

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

The Effects of Parenthood among Incarcerated African American Women & Men

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For the degree of Master of Social Work

By

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## Dedication

Thank you to the California State University, Northridge Social Work Department for allowing me to reach my goals and prosper in becoming an effective, future Social Worker. I also want to thank the girl who stayed up countless nights to complete assignments, attended challenging internships, cried a few times for doubtfulness, birth a handsome baby boy and shared vulnerability throughout the past three years. Thank you to myself, you did it Myriah.

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## Abstract

### The Effects of Parenthood among Incarcerated African American Women and Men

By

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Master of Social Work

The purpose of this study is to highlight the significant impact on families when African American parents are incarcerated. What are the effects of parenthood among incarcerated African American parents? Effects including, psychological, emotional, academic, behavioral, and financial are just some of the effects that the parents, their child/children and kin family members endure during and after a parent's incarceration sentence. This paper will discuss the similarities and differences between African American incarcerated motherhood and African American incarcerated fatherhood. The conceptualization in this research will illustrate how motherhood and fatherhood are defined within the African American community and society, as well as what it means to an African American child when their mother or father is confined. The results will illustrate the variety of effects on what African American children and their families encounter when their parent is imprisoned.

Keywords: Incarceration, African American Mothers, Motherhood, African American Fathers, Fatherhood, Children, Mental Health

## **Introduction**

Children whose parents are involved in the criminal justice system, may confront a large group of difficulties including, mental strain, reserved conduct, scholarly hardship, monetary affliction, and crime. It is hard to anticipate how a child will charge when a parent is irregularly or constantly imprisoned (Martin, 2017). Martin explains in his article, that there is a particular concern that a parent's imprisonment will lead to a cycle of intergenerational criminal behavior. Additionally, for children, having an incarcerated parent is associated with developmental, emotional, and behavioral problems (Maxwell & Solomon, 2018). One statistic indicates that children of incarcerated parents are, on average, are six times more likely to become incarcerated than that of their counterparts. Risk factors rarely present themselves across all children and these behaviors are difficult to understand or predict. The purpose of this study is to highlight the effects of parenthood among African American parents as well as analyze the increased risk of incarceration among children whose mother or father have been imprisoned. This literature review research builds on previous work by conceptualizing African American incarceration as a stressful event that may lead to adverse consequences for families.

### **Incarcerated Mothers**

Research found that children of incarcerated mothers had much higher rates of incarceration and even earlier and more frequent arrests than children of incarcerated fathers (Kopak and Smith-Ruiz, 2014). Furthermore, data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth demonstrated that children of incarcerated mothers were nearly three times as likely to be convicted of a crime by the time they reached adulthood compared to children whose mothers were not incarcerated (Huebner & Gustafson, 2007). The number of incarcerated U.S. women overall has increased dramatically in recent decades—from just 26,000 in 1980 to 219,000 in

2017. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, four percent of women in federal prison and three percent of women in state prison are pregnant at the time of incarceration. For these women, negligent correctional procedures can produce high levels of stress and exacerbate pregnancy-related mental health disorders, which are already disproportionately experienced by Black women (Maxwell & Solomon, 2018). This is important to understand because Black women experience high levels of mistreatment during incarceration due to their ethnic and economic background. As mentioned, being incarcerated while pregnant will negatively decrease their health which can too hinder their baby's wellbeing.

### **Incarcerated Fathers**

Fatherhood is also a significant role in a child's life and wellbeing. As known, in the African American community, fatherhood is perceived as inconsistent and/or absent due to one's circumstances. In today's society, African Americans, specifically African American men are the number one target for mass incarceration. One third of black men will spend time in a jail or prison in their lifetime, a rate eight times that of Whites, according to the Department of Justice (Bonczar, 2003). In fact, incarceration is more common for African American men than obtaining a college degree or serving in the military (Pettit & Western, 2004). One of the most pressing issues that incarcerated fathers face is the decline in the quality of their relationship with their children, as the quality of the father-child relationship during paternal incarceration also acts as a strong predictor of children's emotional and social problems (Landreth and Lobaugh, 1998). With many incarcerated fathers reporting a deterioration in closeness with their children while in jail, separation of fathers from children, as a result of imprisonment, is a major issue for many African American families.

Table 1.1

Approximate number of men in jail or prison per 100,000 population by race and ethnicity, 2014

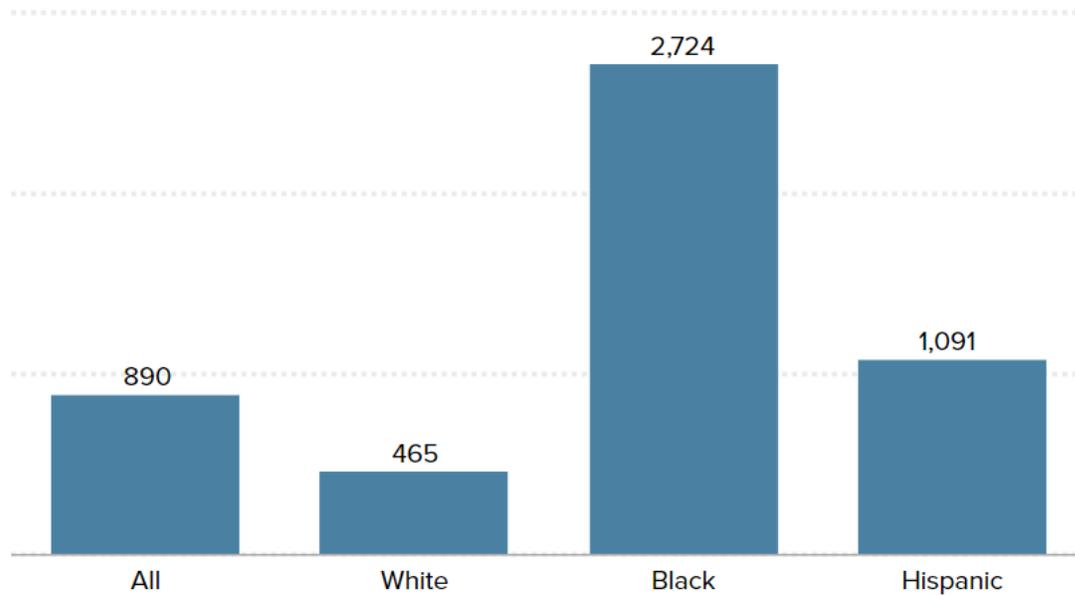


Chart Data

**Note:** The figure includes only prisoners with sentences of 1 year or more and excludes those awaiting trial and those with sentences of less than 1 year.

**Source:** E. Ann Carson, *Prisoners in 2014*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, September 2015, Table 10

Economic Policy Institute

### Demographics among Incarcerated African Americans

Scholars also emphasize that the likelihood that children will have an incarcerated parent is disproportionately connected to the race of the parents (Kopak and Smith-Ruiz, 2014).

Unsurprisingly, the spike in female incarceration has unreasonably affected Black women, especially young Black women (Maxwell & Solomon, 2018). Black women are overrepresented

in the criminal justice system and thus at heightened risk of exposure to these unique stressors.

More than 65,000 women in federal and state custody are mothers of some 147,500 minor

children. These mothers were primary caregivers for their children with about 75% reporting

they had provided most of the daily care for their children before incarceration. Black children

experience the greatest likelihood for family instability associated with the imprisonment of a mother, which is evidenced in the startling reality that they are 9 times more likely than White children to have a parent in prison (Christian, 2009). Furthermore, the vast majority of incarcerated women are mothers mostly to young children. This reality contributes to health disparities for African American incarcerated women. Given the socialization of many African American women, mothering is central to women's identities. Incarcerated mothers must contend with the demands of holding two uncomplimentary roles; mother and prisoner. Prison removes women from the day-to-day tasks of conventional mothering, women with salient mothering identities may experience role strain. Role strain is experienced by stress and perceived difficulty in meeting the demands of doing mothering, an inherent feature of incarceration.

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, and the overwhelming burden of contact with the system has fallen on communities of color, especially African Americans. Structural racism exposes black women to distinct stressors, such as contact with the criminal justice system that ultimately undermine their health and the health of their children (Maxwell & Solomon, 2018). Today, infants born to black mothers die at twice the rate as those born to white mothers. This disparity cannot be fully explained by differences in income, education, or even health care; evidence suggests that cumulative stress from generations of structural racism is driving this epidemic. To combat this persistent problem, lawmakers must attack structural racism in all its forms, including mass incarceration (Maxwell & Solomon, 2018).

## **Conceptualization**

The effects of parenthood and trauma can vary both among the incarcerated parents and their children. The effects are varied among the amount of imprisonment time, the number of children each parent has, the relationship between the mother, father and their child and the parent's overall wellbeing during incarceration.

### **Motherhood among African American Mothers**

Motherhood is a universal life experience that most women around the world are able to experience; however, motherhood is expressed and practiced differently based on one's culture, ethnicity, religion and more. The historical role played by women in African American communities has had the concept of mothering as central to its practice. Motherhood in this setting was different from the norm, which was defined by dependence on men and separation from the community by functioning in the home. Greene states that "the role of mother itself is an important one for many Black women and is accompanied by tasks not required of their white counterparts." African American mothers often equate the role of motherhood as a charge to instill values surrounding the importance of kinship ties, independence and education in their children (Hill 2001; Hill and Sprague 1999). Although, being a mother poses its unique challenges for all women who share this identity, racialized experiences remain. While dominant ideologies of intensive mothering convey the belief that good mothers should invest infinite time, money, and emotional labor in raising their children, motherhood for Black women is complicated by their race, class, and gender positions in society. Black mothers have the added burden of raising their children in a racist society, often alone, with limited financial capital.

## **Incarceration among African American Women**

1 in 19 Black women in the U.S. will spend time in prison while 1 in 45 Hispanic women and 1 in 118 White women will be incarcerated. To make matter worse, shockingly large numbers of the incarcerated Black population are parents (Kopak and Smith-Ruiz, 2014). There are two primary reasons for the explosion in the incarceration of African American mothers in the United States. The predominant reason African American mothers are incarcerated is directly related to the perpetual War on Drugs (Alexander, 2010). This is evidenced by the fact that the largest proportion of African American mothers was incarcerated for drug offenses (Bush-Baskette, 2010). According to the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Drug offenses usually carry along with them mandatory minimum and lengthy sentences. This is the primary reason why incarcerated African American mothers were sentenced, on average, to spend 7.6 (se = .39) years in prison. This is especially important to consider in the context of parenthood given the mean age of mothers' children was 10.2 years. This means mothers were going to be absent for 7.6 years during the most formidable years of their children's lives.

## **Fatherhood among African American Fathers**

Statistics suggest that almost 70% of all births from African American mothers are non-culminating, in the myth that African American fathers are mostly absent. Although African American fathers are less likely to marry the mother of their children than their White and Hispanic counterparts, many African American fathers tend to be parents by cohabitation and visits, offering treatment, financial and in-kind assistance (Herring, 2011). Similar to Black mothers, fatherhood among the Black community is expressed and practiced uniquely. "The thing about being a black father, is that it makes your role as a parent more complex. The parenting part, day-to-day, is the same. But what you're trying to teach your child is much more

layered. You're trying to show them that having a different skin tone or hair might mean they are judged differently. You're adding that to all the other stuff, like 'Eat your greens' and 'Be careful how you cross the road.'" In society, some Black households look like Marvyn's household; where there is a full family and both parents are present. However, in many cases and assumptions, fatherhood is absent in the Black household due to incarceration being the number one placement for African American men. Overall, black men in American society are expected to have certain attitudes regarding the care and well-being of their children (Herring, M. (2011). As fathers, they are expected to behave in a manner prescribed by dominant Western norms. In fact, black noncustodial fathers often are perceived as "bad" fathers because they appear to reject or neglect the very functions of fatherhood set forth by the Western "ideal," such as the role of breadwinner. They are perceived to have no concern for their children's social or economic well-being and they receive primary blame for the increasingly high rates of poverty among black children and the increasing rates of welfare dependency among single black mothers and their children. Yet, black fathers have historically been denied the means and opportunity to successfully and consistently function in the manner prescribed by the Western "ideal" of fatherhood (Landry & Hamer, 2002). This context is significant to know and understand because it illustrates how society perceives black fathers. Additionally, it highlights the contradiction of how the Western society defines what fatherhood should look like for all men. However, many including the African American communities acknowledge how fatherhood is presented differently due to the lack of resources and services that majority of black men encounter. Because of the lack of opportunities that are presented for African American fathers, they face a higher risk of imprisonment which then results in absent fatherhood.

## Methods

The design of this research is to explore the effects of incarcerated African American mothers and fathers. My study will highlight the effects of their psychological, emotional and physical well-being during incarceration as well as their children's well-being based on their absence. To answer the given research question, qualitative methods would be most appropriate to find the effects among the incarcerated African American parents and their children. I searched California State University, Northridge's library OneSearch databases including, ProQuest and EBSCOhost journals. Under EBSCOhost, I searched under "Academic Search Premier" as a criteria for reduction. For both databases, the terms I used while searching were, "African American," "Black," "Incarceration," "Mothers," "Motherhood," and "Children." These terms resulted in 58 results. When searching for articles under the terms "Motherhood and Incarcerated Women," 9 results were presented. Out of the 9, one of the articles emphasized on how incarcerated women in the U.S. are more often from minority populations, younger, and of low socioeconomic status, when compared to non-incarcerated women. It reveals that improved health knowledge and attitudes can empower both women and their families. Search terms, "Motherhood and African American" resulted in a high number of searchers. These two search terms together were not too helpful because it presented different topics of articles that were not related to my research question. As I continued to change my search terms around, my results narrowed down more and more. However, based on the number of useful hits, there was at least one or two articles that were the same that appeared in every search. This specific article examines how *motherhood* is enacted under the circumstances of *incarceration* through the use of qualitative research undertaken in a women's prison. Here are some of the methods that were conducted for the research studies that were used for this literature. For Maxwell, C., &

Solomon, D. (2018) study, to determine familial connectedness to the criminal justice system, the authors utilized two data sources. The first was the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For the analysis, the authors constrained the sample to U.S. residents who answered questions in the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) module between 2011 and 2013; a sample size of 81,280. The authors then used this module to create several models studying the relationship between race, familial incarceration during childhood, and mental health in adulthood. For Joseph Murray, David Farrington, and Ivana Sekol (2012) study, the authors systematically searched for relevant studies until February 2011. They started with an initial set of reports on children with incarcerated parents collected in their previous research on this topic. Additionally, four methods were used to search for additional studies. First, keywords were entered into 23 electronic databases and internet search engines. Secondly, bibliographies of prior reviews were examined as well as edited books on children of incarcerated parents. Moreover, Dallaire, D. H. (2007) study, mentioned that several methodological improvements can be made to improve the overall quality of work with children and families of incarcerated mothers. First, better estimates need to be obtained of the number of children affected by their mother's incarceration, as well as their history of displacement from homes, schools, and siblings. To that end, perhaps pre-existing data could be used to learn more about children with an incarcerated mother. Pre-existing data from sources including children's school records could be analyzed to gather data regarding children's academic performance, attendance and number of school transitions.

### **Article Assessment**

Majority of the articles collected for this study are solely peer-reviewed and were retrieved from California State University, Northridge library database OneSearch, Google

Scholar, and Government Websites. These websites included, National Institute of Justice and U.S. Department of Justice. For this study, author Michelle Alexander’s Nobel book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*, also provided valuable insight for African American incarcerated parents.

*Table 2.1*  
*Results of literature review*

Search Terms	Database	# of initial hits	Criteria for reduction	# of useful hits
“Motherhood” “Incarcerated Women”	ProQuest	9	N/A	2
“Motherhood” “African American”	ProQuest	684	“Incarceration”	1
“Motherhood” “Black”	ProQuest	1161	“Incarceration”	1
“Incarcerated Motherhood”	ProQuest	2	N/A	2
“African American Incarcerated Mothers”	EBSCOhost	6	“Academic Search Premier”	2
“African American Incarcerated Mothers” “Children”	EBSCOhost	4	“Academic Search Premier”	0
“Incarcerated Motherhood” “Children”	ProQuest	2	N/A	2

## **Results**

### **Impact of Incarcerated Mothers vs Fathers on Children**

According to Dallaire (2007), it seems likely that maternal incarceration most profoundly affects children's development negatively (thus setting the stage for children's involvement in the criminal justice system) via disrupted attachment relationships, particularly given the greater chance of nonfamilial care during mothers,' as compared to fathers,' incarceration. Compared to children with incarcerated mothers, children with incarcerated fathers may experience fewer attachment-disrupting separations from their mothers. When fathers go to prison, their children are more likely to remain in the care of their mothers; however, when mothers go to prison, not only are children separated from their mother but they more often transition to the care of a grandparent, or other family member, than to the care of their other parent.

Children and families with a parent imprisoned experience sociodemographic and contextual risk factors, such as single parenthood, sexual abuse, and mental illness, as well as incarceration-related risk factors, such as high rates of incarcerated family members and multiple parental incarcerations. Both sets of risk factors contribute to the accumulation of risk in the lives of their children and families and the likelihood of intergenerational patterns of incarceration. Families with mothers incarcerated may be particularly vulnerable because of the enhanced experience of contextual risk factors (e.g., sexual abuse, mental illness) as well as enhanced incarceration-related risk factors.

The likelihood that children will have an incarcerated parent is disproportionately connected to the race of the parents. More than 65,000 women in federal and state custody are mothers of some 147,500 minor children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). These mothers were primary caregivers for their children with about 75% reporting they had provided most of the

daily care for their children before incarceration (Snyder, Z. K. 2009). Black children experience the greatest likelihood for the family instability associated with the imprisonment of a mother, which is evidenced in the startling reality that they are 9 times more likely than White children to have a parent in prison (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Attachment theory suggests that disruptions and separations in the mother-child relationship increases risks to children and may negatively effect and disrupt the child's ability to form and maintain a secure attachment relationship with the parent or another family member. In times of increasing stress, a secure attachment relationship buffers children from experiencing symptoms of anxiety (Dallaire & Weinraub, 2007). In her research with preschool-age children with incarcerated mothers, Poehlmann (2005) found that the children in her sample were more likely to have insecure attachment representations of their incarcerated mother. Children with insecure, disorganized, and disrupted attachment relationships are at risk for developing a number of negative outcomes including greater psychopathology and substance abuse.

### **Incarceration-Related Risk Factors**

Incarceration-related risk factors would include siblings being separated from each other because of parental incarceration and children being placed in nonfamilial care situations (Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002). Other risk factors which are unique to the experience of parental incarceration and criminal activity include having both parents incarcerated, higher rates of familial incarceration (e.g., grandparents, aunts, and uncles), exposure to regular parental drug use, and the parent having been incarcerated multiple times (Dallaire, 2007). Studies have mentioned that understanding the prevalence of contextual risk factors in addition to incarceration-related risk factors in the lives of children with incarcerated mothers and fathers may help clarify the mechanisms of risk; that is, how and why children with incarcerated parents

are at increased risk for negative outcomes like incarceration. According to Dallaire, D. H. (2007), researchers have identified several risk factors associated with negative outcomes in the population of children with incarcerated mothers, such as the experience of several stressful and traumatic events and many home and school displacements. A number of promotive and protective factors have also been identified, which are associated with more positive outcomes in this group of high-risk children, such as social support, and stable, continuous, sensitive caregiving.

Table 3.1

*Characteristics of Parenthood among Incarcerated African American Women and Men*

Author/Citation	Sample Characteristics	Method	Findings	Limitations
Maxwell, C., & Solomon, D. (2018).	1930s-1990s White baby boomers and Black baby boomers. Total N=81,280. Population participants over 50 years old.	Systematic review, Case study in structural racism	More than 1 in 4 African American baby Boomers (26.4%) report having an immediate family member incarcerated at some point in their lifetime, compared with just 15.1% of white Baby Boomers.	The primary limitation of this study is the availability and reliability of the data collected for analysis. The research contained data on Adverse Childhood Experiences for 9 states including Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.
Landry, B., & Hamer, J. (2002).	Total N=88 diverse fathers Population: low-income, live-away status, and married status	Experimental study, questionnaires	Black fathers have the highest rate of lack of opportunity which effects their parenthood. Parenting roles are expressed differently among black fathers, causing society to dismiss their actions and belittle.	The main limitation of this narrative includes the biases of the author herself. As an African American mother, the author inputs her beliefs, and personal experiences, in addition to her interviews.
Joseph Murray, David Farrington, and Ivana Sekol (2012)	40 studies (including 7,374 children with incarcerated parents and 37,325 comparison children in 50 samples)	Systematic review, keywords entered into databases, screenings	About 10% increased risk for antisocial behavior among children with incarcerated parents, compared with peers.	Only three studies (including four samples) examined changes in children's behavior from before to after parental incarceration. No study used a randomized experimental design, limiting inferences about causal effects.

Dallaire, D. H. (2007).	Total N=7,249, female n=1014 (16%), male n=5132 (84%) 690 = mothers of minor children  324 = mothers of adult children	Experimental study, survey/questionnaire based	Sample showed, incarcerated mothers of adult children reported that their adult children were 2.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than adult children of incarcerated fathers	A smaller sample study examining child, inmate, and caregiver would be helpful to validate study's findings
Hill, Shirley A. and Joey Sprague. 1999	Total N=582 young adults Ages 18-25 Black Americans = 258 White Americans =324	Experimental study, Survey/online Questionnaires , measuring scales	Study predicted that Black Americans exhibit more parental strictness/supervision than White Americans. Hypothesis 2b expected that the Black American sample would report lower parental acceptance/involvement than the White American sample.	One limitation to the current study is that we did not control for income or education. It is inappropriate to assume that all findings were pure effects of racial differences in absence of differences due to income and education.
Green, K. M., Ensminger, M. E., Robertson, J. A., & Juon, H. S. (2006)	Total N=615 mothers Mean age: 32 years (19 -51) On average mothers had 5 children	Experimental Study, measuring scales, psychological scaling	Results indicate that having a son who has been incarcerated more recently is associated with mother's poorer psychological well-being. This study provides preliminary	Further limitation is that findings depend on mothers' report of incarceration, which may be underreported. Other limitations include lack of information about the length of the incarceration sentences

	87% still living in Chicago		evidence of the mechanisms through which incarceration of a family member is associated with a mother's psychological distress.	
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## **Conclusion**

In this literature review paper, studies have shown that incarcerated African American parents, both the mothers and fathers have a significant impact on their child/children's lives before, during and after incarceration. As discussed, due to the mass incarceration rate among African American individuals, parental connection to children will decrease while trauma for the mother, father, children, and family will increase. The results suggest that children whose mothers are incarcerated may be at increased risk for incarceration. The results have clear implications for practitioners in various domains, including teachers, social workers, probation officers, and any field working with families reunifying. When a provider comes into contact with a child or caregiver who is dealing with parental incarceration, they should be aware of additional risks the children often face, including disrupted attachment relationships and neglect. Raising awareness of these issues could help these individuals to better serve children with incarcerated parents. Though children with incarcerated parents may be at increased risk for incarceration, there is still resources, services and hope for those children not to repeat their parents' footsteps. This suggests that there are protective factors which help decrease these risk (Michaels, 2013).

### **Social Justice of Mass Incarceration**

To achieve the universal goal of a lower U.S. incarceration rate for African American women and men, lawmakers must target policies and resources toward specifically addressing African American disparities. As perhaps the United States' clearest manifestation of structural racism, the criminal justice system is an important place to start. Additionally, lowering the rate of incarcerated women and men of color, will increase the presence of motherhood, fatherhood and their children's developmental, emotional, and behavioral stability (Martin, 2017). Why is

this issue important for social workers and other service providers? The research shows that, in general, children whose parents are incarcerated are at higher risk for increased antisocial behaviors and psychological problems, such as depression and substance use. Whether this translates into decreased educational attainment, involvement with the criminal justice system, and other negative outcomes seems to depend on the child's resilience and his or her social support network. Correctional facilities can support the relationship by providing the child with easy access to and visitation with the parent in a child-friendly environment. Law enforcement and child welfare practitioners are often involved with the child before the correctional system is involved with the parent, so enhanced and streamlined communication between the various government entities could maximize the potential to provide the child whatever support is available. If law enforcement, child welfare, educational, and correctional practitioners can share information on the child and family experiencing parental incarceration, then it would be more likely that the child would benefit from early intervention if he or she appears to be at risk for sustained deprivation, loss of educational attainment, or criminal activity (Martin, 2017). Such a partnership would also benefit correctional practitioners and re-entry managers, who would have better information on the child's situation and prior relationship with the incarcerated parent, which seems to be critical for the child's welfare. Given these considerations, it appears that enhancing communication between corrections practitioners and other service providers is an effective way to ensure a safety net for the child and facilitate a successful re-entry for the incarcerated parent. These given considerations also correlate with the purpose of this research study.

## Limitations

Although there has been adequate amount of research illustrating the multiple effects on incarcerated African American parents and their children as well as their family members, there are limitations. One limitation that I came across were the sample sizes of some of the studies. As shown in *Table 2.1*, the participated sample size could have made the experiment more difficult to study due to inaccurate data, including self-reporting and underreported results. Another possible limitation that some of these studies encounter, is the limited access to data. For Maxwell, C., & Solomon, D. (2018) study, one of their limitations included data for only 9 states including, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. These states are geographically and demographically diverse and produce a sample size of 81,280. Still, readers should use caution when drawing national conclusions due to the possibility that including additional states would have a statistically significant effect on the analysis. Due to the research involving such a vulnerable population, the researchers might have faced the problem of having limited access to certain respondents. Because of this, researchers might have had to redesign or restructure their research in a different way. As mentioned in Joseph Murray, David Farrington, and Ivana Sekol (2012) study, no study used a randomized experimental design, limiting inferences about causal effects. Most studies only included children of incarcerated fathers or children of incarcerated parents, most of whom are likely to be fathers. Therefore, less is known about impacts of maternal incarceration on children, compared with paternal incarceration. Lastly, the researchers might have had biased views due to their cultural backgrounds or perspectives of certain phenomena, and this can affect a study's legitimacy, especially conducting experiments with incarcerated individuals. Also, it is possible that researchers will have biases toward data and results that only support their

hypotheses or arguments. Another limitation includes, the limited amount of research conducted on African American incarcerated mothers. Due to the lack of literature review, there was slight difficulty in comparing and contrasting the effects of parenthood among African American women and men. As most of the studies have highlighted the impact of the multiple effects an offspring may encounter due to their parent's involvement with the criminal justice system, many studies have lacked research in preparedness and reentry programs. Researchers should have also measured those participants who have reintegrated into society successfully or not due to their support system. This extended research would have correlated and underlined the effects of the parent and child relationship during incarceration. Despite these limitations, this literature review research paper found an important association between the effects of parenthood among incarcerated African American women and men.

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