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Intergenerational Incarceration and Inmate Adjustment

Sarah C. Light

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Science in Criminal Justice

School of Criminal Justice

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## **Abstract**

Current research has found the impact of incarceration to be far reaching. Families, especially children, often experience the most strain and disadvantage as a result of a parent's incarceration. This effect can carry into the adult years and influence economic, educational, and behavioral health outcomes. The present study investigates the effect of having a parent or stepparent incarcerated on behavioral and psychological inmate adjustment to the prison environment. Using secondary data from a national data sample of 14,499 inmates, behavioral and psychological adjustment to the prison environment was measured. Results showed no significant effect of second generation prison status on inmate adjustment. Results did indicate that being male is associated with an increase on both the psychological and behavioral adjustment scale that is more than twice that of females. Inmates that had a previous incarceration showed a decrease on both the psychological and behavioral adjustment scales. A violent offense was associated with an increase on the psychological adjustment scale. Current research and opportunities for future research are discussed.

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# Intergenerational Incarceration and Prison Adjustment

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Parental Incarceration

Mass incarceration and the prison boom has contributed to a growing number of children with incarcerated parents. As of 2004, roughly 1.7 million minor children in the United States had an incarcerated parent (Glaze and Maruschak, 2008). Expanding research suggests negative mental, behavioral, and educational outcomes that result from having an incarcerated parent during childhood. Children of incarcerated parents face higher risks of mental illness, trauma, poverty and lower levels of education obtainment and these effects can last far into an individual's adult years. Further, current research suggests that many of the societal exclusions that inmates face because of their incarceration are passed on to their children. There are many ways that the impact of incarceration can be measured and observed outside of the walls of the prison and the lives of inmates. The incarceration of parents and the subsequent consequences of that incarceration on their children is an area in need of further research.

Problems with socialization and stigma and other risk factors associated with parental incarceration contribute to the transmission of offending and incarceration from parents to their children (Beaver, 2013; McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Ng, Sarri and Stoffregen, 2013; Novero et al, 2011). Thus, a significant number of inmates in our prison system report having had at least one parent incarcerated. This thesis will analyze the prison experience of these inmates, specifically their ability to successfully adjust within the prison environment.

## **Inmate Adjustment**

Adjustment to the prison environment has been studied at length over the last century. This is perhaps not surprising for an institution that so drastically changes the lifestyles and realities of its occupants. Early observers of the prison and similar institutions found a unique society, made of informal rules and mannerism, that worked together to build the structure and order of the prison environment (Goffman, 1961; Clemmer, 1958). Sykes (1958) labelled this as “the society of captives”, in the title of his book written about the inmate culture at the New Jersey State Prison.

Others, argue that a great deal of influence to the prison environment comes from outside of the prison itself, brought in by the inmates incarcerated there (Irwin and Cressey, 1962). A large body of research has supported this theory as well, finding influence of inmate adjustment patterns in a number factors outside the prison. Mental health, traumatic experiences, criminal history, and many other variables unique to each inmate are significantly correlated with the success or failure of an inmate’s adjustment to the prison environment (Cao, Zhao and Van Dine, 1997; Steiner and Wooldredge, 2008; Toman, Cochran, Cochran and Bales, 2015).

## **Purpose of Study**

A great deal of literature has been dedicated to the risks and disadvantages of growing up with an incarcerated parent. However, very little research has been dedicated to the experience of intergenerational offenders and their prison experience. The small amount of literature regarding second generation prisoners uses rates of misconduct to measure adjustment and have a relatively small sample size (Novero, Loper and Warren, 2011; Ng, Sarri, and Stoffregen, 2013). Yet, as this population inevitably continues to be present within the criminal justice system and

the incarceration setting, there is an importance in better understanding the unique impact their experience has on their individual adjustment to prison.

The proposed study will use two variables (misconduct and mental health) to measure inmate adjustment to prison. The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of second generation prisoner status on inmate adjustment.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Prison Adjustment and Prisonization

Donald Clemmer (1958) first coined the term “Prisonization” in his 1940 book *The Prison Community*, in reference to the socialization and adjustment process that inmates experience within the prison environment. There are a number of aspects of prison that an inmate must cope with upon incarceration. Foremost, is the purposefully restrictive environment of prison, which strips a majority of an inmate’s personal control and liberties that he or she may take for granted in free society. This restrictiveness is in part a consequence of prison management techniques that have traditionally focused on control to achieve prison goals of safety and order. Further, an inmate must adjust to the already present inmate culture within the prison. Status and informal codes and rules between inmates, shape the way in which inmates adjust to the prison environment (Sykes, 1958; Goffman, 1961).

Prison adjustment literature suggests a number of influences to the prison environment, inmate culture, and an inmate’s overall adjustment to both of these aspects of incarceration. Classic deprivation and importation models of adjustment compare the influence of the outside, free society as well as the depriving structure of the prison on an inmate’s adjustment. Outside of these macro level variables, cognitive adjustment models borrowed from the discipline of psychology, emphasize the many variables that influence each individual person’s adjustment and coping mechanisms to the very same situation (Lazarus, 1984). As with a great deal of theories, a number of integrative models have found support for deprivation, importation and cognitive models, suggesting that prison adjustment is a much more complex construct than imagined.

To add to its complexity, prison adjustment has found itself narrowly defined by the literature. There are multiple goals of the prison including, safety, punishment, control, and rehabilitation (often associated with reducing the chance of recidivism). Yet, today's prisons are managed with an unwavering focus on control and security, often ignoring goals of rehabilitation <sup>1</sup>(Craig, 2004).

An individual's adjustment to prison has traditionally been measured by the number of infractions committed or psychological health after admittance into prison. Within the literature, the definition of adjustment is relatively ill defined and narrow as the picture of "ideal" adjustment relates almost exclusively to an inmate's behavioral and psychological health. Current literature fails to address the many factors that can shape inmate adjustment by restricting its definition of adjustment to such narrow definitions, which exclude temporal variables affecting adjustment, which may have taken place prior to the incarceration period.

Isolation from the rest of society, the inability to make choices for oneself, and a loss of personal identity are all characteristics of the prison that are difficult for an inmate to adjust. To become adjusted to a stressful environment such as prison, an inmate must address the extreme demands and alterations in lifestyle and environment. In addition to the loss of personal control and choice within the institution, each inmate brings with them beliefs, experiences and goals from outside of the prison that effect the way in which they adjust to the prison environment.

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<sup>1</sup>This focus on security and deviation from rehabilitation was emphasized as the crime control era of the 1970's began to popularize within policies. Reflecting an overall attitude of "nothing works" and the inability of government to change human behavior, the custodial model of incarceration focused on the efficient incarceration of inmates and less on rehabilitation (Martinson, 1974). This is further discussed in the "prison management perspective" section of this paper.

## **Theoretical Background**

**The deprivation model.** Deprivation models of prison adjustment suggests that how an inmate's adjustment to prison is influenced by the stresses related to the deprivations of rights and liberties that are characteristic to incarceration. By their nature, prisons isolate an individual from society, culture and norms and replaces them within an unfamiliar environment of restriction and informal social order. Goffman (1961) in his book "Asylums" first defines prisons as "total institutions". Total institutions uniquely:

"Disrupt or defile precisely those actions that in civil society have the role of attesting to the actor and those in his presence that he is a person with "adult" self –determination, autonomy, and freedom of action" (p. 41).

What is key in Goffman's description of a total institution, which he specifically defined after observing the social experience of the patients at St. Elizabeth's Mental Hospital in Washington, D.C., is the specific way in which prisons deprive inmates of basic social and societal rights. After observing the social experience of the patients, Goffman defines a number of ways in which inmates endure the "mortification process", which strips the inmate of the very behaviors, controls, and dignities that identify him or herself in normal society. To cope with the loss of these basic rights and identity, prisoners take on a variety of roles in an attempt to normalize prison life and gain back rights and liberties.

Gresham Sykes found a similar theme in his observations of New Jersey State Prison (1958). His study, which examined the informal inner workings of inmate culture and the structure of power and management of the prison, suggests that the loss of rights, liberties and personal control are what influence the inmate culture and adjustment to that culture. Further,

these losses impact the relationship of power between inmates and prison administration and the overall management of the prison.

Sykes identifies five ways in which the prison deprives inmates, including the loss of liberty, goods and services, autonomy, safety and heterosexual relations. Sykes refers to these deprivations as the “pains of imprisonment” and observed their influence on the balance of relationships between inmates, as well as that between inmates and administration. Inmates varied in their adjustment to the loss of basic rights, relationships and materials, taking on different roles to satisfy different means. For example, “merchants” and “gorillas” maintained control of goods that other inmates desired, maintaining the supply and demand of the informal market. “Good guys”, or those inmates that were viewed as simply doing their time without any conflicts between staff or other inmates, served as mediators between the power of control that prison administration and inmates balanced.

Several studies have measured the effect of deprivation theory variables on inmate adjustment and have indicated a number of predictors. Not surprisingly, the prison environment is a significant indicator of how an inmate will adjust. Steiner and Meade (2013) found that a more violent prison context is positively correlated with inmate mental health problems while incarcerated. Factors such as the amount of time that an inmate has spent incarcerated is correlated with misconduct and behavior, suggesting that the prison environment influences and changes the way that inmates react and cope with prison (Zamble, 1992, Zamble and Porporino, 1988). Additionally, prison programming and rehabilitative efforts have been found to be significantly correlated with inmate adjustment. A number of studies suggest that rehabilitative programs such as addiction treatment, psychosocial treatment and education are positively related to successful inmate adjustment and coping both within the prison and during the



community reentry process. Lahm's (2009) study of male inmates from three different states found that those who participated in college education courses received less misconduct "tickets" in comparison to inmates participating in other programs.

Sykes' deprivation theory exemplifies a functional theory of prisonization and inmate adjustment. Through observation, Sykes' organizes and expands on the inmate culture and prison hierarchy to explain the harmonious balance between inmates and prison administration. This balance within the "society of captives" is what Sykes' argued kept the order and safety within the prison in check. Without this structure and informal rules which allowed inmates to govern their own environment, violence and unrest would likely increase according to Sykes'.

**The importation model.** Alternatively, and inclusive of structural-functional and cultural interpretation, Irwin and Cressey (1962) suggest that prison life and the prison community are shaped by lived experiences of inmates prior to their arrival to the prison facility. Culture, pre-existing beliefs and previous criminal history are imported into the prison with inmates, creating the inmate culture and influencing inmate adjustment to that culture from the outside-in. Differing lives and experiences outside of the prison can position an offender to a particular orientation within a prison facility. A repeat offender, for example, is likely to simply finish his time in prison with few problems in an attempt to get out sooner and continue offending. Importation theory argues that an inmate's behaviors prior to their incarceration are what influence their behavior within the prison and in turn, the prison community.

The importation model has been tested by a number of studies. Cao, Zhao and Van Dine (1997) identify 12 variables related to the importation model in their review of the literature. These include age, gender, education, race, employment, marital status, history of mental illness and/or substance abuse, number of violent offenses, the county of crime commitment, juvenile

incarceration history, and adult incarceration history. In their study of male and female inmates in Ohio State Prison, importation and deprivation model variables were compared for significance in relation to inmate misconduct. Results found more importation model variables (5 out of the measured 12) significantly related to inmate misconducts.

Other studies have found support for specific importation model variables. For example, traumatic experiences that take place outside of the prison can impact the way in which an inmate adjusts to prison. Cain, Steiner and Wright (2016) found that victimization from a non-stranger, specifically child abuse and sexual assault, was significantly related to depressive symptoms for both incarcerated men and women.

In addition, variables such as age, sex, the type of offense, and the length of an inmate's sentence can act as strong predictors of inmate adjustment as well (Steiner and Wooldredge, 2008; Toman, Cochran, Cochran and Bales, 2015). McCorkle (1992) found that younger inmates with long histories of institutionalization were more likely to employ aggressive, proactive techniques to cope with the violent prison environment.

Further, relationships that an inmate possesses outside of the prison, specifically parent/child relationships, influence the success of an inmate's adjustment to the prison environment (Benning and Lahm, 2014). In their comparison study of male and female inmates, Benning and Lahm (2014) found that inmates who received more mail and visits from their children while incarcerated were more likely to commit rule violations. Even seemingly less impactful factors such as the way an inmate was treated by law enforcement at arrest appear to be significantly related to inmate adjustment (Klahm, Steiner, and Meade, 2014).

Overall, current literature suggests that both importation and deprivation theory variables contribute significantly to inmate adjustment to the prison environment (Adams, 1992; Tewksbury et al, 2014; Hilinski-Rosick and Walsh, 2016; Hochstetler and DeLisi, 2005). Consistent with coping theories, stresses from the prison environment as well as experiences that inmates bring with them from outside of prison are both significantly related to inmate adjustment. In relation to the current study and second-generation prisoners, the increased childhood risks that are contributable to having an incarcerated parent likely play a role in the success or failure of successful adjustment to the prison environment.

### **Methodological Concerns**

Importation theory suggests that the prison culture and inmate adjustment to that culture, is shaped mostly by the characteristics, culture, norms and beliefs that the inmate brings into prison upon incarceration. Studies of inmate adjustment, especially those that attempt to measure the life and experiences of the inmate prior to incarceration, face a number of challenges in controlling for all significant variables. Additionally, accessible samples and data are often limited in their ability to generalize to other inmate populations because sample sizes are small or the population is narrow in its representation.

**Sample and population.** Inmate adjustment literature varies in its ability to obtain reasonable sample sizes that are generalizable to other populations. Generalizability is not necessarily a key goal of all studies, especially those that are looking to achieve a more intimate and individual-level understanding of a research problem. Studies with small sample sizes, those including only male participants or that are not nationally representative, drive future research to apply the same research questions to excluded populations (Tewksbury et al, 2014; Novero et al, 2011; Benning and Lahm, 2016).

**Temporal order.** Equally challenging for inmate adjustment theories is controlling for factors that may affect an inmate's ability to adjust that occurred outside of the incarceration period. Steiner and Meade (2014) suggest that this could be a foreseeable limitation in their own study of inmate adjustment in a violent prison context. It is possible, although well controlled for, that maladjustment was a beginning influencing factor which created the violent context rather than the other order. Thus, making the interpretation of results difficult, or at the very least, necessary to take with consideration.

Measurements of adjustment are equally at risk of temporal misinterpretation as mental health and behavioral problems could be a result of already present behavioral and mental characteristic. Many studies control for previous mental health records and behavioral norms by controlling for mental health diagnosis prior to incarceration and offenses committed. However, diagnosis of mental illness only controls for those inmates that have had a formal diagnosis and ignores the possibly significant population that may struggle with mental health issues prior to incarceration. This is a potentially limiting concern in Cain et al's study of non-stranger victimization and inmate adjustment. While mental health prior to incarceration was controlled for, this does not likely account for all inmates with mental health concerns prior to incarceration. Further, although measures of mental health were specified to six months prior to the survey, the sample population was not adjusted to include only inmates that were incarcerated during that time frame. Thus, inmates that were not yet serving their sentence may be mixed into the sample, jeopardizing validity of the measure.

**Self-reported data.** As with much of prison related literature, there is concern for the validity of self-reported, survey-based data. While several studies have found reasonable support for the strength of self-reported data from inmates, there is still concern for margins of error in reporting

(Steiner and Wooldredge, 2014). Self-reported data is challenging to utilize due to concerns of inaccurate reporting by inmates or staff. Inmates and prison administration could easily misrepresent the number of infractions they receive or give out. Further, the number of reported infractions does not account for the actual number of infractions that take place but are not punished or seen by prison administration. This may be of special consideration for inmate adjustment literature, which often relies on inmate reported data of prison misconducts (Benning and Lahm, 2016; Steiner and Meade, 2016; Cain et al., 2016, Tewksbury et al, 2014).

### **Prison Management Perspectives**

Sykes (1958) discusses two parts of the prison that inmates must adjust to, that of the inmate culture as well as the interaction between inmates and prison administration, both of these relationships functioning as a mechanism to relieve the “pains of imprisonment”. Deprivation theorists discuss in depth the many ways that prison administration attempts to manage and control inmate behavior. Goffman (1961) specifically refers to the power that prison administration has over individuals in total institutions in regards to their release and success. Sykes (1958) suggests that the misconduct that took place at New Jersey State Prison was less an issue of maladjustment, but rather parts of a complex informal system that traded power and control to inmates in return for order and safety within the facility, suggesting a complex prison management perspective. He argued that this balance of power and control of the prison environment was much like a pendulum, swinging back and forth between inmates and administration. During periods when prison administration attempted to become rigid, inmates would use violence and disorder to reestablish control.

The 1970’s saw a strong push from the public to focus on the incarceration and punishment of offenders. Packer’s (1964) crime control model, which emphasized efficiency and

priority in catching and punishing criminals became a strong focus in criminal justice policy. The crime control model of punishment bled into the correctional system, shifting focus from rehabilitation and reduction of recidivism to simply holding offenders. Simon (2014) addresses in his book *Mass Incarceration on Trial* how this shift in policy reflected a period in public opinion that was unconvinced that anything, much less government, could succeed in the rehabilitation of a criminal.

This dynamic between inmates and prison administration is one that is often overlooked by inmate adjustment literature. Yet, when discussing successful inmate adjustment, it is imperative to address the goals of the prison, which are often focused on control and security, rather than rehabilitation and therapy.

**Current prison management theories.** Prison management theories have developed historically from conceptually rehabilitative to institutions of complete control and inmate management. Prisons were created as a more humane and rehabilitative method of punishment for even the worst criminals. Prior to their development, criminals of all varieties were placed in jails, where sickness, malnourishment and starvation were prominent. Prisons and criminal justice reform were pushed heavily by the Quakers and the first penitentiary was built shortly after the Revolutionary War in Philadelphia (Gutterman, 1992). The most dangerous and violent inmates were kept in solitary confinement, with no communication between each other and were kept in complete isolation for most of the day. This model, known as the Philadelphia Model, was developed to force penance from inmates of their sins and eventually their rehabilitation (Gutterman, 1992; Craig, 2004). Soon after, the Auburn prison was built in New York, introducing a new approach to prison management. Long days of hard labor, isolated cells at

night and no communication between inmates were the most notable aspects of the New York model and began to take over as the more popular and more efficient management style.

Clearly, the correctional reality of today is much different than that of the early 1800's. Mass incarceration as the result of strict law enforcement and sentencing policies over several decades, has created prisons that focus heavily on goals of security and inmate management.

After evaluating prison management styles in Texas, California and Michigan, Dilulio (1987) identified and categorized three types of prison management: control, responsibility, and consensual. These categories, in part, relate to the relationship between inmates and prison administration and the overall structure of the prison.

The consensual model of prison management, which Dilulio aligned with California's prisons during the time of his study, focus heavily on working with inmates to complete prison time and successfully reenter society. In the consensual model, inmates are given a large role in the management of the prison and its structure. While prison administration and workers operate in a paramilitary hierarchy, there is a strong emphasis on officers working with inmates, many of which even priding themselves in speaking the inmates' argot languages. Further, minor offenses in the consensual model are encouraged to be treated with informal action or counseling.

Similarly, the responsibility model relieves some of the control to inmates. However, there is a foremost importance of security and safety that is much clearer in the Michigan prisons that Dilulio studied. In this model, prison administration and policy focuses its direction on ensuring that inmates are allowed as much freedom as security will allow. Dilulio notes that some officers and administrators of this management style found strict models like that of the control model, ridiculous and inhumane as it strips an inmate's identity. It is argued that this

model allows for as much normalization of the prison environment as possible without degrading the security of the prison.

Finally, the control model centralizes all authority to prison administration. Within a control model prison, rules and regulations are followed closely and enforced rigorously, with even the most minor of offenses addressed formally. Prison administration has a strict and clear hierarchy. This is what Dilulio concluded was the safest, most efficient, and most humane form of management (1987), noting its success and evolution in Texas prisons. However, others have disagreed in the control model's superiority in achieving inmate security, rehabilitative or recidivism goals. Craig (2004) suggests that the control first model does not allow for effective rehabilitation and/or treatment for inmates because the environment it creates is counterproductive to the goals of rehabilitation.

Within each of Dilulio's models, there is connection between inmate adjustment and structure of prison management that influences both the definition of successful adjustment and what a model inmate would look like. Clearly, there is a considerable difference between the expectations of an inmate's behavior in the consensual model when compared to the control model. The successfully adjusted inmate in the consensual model of prison management may be, by definition, poorly adjusted within the context of the control environment – particularly in terms of behavioral adjustment. The variation within these models also further exemplifies the many ways in which “successful” adjustment may be defined. The control model, for example, focuses heavily on inmate's ability to behave appropriately as defined by administration, arguably leaving little room for attention to psychological adjustment and rehabilitation. The consensual model, in comparison, may over-emphasize the need for some extent of inmate autonomy and control and lack focus on successful behavioral adjustment.



This conflict between a focus of institutional security and rehabilitation may help to explain why prison adjustment literature has remained ambiguous in its measurement of inmate adjustment. While a large body of literature exists that addresses a number of correlations to prison adjustment, often measured by the number of prison misconducts or the psychological adjustment of the prisoner, there are still a number of goals of the prison that have been neglected. An inmate's ability to adhere to prison rules and mentally cope with the prison context are both excellent indicators of successful adjustment because they meet the goals of safety and security as well inmate well-being. However, there are arguably many punishment and long-term goals of the prison that are necessary for successful adjustment. One large variable of adjustment being rehabilitation and reducing the chances of recidivism post incarceration. Van Ginneken (2015) argues that adjustment research is too focused on incarceration itself and must address adjustment variables that measure an inmate's ability to succeed outside of the prison in the post-release setting.

### **Strain and Violence in the Prison Context**

Current research suggests that prisons are exceedingly violent environments for inmates to adapt to. While fatal assaults have decreased significantly over the last two decades, the rates of victimization within prisons have continued to remain significantly high (Mumola, 2005). In Teasdale, Daigle, Hawk and Daquin's (2016) analysis of a nationally representative sample of federal prisons, 13% of inmates reported being physically victimized during their current sentence. Lahm (2009) found a similar rate of reported physical assault as well as 25% of inmates who reported experiencing property victimization. For some, it may be difficult to put these statistics in perspective. Wolff, Blitz, Shi, Siegel and Bachman (2007), after comparing reported rates of prison victimization within a nationally representative sample of inmates with

rates within the general population, concluded that rates of physical assault for male inmates is 18 times higher in comparison to the general population and 27 times higher for females incarcerated.

Both deprivation theory variables as well as importation variables have shown to be significantly correlated to violence within the prison environment. The climate of the prison, or the overall attitude of inmates to the prison and guard-inmate relations, has been found to be significantly correlated with increased rates of victimization and assaults (Wolff, Shi, & Siegel, 2009; Wooldredge, 1994). Inmate level variables including age, race, type of offense, and mental illness have also been found to be significantly correlated with higher rates of victimization (Wolff et al, 2009, 2007; Lahm, 2009).

The violence that is characteristic of the prison environment has a direct and negative impact on inmate adjustment during incarceration and post-release. Steiner and Meade's (2013) study, discussed above found that a more violent prison context was positively correlated with increased risk for mental health problems for inmates. Further, a handful of studies have applied the principals of Agnew's general strain theory (2001, 2002) to the strain of victimization experienced by inmates in prison. Zweig, Yahner, Visher, and Lattimore (2015) found significant correlations between in prison victimization and negative post-release outcomes in their study which surveyed over 500 males and 168 female inmates at four different points post-release. Results concluded that the strain associated with in-prison victimization significantly increased the risk of substance abuse and reoffending up to 9 months after release from prison. This area of research demonstrates the consequences of violent prison environments on adjustment within and outside of prison.

## **Inmate Adjustment**

As discussed in previous paragraphs, inmate adjustment is a difficult construct to properly define as its accurate measure is reliant upon defining the goals of the prison. Does successful adjustment mean an inmate is following institutional rules? That he or she is psychologically adjusting to incarceration and prison? Or should the measure be based upon an inmate's ability to adjust to society after incarceration? Adjustment is also a complex construct to create because it varies per individual (Zamble and Porporino, 1988; VanTogeren and Klebe, 2010; VanGinneken, 2015). Zamble and Porporino, point to the individuality of coping and adjustment as a key justification for behavioral treatment programs that can accommodate each inmate. Since the goals of prison are diverse and sometimes conflicting, multi-dimensional models of inmate adjustment have been found to be useful in encompassing a broader definition of prison adjustment and aiding in the understanding of inmate coping to the prison environment (VanTogeren and Klebe, 2010; VanGinneken, 2015).

Inmate adjustment literature has found evidence of a large variety of factors associated with inmate adjustment. Steiner and Wooldredge (2008), in their study of a nationally representative sample of state prison inmates, found age, prior incarceration, pre-arrest drug use, and program participation were positively significant for inmate misconduct in all three measured categories: assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, and other nonviolent offenses. These results echoed similar previous findings. For example, Schmid and Jones (1993) found that first-time, short-term inmates displayed ambivalence in their adjustment strategies, directly resulting from their inability to achieve a significant status within the prison. This, combined with a conflicting desire to contact the outside world and also survive within the prison, resulted in a unique dynamic for this population. This is uniquely different from inmates with long term

sentences or those who have been incarcerated for a long period of time. Loper and Thompson (2005) found in their study of female inmates that those with medium to long sentences experienced more conflict and misconduct when compared to inmates with shorter sentences, although there was no significant difference in adjustment in terms of emotional adjustment.

**Multi-dimensional models of inmate adjustment.** Additional research has utilized multi-dimensional models of adjustment measurements to better understand inmate adjustment strategies (Van Togerem and Klebe, 2010; VanGinneken, 2015). VanTogerem and Klebe (2010) measured adjustment using a multidimensional construct that captures an offender's ability to acquire basic provisions in prison and temporarily assimilate into prison culture, while still understanding that incarceration is temporary and not a permanent state. In addition, participants were measured upon their success in abandoning criminal thinking by engaging in rehabilitative programs. VanGinneken (2015) developed a measure of adjustment in the prison environment through interviews with 15 male and 15 female inmates. Inmates who failed to adjust were categorized as negative (or despondent), and displayed behaviors of poor coping, poor functioning, failure to manage mental illness, unhappiness and hopelessness. Inmates with displays of successful adjustment show the ability to cope and adequately function, but also have low subjective well-being and low expectations for the future. Positive or flourishing adjustment appears similar to neutral adjustment, but the inmate possesses a higher level of subjective well-being and a positive outlook for the future. These models for measuring inmate adjustment provide a broader understanding of the many aspects of inmate coping and adjustment and accommodate for individual circumstance.

**Cognitive adjustment models.** To understand prison adjustment, it is important to understand how and why an individual reacts and adapts to a stressful environment such as

prison. Psychological theories of coping and adjustment provide a strong theoretical framework for prison adjustment research. The transactional model focuses on coping and adaptation as a transaction between a person and their environment (Lazarus, 1999). Transactional theory suggests that when an individual appraises a particular situation as stressful, he or she then evaluates his or her ability to handle the stressful situation (Lazarus and Folkman, 1987; Lazarus, 1999). Appraisal of what type of situation (stressful, positive or benign) and one's ability to handle the situation are considered primary and secondary appraisals. Lazarus argues that appraisals and coping responses will vary based on an individual's hierarchy of goals, experiences and their personal beliefs about what is happening to them within the situation. Transactional theory explains the factors which may contribute to differing coping methods between individuals who experience the same environment, including an extremely stressful environment like prison (Lazarus and Folkman, 1987; Zamble and Porporino, 1988).

Within the prison context, Lazarus' theory acknowledges that adjustment is often individualized and dependent upon an inmate's hierarchy of goals, beliefs and previous experiences. Two people can experience the same prison environment and have entirely different mental or behavioral reactions, dependent upon their experiences.

Adjustment research supports this theory as well, finding that individual methods of coping and adjustment affect how an inmate will respond to the prison environment (Rocheleau, 2013). In Zamble and Porporino's (1990) study of coping patterns of prison inmates in Ontario, Canada area prisons, researchers concluded that inmates' inability to cope in the prison environment was strongly related to their poor coping habits in other aspects of their personal life. The researchers argued that to reduce recidivism within the prison populations, behavioral treatment programs that focused on the individual coping needs of inmates would be necessary in

prisons. This can help to explain why some inmates are able to successfully adjust to the prison environment, while others struggle behaviorally and mentally.

### **Adjustment and Second-Generation Prisoners**

While the research regarding prison adjustment is broad, few studies address intergenerational imprisonment and its impact on prison adjustment. As the literature shows, growing up with an incarcerated parent creates a number of significant disadvantages for children that lasts into their adult years (Murray, 2007; Miller and Barnes, 2015). This includes a greater likelihood of participating in deviant and criminal behavior and consequently, ending up within the criminal justice system themselves. However, much of the literature stops here, not addressing the potential effect that parental incarceration could have on adjustment to imprisonment. Ng, Sarri, and Stoffregen (2013), identified a significant number of youth in their study of Michigan juvenile and adult facilities that reported having an incarcerated parent. They measured this population within the juvenile justice system using Murray's (2007) social exclusion framework, which suggests a number of categories in which incarcerated parents pass on the negative consequences of imprisonment to their children. Results indicated significant negative impacts of parental incarceration, all of which aligned with Murray's social exclusion framework. Still, these measurements and framework do not address how inmates with a history of parental incarceration adjust while incarcerated.

Novero, Loper and Warren (2011), is one study that expands the current understanding of the second-generation prisoner population and their adjustment to the prison environment. Novero et al's (2011) study examines prison adjustment through measurements of inmate violence, anger and misconducts, while controlling for potential confounding variables including adverse childhood experiences (ACES). ACES are experiences that occur in a child's life that

can have cumulatively negative effects and can lead a child to dangerous and riskier pathways when growing up (Felitti et al, 1998) Results indicated that the second-generation prisoner population adjusted significantly worse when compared to the first-generation prisoner population. While thorough in its evaluation of the effects of second generation prisoner status, the small sample size and geographic location limits understanding of this correlation across the United States.

### **Parental Incarceration**

As of 2007, over half of state and federal prison inmates in the United States reported having a minor child. Further, 2.3 percent of the national minor population has at least one parent that is incarcerated in a federal or state prison facility (Glaze and Maruschak, 2008). The number of incarcerated parents has rose substantially since 1991 as incarceration has continued to be a commonly used sanction to crime within the United States.

These figures shed light on an indirect consequence of incarceration, as a rising number of children grow up separated from mothers and fathers. A substantial amount of literature addresses the many and widely reaching ways that incarceration can impact and punish an offender during and after his or her sentence (Western, 2002; Waquant, 2001). However, less literature addresses how this punishment and subsequent impact can ripple through families and communities. For children, the event of a parent's incarceration is likely to impact a child for their lifetime. While children tragically are separated from their parents for a number of different reasons, literature that addresses parental incarceration suggests that the removal of a parent due to incarceration has a uniquely different impact on their minor children in comparison to other reasons for a parent's absence, such as divorce or death (Murray and Farrington, 2005).

## **Parental Incarceration and Social Capital**

Current research has explored the impact that parental incarceration has on a child's relationships and networks within their surrounding community. The incarceration of a parent removes a social and financial support for their children. Incarceration adds additional burdens for children as well, including stigma associated with their parent's incarceration and exclusion from various societal resources. These negative byproducts of incarceration prove to be detrimental in children's development of relationship and networks within their community, often referred to in current literature as social capital.

**Social capital.** Social capital is a broad and intangible concept that is used to refer to the networks, norms, trust and connections between people within a community. These networks and connections are based on shared values, norms and goals and create trust between community members, which provides the foundation for that community to move forward with positive change that is mutually benefitting (Putnam, 2005; Dinda, 2013; Dinda, 2008). Coleman (1988, 1990) describes a form of social capital in the collaboration of individuals to create an activist organization. This would not be possible without some base of trust, common understanding and networking. Dinda (2008) clarifies that a main characteristic of social capital is that it represents resources that are embedded in social relations and not individuals. As an important component of community development, social capital is tied into a great deal of social organization and economic development literature and theory. The concept of social capital provides an understanding of how communities and individuals function effectively toward economic and social development.

In relation to criminal justice theory, social capital is a foundational building block of order and organization because it strengthens informal, community level social controls. The



more connections, networks and trust available for community members to utilize, the easier it is for that community to maintain mutual safety goals without state level controls (Rose and Clear, 1998). Thus, the more social capital a community retains, the easier it is for that community to maintain social order and safety (Clear and Rose, 1998; Clear, 2007; Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999).

At the individual level, social capital operates as a resource that can be drawn on to facilitate positive opportunities and move one forward within their community (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999). Social capital allows an individual to participate effectively in their community by providing knowledge of and access to resources within that community through networks and connections with other community members (Clear, 2007). There are a number of factors that contribute to the production of social capital. Dinda (2014) discusses how human capital, or the resources and skills that individuals contribute to a community, partially produces social capital as well. In this theory, human capital, which is gained through institutions such as the family and schools, provide the foundation for the building of networks and trust among community members. Putnam (1995), discusses how this is also achieved through civil engagement as well as membership in moral and recreational groups, such as church or even, as given in his example, bowling leagues.

Social capital also aides in maintaining social control within a social group or community. Social control is held by the social bonds (networks and relationships) that are present in a group and can be present on several levels of social order including, private, parochial, and public (Hunter, 1985). Hunter suggests that while each of these levels of social order can interact with each other, they each have distinctively different intimacies of social bonds, differ in their institutional locus, and spatial domain. For example, private social order

occurs mainly amongst family, friends and neighbors and involves a much more intimate and committed social bond than those of parochial and public social orders. Bursik and Grasmick (1993) further emphasize the importance of the public level of social order, which they argue, can be a valuable resource for communities to organize and maintain order. Distinguishing these three levels of social orders and their relation to social bonds and social control exemplifies the many ways that social capital can influence communities and social groups.

The family structure serves as a key component of social capital as children learn and develop accepted social norms and cultural values through their parents. When a parent is removed because of incarceration, the child is at risk for missing out on opportunities to develop social capital through a healthy family structure. Sampson and Laub (1993) examine the effect of social capital and its relation to deviance during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. In each life stage, the importance lies in the relationships and bonds that an individual has with family, peers, siblings, work, significant others and similar connections. As the authors point out, it is not the singular relationships (marriage, friendship, etc), but rather the connectedness of all of these relationships and the reciprocal benefits they bring (p. 141). Strain, socialization and stigma theories shed light on the ways in which parental incarceration contributes to the loss of a child's ability to garner social capital.

### **Strain Theory**

Strain theory explains deviance as the consequence of emotionally stressful events. Traditionally, strain theory has emphasized the relationship between the experience of stressful events and deviance in youth. Agnew (1992) outlines three types of circumstances, expanding from classical strain theory, which contribute to strain and consequently, deviance (Agnew, 1992). These include strain as a result of anticipated or actual failure to achieve positively valued

goals, strain from the loss of positively valued stimuli, and strain resulting from the anticipation or actual presence of negatively valued stimuli. Parental incarceration falls under the second of these categories as a loss of a positively valued stimuli for a child as children are separated from their parents because of incarceration. Negative and angry emotions are significantly correlated with having an incarcerated parent. Wildeman (2010) found that boys with incarcerated fathers showed greater displays of aggressive behavior. Interestingly, this effect was found to be concentrated among boys whose fathers were neither violent nor abusive to their children, suggesting an effect that is directly related to the incarceration of that parent.

Porter and King (2015), in their study of a sample gathered from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, found that children with an incarcerated father were more likely to commit “expressive” delinquent offenses. Expressive delinquency is defined by the authors as offenses that are related to “acting out” and emotionally driven aggression, a key variable of deviance as explained by Agnew’s strain theory. This type of delinquency showed a more significant correlation to paternal incarceration when compared to instrumental delinquency, or those offenses that result in material or monetary gain. These results indicate that strain theory serves as a mechanism in explaining delinquency in the children of incarcerated parents (Porter and King, 2015).

**Parental incarceration and economic strain.** The implications of strain theory are much broader when looking at the financial strain that the incarceration of a parent places on a family. Roughly half of the parents that reside in state prisons alone report providing financial support for their minor children (Glaze and Maruschak, 2008). The loss of employment and income upon a parent’s incarceration can reduce a household’s income by half, leaving a large gap to fill for the remaining parent. Geller, Garfinkel and Western (2011), reported that fathers

who had been incarcerated at any time provided significantly less financial support to their children. This relationship was strongly correlated with their diminished participation in the labor market and instability in their family and romantic relationships (p.44). Further, using national data collected from unwed mothers and fathers, Gellar, Garfinkel, Cooper and Mincy (2009), found that children whose parents reported ever being incarcerated experienced more economic and residential instability. While perhaps not a surprising result given the known barriers that incarceration creates for offenders during and after their incarceration, this study further highlights the fact that children within families with incarcerated parents have unmet economic and material needs. In addition, the justice process itself can create a great deal of economic strain as fines and fees associated with sentencing and incarceration further burden the financial strain that the families and children of incarcerated individuals experience (Harris, Evans and Beckett, 2010).

Even after a parent's incarceration, exclusion from welfare and government aid programs place an additional financial burden on parents as well as their children (Murray, 2007; Wacquant, 2009). Pager (2003) further explains this post incarceration burden as a societal identity that often blocks ex-offenders from obtaining employment. Thus, the return of an incarcerated parent does not necessarily relieve the economic strain felt by their families and at times, can even increase it as the additional family member spreads family budgets even thinner (Murray, 2007).

**Strain and the loss of social capital.** Social capital becomes a lost resource for children of incarcerated parents when strain related to their parent's incarceration is present. Economic and financial instability simply reduces the amount of material resources that a child will receive (Geller et al, 2009, Geller et al, 2011). This strain contributes to less opportunities for education,

which as discussed previously, aids in the development of human and social capital. In addition, financial strain from the loss of a parent due to incarceration leaves less time for the remaining parent to assist in the development social capital through relationships or school (Rose and Clear, 1998). Indirect consequences of parental incarceration and economic strain, such as less time for a parent to be available for the child, negatively impacts a child's prospects for developing the norms, networks, and connections within their family and community, which aid in securing resources from social capital (Hagan, 1994).

### **Socialization Theory**

Recent criminological literature and theory has correlated the socialization process to the likelihood of deviance and development of social capital. Socialization is the process by which people learn the skills, behaviors, and values that are accepted by the culture they live in. There are several mechanisms that can influence the socialization process including family, school, and peers. These institutions contribute to a child's understanding of acceptable behaviors and values and can provide the foundation for social capital.

**Socialization and control theory.** Control theories, such as Hirschi's (1969) social control theory, emphasize the importance of bonds and attachments to society. These bonds are the key influence on an individual's likelihood of deviance and crime. When an individual's attachment to society, through family, school and/or peers, is weak, their likelihood of deviance increases. More recently, Hirschi and Gottfredson (1990) further developed this perspective in their general theory of crime. Low self-control within an individual is the key to this perspective, serving as the most significant predictor of delinquency and crime. The authors further develop this theory by positing that self-control is learned through the socialization process that occurs in the family, school, and through peers. At the family level, the variables of child rearing are the

influencing factors of self-control. These include attachment to the parent, supervision by the parent of the child, recognition of the child's deviant behavior, and punishment of that behavior.

Sampson and Laub (1993), further articulated the theoretical concepts of Hirschi and Gottfredson (1990), in their large study of lifetime crime pathways. This study utilized the data of Glueck and Glueck's study of juvenile delinquency, including measurements from roughly 500 participants. Using social control theories' theoretical foundation, the authors measured attachment to family, school, siblings, peers and their correlation to delinquency. This theory adds to Hirschi and Gottfredson's (1990) general theory of crime by expanding the base of its principles to the full lifespan of an individual. In their results, the authors found support for their age graded theory of crime and delinquency, which suggests that familial structures and factors related to child rearing can influence children toward the direction of delinquency, this is later enforced during a child's adolescent years in attachments to school and peers. Finally, weak or strong social bonds that are developed in adulthood either continue the individual's pattern of crime or influence the desistence of deviance and crime (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Attachment, bonds and the socialization process that occurs in the family are key areas where parental incarceration impacts a child's life the most and contribute to the loss of social capital.

**Parental incarceration and socialization.** Clear (2007) argues that "Families are the central mechanism of informal social controls, bolstering the limited capacity of formal controls to shape behavior" (pg. 95). Parental incarceration removes a potential assistant in the socialization process (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999). Children are unable to attach and bond to the missing parent, a key factor in the prediction of deviance according to control theories (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990; Sampson and Laub, 1993). Further, the loss of a parent reduces the number of people and amount of time available to supervise the child, thereby creating more

opportunities for deviant behavior to go unnoticed and uncorrected. This is especially true in cases that the other parent must work more hours to make up for the financial loss from the other parent's incarceration. Sampson and Laub (1993:77) found that increase in parental supervision and attachment between child and parent were associated with a decrease in deviance.

Problems with socialization and control related variables are further emphasized when considering a child's relationship with school and school performance. The school, in the eyes of control theories, provides opportunity for social control and socialization (Hirschi, 1969; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990; Sampson and Laub, 1993). Schools provide a well supervised, structured environment that teaches acceptable values and behaviors. When a child is well attached to school, their chance of delinquency decreases (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Research indicates a relationship between the familial unit and its ability to provide educational resources to children and a child's success and attachment to school (Teachman, 1987). The ability for parents to be involved, have knowledge of, and interest in a child's school and educational development is also significantly related to that child's educational success (Coleman, 1988, 1990).

Additionally, research supports that the absence of a parent can also lead to the intergenerational repetition of non-normative behaviors through socialization (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Hagan, 1996). When a parent is incarcerated, one less person is available to provide prosocial and culturally acceptable norms to the child. This can lead to the other parent as a more salient role model (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988). McLanahan and Bumpass (1988) utilized data from the 1982 National Survey of Family Growth, a nearly 8,000 participant sized sample of women between the ages of 15 and 44, to identify the impact of single parenthood on the marital and child-bearing of the next generation. Results from their study indicated that the children of single mothers were significantly more likely to have children early, marry early, and

have their own marriages break up (1988). The authors concluded that socialization theory best supported this correlation, suggesting that girls of single parent homes were more likely to equate early marriage and child bearing as a normal or acceptable occurrence. This was further explained by supervision theory, which clearly indicates that the lack of available parental supervision best explains the transfer of nonnormative family behaviors. Children may also rely heavier on peers to develop social norms and values. As Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory suggests, this can become adverse when peers are delinquent.

**Socialization and social capital.** Socialization and the factors of informal social control that are necessary to keep children and adults away from the path of crime and deviance, are wholly related to the development and retention of a child's social capital. Social capital is the use of networks, trust and mutually benefiting goals to achieve positive and reciprocal benefits. These networks, trust and relationships are formed through the socialization of the individual of values and beliefs that the community adheres to and finds acceptable. Attachment, supervision, and the identification/punishment of deviant behavior are negatively correlated with delinquency *and* help to form the base for social capital (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999). The presence of attachment, supervision, identifying and punishing delinquency through the family unit (informal control) is partially how social capital is created at the individual level.

Coleman (1988) specifically identifies the family structure as playing an important role in the creation of social capital. Similar to the factors that are necessary for proper socialization, social capital is formed through time spent with a parent who serves as a role model for acceptable behaviors, societal values and mutual goals. When parental incarceration occurs within the family structure, the time, money and attachment of the absent parent is sorely missed. The remaining parent is left to make financial, emotional, and material needs meet for the child.



Often times, the resources required for supervision, attachment and socialization are not available in a single parent household, making the development of social capital difficult.

## **Stigma**

Incarceration by its very nature separates the offender from the rest of society, exemplifying what society has labeled as non-normative behavior committed. The stigma that society has associated with incarceration can be difficult to shake for offenders both during their time served as well as during reentry. Even worse, the stigma of incarceration is placed not only the incarcerated, but also their families, children and peers. For children, the stigma of a parent's incarceration can be embarrassing and cause emotional distress, leading to delinquent and anti-social behaviors.

**Parental incarceration and stigma.** Goffman (1963), defines stigma as one of three undesirable attributes, including the stigma of a poor character as the result of incarceration or a criminal history. He argues that stigma shapes the way in which “normal” individuals react to the stigmatized person and visa-versa (Goffman, 1963). Further, Goffman discusses the impact of stigma on the families and friends of the stigmatized individual. He notes that the stigma of a parent, can cause a great deal of stress on the child, who may be bullied or teased for their parent's actions.

Additionally, labeling theories suggest that societies' label of an individual as an “offender” or “delinquent”, perpetuates their likelihood of serving that role (Becker, 1963). For offenders, strong labels and stigma from the societal view of incarceration and crime can partially mediate their ability to maintain social relations, find employment or find housing. For their children, the stigma and label of having an incarcerated parent can be devastating as a result

of their parent's blocked goals, but also can have direct impact. Children with incarcerated parents may be bullied by other children for their parent's incarceration and even labelled as deviant themselves.

A large influence in the stigma and label of incarceration comes from criminal justice policies that focus heavily on the punishment of the crime and less on the reentry process back into society. Braithwaite (1989) suggests that reintegrative shaming provides a pathway for the ex-offender to successfully reenter the community and society again. However, as Braithwaite also notes, programs such as probation and parole are more stringent than before, pulling away from the goal of assisting inmates in their reentry in their communities. Without this help and overall understanding of the necessity of successful reentry, stigma of the offender after incarceration can severely block the reentry process (Maruna and Shadd, 2001).

When a parent is unable to reenter their community or families successfully, their children, families and communities suffer. For children, the stigma of incarceration and crime can result in issues of bullying and teasing for children in school (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999; Murray, 2007; Goffman, 1963). Exclusion from peer groups because of bullying combined with the shame of parental incarceration can produce defiant and angry responses (Scheff and Retzinger, 1991 as cited in Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999). In many circumstances, bullying and the stigma of having an incarcerated family member can lead to housing instability as families are forced to move to other school districts and communities to escape the label (Murray, 2007).

**Stigma and social capital.** Stigma as defined and implemented by society, can greatly influence the social capital of an individual. The stigma of incarceration blocks both the incarcerated and their families from obtaining resources that aid in the formation of social capital. Housing, employment, and peers are all areas in which social capital can form and be

utilized as a resource. When the stigma of a parent's incarceration blocks these, a child is unable to make the friends that provide beneficial and positive relationships or acquire stable housing that allow for the child to develop and familiarize in a community.

Further, the societal backlash that comes from the stigma of an incarcerated parent can negatively influence the emotions and social skill of their child. This emotional and social influence and impact a child's trajectory into peer groups and school. As discussed in previous sections, school and peers are significant in the socialization and building of social capital, as they provide a structured and direct environment for learning values and building trust amongst community members.

### **Social Exclusion**

Social exclusion theories focus on the number of ways in which incarcerated individuals, as well as individuals who possess a criminal record, are excluded from normal societal participation, including workforce participation, utilization of government resources, and housing (Wacquant, 2001; Pager, 2003). This exclusion is related to the disenfranchisement that felons experience upon their reentry into society. Social exclusion theory further expands the understanding of the impact of incarceration on children by identifying a number of ways in which children experience the same societal exclusions as their incarcerated parent including pre-existing disadvantage, loss of financial resources and material exclusions, a lack of political participation, and the stigma of having an incarcerated parent (Murray, 2007).

Murray (2007) addresses seven ways in which children are transferred the burdens of social exclusion as a result of their parent's incarceration. The first of these, addresses the pre-existing disadvantages that children of prisoners are already likely to experience before their

parent's arrest. Before incarceration, preexisting exclusions are present for many offenders and their children as the incarcerated population is generally poorer and less educated than the general population (Murray, 2007). Thus, even before their parent becomes incarcerated, children of incarcerated parents generally lack resources that the rest of the population has.

Preexisting exclusions are further aggravated by material exclusions that result from incarceration such as government assistance and public aid (Wacquant, 2001; Murray, 2007). Harsh policies that ensure that those convicted of felony are unable to apply for government aid further damages the financial wellbeing of incarcerated parents and, consequently, their children (Wacquant, 2001). Further, the stigma of a criminal record, especially a felony, has been proven to significantly reduce one's ability to find employment (Pager, 2003). Difficulty in finding employment for ex-offenders passes an additional financial burden to their children as income sources are limited.

Social exclusions that are passed from an incarcerated parent to their children have been observed in more direct ways as well. Foster and Hagan (2007), found that particularly in the case of paternal incarceration, children of incarcerated parents were at a much higher risk of educational detainment, homelessness and political disengagement. Observed risk factors were strongly associated with both father's educational detainment and incarceration, resulting in children's own educational detainment and future social exclusions (Foster and Hagan, 2007).

Political participation is an additionally worrisome activity that children of incarcerated parents often are excluded from. When looking at the many indirect consequences of incarceration experienced by offenders, a larger portion of literature has focused on voting rights and felon disenfranchisement. This refers to the laws and policies created in many states that do not allow individuals convicted of a felony exercise their right to vote (Manza and Uggen, 2006).

For some states, convicted felons are unable to participate in the voting process for a certain period of time. However, in a number of states, they are not allowed to vote at all. This raises a number of questions in regards to constitutional individual rights as well as larger impacts on communities where incarceration rates are high and acute.

**Exclusion and social capital.** Foster and Hagan's study of children with paternal incarceration, indicated that children were at a much higher risk for political disengagement when they reported their father incarcerated during their childhood. This suggests that transfer of exclusion is salient as well in political participation, leading to potential larger impacts of intergenerational political disengagement on communities that incarceration rates remain high.

Further, the political participation is a foundational institution for the access and utilization of social capital. Coleman (1988, 1990) highlights the political process and engagement of the political system as an exemplification of social capital at work and its development. The organization, sharing of beliefs and action toward beneficial community action characteristic of political engagement, all incorporate the necessary networks, trust and connections of social capital. The exclusion of both offender and their children by society as a result of the parent's incarceration creates devastating effects on the social capital of the parent and children. This particular use of social capital is especially significant when considering the direct influence political action has on developing and influencing community and societal policies.

### **The "Positive" Outcome of Parental Incarceration**

Hagan and Dinovitzer (1999) suggest that parental incarceration could also be viewed as a positive mediator of its negative effects on children as parents who are a danger and strain to

their families are removed. Under this circumstance, it would seem that any financial or social consequences of the incarcerated parent's absence would be mediated by the removal of the burden of their participation within the child's life. However, relevant literature overwhelmingly throws support toward the argument that parental incarceration does more harm to a child and their family (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999). Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to possess fewer resources due to poverty, have an increased risk of mental health problems, experience instability in housing and lower educational achievement (Nichols, Loper, Meyer, 2016; Arriditta and Savla, 2015; Murray, 2007; Clear, 2007; Wildeman, 2014). Further, the risks and disadvantages associated with growing up with an incarcerated parent last for a child's lifetime, including a higher risk of participating in delinquent or criminal behavior (Foster and Hagan, 2016; Miller and Barnes, 2015; Ng and Sarri, 2013; Beaver, 2013).

### **Parental Incarceration and Trauma**

Trauma theories suggest that the many traumatic events and situations that child experience as a result of a parent's incarceration, are the mediating mechanism behind their increased risk for negative outcomes. Recent literature, which has explored in depth the consequences that parental incarceration put upon children, suggests that children are at a higher risk for trauma as a result of a parent's incarceration. Trauma could be related to the actual event of the parent's arrest, the ambiguous absence of that parent, as well as the many situations that children could be placed in as a result of a parent's incarceration and single parent households.

Children experience a number of traumas during the time leading up to and during their parent's incarceration. Witnessing the arrest of a parent can be violent and scary for a child (Philips and Zhao, 2010). The sudden separation from a parent can leave a child confused and uncertain about the absence of their parent and often times, explanations for absences from

caregivers are inadequate and only cause more stress and uncertainty (Shaw, 1992; Bocknek, Sandersen, and Britner, 2009). Once a parent is incarcerated, poor experiences during visitations at prison facilities can also negatively impact a child and their ability to cope with the incarceration and the absence of a parent (Richards et al, 1994; Arditta, 2012). Finally, housing instability and sudden moves due to the incarceration of a primary caregiver or the inability to afford current housing without the incarcerated parent's financial contribution can be scary and disrupting for a child (Murray et al, 2012).

The incarceration of a parent itself is considered by relevant literature to be a type of adverse childhood experience (ACES) that can negatively impact a child's mental health. As events that can take the form of a singular action, but also the cumulation of many negative actions, ACES can have an immediate impact on the child's mental wellbeing as well as influence the trajectory of the child's life. In this way, a parent's incarceration can create environmental changes in the child's life such as new homes, new guardian or less time with either parent, it can also influence the way in which the child interprets and copes with emotions.

The experience of parental incarceration creates an increased risk for experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (Bocknek et al, 2009). In their qualitative study of young boys and girls with incarcerated parents, interviewers found a number of themes that suggest children's tendency to rely on internalizing behaviors in response to negative stress. Further, the children in their study relied on a number of coping mechanisms, including denial of the parent's absent role in their support system (Bocknek, 2009). Similarly, Arrditta and Savla (2013) in their study of 45 children and caregivers enrolled in a child mentoring program, discovered that within single caregiver families that had been impacted by incarceration, children scored significantly higher on post traumatic symptom self-report tests than children who had not been impacted by

incarceration. While the sampling size for this study was small, the results indicate a clear and significant difference in the risk for trauma symptoms in children that had an incarcerated parent. Parental incarceration creates a uniquely negative impact on the mental health of the child. Further, Arditta's (2012) study suggests a significant correlation between the ambiguous loss of a parent due to incarceration and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms when compared to children without an incarcerated parent.

The trauma of a parent's incarceration can cause mental and emotional instability in children. Losing a parent on its own is a significantly negative event in a child's life. For children of incarcerated parents, this loss may equate to poor reasoning and understanding of why the parent is missing, painful experiences in visiting the incarcerated parent, and additional strain related to decreased time with the remaining parent.

## **Mental Health**

Children of incarcerated parents are at greater risk of mental health problems outside of PTSD. As discussed in the following sections, research in regards to the effects of parental incarceration on children are difficult to measure. Each child responds to the parent's incarceration in a different manner and the situational differences between each family and the incarceration are broad, making them challenging to control for.

Overall, recent literature has found that parental incarceration increases the likelihood of negative mental health outcomes. Further, it appears that the parental incarceration itself is what contributes to this negative outcome. In their study, Murray and Farrington (2008) analyzed the impact of a parent's absence, due to incarceration compared with parental absence for other reasons. The authors utilized data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development, a



longitudinal study of 411 children in working-class London. The results indicated that children of incarcerated parents were over twice as likely to experience mental health problems associated with internalizing behaviors, such as depression or anxiety. This effect was exclusive for children who had been separated from their parent due to incarceration (Murray and Farrington, 2008). Davis and Shafler (2017) also found that having an incarcerated parent significantly increased the chance of mental health problems in children. However, this increase was at least partially mediated by strong parent-child relationships.

While it is clear that there are significant correlations between the incarceration of a parent and a child's risk of negative mental health outcomes, recent studies of this effect are mixed in their conclusion of causation. Murray, Farrington and Sekol's (2012) meta-analysis of 40 studies which examine the effects of parental incarceration on children, found that parental incarceration was not associated with higher risks of poor mental health outcomes. As the authors point out, this finding points to the need for more rigorous statistical analysis of parental incarceration effect. Assessing if parental incarceration is significantly associated with negative mental health outcomes is difficult as there are numerous mediating effects that may be present for each child and family.

### **Educational Outcomes**

Children of incarcerated parents are at a higher risk for low educational outcomes and school achievement. a large portion of the relevant literature supports a significant and negative correlation between the incarceration of a parent and the child's educational achievement, especially in measures of high school and college completion (Hagan and Foster, 2012; Cho, 2011). Children who experience paternal incarceration specifically, show significant disadvantages in educational achievement, which then contributes to future social exclusion

(Foster and Hagan, 2007). In this way, educational disadvantages are simply one more way that parental incarceration undermines the growth and development of children.

Cho (2011) in a study of over 6,000 Illinois, school age children, found that students with incarcerated mothers had a significantly higher risk of drop out during the months of their mother's incarceration. This difference did not change even after controlling for quality of the school. Cho's (2011) study also suggests a broader community level effect on the high incarceration rates of mothers. Children without an incarcerated parent had a increased risk of drop out when attending schools where the overall maternal incarceration rate was high. This influence did not present itself for both groups, however, as children with an incarcerated mother did not have an increased risk due to a school with a high maternal incarceration rate, nor a decreased risk in a school with an overall low one (Cho, 2011).

Foster and Hagan (2012) found similar results while studying paternal incarceration, in their study using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. In examining associations between paternal incarceration and educational outcomes, results indicated that for children with an incarcerated father before the age of 12, who also attended a school with a high paternal incarceration rate, college completion was reduced by about three-quarters when compared to youth who attended schools with low incarceration rates and who did have an incarcerated father before age 12. This effect also stayed significant after controlling for a large number of individual and institutional level variables. Foster and Hagan's (2012) results also indicate a negative educational effect for children without an incarcerated father attending schools with high parental incarceration rates.

Parental incarceration appears to be a significant block to the educational achievement of children with incarcerated parents. Given the association between educational achievement and

risk of delinquency in children (Foster and Hagan, 2007), this effect is concerning for the prospects of intergenerational delinquency and highlights a clear potential for intergenerational incarceration to become a rising phenomenon. Further, the impact of high parental incarceration rates in communities has an additional, broader effect on the educational achievement of children of that community, even when they do not have an incarcerated parent. These results indicate a much larger impact of parental incarceration and mass incarceration on youth in general.

### **Parental Incarceration and Delinquency**

Current literature has found a correlation between parental incarceration and delinquency in children. This correlation becomes more complex, however, when looking at the many factors that may be present in addition to the incarceration of a parent. Variables associated with the family and family functioning have shown to have a mediating role in the relationship between intergenerational delinquency and incarceration.

Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to participate in delinquent activities and become incarcerated in teen and adult years. Ng et al (2013)'s study of incarcerated juveniles found high rates of reported parental incarceration, exemplifying the cyclic nature of the intergenerational incarceration and delinquency. Non-normative behavior can appear early in children with incarcerated parents. For example, recent research has concluded that parental incarceration is strongly correlated with children's emotionally angry and resentful disposition as well as anti-social behavior (Murry et al, 2012; Murray and Farrington, 2008). This effect is unique to parental absence due to incarceration as opposed to losing a parent to death or divorce (Murray and Farrington, 2008). In a comparative study of England and Sweden, researchers found that parental incarceration predicted children's own criminal behavior in both populations

(Murray, Janson, and Farrington, 2007). This suggests that this effect is related to the effect of parental incarceration rather than cultural influences.

Delinquency and criminal justice involvement for the children of incarcerated parents can be attributed to problems within the family. Sampson and Laub's (1993) study of criminal behavior throughout the lifespan found a strong correlation between childhood delinquency and "family process". Family process refers to supervision, attachment, and discipline within the family. Sampson and Laub's study concluded that children in families with little supervision of children, weak attachment to parents, and poor disciplining styles (erratic or inconsistent) were much more likely to be reported as participating in delinquent activities. Parental incarceration can place families at risk for all of these variables of family process because there becomes one less person to watch children, to bond with them, and to discipline them in a positive way. This exemplifies the many ways in which parental incarceration may have an indirect, although strong impact on children.

Research supports that parental incarceration contributes significantly to a number of negative outcomes for children. Outcomes can include, behavioral, mental, and social disadvantages that can create riskier and non-normative pathways for children. Social exclusions, which pass in a variety of ways from the incarcerated parent to their children also contribute to further disadvantages within the child's life course, including poor educational outcomes, exclusion from material resources, and the stigma of incarceration (Murray, 2007; Foster and Hagan, 2016). Strain, socialization and stigma theories of crime and deviance, clarify how the loss of a parent and caregiver due to incarceration can contribute to significant problems and outcomes in almost every aspect of a child's life (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999; McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Murray and Farrington, 2005). This research points to the indirect, but

significant impact that mass incarceration has on not just the individuals it punishes through the criminal justice system, but also the children and families of those incarcerated.

### **Impact of Parental Incarceration into Adulthood**

The negative effects of an incarcerated parent do not alleviate after childhood. The cumulative disadvantages that the children of incarcerated parents face guide them toward dangerous and riskier pathways. In addition, the mental health, trauma, and socioeconomic impact experienced in childhood due to an incarcerated parent continues into adulthood and lifetime. Foster and Hagan's research (2016), suggests that parental incarceration, especially paternal incarceration, contributes to socioeconomic inequality even into an individual's 20's and 30's. Using data collected over four generations, results indicated four social exclusion categories that young adults of incarcerated parents experience. These include lower household and personal income, negatively perceived socioeconomic status, and feelings of powerlessness. Miller and Barnes' (2015) analysis of young adult outcomes for children with incarcerated parents suggests a similar pattern. Of the sample used, children of incarcerated parents had negative outcomes in physical health, were less likely to finish higher education and were more likely to have a diagnosis of depression. There are a number of reasons that parental incarceration can impact their children well into adulthood. Children of incarcerated parents find the transition into adulthood more difficult, as parents are unable to provide housing and financial assistance (Sienick, 2014). Further, having grown up with an incarcerated parent can have significantly harmful effects on an individual's mental health, illegal drug use, and intimate relationships during adult years (Mears and Sienick, 2016).

The impact of parental incarceration on children is both complex and far reaching. Children experience disadvantages and challenges in educational, behavioral, psychological and

social outcomes. This impact further inhibits the relationships and connections that children and young adults are able to make with their peers and within their community, reducing their ability to gain social capital. These factors combined create increased opportunities for behavioral problems and delinquency and many children of incarcerated parents find themselves a part of the criminal justice system as well.

Adjustment to the prison environment is difficult given the nature of incarceration on its own. The deprivations and loss of liberties that inmates abruptly experience upon entering the prison can be traumatic and stressful. To add to the “pains of imprisonment” as Sykes (1958) refers to these losses, the strain caused by the violent and dangerous environment of many prisons makes adjustment difficult. How an inmate copes with the stress and loss of basic rights is dependent on both the culture within the prison as well as the experiences and many factors that an inmate brings into the prison. Having an incarcerated parent is one such experience that could have an impact on the way an inmate adjusts to the prison environment.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Design**

The present study uses secondary, survey data from the 2004 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities. The research questions that are addressed include whether second-generation inmate status influences the inmate adjustment experience. Currently, research that looks specifically at the relationship between prison adjustment and intergenerational incarceration is limited. This study provides initial exploration into this question so that future research can continue to better develop its relationship.

### **Research Questions**

The following question will be answered in the present study:

1. Does second generation prisoner status influence adjustment to the prison environment?

### **Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities**

The Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2004 is a large, nationally representative survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). This survey is a part of a series, with the last survey taking place in 1997. The original dataset included over 15,000 male and female inmates from state and federal correctional facilities across the United States. The survey was conducted through personal interviews, which gathered information regarding inmates' current offense and sentence, criminal history, family background, personal characteristics, drug and alcohol use, mental and physical health, prison activities, programs and services.

**Procedure.** Sampling of participants for the Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2004 was conducted using a 2-stage process, the first stage identifying facilities, and the second selecting inmates within chosen facilities. In stage one, facilities were selected based upon inmate population size and representation of male and female populations. Facilities which possessed large populations and were well represented were automatically chosen. Remaining facilities were grouped into strata based on geographical regions and then selected using a sampling process that weighted the size of the facility and the probability of each inmate within that facility being chosen for participation. In total, 290 facilities were selected. 225 of these were male only facilities and the remaining 65 were female only facilities.

Stage two of the sampling process selected inmates within chosen facilities for interviews. Lists of present inmates were provided for both state and federal facilities by the bureau of prisons. Participants were randomly selected using a computer-based program. In the state dataset sample, 14,499 cases were collected.

Original data collection took place between October of 2003 and May of 2004. Interviews were conducted individually with participants and were roughly an hour in length. Data was collected from all participants using a semi-formal self-reporting survey. Interviews were conducted in-person, using a computer-assisted personal interviewing program, which supplied questions and follow up questions for interviewers<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>Original data collection was conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Census for the U.S. Department of Justice. Data collection followed mandated Department of Justice guidelines for human subject approval.



## **Data Collection**

Variables from the Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities 2004 that measured components related to psychological and behavioral adjustment while incarcerated were pulled to create dependent variable measures for the present study. For the purpose of this study, which attempts to address a gap in the literature regarding second generation prisoners, psychological and behavioral variables will be measured to assess differences in adjustment success. Similar to many studies within the realm of prison adjustment literature, the constraints of the dataset used by the current study make it difficult to address the vast and diverse ways in which psychological adjustment could be measured. For example, the questions asked of participants in the original dataset do not encompass all of mental health or psychological adjustment to the prison environment. Constraints such as this should be considered for future research.

## **Instrumentation**

The data collected from the Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2004 for the purpose of the present study was recoded into new variables that fit the context of the present study and research question. In the case of the dependent variable measures, behavioral and psychological adjustment, scales were created based on a principal component analysis of all included variables. Reliability analysis was then performed to ensure a strong alpha score.

**Dependent measures.** Variables pulled from the original dataset for the measurement of psychological adjustment, asked if respondents had experienced psychological problems in the prior year. All of these items were recoded (1= “yes”, and 0 = “no”). All blank, refused or “do

not know” responses were marked as missing. A lower score on this scale would indicate less reported psychological problems, and thus better adjustment. Higher scores on this scale would indicate poorer inmate adjustment.

To create a measure of psychological adjustment, items that asked participants about a variety of mental and social maladjustments were pulled from the original dataset. These items asked if participants had noticed a shortness of temper, increased anger, feelings of wanting revenge, numbness, and hopelessness for the future, changes in appetite and sleep, and whether participants felt close to their family and friends.

Psychological adjustment is a 10-item multi-dimensional scale ( $\alpha = .80$ ). The scale ranges 0 to 10. Items within this scale ask participants whether they had experienced a variety of psychological challenges within the last year. This scale combines responses to the following questions: 1. During the last year: Have you lost your temper more easily, or had a short fuse more often than usual? (.79) 2. During the last year: Have you been angry more often than usual? (.74) 3. During the last year: Have you hurt or broken things on purpose, just because you were angry? (.63) 4. During the last year: Have you thought a lot about getting back at someone you have been angry at? (.66) 5. Has there been an increase or decrease in your overall activity compared to your usual level of functioning? (.74) 6. Has there been a noticeable increase or decrease in the amount of time you sleep? (.76) 7. Has there been a noticeable increase or decrease in your appetite for a period of 2 or more weeks? (.73) 8. Have you given up hope for your life or your future? (.62) 9. Have there been periods when you felt no one cares about you?

(.70) 10. Have there been periods when you felt numb or empty inside? (.69)<sup>3</sup>. Variables were added together to create the psychological adjustment scale.

Variables pulled from the original dataset used for measures of behavioral adjustment asked if participants had committed specific violations and number of time participants committed that violation since their incarceration. For the behavioral adjustment measure, items which asked if participants had been written up or found guilty of any offenses were pulled from the original dataset. This follows a similar approach to recent inmate adjustment literature (Lahm, 2009; Benning and Lahm, 2016). In the original survey, participants were first asked if they had been written up or found guilty of any offense since admission to their current incarceration. Participants who answer yes to this question were then asked a series of questions regarding specific violations and the number of times they were committed. Violations included drug and alcohol violations, weapon possession, verbal/physical assault on inmates and staff, escape/attempted escape, disobeying orders, being out of place, other minor or major violations. Those who answers no to the initial question skipped questions regarding specific violations and moved to the next section of the survey.

Prior to combining these variables for the purpose of the present study these items were separated into three tiers. First, participants were asked if they had committed any violations since their admission. If participants answered “yes” to this question, a series of questions then asked first if they had committed a specific violation (drug, alcohol, etc.), and then how many times they had committed that violation. To retain all of the value of the data provided in the original survey, responses from all the tiers (have you ever been written up/found guilty of a

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<sup>3</sup> A principal components analysis with a varimax rotation was employed on each of the items used for the psychological adjustment scale. Analysis revealed that variables loaded into three factors. Variables with factor loading of .6 or greater were collected for scale. Factor loadings of included items are noted in parentheses.

violation during your incarceration, have you ever been written up/found guilty of a specific violation, and how many times have you been written up or found guilty of that specific violation) were combined into 15 variables, by specific violation. Each new variable asked the question “since your admission, have you been written up for or found guilty of \*specific violation\* and how many times?” A large number of reported infractions would indicate poor behavioral adjustment while a small number of infractions would suggest successful adjustment.

The behavioral adjustment measure was created using a 12-item, multi-dimensional scale ( $\alpha = .64$ ). The scale ranges from 0 to 17. The items included in this scale included questions which asked about whether participants had been written up or found guilty of 1.) A drug violation, including using or dealing 2.) Alcohol violation, including using or possession 3.) Possession of a weapon 4.) Possession of another unauthorized substance or item 5.) Verbal assault on a correctional officer or other staff member 6.) Physical assault on a correctional officer or other staff member 7.) Verbal assault on another inmate 8.) Physical assault on another inmate 9.) Being out of place 10.) Disobeying orders 11.) Any other major violation 12.) Any other minor violation. Scores were combined into an additive scale.

**Independent measure.** The independent measure in this study is the status of second generation prisoner. Participants were asked in the original survey: Have any of your parents or stepparents ever been sentenced and served time in jail or prison? A total of 2,976 inmates answered “yes” to this question. This item was recoded into a dichotomous variable with “Yes” = 1 and “No” = 0.

### **Study Attrition**

The present study utilizes only the state dataset from the 2004 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities. Population size ( $n = 14,449$ ) within this dataset was more

than large enough to achieve the data analysis goals of this thesis. Analysis of federal prison inmates should be considered for future research.

The original dataset included a sample size of 14,499 participants. The items from the original dataset used to create the psychological scale of inmate adjustment specified a time frame of one year (i.e. “in the past year have you...?”). To accommodate for this and ensure a reliable measurement of adjustment, the original population was sampled by length of time incarcerated for the participant’s current sentence. Those inmates that had been incarcerated for 1 year or less were removed from the sample to avoid measuring effects outside of the prison environment. There is not a variable present within the original dataset that indicates the length of time that a participant was incarcerated at the time of survey administration. To create this variable, the date of survey was subtracted by the date of incarceration and converted into months. This allowed for a standardized number to pull eligible participants from (those incarcerated for more than a year). There were 5,635 cases that had been incarcerated for less than a year. This brought the sample size to 8,814 cases. An additional 509 cases were excluded from the model because of missing data. This dropped the number of cases of the final sample size to 8,305.

**Control variables.** All control variables, including age, race, gender, previous incarceration, current offense, and having a previous mental health diagnosis were recoded to eliminate non-valid data (“don’t know”, refused, or blank answers).

Age, race, and gender were measured using the items in the original survey. Age and gender were reported by participants and then verified using institutional records. Gender was categorized by male and female. Race was already coded in the original dataset, including six

categories (white, black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, or multiple races chosen).

Having a previous incarceration was measured by combining several items from the original survey. Questions regarding previous offense history were broken down by status of inmate at arrest. These categories included on probation, on parole, escaped, or none of these. Each section asked participants if they had ever been sentenced to serve time for any crime. This variable was recoded to reflect only that the participant had or had not ever been incarcerated (1=previous incarceration, 0=no previous incarceration).

Current offense was categorized by type of offense. This was recoded to reflect violent or non-violent offenses. In order to retain the largest sample for the present study, 1233 missing cases were recorded as “non-violent”.

Reporting a previous mental health diagnosis was added to control for pre-existing mental health concerns prior to incarceration. This variable was recoded from a question within the survey which asked if a participant had been diagnosed with a variety of mental illnesses. The following question, which only addressed participants that had identified at least one previous diagnosis, asked if the participant had ever taken medication for any one of the diagnosed mental illnesses. All “yes” and “no” responses were recoded as “has a previous mental health diagnosis”. Missing responses were treated as not having a previous mental health diagnosis.

Current literature has suggested that controls such as age, race, gender, previous incarceration, current offense, and previous mental health diagnosis have a significant impact on inmate adjustment (Steiner and Wooldredge, 2008; Cao, Zhao and Van Dine, 1997; Cochran and

Bales, 2015). Younger inmates, for example, have been found to employ more aggressive actions toward other inmates in response to violent prison contexts (McCorkle, 1992). Further, inmates that have already experienced incarceration may experience adjustment differently than those experiencing incarceration for the first time. Accounting for these influential variables ensures a clear measure of the impact of the prison environment on inmate adjustment.

## **Data Analysis**

Both a bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis were employed to measure the effect of having an incarcerated parent or stepparent on inmate adjustment. A correlation table was created to measure bivariate correlations. A negative binomial regression analysis was used to measure the effect of each variable on psychological and behavioral adjustment.

## **Hypothesis**

The research question of the present study is as follows:

1. Does second generation prisoner status influence adjustment to the prison environment?

The hypothesis (H1) states that second-generation prisoner status will have an adverse influence on prison adjustment, meaning that second-generation prisoner status will be related to an increase on the behavioral and psychological adjustment scales. Importation theory and related literature suggests that influences from outside the prison produce a significant effect on not just the culture of, but the adjustment to the prison environment (Irwin and Cressey, 1962; Cain, Steiner and Wright, 2016; Cao, Zhao and Van Dine, 1997). The null hypothesis (H0) of this study states that second generation prisoner status will have no effect on inmate adjustment to the prison environment.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Bivariate Correlations

The presented table includes bivariate correlations among key variables. Gender is significantly correlated with having a parent or step parent incarcerated at the .01 level. Specifically, being female was correlated with having a parent or stepparent incarcerated ( $r = -.034, p < .01$ ).

Table 1

Correlations														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Months Incarcerated	1													
2. Gender	-.008	1												
3. White, non-hispanic	-.035**	0.004	1											
4. Black, non-hispanic	.022*	-.035**	-.619**	1										
5. Hispanic	-.010	.041*	-.348**	-.376**	1									
6. American Indian, Alaskan Indian, non-hispanic	0.001	.027**	-.099**	-.107*	-.060**	1								
7. Asian, Pacific Islander, non- hispanic	.035**	-.015	-.074**	-.080**	-.045**	-.013	1							
8. Multiple Races chosen, non-hispanic	.036**	.004	-.139**	-.150*	-.085**	-.024**	-.018	1						
9. Parent or step-parent incarcerated?	-.001	-.034**	.012	.003	-.021*	-.003	-.001	.003	1					
10. Psychological adjustment	.039**	.107**	.029**	-.015	-.016	-.014	-.017*	.017	-.004	1				
11. Behavioral adjustment	-.002	-.075**	-.010	.004	.021*	-.005	-.015	-.016	-.003	.519**	1			
12. Previous mental illness diagnosis	-.034**	.001	-.022**	.254**	-.290**	.077**	.079**	-.116**	.014	.000	-.017*	1		
13. Previous incarceration	-.004	.028**	.786**	-.785**	-.149**	.136**	-.101**	.191**	.009	.017*	-.028**	-.099**	1	
14. Violent Offense	.057**	.038**	-.258**	-.394**	.377**	.107**	.075**	.135**	-.020	-.006	.019*	-.227**	-.070**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Gender is also significantly correlated with psychological adjustment at the .01 level ( $r = .107$ ). The direction of this correlation suggests being male is associated with scoring higher on the psychological adjustment scale. Being white is significantly correlated with psychological adjustment at the .01 level ( $r = .029$ ). Specifically, white is correlated with higher scores on the psychological adjustment scale. Further, identification with multiple races is correlated with scoring higher on the psychological adjustment scale, indicating that participants within this race



category experienced higher rates of psychological problems ( $r = .017, p < .05$ ). The number of months incarcerated is positively correlated with psychological adjustment. This correlation suggests that individuals who have been incarcerated have higher scores on the psychological adjustment scale ( $r = .039, p < .01$ ).

Behavioral adjustment is also significantly correlated with gender at the .01 level ( $r = -.075$ ). The direction of this correlation indicates that being female correlates with reporting write ups. Behavioral adjustment is positively correlated with being Hispanic at the .05 level.

Of interest is the correlation between reporting previous mental health diagnosis and behavioral adjustment. This correlation is significant and negative, suggesting that a previous mental health diagnosis is correlated with a decrease in reported write ups ( $r = -.017, p < .05$ ). Behavioral adjustment is positively correlated with psychological adjustment at the .01 level ( $r = .519$ ). This suggests that as reported write-ups are correlated with more reported psychological concerns.

Reporting a previous mental health diagnosis is significantly correlated with being black ( $r = .254, p < .01$ ), Native American ( $r = .077, p < .01$ ), as well as Asian/Pacific Islander ( $r = .079, p < .01$ ). Identification with these groups is positively correlated with having a previous mental health diagnosis. Reporting a previously mental health diagnosis is negatively correlated with being white ( $r = -.022, p < .01$ ), Hispanic ( $r = -.290, p < .01$ ), and identifying as multiple races ( $r = -.116, p < .01$ ). This correlation indicates that participants in these race groups are unlikely to report having a previous mental health diagnosis.

Previous incarceration is significantly and positively correlated at the .01 level with gender. This suggests that males are likely to have previously been incarcerated ( $r = .028$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These data also show a statistically significant and positive correlation between previous incarceration and race. Previous incarceration positively correlated at the .01 level with being white ( $r = .786$ ), American Indian/Alaskan Indian ( $r = .136$ ), Asian/Pacific Islander ( $r = .101$ ), and identifying as multiple races ( $r = .191$ ). Being black ( $r = -.785$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and Hispanic ( $r = -.149$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was negatively correlated with reporting a previous incarceration.

Interestingly, previous incarceration is significantly and negatively correlated with behavioral adjustment. This indicates that those who reported having a previous incarceration are unlikely to report write ups ( $r = -.028$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Surprisingly, having a previous incarceration correlated negatively at the .01 level with having a previous mental health diagnosis, indicating those participants with a mental health diagnosis were unlikely to report a previous incarceration ( $r = -.099$ ).

Type of offense was positively correlated at the .01 level with time incarcerated. Being incarcerated for a non-violent offense is negatively correlated with violent offenses ( $r = .057$ ). Further, type of offense is positively correlated with gender, suggesting that being male is related to being incarcerated for a violent crime ( $r = .038$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Type of offense is significantly correlated with race as well. Being Hispanic ( $r = .377$ ,  $p < .01$ ), American Indian/Alaskan Indian ( $r = .107$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Asian/Pacific Islander ( $r = .075$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and identifying with multiple races ( $r = .135$ ,  $p < .01$ ) is related to being incarcerated for a violent crime. Being white ( $r = -.258$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and black ( $r = -.394$ ,  $p < .01$ ) is related to being incarcerated for a non-violent offense.

The table also shows that type of offense is correlated at the .05 level with behavioral adjustment. This correlation suggests that violent offenses are positively correlated with reported write ups ( $r = .019$ ). Type of offense also correlated significantly and negatively at the .01 level with previous incarceration and having a previous mental health diagnosis. Being incarcerated for a violent offense is negatively related to having a previous incarceration ( $r = -.070, p < .01$ ). Of interest is that these data suggest that having a violent offense is negatively related to reporting a previous mental health diagnosis.

### **Multivariate Analyses**

A negative binomial regression was run to estimate the effect of having an incarcerated parent on inmate adjustment. To address the research question of this study, having a parent or stepparent incarcerated is not statistically significantly related to psychological adjustment, when controlling for all other variables. Having an incarcerated parent or stepparent is also not significantly related to behavioral adjustment.

Table 2

<b>Negative Binomial Regression</b>				
Psychological Adjustment				
Variables	B	Std. Erro	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	.329	.0340	.000	2.118
Black, Non-Hispanic	-.059	.0683	.387	.943
Hispanic	-.069	.0573	.231	.934
Asian Pacific Islander, Non-	-.159	.1108	.151	.853
American Indian, Alaskan	-.084	.0868	.336	.920
Multiple	.092	.0676	.174	1.096
Violent Offense	.075	.0342	.029	1.077
Previously Incarcerated	-.110	.0538	.041	0.896
History of Mental Health	.013	.0404	.749	1.013
Months Incarcerated	.000	.0002	.932	1.000
Parent/Step-Parent Incarcerated	-.011	.0330	.728	0.989

Dependent Variable: Psychological Adjustment

### Psychological Adjustment

Despite this, several significant predictors were found. Gender is statistically significantly related to psychological adjustment, after controlling for all variables ( $B = .329, p < .01$ ). Being male was associated with an increase on the psychological adjustment scale that was over two times that of females, as indicated by the odds ratio. Odds ratios are measures of association between two variables. Specifically, this measure quantifies the effect of one variable's presence or absence on the presence or absence of another variable. In the case of the present study, the odds ratio measures the effect of each variable on behavioral and psychological adjustment. An odds ratio greater than one indicates an increase on the scale when exposed to the corresponding variable. An odds ratio that is less than one indicates a decrease on the scale when exposed to the given variable.

The type of offense committed by a participant has a statistically significant effect on psychological adjustment ( $B = .075, p < .05$ ). After controlling for all variables, these data show that violent offenses were associated with a 7.7% increase, indicated by the odds ratio on the psychological adjustment scale compared to non-violent crimes, indicating more psychological concerns experienced by those who are incarcerated for violence. Previous incarceration has a statistically significant effect on psychological adjustment, after controlling for all variables ( $B = -.110, p < .05$ ). Having been incarcerated prior to the current sentence was associated with a 10.4% decrease on the psychological adjustment scale compared to those who had never been incarcerated prior to the current sentence.

Table 3

	Behavioral Adjustment			
	B	Std. Error	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	.752	.0360	.000	2.121
Black, Non-Hispanic	-0.419	.0691	.000	.658
Hispanic	-.240	.0592	.000	.787
Asian Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	-.500	.1203	.000	.606
American Indian, Alaskan Native, Non-Hispanic	-.093	.0883	.294	.911
Multiple	-.330	.0727	.000	.719
Violent Offense	.059	.0335	.077	1.061
Previously Incarcerated	-.554	.0548	.000	.575
History of Mental Health	-.133	.0412	.001	.875
Months Incarcerated	-0.001	.0002	.002	0.999
Parent/Step-Parent Incarcerated	-.018	.0329	.582	.982

Dependent Variable: Behavioral Adjustment

### Behavioral Adjustment

Gender has a statistically significant effect on behavioral adjustment as well ( $B = .752, p < .01$ ). After controlling for all variables, being male was associated with an increase on the behavioral adjustment scale. These results indicate a greater likelihood of males reporting more

write ups. The effect of being male on behavioral adjustment produced an odds ratio that was also twice as large as the effect of being female.

Previous incarceration has a statistically significant effect on behavioral adjustment ( $B = -.554, p < .01$ ). Previous incarceration was associated with a 42.5% decrease on the behavioral adjustment scale. This indicates that having a previous incarceration is associated with a lesser likelihood of reporting write ups.

Several categories of race are significantly related to behavioral adjustment. Being black is associated with a 34.2% decrease on the behavioral adjustment scale compared to being white ( $B = -.419, p < .01$ ). This indicates that being black is associated with 34.2% less write-ups compared to being white. Being Hispanic was also associated with a decrease of 21.3% in write ups compared to being white ( $B = -.240, p < .01$ ). Being Asian Pacific Islander ( $B = -.500, p < .01$ ) is associated with a 39.4% decrease, while identifying as multiple races ( $B = -.330, p < .01$ ) was associated with a 28.1% decrease in behavioral adjustment when compared to being white. Being Native American did not produce a statistically significant effect on behavioral adjustment.

Further, these data suggest that time incarcerated is statistically significantly related to behavioral adjustment scale ( $B = -.001, p < .01$ ). However, this effect is extremely small, with only a .001% decrease on the behavioral adjustment scale for each additional month incarcerated.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The purpose of the present study is to better understand the effect of second-generation prisoner status on inmate adjustment. To achieve this, both psychological and behavioral measures of adjustment were utilized in analysis. However, after controlling for all variables, the results of this analysis do not support the hypothesis that second-generational prisoner status has a significant impact on inmate adjustment to the prison environment. In both measures of psychological and behavioral adjustment, inmates who reported having an incarcerated parent or stepparent, did not report significantly more or less write-ups or psychological problems since their admission. This could be because the influence of second-generational status simply does not impact inmate adjustment to the prison.

### **Deprivation Theories**

Prison adjustment can be influenced by a number of factors, both from within and outside of the prison. As theorists such as Goffman (1961), Clemmer (1958), and Sykes (1958) highlight in their research, the prison environment and culture itself can shape the behavior and experience of an inmate while incarcerated, through the stripping of identity and deprivations of rights and liberties. This provides the foundation for the inmate culture that Sykes (1958) identifies in his research. The inmate culture includes an informal control system, inmate classifications, and a separate language that regulates that inmate community.

Current research has identified a number of predictors of inmate behavior related to the prison environment. For example, a more violent prison context is associated with higher reports of mental health problems from inmates (Steiner and Meade, 2013). Time incarcerated has been found to have a significant effect on inmate adjustment and misconducts (Zamble, 1992, Zamble

and Porporino, 1988). However, this effect was not found in the present study. While there was a significant relationship found between time incarcerated and number of misconducts that were reported, the effect was very small. It is possible that the variables analyzed for the present study included significant variables that may have mediated the effect of time incarcerated.

### **Importation Theory**

The inmate experience is strongly influenced by factors outside of the prison as well. The characteristics and experiences that inmates bring into prison with them have been found to have a significant impact on the way in which inmates react to the strains and deprivations of the prison environment. These outside factors include culture, socioeconomic status, and previous experiences (Cao, Zhao and Van Dine, 1997; Cain, Steiner and Wright, 2016; McCorkle, 1992). Inmates shape and influence the prison culture and environment as they contribute their own norms, beliefs and experiences upon admission to prison.

Current research has identified many characteristics that inmates bring into the prison environment with them that shape the prison culture and inmate's adjustment to that culture. These factors include age, race, gender, time incarcerated, and type of offense (Steiner and Wooldredge, 2008). The present study's results parallels those of current research. Type of offense was found to have a significant effect on psychological adjustment. Gender proved to have a significant effect on both psychological and behavioral adjustment. In addition, race was shown to have a significant effect on behavioral adjustment.

Recent research has found a reciprocal relationship between the prison and communities that retain a disproportionate number of inmates after their incarceration. Similar to the way in which inmates import their previous experiences, culture, and way of life into the prison upon



entry, inmates pass the experiences and culture from prison into the communities they reenter. Clear (2008) cites several areas in which the cycle of people out of communities, into the prison, and back again has impacted the communities where much of the incarceration rates are concentrated. This includes impacts to labor markets and the economic viability of the community, which is negatively impacted by the rotation of potential employees and customers out of the community (Clear, 2008; Clear, 2007). Community relationships are additionally strained and disconnected because of this constant movement of community members in and out of the community. Family members and friends are unable to be relied on while incarcerated and those relationships become further suspect as the inmate returns to the community and is labelled with the stigma of “ex-offender” (Clear, 2008). Even attitudes towards authority and law enforcement are significantly influenced by high concentrations of ex-offenders in a community as poor law enforcement and correctional policies create a negative attitude toward the efforts of law enforcement and police (Crutchfeld, 2005).

Clear (2008) goes on to explain that the identity and of community itself begins to change when a large portion of the residents are in and out of the correctional system. Coupled with the economic and community relation strains of incarceration, communities with many ex-offenders and high arrest rates are labelled as “problem” or “dangerous” communities. This makes those communities unattractive to move to and can motivate individuals within them to move out, further weakening the economic structure. The reciprocal impact of concentrated incarceration in the communities that experience it at the highest rates further explains the impact that incarceration has on the children and families of inmates.

**Prison management.** Styles of prison management play their own significant role in the inmate culture and how inmates adjust to the prison environment. Dilulio (1987) describes several

different styles of management ranging from authoritarian to management styles that attempt to give as much control to inmates as possible while still maintaining a safe environment. While the present study was unable to measure the management styles of each facility surveyed due to restriction in the original dataset, it is important to note that this may act as a strong mediator for reported write ups. Depending on the facility and its management style, a particular infraction may or may not be considered a reportable write up. This can influence the way in which successful inmate adjustment is defined within each facility and can make it challenging for adjustment research to define adjustment consistently.

**Strain, violence, and inmate adjustment.** Discussions of inmate adjustment must include a discussion of the violent and stressful state of prison. A lack of security and a much higher rate of assault and victimization compared to the general population motivates many inmate behaviors (Wolff, Blitz, Shi, Siegel and Bachman, 2007). A violent prison environment, for example, has been found by previous studies to negatively impact inmate psychological adjustment to prison (Steiner and Meade, 2013). Strain from a violent prison context carries into the transition from prison to community and has a significant impact on inmate's drug use, post-incarceration (Zweig, Yahner, Visher, and Lattimore, 2015). Further, hyper-masculinity in male inmates often results from this strain, influencing poor adjustment behavior in the prison as inmates attempt to avoid victimization through a show of force or violence (Haney, 2011).

The findings of this research may provide an explanation for the findings of the present study. Having a previous incarceration was associated with a significant decrease in reported write ups and psychological concerns. It is possible that those who experience multiple incarcerations have already experienced the “shock” of the violent prison context and are able to adjust better both behaviorally and psychologically compared to those experiencing incarceration

for the first time. This may be related to an already present expectation of the prison culture and a better understanding of how to assimilate within it for inmates that have been incarcerated previously.

**Second generation and gendered adjustment.** As discussed in previous chapters, there is limited research specifically related to second generation prisoners and their experience within the prison context, with exception to only a handful of relatable studies. What is understood is that many children of incarcerated parents become participants of deviant and/or criminal behavior, often finding themselves in the criminal justice system (Ng, Sarri, and Stoffregen, 2013; Murry et al, 2012; Murray and Farrington, 2008). Novero, Loper and Warren's (2011) study of second generation prisoners found a significantly negative effect of second generation status on inmate adjustment. The findings of this study did not mirror these results. Second generation prisoner status did not produce a significant effect on behavioral or psychological adjustment.

There are a number of reasons that the Novero, Loper, and Warren (2011) study outcomes differed from those of the present study. The sample size of 2011 study is significantly smaller than that of this sample, with roughly half of inmates reporting an incarcerated parent or step parent. In addition, participants were from only 10 prisons within two state jurisdictions. One explanation may be that this small and isolated sample was not generalizable. It is possible that the large and geographically varied sample that was used in this study may have eliminated the effect of second generation prisoner status. Another explanation may be related to the way in which adjustment was measured in each study. It is also possible that the control variables that were used in this study may have masked any effect of second generation prisoner status on

adjustment. Further research is needed to identify other factors that may contribute to the effect of second generation prisoners on inmate adjustment.

Consistent with the findings of previous studies, gender had a significant effect on adjustment. Being male was related to a significant increase on both the behavioral and psychological adjustment scales. This was over twice as much when compared to females. This indicated that males reported both more write ups as well as more psychological concerns while incarcerated. These results run parallel with the findings of current inmate adjustment literature that focuses on gendered differences. Several studies have found that males commit more and more serious misconducts compared to females, highlighting findings similar to those in this study (Hilinski-Rosick and Walsh, 2016; Craddock, 1996).

This may be related to the way in which inmates of both genders attempt to cope with incarceration and the prison environment. Women in prison rely heavier on their peer groups within the prison to cope with incarceration (Jiang and Winfree, 2006). Often, women form what has been referred to as pseudo families, which act as a support and security mechanism for them within the prison walls (Owen, 1998; Pollock, 2002). These pseudo families serve as emotional and economic support, as well as a medium for violence and aggression and a means for protection from intimidation and assault (Forsyth and Evans, 2003). Forsyth and Evans (2003) compare the roles that pseudo families serve to male gangs within prisons, which serve many of the same functions. However, current research has pointed to an overwhelming presence of hyper masculinity among male inmates within the prison, which acts as a significant factor in violence and sexual assault in male prison populations (Haney, 2011; Dolovich, 2012). To compensate for the loss of autonomy and fear of being viewed as “weak” or “feminine” in the violent prison context, inmates will utilize opportunities to take advantage of or commit violent

acts against other inmates to prove their strength and dominance (Haney, 2011). This hyper masculinity may contribute to the significant gendered differences in misconduct. Further investigation and future research may benefit to look closer at the relationship between gender and inmate adjustment.

### **Parental Incarceration**

Research which focuses on the impact of parental incarceration has exposed many negative consequences for the children of inmates. Traumatic events in childhood, such as the removal of a parent due to incarceration have shown to have uniquely negative consequences on the educational, behavioral, emotional, socio-economic outcomes of a child (Murray and Farrington, 2008; Davis and Shafler, 2017; Arrditta and Savla, 2013; Hagan and Foster, 2012). Children of incarcerated parents exhibit more delinquent and aggressive behaviors that can evolve into involvement within the criminal justice system. Parental incarceration can even serve as an influence past childhood and produce negative outcomes into adulthood as well (Mears and Sienic, 2016; Sienick, 2014). While the present study did not find a significant effect of parental incarceration on inmate adjustment, further research should focus on the experience of growing up with an incarcerated parent and its impact on inmate adjustment.

**Economic strain, socialization, stigma and social capital.** The stigma of incarceration experienced by inmates and those released from prison has been shown to be passed down to their children, impacting the ways in which they live, interact in their community, and operate in society (Murray, 2007). The removal of a parent from the family unit leaves empty a necessary role that provides economic support, emotional wellbeing, and assists in the process of socialization. Perhaps the most significant of these losses is the strain caused by the loss of income and financial support (Geller, Garfinkel and Western, 2011). This can create residential

and economic instability for children and their families, who must fill the gap in income, often with a second job or assistance from relatives (Gellar, Garfinkel, Cooper and Mincy, 2009). Even after a parent is released from prison, challenges in finding employment and exclusion from government aid programs are felt directly by the children and families of those released (Murray, 2007; Waquant, 2009; Pager 2003).

Socialization is an additional process negatively impacted by the incarceration of a parent. Sampson and Laub's (1993) work, for example, suggests that the way in which children are raised and disciplined relates to future deviant behavior. This can further impact a child's attachment to school and educational performance (Sampson and Laub, 1993, Teachman, 1987). Simply, the loss of a parent due to incarceration means one less parent to discipline, monitor, and take an overall interest in a child's life. Control theories, such as Hirschi's (1969) control theory, explain the impact of parental incarceration on child deviance as a result of the loss of bonds and attachment to society, beginning with the loss of the parental bond. The evolution of this theory, referred to as the general theory of crime, places additional emphasis on the role that childhood socialization plays as a predictor of delinquency and crime (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990).

The stigma of a parent's incarceration is also passed to their children, both at the individual and societal level. Children of incarcerated parents are often bullied and labelled as deviant themselves because of their parent's incarcerated status (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999; Murray, 2007; Goffman, 1963). Labeling theory suggests that this can lead to children filling that role as deviant as it is reinforced during their childhood (Becker, 1968). Further, challenges for inmates in finding housing and employment, as well as peers that can assist in the reentry process are directly passed to their children. Exclusion from these societal resources makes the formation of lasting peer relationships or security in stable housing difficult for children.

Economic strain, the loss of socialization, and the stigma of incarceration, which are passed down to the children of incarcerated parents orchestrate together to impact the overall movement and opportunity that a child has within his or her community and society. The reduction of a child's social capital within a community is the largest and arguably most detrimental consequence of a parent's incarceration. Economic strain and stigma that results in housing instability, and exclusion from peers disintegrates the connections and opportunities that a child may have to move forward within his or her community (Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999). Further, the removal of a parent whom can serve as a role model and key actor in the socialization process leads to challenges in a child's ability to succeed in school and make healthy relationships with peers (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990; Sampson and Laub, 1993). These relationships and attachments that suffer because of a parent's incarceration are the foundation for a child's ability to utilize those connections and create opportunities for upward movement. Parental incarceration makes this process that much more challenging for children, leading to many of the negative consequences that current research continues to find associated with the incarceration of a parent.

The present study focuses on the impact that the incarceration of a parent can have on the adjustment of an inmate. Current and previous research suggests that the consequences of parental incarceration build throughout a child's life and become far reaching into adulthood. Inmate adjustment theories propose that previous experiences, especially those that are traumatic like the removal of a parent due to incarceration, influence the way in which an inmate will adjust to the stressful and unique environment of prison. The results of this study did not find parental incarceration to be a significant predictor of inmate adjustment, however further

research may shed light on the relationship between parental incarceration and inmate adjustment.

## **Limitations**

The limitations of this study serve to inform future research in this topic and highlight potential challenges in the findings. This study utilized second hand data from a survey conducted in 2003. One limitation of this dataset was related to the survey item that measured type of offense (violent or non-violent), which had a number of missing cases for unknown reasons. For the present study, these missing cases were recoded as non-violent. This may have had an effect on the result of the present study.

Further, while the dataset and population provided an excellent resource to draw from, the questions and responses of this survey were not aimed toward the research question of this study. This makes it difficult to accurately measure psychological and behavioral adjustment. For example, the questions used for the psychological adjustment scale addressed issues with sleeping, eating and anger. Questions that focused more on how an inmate was socializing within the prison, if they were participating in rehabilitative programs, and if they had an overall positive attitude toward their situation would have provided a deeper understanding of adjustment.

As a number of studies that focus on the inmate adjustment experience have found, multi-dimensional models of adjustment are ideal in measuring inmate adjustment (VanTogeren and Klebe, 2010; VanGinneken, 2015). The prison experience and inmate adjustment are complex phenomenon that require a more inclusive approach in research. While the number of write ups an inmate reports is a clear predictor of his or her ability to successfully adjust to prison, it does



not fully encompass the inmate experience. Similarly, psychological adjustment to the prison environment does not address other aspects of adjustment such as rehabilitation or adherence to facility rules. Additional measures of adjustment may have provided a better understanding of how second-generation inmate status impacts inmate adjustment.

Further research should continue to analyze adjustment with more specific and well-defined variables. This study utilized questions related to psychological well-being that relate to an inmate's adjustment to the prison environment. These measures were limited to the questions in the secondary data. These questions do not necessarily encompass the large range of factors that may indicate successful or unsuccessful adjustment. It is more likely that there is a large range of psychological indicators that would suggest an inmate is or is not successfully coping and adjusting to the prison environment. For example, questions regarding how an inmate interacts with other inmates and prison administration may have led to more accurate outcomes. Further, while this study attempted to analyze misconduct by categorizing available data into violent and non-violent incident's, it would advantageous to break that measurement even farther by measuring types of misconduct (drug offense, assault, etc). Future research should address these concerns with clear and concise definitions and variables that measure multiple aspects of inmate adjustment.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

Involvement in the criminal justice system is often intergenerational, with family operating as the medium for a child's socialization (Ng et al, 2013). Removing not only a parental figure, but also a financial contributor from the family structure creates economic strains and a lack of resources for children (Geller et al, 2009, Geller et al, 2011). Further, children of incarcerated parents experience many of the same societal and community exclusions and disadvantages that offenders experience upon reentering the community (Murray, 2007). This impact is further felt when looking at the many ways that having an incarcerated parent prevents children from developing social capital within their communities and utilizing social capital as a resource to achieve basic goals (Rose and Clear, 1998). Research which focuses on the broader effects of incarceration only seems to uncover deeper disadvantages to the communities and families that incarceration impacts the most.

Incarceration is a unique societal phenomenon that limits, if not removes, the very goals that society values for an individual such as freedom, liberty, and individualism. Because of this, the inmate adjustment experience is a complex one that can be assessed from a number of perspectives. Successful adjustment can mean many things. It can refer to sound mental health or health socialization while incarcerated. It can mean an adherence to the rules of the prison or the ability to successfully reenter society once released. Each of these aspects together must be understood to develop a full picture of the inmate adjustment experience. Second generation inmates bring with them to the prison environment the experiences, challenges, and norms of their life outside the prison walls. This perspective is unique and should be taken into consideration for future inmate adjustment research.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

A variety of areas should be considered for future research in light of the present study's results. While the results of this study indicate no effect of having an incarcerated parent on inmate adjustment, there are a number of areas of study that may better inform these and future findings.

**Disintegration.** Much of inmate adjustment literature acknowledges the “shock” of prison admission. This refers to an inmate’s reaction upon first experience of the prison and all of which it entails. While much of this experience is obvious, such as the loss of control, autonomy, and many liberties (as early prison culture theorists such as Sykes, Clemmer, and Goffman emphasize), the transition from a free member of society to a confined inmate of the prison is the first moment of “shock” an inmate experiences. John Irwin and Jonathan Simon (2013) recognize this transition, which he defines as disintegration, and describes a number of ways in which this process occurs for new inmates. Examples of this include the loss of property, the loss of social ties, and the loss of the ability to “take care of business”. Upon entry in the prison, or even the initial entry into jail, an inmate cannot make payments on his or her vehicle, may not be able to pay rent, or inform work of his or her absence unless able to utilize others that are “outside”. Incarceration can strain relationships, both romantic and friendships. This initial transition from freedom to incarceration can be the most shocking aspect of prison or jail. The present study found that those inmates who reported a previous incarceration had significantly less write ups or misconducts in prison. This could perhaps be related to inmates already overcoming and expecting the disintegration process. Further research is necessary to better understand the impact of the transition from society to incarceration and how that transition may become “easier” with multiple incarcerations.

**Inmate classifications and prison management.** In addition, further research may benefit at a closer look at the relationship between inmate adjustment, specifically measured by misconducts, and classification systems and prison management styles of prisons. Inmate classification refers to the process by which prisons determine the custody level and type of prison an inmate should be incarcerated in (Sun, 2013). This process is an important one as it provides the appropriate security for officers and inmates and maintain the balance between safety and opportunity for rehabilitation. This classification is often determined by number and severity of misconducts, which can prove to be unreliable in determining the actual threat of an inmate to the prison (Berk and de Leeuw, 1999). Misplacing inmates in the incorrect custody level can have serious ramifications. Inmates placed in too low of a custody level could be a threat to other inmates and staff, but inmates placed in too high of a level could miss opportunities and programming that are not offered at higher security levels (Berk et al, 2003). Yet, as Pierce (2017) indicates, there are few studies that focus on the relationship between inmate misconduct and security classification. What research that is available has mixed conclusions, suggesting that misconducts increase as security classifications increase, that they decrease, and that they remain the same.

When discussing inmate adjustment, it is necessary to understand the full impact of the prison on adjustment, especially when that adjustment is measured by the number of misconducts committed. Just as varying styles of prison management can influence the number of misconducts an inmate is formally written up for, it is possible that the type of classification and security level an inmate is placed in can influence this as well. Future research should further investigate this relationship to ensure that inmate adjustment is measuring the inmate experience, outside of the prison structure.

**Second generation prisoners.** Finally, in light of the present study's results regarding the effect of an incarcerated parent on the inmate adjustment experience, future research is needed to clarify if any effect exists. Previous research by Novero, Loper, and Warren (2011), indicated a strong and negative effect of parental incarceration on inmate adjustment. It's possible that this effect was mediated by other factors in the present study. With consideration to the many influences of inmate adjustment as well and the experience of children who grow up with an incarcerated parent, research should better isolate how second generation inmates adjust when compared to the rest of the general prison population.

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