to add to the existing literature on the experience of children who experienced paternal incarceration. While each participant experienced paternal incarceration, the nuances of their personal experience contributed to the impact of paternal incarceration. The results of the current study revealed first-hand accounts of how these individuals believe they have been impacted by their father’s incarceration. It seems that the degree to which paternal incarceration affected participant well-being depended heavily upon the presence or absence of other protective factors in her life. Furthermore the impact of the incarceration could also be compounded by other experiences in the participant’s life at that time including, but not limited to, domestic violence and foster care. These other experiences make it difficult to make specific statements regarding the overall impact of the incarceration. What makes this study particular powerful is that despite our ability to make these clear statements as researchers, the data from the current study is based on how the participant perceived the impact of their father’s incarceration.

While other variables could have confounded the impact of paternal incarceration, participants also identified buffers which likely affected the negative outcome which could be felt by incarceration including the role their mother assumed and extended family and community support. Participants also spoke to the positive effect of acquiring knowledge related to their father’s incarceration and how learning the language to communicate about this experience is particularly helpful as adults. Results of the current study also speak to role that
they perceive race to have had in their fathers incarceration. While participants did not identify race as a factor when they were children, as adults they expressed awareness in to how this likely contributed to their father’s incarceration. It seemed that this knowledge served as a new buffer to how they perceive their fathers incarceration and the role which he played in it. While they do attribute some blame to their father, the attribution of systematic issues playing a part seemed to help participants empathize with their fathers arrest and incarceration.

It should also be noted that many similarities exist between the experience of children of incarcerated parents and children of divorced parents. Both populations exhibit outcomes which can be connected to attachment theory and ambiguous loss theory.

**Implications**

**Practice**

If we consider the incarceration of a parent as a true type of loss, then we should provide the same considerations to children of incarcerated parents. They should be permitted to cope and process the loss and as with grieving a loss, they should be allowed to grieve in the way which is most effective for them as an individual. As mental health professionals, it is necessary to tailor interventions and treatments to the individual’s specific needs rather than to attempt to implement a general treatment to all children who experience paternal incarceration. Clients should be provided with a safe space to examine the experience of incarceration in their own time and on their own terms. It is also important for mental health professionals to gain a general understanding of the criminal justice system and the amount of individuals who are actually impacted by incarceration, not solely those directly impacted, but also those who have experienced the collateral consequence of incarceration. The stigma of incarceration makes it a
topic which people often tip-toe around, if we engage in this tendency as mental health professionals we likely reduce the likelihood that our clients will share this experience with us. Being aware of a client’s experience of having a loved one incarcerated can provide important information for professionals regarding how and why our clients interact the way they do in the world. For example, all participants in the current study spoke about difficulties which they have experienced in maintaining dating relationships and spoke to fears of abandonment. It would be crucial information for the mental health professional to know that a factor in this schema is related to the fact that one of their primary caregivers was removed from them abruptly and it was an experience that they were never able to process.

Research

While many studies have been conducted regarding parental incarceration, research should continue to be done which allows for the direct assessment, rather than primarily observational studies, of the child and their having the opportunity to share about what the experience was like for them. As indicated in the current study, despite all participants experiencing paternal incarceration, other variables existed which could have had an effect on the individuals childhood experience, and ultimately long term effects, including foster care, witnessing domestic violence, mental health difficulties, and parental substance use. For more clarity regarding the effect of paternal incarceration, additional research should be conducted that allows more participants to speak to their experience. Given the demographic specifics of the current study, it is important to explore how this experience may be similar or vary across gender (of the incarcerated parent and/or child), racial groups, the age of the child when paternal incarceration occurred, and the type of offense committed by the father.
Policy

Policy regarding the incarceration of parents has been influenced by scholarly research. For example, this is reflected in recommendations for New York State to acquire child sensitive arrest policies and procedures. The law, which was initially proposed in 2013, was initiated based on the reported traumatic experience shared by children who had witnessed the arrest of their parent. The law mandates that law enforcement follow a written protocol and receive training on how to reduce the trauma that a child could experience if they are present when their parent is arrested (Krupat, Gaynes, & Lincroft, 2011). Perhaps the current research also has implications for the sentencing currently imposed upon individuals. Mandatory minimums are often placed upon individuals charged with drug related offenses; however there is no consideration of the broader impact of these sentences. As previous literature has noted, the incarcerated individual is not the only one serving time, their families serve time with them. Participant responses in the current study regarding their experience of disclosure and what they believe would be helpful lends implications for how spaces for these conversations can be introduced in safe environments for children who are currently experiencing paternal incarceration. Given the strain experienced by families of the incarcerated it is ambitious to think that these families can actively seek external support services to address the impact of the incarceration. As recommended by participants they believe there is benefit to having a safe space to speak about the experience and a space where they are given the language to discuss their experience. It would be beneficial if these spaces were created in schools, environments in which the child is already comfortable that foster these conversations that are difficult for adults to discuss, let alone children.
Limitations

A limitation of the current study was related to the retrospective recall of the participant experience. While it was unique to have participants examine their experience retrospectively, of having their father incarcerated during middle childhood, it is possible that this might have been far removed for some of the participants thus making it difficult to clearly recall how they were impacted subsequent to their fathers incarceration. Another limitation of the current study is that the results are not generalizable. The main purpose of qualitative inquiry is not to generalize findings to all populations (Morrow et al., 2001). Additionally, IPA is not meant to be replicated and tends to look different for each study as what is necessary for one study may not be necessary for another. This fact makes it difficult to assess the validity of the current study as well as all which utilize IPA. Qualitative inquiry is sensitive to researcher bias. While the researcher identified her stance and contributing factors regarding the current study, it is impossible to completely isolate the effect researcher bias.

Researcher Reflection on Study

I am humbled by the opportunity to complete a study which allowed me to intimately connect with various women who were willing to share personal aspects of their life with me. I regularly had to process my feelings and reactions to each conducted interview. While I had an experience with the incarceration of my sibling, I was struck by some of the similarities, as well as differences. I remember the confusion and the changes which occurred in my household as a result of my brother’s incarceration. As participants spoke, I found myself also thinking about my experiences visiting my brother, new roles which I assumed in my household, and my hesitation to ever broach the conversations with my mother about my brother’s incarceration. I
was initially surprised at the relief reported by participants about their father’s incarceration. This response opened my eyes to the nuances of incarceration and the response to it which is not often evidenced clearly in the literature. Despite the range of experiences and reactions to incarceration, there is an effect, a lasting effect, whether it is negative or positive, an individual’s life changes and is altered by the incarceration of a family member. I think about my experience and while my brother’s incarceration changed my family forever, I realize that I would not be at this place in my life, wanting to speak to the experience of incarceration, had I not lived it.
References


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Appendix I

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Karima Clayton and I am currently a 5th year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology. I am currently recruiting participants for my dissertation project which is focused on understanding the experience of children of incarcerated parents. I am particularly interested in children, who are now adults (at least 18) whom have had this experience who can speak about how it has impacted them. I will specifically be interviewing daughters of fathers who have been incarcerated as a result of a drug-related offense. Additionally, my study will focus on the experience of daughters who identify as Black or African American. I am focusing on this specific population since the current statistics indicate that while African Americans make up nearly 13 percent of the population in the United States, they make up nearly half of the population that is currently incarcerated.

While research has been conducted about the effect of incarceration of parents on children, it is rare that the experience is expressed from the child who has experienced it directly. I am hoping to help fill this gap in the research with my dissertation study.

I am happy to discuss further details if necessary about my dissertation project. Thank you in advance for any assistance you can provide in the recruitment of participants. Attached you will find my flier for recruitment which outlines the criteria for research participants.

I can be contacted by email at kcresearch2013@gmail.com or 347-504-0270.

Regards,

Karima Clayton, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
Teachers College, Columbia University
Appendix II

Are you a female who is at least 18 years of age?

Do you Identify as Black or African-American?

Do you have a father who is currently incarcerated for a drug-related offense?

Has your father been incarcerated since you were a child (under the age of 18)?

Did you live with your father prior to his incarceration?

If you answered YES to all the questions above, then you are eligible to participate in a research study which is exploring the experience of children of incarcerated fathers and the impact of their father’s incarceration.

You will receive a $20 gift card for participating in the study.

Interviews will last between 60 and 90 minutes

If you are interested in participating, or you would like additional information about this research please contact the principal investigator at kcresearch2013@gmail.com or (347) 504-0270.
Are you a **female** who is *at least* 18 years of age?

Do you Identify as Black or African-American?

Do you have a **father** who was/is currently incarcerated for a drug-related offense?

Has your father been incarcerated since you were a **child** (under the age of 18)?

Did you **live** with your father prior to his incarceration?

If you answered **YES** to all the questions above, then you are eligible to participate in a research study which is exploring the experience of children of incarcerated fathers and the impact of their father’s incarceration.

You will receive a **$20 cash** for participating in the study.

*Interviews will last between 60 and 90 minutes*

If you are interested in participating, or you would like additional information about this research please contact

**kcresearch2013@gmail.com** or (347) 504-0270.
INFORMED CONSENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study about the experience of adult children of incarcerated fathers. You will be asked to answer questions about your experience and the perceived impact, behaviorally, psychologically, and emotionally, if at all. The interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be coded using pseudonyms and stored separate from any identifying information so that your confidentiality can be maintained.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to your participating in this study. There are risks associated with your participation in the study. Some participants may feel discomfort in sharing personal experiences related to having an incarcerated father. If you experience any discomfort while responding to any of the questions please feel free not to answer the questions or to discontinue your participation at any time. Upon completion of the study, you will be provided with information for various organizations that provide support and resources to family members of the incarcerated.

The principal investigator may not be able to keep confidential any disclosure or endorsement of thoughts to harm yourself. In the event that you tell the research staff that you are thinking about harming yourself the principal investigator will ask you more questions about these thoughts. Depending on the severity of your thoughts you may be provided with referrals for treatment; be encouraged to contact your personal physician, trusted family member, or therapist to discuss your thoughts of harming yourself; or create a plan with the principal investigator which may include getting you to a hospital for safety. Additionally, in the case that ongoing abuse is reported, the principal investigator is required to contact law enforcement.

Additionally, you may be contacted in the future regarding a follow-up interview. You will only be contacted if clarification is needed regarding your response to the initial interview questions. Participation in the follow-up interview is voluntarily. If any questions or concern should arise for you after completion of the study, feel free to contact the principal investigator.

PAYMENTS: You will receive a $20 visa gift card upon completion of study participation as payment for participation. At the time you will be asked to sign a receipt with a created pseudonym confirming payment was received. The receipt will be kept separate from collected data.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: You will not be asked to provide your name or any contact information during the interview. All identifying information that you provide will be kept private and confidential. Each completed interview and transcript will be coded with a pseudonym to further ensure confidentiality. The data will be stored on a password protected computer. The password will only be known to the principal investigator. When analysis of the data is complete, the data will be stored in a locked file cabinet and the data will
be destroyed after 5 years. During the reporting of the data, the created pseudonym will be utilized for each participant so that your name is not included in reporting or publication.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. In the case that clarification regarding one of your responses is needed, you may be contacted for a follow-up interview. The follow-up interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Your participation in a follow-up interview is voluntary and you will not be penalized if you choose not to participate.

**HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED:** The results of the study will be used for the principal investigator’s dissertation study which is focused on describing the experience of daughters with incarcerated fathers. The report may later be submitted for presentation at a conference or for publication in an academic journal.
PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Karima Clayton, M.S. ________________________________

Research Title: The Experience of Having an Incarcerated Father

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. You can contact the principal investigator at (347) 504-0270 or kcresearch2013@gmail.com.
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant’s Rights document.
- If video and/or audio taping is part of this research, I ( ) consent to be audio/video taped. I ( ) do NOT consent to being video/audio taped. The written, video and/or audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team.
- My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: ________________________________ Date:____/____/____
Appendix V

Personal Data Sheet

Please select or fill in the response that best fits for you:

1) Age? __________

2) Race? __________

3) Ethnicity? ____________________

4) Current relationship status?
   a. Single
   b. Married
   c. Separated
   d. Divorced
   e. Divorced and Remarried/or in a new relationship
   f. Living with Significant other

5) Do you have children? __________________
   a. If yes, how many? __________________________
   b. If yes, What are there genders and ages? __________________________

6) What is your religious affiliation? __________________________

7) What is the highest degree you have completed?
   a. High School
   b. Associates Degree
   c. Bachelor’s Degree
   d. Master’s Degree
   e. Doctoral Degree
   f. Trade/Technical School
   g. Other Professional Degree (i.e. Law, Medical)
   h. Other __________________________

8) Are you currently employed?
   a. If yes, what is your job title? __________________________
b. How long have you been in this position? __________________________
c. Longest period of employment? _________________________________
b. If no, how long have you been out of work? ______________________

9) What is the highest level of education completed by your mother? __________________________
   a. High School
   b. Associates Degree
   c. Bachelor’s Degree
   d. Master’s Degree
   e. Doctoral Degree
   f. Trade/Technical School
   g. Other Professional Degree (i.e. Law, Medical)
   h. Other __________________________

10) What is the highest level of education completed by your father? _________________________
    a. High School
    b. Associates Degree
    c. Bachelor’s Degree
    d. Master’s Degree
    e. Doctoral Degree
    f. Trade/Technical School
    g. Other Professional Degree (i.e. Law, Medical)
    h. Other __________________________

11) Is your mother currently employed? ______________
    a. If yes, what is her current occupation? _______________________

12) Was your father employed prior to his incarceration? _________________________
    a. If yes, what type of job did he have? __________________________

13) Do you have any siblings? __________________________
    a. If yes, how many and how old are they? _______________________

13) Have you ever been arrested? __________________________

14) Have you ever served time in jail or prison? _______________________
    a. If yes, how many times?
b. If yes, what were your charged with?____________________________
c. How old were you?
d. How much time did you serve?________________________________

17) Do you have other family members who have been incarcerated?____________________
a. If yes, how many family members?
   b. If yes, what is there relationship to you?________________________________

16) How old were you when your father was incarcerated?____________________

_Please answer the following about your father whom is incarcerated_: 

1) What is your father’s age?________

2) What is your father’s race?_______________

3) What is your father’s ethnicity?________________

4) Do you know the type of crime was your father charged with? ________________
   a. If yes, what were the charges?____________________________

5) Where is your father incarcerated? ____________________________

6) How long is your father’s sentence? ________________

7) How long has your father been incarcerated?_______________

8) Is this your father’s first time being incarcerated?_________________
Appendix VI

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1) Tell me about the incarceration of your father? (What have you been told about your father’s incarceration?)

2) How has your father’s incarceration impacted/affected you?
   a. Has the impact changed over time?

3) What changes have occurred/have you experienced since your father has been incarcerated?
   a. Did you notice any changes in your behavior? (i.e. behaviorally; academically)
   b. Did your living situation change?
      i. If yes, how did your living situation change?
      ii. How did/do you feel about these changes?

4) What are your feelings related to your father’s incarceration?
   a. Have your feelings changed over time?
   b. Did these feelings negatively affect you?
      i. If so, how did they negatively affect you?

5) Tell me about your relationship with your father before his incarceration?

6) Tell me about your relationship with your father now? Or since his incarceration?
   a. Do you communicate with your father? How do you communicate and how often (i.e. phone; letters)? When was the last time you communicated with your father?
   b. Do you visit your father?
      i. What is it like for you when you visit your father?

7) Do you speak to others about your father’s incarceration (i.e. friends/family/coworkers)?
   a. If yes, who do you speak to?
      i. How have people responded when they find out your father is incarcerated?
   b. If no, what are your reasons for not telling others about your father’s incarceration?
c. Have you ever been treated negatively because your father is incarcerated?

8) What do you think are the reasons for your father’s incarceration?
   a. Do you think your father was treated fairly during his arrest, sentencing, incarceration?
      i. If no, please tell me about how he was treated unfairly.
      ii. If no, do you think he was treated negatively because of his race?

9) Tell me about the support agency/organization that you have connected with related to having an incarcerated parent?
   a. Why did you decide to connect with this agency/organization?
   b. How engaged are you with the agency/organization?
   c. Have you sought out any other groups and/or agencies as a result of your father’s incarceration?
   d. What do you think would be helpful for families impacted by incarceration?

10) Tell me about your overall childhood?
    a. What parts of your childhood did you enjoy? (i.e. memories you have of your time with your father)
    b. Did your father’s incarceration make your childhood more difficult? Were there other experiences that made your childhood difficult?

11) Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding your father’s incarceration and how it affected you?
Appendix VII

**Thank You for Your Participation!**

We realize that completing this study may bring up thoughts or feelings that some individuals may want to discuss in more depth. If you would like to speak to someone who may provide further support, we have listed the following resources:

- Teachers College, Columbia University
  - The Dean-Hope Center for Educational and Psychological Services
  - (212) 678-3262
- Office of Mental Health - New York
  - Crisis Hotline - 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Information Helpline/Referral Service
  - 1 (800) 950-NAMI (6264)
  - [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
  - [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org)

In addition, many organizations exist which provide resources and support to family members who have experienced having an incarcerated family member. Below you will find a listing of these organizations and their websites:

- Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM)
  - [www.famm.org](http://www.famm.org)
- The Osborne Association
  - [www.osborneny.org](http://www.osborneny.org)
  - 1-800-344-3314
- The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Family and Corrections Network
  - [http://fcnetwork.org/](http://fcnetwork.org/)
  - 215-576-1110

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the preliminary results of the study, please write to me at the address listed below. Your request to receive a copy of the results will in no way be connected to your responses on the survey:

Karima Clayton, M.S.
Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, Teachers College, Columbia University
525 120th St. Box 102 New York, New York 10027-6696
Appendix VIII

Transcript Outline
Participant 001

1) Tell me a little bit about your father's incarceration, maybe what you know about it, what you’ve heard about it and then we’ll go from there.
   a. Father’s Incarceration a mystery, not sure what happened or what was going on
   b. Financial Changes – mom was now a single mother
   c. Visited Father – limits on what we can do when we visit; not a lot of touching
   d. Father’s relocation – was close to us initially then moved to a facility far away

2) …It seems like you had lots of questions during this time, were there ever questions that you actually asked your mom, or asked other people, wondering why did your dad just disappeared?
   a. Didn’t ask many questions – some things you just know not to ask about
   b. When asked questions often not told the truth
   c. Tried to just observe what was going on

3) …I'm just wondering about your childhood overall and more specifically about what it was like before your dad was incarcerated, and then the time after, and then even maybe when he came back?
   a. Broken family unit after dad left
   b. Reminiscing on positive memories with father
   c. Two incomes down to one income; fathers bank accounts were frozen
   d. Not close to extended family; no emotional/financial/social support from family
   e. Moved to a new apartment because of financial strain
   f. Mom was never stressed; figured things out
g. Moved to a different state because NYC became too expensive with one income

4) Just you and your mom?
   a. Parents did not get back together after father’s release from prison
   b. No financial support from father
   c. Mom stable financially
   d. Hard not having father around during childhood and teenage years
   e. Questioned father’s love and care
   f. Questioned father’s choices – “Why would dad do drug dealing?”
   g. Being part of a statistic
   h. Positive outcome – pursuing higher education
   i. Hard emotionally – fear of abandonment in relationships
   j. Figured things out/worked through things as an adult

5) What do you think helped you get there?
   a. Mom is incredible; strong support from mom
   b. Support from “family” not blood related – including financial support
   c. Faith helped me progress and move along
   d. Currently a mentor for girls who have incarcerated fathers
   e. Seeing positive in the incarceration – would have been a spoiled brat without this experience
   f. Situation gave me strength/courage; it was painful, but more optimistic person

6) Just even hearing you talk about it, it just sounds like you do have so much strength around the situation. Like you were saying you were able to find a way to move forward and make progress despite the difficulties you experienced.
   a. Currently social work student
   b. Systematic things happening…black men aren’t given the opportunity to thrive in society
c. Mentions War on Drugs and related inequalities

d. Families struggle when the man is taken out of the home

e. Statistics show there is no difference in drug use amongst communities

7) Even in just hearing you mention the war on drugs, or even talking about a lot of the disproportionate issues related to incarceration and drugs. I'm wondering when you think about your father's incarceration do you attribute those as some of the reasons? What do you think led to this happening?

   a. We live in a racist culture; War on black people
   
   b. No positive images about black men
   
   c. Structural racism

8) …When you think about when you father was treated, or his arrests, sentencing, incarceration, do you feel like it was fair?

   a. Not fair treatment
   
   b. Strip father of his identity while in prison; orange jumpsuit
   
   c. Observed only people of color when visiting father
   
   d. Families not considered when people are sentenced; I did time too
   
   e. What he did was wrong, but give some leeway when you see all the things that lead up to it
   
   f. If my father was White his consequence would have been less

9) …When you think about how your father's incarceration has impacted you or affected you, I guess do you feel like it's changed over time, or has it been consistently impact, and identify what impact you think it is as well?

   a. Influenced me being in school for social work
   
   b. His incarceration raised so many questions for me about the system and society and how we operate and why
   
   c. I want to move other people to think and become more aware
   
   d. Desire to raise my consciousness
   
   e. Want to stand up for my rights and protect the rights of others

10) When did you start thinking about those things?
a. Junior and Senior year in college started to reflect on my experience and how it impacted me

b. Current events/public cases about mistreatment of blacks (Trayvon Martin)

11) …more specifically or similarly when you think about the things you experienced as a result of your father's incarceration, or how do you think about things differently. I guess I also wonder about things you noticed in yourself, or any changes in terms of if there are behavioral changes you thought looking back that you noticed happening. Any emotional changes, any academic changes that happened or you experienced as a result of your father being incarcerated, if you noticed anything different like that in those five years, or even after that?

  a. Impacted my relationships (friendships and dating); dad left me with the feeling of pain, hurt, abandonment
  b. One of the most important people in my life was taken away in a moment
  c. Feared losing mom growing up; protective of her
  d. Daddy issues in romantic relationships; questioned their loving me when I can’t even get love from my own dad
  e. When father was released thought everything would go back to normal; surprised me when it didn’t
  f. Leave relationships before I get left
  g. Independent
  h. Always concerned about finances and financial security

12) Do you think people realize or notice that some of these things are difficult for you? You talked about feeling abandonment and fears around if something happened to your mom. Do you feel like people could tell that you were impacted?

  a. Only people who know me know how I have been impacted or can tell a difference
  b. Increased Drive; Motivated to succeed
  c. People assume came from a strong 2-parent household and are surprised if I choose to tell them the truth
  d. Had to grow up fast; mature
  e. Still had a good childhood overall because of my mom
13) I wonder is it something that you have spoken about and how do you decide if you can speak about it?

   a. Speaking about it is part of the healing process
   b. Silence about it is not helping myself or others
   c. I should be able to tell my story
   d. Share my experience with people I am dating; let them know I am a runner
   e. Don’t want to continue with behaviors destructive to my personal well-being; silence perpetuates the hurt
   f. Easier to speak about as I continue to develop the language for my experience

14) When would you say you got to that point where you felt like you were ready to talk about it, or found the language to express what you're experiencing?

   a. Graduate program has opened up these conversations; initially I was uncomfortable now it’s great
   b. It’s an ongoing growing process
   c. May never have it all figured out but at a point where I am comfortable moving forward and have the conversation

15) …How do you feel people have responded to you sharing your experience about having a father incarcerated?

   a. People appreciate me talking about it because it’s not a conversation that happens often
   b. It removes the stigma a bit when I talk about it
   c. Could have been a teenage mom or fit the statistic; just because negative experience happened doesn’t mean it’s going to negatively shift the course of life

16) Before you got to this point, do you feel like you were experiencing any stigma, or that you felt like you couldn't talk about it at times?

   a. Just didn’t have the language to talk about it; didn’t know what to say.
17) … I know you said you had a lot of family close by when your father was incarcerated, before you guys moved. I'm wondering is it something they would talk to you about, or check in with you about?
   a. No one talks about stuff like that
   b. Normalized within our culture

18) Do you ever feel like anyone ever treated you negatively because you had a father who was incarcerated?
   a. Not really; people just assumed my mom was a single mom; most didn’t know my dad was incarcerated

19) I know you talked about the pain associated with being seven and your dad just disappeared one day. I guess do you feel like that feeling ever went away, or changed, or if there were other feelings you were experiencing about your dad being incarcerated?
   a. There will always be pain there
   b. The pain gets smaller the more I talk about it
   c. Just trying to use the pain for positive; working with communities and children who have incarcerated parents
   d. Use pain as source of strength

20) You’ve mentioned a couple times just working with other communities, people who experience something similar than you. Are there agencies or organizations that you’ve reached out to work with?
   a. Did not connect with organizations as a child
   b. Currently working with different organizations/student groups who have the conversation about incarceration

21) What do you think about what would be helpful, or what would have been helpful for you? What do you think that would look like or could have looked like?
   a. A mentor would have been helpful who experienced what I went through
   b. Being around other kids who had the same experience
   c. Support system for moms; new single moms

22) What was your relationship like with your dad, what is it like now, what was it like when he was incarcerated, and after?
   a. When incarcerated – visit/write letters
b. Visits became less often over time—when they moved him out of NYC
c. When came home—it was strange, awkward, weird; he missed so much
d. Parents never got back together
e. He didn’t have a great father figure either
f. Have other siblings; not my mother’s children, dads with other women
g. Relationship developing more now
h. Have to accept him as who he is because I can’t change him
i. Perception of what a father should be in mind but that’s not fair to him
j. Speak to father about his incarceration
k. Empathy for father; he knows he wasn’t the greatest father and that must hurt him in a way

23) When you think about your dad's perspective and what he might be experiencing, how does that impact how you look at the situation, or how you feel towards your dad. Does it?
   a. His incarceration had so much more to do than with just him
   b. Systemic, societal, institutionalized issues
   c. Did not initially think about how the situation hurt him too, not just me.

24) …What was your father like as a parent before his incarceration? You mentioned the time when he tried to do your hair, tried to make breakfast. I guess just generally how did you view him as a parent before he was incarcerated?
   a. He was a cool guy; thought he was loving
   b. Spent a lot of time together
   c. I look like him
   d. Difference between my mom and dad; he was more strict not in a way where I felt afraid of him
   e. He was always present, home every night
   f. If he left for a couple days, I always knew he would come back
25) …I know you mentioned that you and your mom would occasionally visit your dad. I guess I'm wondering what it was like for you on the visits when you would go see him and spend that time with him when you were able to?
   a. Pretty good experiences; glad to be able to hang out with dad
   b. I was shy at times; I didn’t understand the environment we were in and why they checked us and things

26) Okay then you mentioned that he would call sometimes, and he would write letters. Were you also writing letters to him?
   a. I got letters, but did don’t remember writing many; was still developing my writing skills
   b. Didn’t understand why I had to write him a letter and why we just couldn’t call him
   c. Weird to have to write a letter; didn’t know what to say

27) How often do you feel like you communicate with your dad now?
   a. More common than it was before
   b. Dad uses money as a way to make up for time; way to show his love
   c. Financial support is the nature of our relationship

28) …Do you feel there's anything else that you would want to share regarding your father’s incarceration that you haven’t discussed, how it's affected you? Just more generally maybe?
   a. Don’t see my dad as a criminal even though he was incarcerated; will never view him as a criminal
   b. Society wants to label him a bad person
   c. He will always be my dad
   d. Positive reaction to interview; Appreciation for interview experience
Appendix IX

Initial Descriptive Comments by Question/Category
IPA Analysis

1) Incarceration of Father

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Informed/Not given accurate information/Mystery</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed/Told the truth about incarceration</td>
<td>008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed the arrest</td>
<td>001, 004, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told truth about incarceration many years later/when older</td>
<td>002, 007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Impact/Effect of Father’s Incarceration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration has influenced career path</td>
<td>001, 002, 006, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship choices/expectations</td>
<td>002, 003, 004, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships – Inability to trust/Guarded</td>
<td>A, 002, 003, 004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships – Fear of Abandonment</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships – Dating same type of man as father (DV - Physical/Emotional Abuse)</td>
<td>004, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence as Adult</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 002, 004, 005, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Changes as a result of Father’s Incarceration (behavior, academic, living etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased responsibility at home for participant</td>
<td>A, 002, 003, 004, 006, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from Family Members/Other father figures</td>
<td>001, 006, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative behavioral changes</td>
<td>A, B, 003, 004, 005, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Changes/Not noticed by others</td>
<td>001, 002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Difficulties/Burden</td>
<td>001, 003, 004, 006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Behavioral Changes/Pressure to Succeed</td>
<td>B, 001, 002, 004, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relocation</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play the “role” that everything is okay</td>
<td>002, 004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4) Feelings related to father’s incarceration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment</td>
<td>B, 002, 006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normalization – everyone knew someone or had other family members incarcerated</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 002, 003, 006, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>A, 002, 003, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad/upset</td>
<td>001, 003, 004, 006, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry/mad at father</td>
<td>002, 003, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting an apology</td>
<td>A, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused/Surreal Experience</td>
<td>B, 002, 004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy for Dad</td>
<td>B, 001, 004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal</td>
<td>003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) Relationship with father before incarceration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Relationship/Close</td>
<td>A, 001, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoiled by Father (gifts, money)</td>
<td>A, 001, 002, 005, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No close relationship; minimal communication</td>
<td>B, 002, 003, 004, 005, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid of Father</td>
<td>001, 003, 004, 005, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) Current relationship with father/communication/visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visited while incarcerated</td>
<td>A, 001, 002, 006, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No visits</td>
<td>B, 003, 004, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular communication (letters/phone)</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 002, 006, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No current communication with father</td>
<td>B, 002, 004, 005, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More like a friend than a father</td>
<td>002, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame Mother/Mother did not allow communication</td>
<td>003, 004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents did not get back together after incarceration</td>
<td>A, 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 007, 008 (All except B and 006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close relationship now; not as a child</td>
<td>B, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never visited father</td>
<td>003, 005, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t know how to connect/build relationship with father after released</td>
<td>001, 002, 004, 005, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gifts received from father while incarcerated 002, 007
Father currently provides financial support; way to show that he cares 001, 002

7) Speak to others about father’s incarceration/Stigma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being judged/treated negatively by others</td>
<td>003, 004, 006, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t talk about</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 003, 004, 005, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclose to select group of family/friends</td>
<td>001, 002, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will talk about if they want to understand my experience</td>
<td>001, 002, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More comfortable discussing now as an adult</td>
<td>001, 002, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8) Reasons for Incarceration (Fair/Unfair; race)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfair Incarceration</td>
<td>B, 001, 004, 005, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Factors</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 003, 004, 006, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of current events in medias depicting racial injustice</td>
<td>001, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Racism; Systemic issue</td>
<td>A, 001, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War on Drugs/Criminalization of Drugs</td>
<td>A, 001, 002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged racial disparities, but do not think it applies to father</td>
<td>002, 005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9) Agency/organization support/what would have been helpful/what should be provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance/support needed</td>
<td>B, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No help from outside agencies/organizations as a child</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest therapy needed for children impacted to provide emotional support</td>
<td>001, 002, 005, 006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/Church family was supportive</td>
<td>001, 003, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently mentor to youth in their community</td>
<td>001, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met with school counselor</td>
<td>003, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support needed within school system</td>
<td>001, 002, 004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would have helped if I got to visit him</td>
<td>003, 007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10) Overall childhood/other events that impacted childhood/father’s incarceration effect on childhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence – Witnessed Mother’s Abuse</td>
<td>A, 002, 003, 004, 005, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Abuse/Experiencing Physical Abuse</td>
<td>A, 004, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw father use drugs/substances</td>
<td>003, 004, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Childhood</td>
<td>001, 002, 003, 004, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care after father’s incarceration</td>
<td>005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11) Anything else not asked that is important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of a Father (Defined)</td>
<td>001, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for a family unit</td>
<td>B, 001, 004, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling not loved/cared for by father</td>
<td>A, 005, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased self-esteem/self-worth</td>
<td>A, B, 003, 005, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12) Response to interview experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad to talk about, but relieved</td>
<td>003, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation people are avoiding</td>
<td>001, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a conversation had before, happy for the chance to speak about</td>
<td>004, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive experience</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 002, 004, 005, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13) Response to interviewer disclosure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No verbal response</td>
<td>003, 004, 006, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided encouragement/positive feedback to PI</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 002, 005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14) Current Incarceration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Incarcerated</td>
<td>002, 005, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Currently Incarcerated</td>
<td>A, B, 001, 004, 006, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15) Additional themes identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Differentiating Themes</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father made positive changes in life after his release</td>
<td>001, 006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant has mental health diagnosis</td>
<td>B, 005, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought counseling as an adult/Currently in therapy</td>
<td>006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother a strong support/buffered the effects of father’s incarceration</td>
<td>001, 002, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving clarity as adult regarding the experience and how they have been impacted</td>
<td>001, 002, 003, 004, 006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced negative treatment on visits</td>
<td>002, 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant has been arrested/incarcerated</td>
<td>005, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want better for their children</td>
<td>007, 003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>001, 002, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered questions for father/Unprocessed feelings</td>
<td>002, 003, 004, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial System does not realize the familial impact of incarceration</td>
<td>A, 001, 004, 007, 008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-Latino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African (Nigerian)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian-Baptist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Religious</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participants Completed Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>High School/GED</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant Age at Onset of Father’s Incarceration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years old</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years old</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father’s Incarceration Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Incarcerated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Incarcerated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</table>
Table 2

Additional Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Age when father was Incarcerated</th>
<th>Father’s Incarceration Status</th>
<th>Participant Arrest or Incarceration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Incarcerated</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanya</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>No-pregnant with first child</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Domiciled with partner</td>
<td>Yes-7 (2 deceased)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Incarcerated</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Released</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superordinate Themes</td>
<td>Subthemes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Need for Transparency – “I just wanted to know the truth”</strong></td>
<td>Where did he go?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did he love me?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Visitation Process</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Broken Family Unit – The Father’s Absence</strong></td>
<td>Memories of father prior to his incarceration – The good and the bad.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preservation of Father – It’s not all his fault</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parentification of the Child</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Stain of Incarceration – Life was never the Same</strong></td>
<td>Financial Strain</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional and Behavioral Change</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Striving for Success – Not wanting to be judged for father’s mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Buffers and Barriers to Adjustment</strong></td>
<td>Additional Support System</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother’s Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Becoming Independent – Fear of relying on other people</strong></td>
<td>Inability to trust/Fear of Abandonment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What could be helpful?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>