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Fathers Behind Bars: A Qualitative Examination of Father-Child Relationships During Incarceration

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Sociology

by

Britni L. Adams

Dissertation Committee:
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DEDICATION

To

my parents, friends, and Adam

in recognition of your unwavering support in all its many forms.

a bit of perspective

Parenthood…
It's about guiding the next generation,
And forgiving the last.

Peter Krause

and encouragement

We cannot always build the future for our youth,
but we can build our
youth for the future.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Fathers Behind Bars: A Qualitative Examination of Father-Child Relationships During Incarceration

By

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Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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With growing jail populations, more children experience paternal incarceration. Using the life course framework, this dissertation examines how fathers who are transitioning to adulthood navigate parenthood, adulthood, and the criminal justice system. Using an intergenerational approach to understand how identities of fatherhood are constructed and enacted, my dissertation focuses on how fathers in county jails across southern California evaluate (1) their own caregivers as parents, (2) the criteria of a good father and themselves as fathers, and (3) the relationships they have with their children during jail. This project is unique because it draws on 43 semi-structured, open-ended interviews of *currently incarcerated young fathers*. Findings thus far show congruence with previous research who describe good fathers as people who are accessible to their children, financially provide for them, support them, and guide their children. Fathers prioritize effort from their own caregivers being involved in their lives, offering guidance and working to provide for the fathers. Fathers describe similar importance for good parenting in jail, and by adapting their fatherhood identity, they retain their fatherhood identities while incarcerated. The most advantaged of these fathers, embedded in families able to mobilize to facilitate a father-child relationship experience set-backs in relationships and expect challenges

after release. The most disadvantaged, however, become further disconnected from family and alter their fatherhood identity with a nihilistic perspective. Incarceration exacerbates inequalities in families by forcing families to empty resources into jail, an environment that is set up to challenge their ability to stay connected. For those families without these resources, their family connections deteriorate the most.

INTRODUCTION

According to an article published by the Vera Institute of Justice, young men ages 18-24 make up 10% of the population in the United States, but are overrepresented in the prison population at 21% (Frank 2017). Statistics on the jail population—as opposed to prison—are becoming more available, but still lack the demographic nuance to understand who make up these populations, including rates of young fathers. Adult males, men over age 18, continue to make up the largest group housed in jail (Minton and Zeng 2016), but estimates of parents in jail, especially those ages 18-26, remain difficult to find. This age range, a period referred to as emerging adulthood in the life-course perspective, is especially important to understand as it is a critical period in concluding psychosocial development (Steinberg 2008), identity formation, and meeting expectations of adulthood (Arnett 2000).

Young men at risk of incarceration are also at risk for teen parenthood (Nurse 2002). This means while their peers are increasingly delaying role transitions of parenthood and marriage (Arnett 2001), in favor of gaining financial independence and finishing higher education for adulthood, young incarcerated fathers are navigating the ambiguity of their early twenties as parents with a criminal record. As an overrepresented population in prisons, young fathers in this stage of development are likely to have trouble forming identities of adulthood while incarcerated, and are likely to delay adulthood even further given the economic deficits of a criminal record (Pager 2003; Pager, Western, and Sugie 2009). Experiences transitioning to adulthood while in jail could lead to different challenges for young fathers than would be expected for young fathers in prisons.

Jail correctional facilities and their populations are often subsumed in prison characteristics without being differentiated. Though at their core of being punitive confinement

resulting from criminal activity like prison, jails have unique characteristics that may change the experiences of the people in them, and for their families. First, the core of incarceration as punitive confinement for those who commit crimes is blurred in jails because people in jail vary in their status. People housed in jail can be pre-conviction status, post-conviction status, or post-conviction status awaiting transfer to prison. Jails receiving federal funding for immigration and customs enforcement (ICE), can also house ICE detainees awaiting deportation. Second, given the varied populations in jails, time spent in jail varies from a few days and release on bail (for those who can afford bail), to multiple years awaiting trial. With the possibility of shorter stints spent behind bars, there is a churn of people who can go in and out of jail repeatedly over short amounts of time, resulting in statistics such as 10.9 million admissions into jail in 2014 while the daily population hovers around 700,000 people (Wagner and Rabuy 2017).

Historically, jails were built for awaiting trial and sentences under one year, meaning jails were not designed to facilitate daily living with work, schooling, visiting, and resources for personal development as prison reform has included in prison facilities. Specifically, in California, the Public Safety Realignment Initiative and the installment of AB 109 in 2011 has changed corrections, giving counties funding and local discretion of plans for their increased incarceration populations (Petersilia 2014). This act—in response to a federally mandated order to reduce overcrowding in state prisons in California—diverts more corrections to county jails from state prisons. Jails were not originally built to house large populations for long periods of time, but with men and women remaining in them for years, consequences for families under different visitation policies experience different changes in their family systems. Unique to jail is also the system of bail, a bi-product of pre-conviction status where a person can pay a portion of a set amount of money and be released to the community, but returning for court dates.

Bail amounts are set by judges considering information about the seriousness of a crime, the defendant's criminal record, employment status, and ties to their community. However, bail amounts set in the thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars, even for probation and parole violations, means the disproportionate amount of families already living in poverty who are at higher risk for coming into contact with the criminal justice system, typically cannot gather the thousands of dollars for the ten percent deposit for bail. These families have to wait for the overburdened court system to offer a plea agreement or await trial while their loved one is behind bars. Taking out loans to cover bail deposits, draining any financial safety net in savings, or eliciting the help of bail-bonds companies puts families at further financial risk having to pay interest and meeting the time constraints on paying money back. Given the limitations in contact, varied statuses possible in jail, limited personal development resources, churning in and out with high recidivism rates, and potential financial risks of paying bail, research needs to continue investigating consequences to men and their families during jail and after release.

Research investigating the impact of family ties during jail has shown that family contact during incarceration has positive influences on prisoner and family mental health and well-being, reduced recidivism, and greater cohesion within the family post-release (Hairston 1991). Contact for families during incarceration, including prison, can be difficult logistically and financially, contending with costs of transportation, overnight stays, and other costs of contact such as letters and phone calls (Nurse 2002). The process of "secondary prisonization," experienced by visitors of inmates can be difficult for loved ones (Comfort 2007, 2009), and even traumatic for children visiting incarcerated parents (for a review, see Poehlmann et al. 2010). There is mixed research on visiting and contact for caregivers, children, and incarcerated parents, with visits being traumatic for children, but positive for the co-parenting alliance (Loper et al. 2014) which has

implications for parenting stress during imprisonment (Loper et al. 2009). Letters and phone calls between fathers and children have shown to improve child behavior and mood (Schlafer and Poehlmann 2010), and there is a clear association with lower recidivism rates for incarcerated parents when families are able to stay connected during incarceration. It is perplexing that while research shows benefits to contact with family during incarceration, that more has not been done to support families in maintaining contact and relationships during incarceration. Obvious changes could include cleaner and more child-friendly waiting rooms, reduced cost for calling (happening in some states in prison), and more access to mail (some states permit only a postcard for mail contact with families).

One important avenue for understanding how incarceration affects families is to explore how fathers in jail navigate parenthood. Family life, considered a private institution within family units, becomes public while navigating the criminal justice system. Visits, calls, and mail are often highly monitored, altering how caregivers can relate to one another. These forms of communication shape how fathers and children can interact and be involved in each other's lives as both navigate available meaningful behaviors of fatherhood. While prison often allows for contact between visitors, extended time for visits, and even the ability to share meals (Comfort 2009), an important part of family cohesion, jail policies limit this contact to half of an hour—even court-appointed visits between father and child are likely to be from behind glass. There is no admittance of food, electronics, or even keys, during visiting in jails[1]. Policies between state, federal, and county level facilities, as well as within each, vary widely. However, monitoring correspondence with people outside of confinement, timed visits, and limited contact are

[1] This is true of the correctional facilities visited for this sample, but these policies can vary across county jails within a state, as well as jails within a county.

common policies across county correctional institutions. Given the lack of opportunities within jails for families to maintain previously held roles and to interact in natural and meaningful ways (Clarke et al. 2005), this project answers the following research question: How do fathers parent while in jail? After discussing data collection and methodological considerations in chapter one, in the first empirical chapter (Chapter 2), I ask the following: How are parenting practices intergenerationally transmitted among families experiencing an incarcerated loved one? Specifically, how do young incarcerated fathers form concepts of parenting during a crucial developmental period while in jail? In the second empirical chapter (Chapter 3), I ask the following: How do fathers in jail describe fatherhood and how do they evaluate themselves as fathers? In the final empirical chapter (Chapter 4), I ask: How do their fatherhood identities shape their relationships with their children? This dissertation uses qualitative interviews with young fathers in county jails to answer these questions.

INCARCERATION AND THE FAMILY

Family is the crux of passing down human life, meanings, values, and traditions. Encapsulated within the family are concepts, practices, and behaviors of parenting that are transmitted to the next generation. Shifts in higher rates of divorce, more single-parenthood, more cohabiting, and second marriages, are becoming a daily part of family life in the United States (Cherlin 2010), contributing to higher multi-partner fertility. With increases in immigration over the past several years, especially from Mexico, extended kin may play a more integral role in family life for some groups of people. With changes in family structures, especially changes resulting from the absence of an incarcerated parent, it follows that there are changes in roles and responsibilities for the people who are part of that family. Collateral

consequences of mass incarceration for child well-being are widespread, and contribute to larger forms of disadvantage across domains of family, health, education, employment and wages, and relationships in later adulthood (Turney 2017; for reviews, see Wakefield and Uggen 2010; Uggen and McElrath 2014). Though results about consequences from paternal incarceration are mixed and can offset one another (Turney and Wildeman 2013), research largely shows that having an incarcerated parent has negative consequences for childhood health. Learning disabilities, physical, and mental health—such as asthma, depression and anxiety (Turney 2014b, 2015c)—cognitive development (Haskins 2016), school behavior and educational attainment or retention (Dallaire, Ciccone, and Wilson 2010; Turney and Haskins 2014; Ewert, Sykes and Pettit 2014), behavioral problems (Wildeman 2009, 2010), and adolescent substance use (Roettger et al. 2011; for a review, see Murray, Farrington, and Sekol 2012) are all possible consequences. Additional consequences to family functioning, a recently enlivened part of scholarly research, include poor father-child relationships, interrupted fathering identities (Dyer 2005; Tripp 2009), difficulties in co-parenting, and higher rates of familial instability leading to relationship dissolution (Turney 2015a, 2015b) and divorce (Massoglia, Remster, and King 2011).

While citing research that draws attention to the complexities in the ways families navigate parental incarceration, Sampson (2011) calls for research that explores the nuances of family functioning to understand the mechanisms underlying the collateral consequences of mass incarceration. Paternal incarceration can impact children through diminished parenting (a mechanism), but also as a collateral consequence itself. For example, poor parenting can occur because of other challenges incarceration presents, such as reduced economic stability (Turney et al. 2012), and increased parental stress (Turney 2014a). Understanding consequences for

children and caregivers who have a loved one in jail or prison offers insight into the ways that young parents in confinement understand their role as a parent while incarcerated, and how they enact their role expectations while incarcerated. Following the symbolic interaction tradition and a life course perspective, the ways people form their identities and build relationships occurs through iterative processes of interacting with others (Mead 1934; Stryker 1968). Social learning theory (Bandura 1969) would suggest that fathers interact and relate to their own parents to build a concept of parenting that they either model directly, or they construct alternative models based on their experiences being parented. The behaviors that fulfill concepts of parenting are carried out with their own children, influence father-child relationships, and ultimately reflect a fatherhood identity through linked lives (Elder 1998).

Incarcerated fathers evaluate their experiences with their own parents and create notions of good parents. In evaluating themselves as parents against their own expectations, they create a perception of themselves as father at different stages of incarceration—before, during, and after. Incarcerated fathers' identities and self-evaluations of being a good father could be impacted by how others view them as fathers, which influences how central their fatherhood identity is (Stryker and Serpe 1994), and can impact subsequent parenting behaviors and relationships (Pasley et al. 2002). The psychological centrality of a fatherhood identity is key to understanding how role salience can result in various levels of role performance. Lack of contact between father and child has been shown to result in the child feeling alienated from the father compared to children with contact during incarceration (Schlafer and Poehlmann 2010). Given the goal of families to raise competent, well-adjusted, and independent members of society, it is important to understand how families do so when there are challenges such as incarceration.

Incarceration as a context contributes identity commitment disadvantages that result in deficits in identifying as fathers and in role performance. Fathers' relational and environmental contexts in jail shape their identities as fathers, and for young fathers, during a crucial developmental stage for identity formation (Adamsons and Pasley 2013; Arnett 2000). For instance, the relational context of fleeting interactions with other men in jail, and the monotonous interactions with deputies in a culture of dehumanization and inmate identity, detract from a fatherhood identity while in jail (Tripp 2001). Paternal incarceration is associated with changes in communication between family members, parenting styles and maternal neglect (Turney, 2014a), need for child care, and need for other financial help (Turney, Schnittker, and Wildeman 2012; Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, and Garfinkel 2011). The environmental context of jail—poor visiting rooms, long waits, no physical contact, and families experiencing hostility from jail personnel—combined with the intensity of these being their everyday experiences can do lasting damage to these men as fathers and to their relationships with their families (Marsiglio et al. 2005). It is possible that incarceration is contributing to the vast collateral consequences through parenting identity destruction.

In addition to incarceration being concentrated among young men of color, rates of teenage pregnancy are similarly higher among young people of color. Rates of teenage pregnancy have declined since their height in the 1990's, but over 700,000 women under 20 gave birth in 2008, with higher rates for non-Hispanic Black women (Kost and Henshaw 2012). Latino men and women tend to fall in between rates of non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White rates of incarceration and family demographic trends, often gaining less attention as the latter two. However, immigration has increased over the past decade and undocumented immigrants experience inequality across multiple generations despite spending most of their life

in the United States (Enriquez 2015). Increasing amounts of Latino immigrants from Mexico and Central America are at risk for being incarcerated with additional uncertainty regarding deportation. Few studies investigating the collateral consequences to families who experience incarceration have accessed a large enough Latino population to understand their experiences and compare them to White and Black populations that have been explored for two decades. This project is unique in that almost four-fifths of the sample self-identify as Latino or Hispanic. This is a major contribution to the incarceration and family literature.

Finally, teen parenthood and incarceration have similar risk factors, and as rates for teen parenthood decrease, but remain higher among young people of color, early parenthood and incarceration becomes concentrated among young, minority men and women living in poverty (Nurse 2002; Fader 2013). This makes investigating family processes (for a review, see Dyer, Pleck, and McBride 2012) for young people crucial to understanding how paternal incarceration can shape the transition to adulthood for a large portion of young men of color in America, and how it contributes to intergenerational transmissions of family inequality. These men became parents in late adolescence or early emerging adulthood, many of whom also had their first incarceration experience at a similar early age. This might influence the type of fatherhood identity they construct and enact, shaping behaviors and father-child relationships after release.

INCARCERATION AND THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Following the life course perspective, not only is timing in lives crucial for understanding development and transitions throughout the life span; but, it is important to understand the ways that people mutually influence one another through linked lives (Elder 1994, 1998). For instance, the timing of lives within a historical period, such as being incarcerated at different phases of

mass incarceration including the prison boom, or realignment policies, matters for where a person is confined, the resources available to him, and how long he will remain there. Additionally, being incarcerated at different times in one's individual life is important for understanding the impact to development—both identity and otherwise—familial ramifications, and access to opportunities after release. For example, a young man who goes to jail for the first time at age 18 might experience a large impact to his economic future at an age when his peers are furthering their education and already entering the labor market. Compared to a man entering jail at age 35 for the first time who already has post-secondary education and a steady career field, the young man might experience a different pathway to adulthood. A person becoming a parent in adolescence will also likely have different experiences than someone doing so in their early thirties. The people involved in our development over the life course—parents, grandparents, aunt, uncles, siblings, children, romantic partners, friends—all impact the concepts and identities that we create through our interactions and experiences with others. Emerging adulthood is defined as the time to explore one's social place and create expectations for their future, coupled with financial independence and developing relationships with parental figures where child and parent are equals (Arnett 2000). Incarceration is a context and experience that can alter this process of identity formation and even reverse the process of transitioning to adulthood.

Research on incarceration does not waver on identifying this population as young, low-income, low-educated, men of color (Wakefield and Uggen 2010; Western and Wildeman 2009), nor does it waver on the consequences of parental incarceration for childhood disadvantage (Wildeman 2009) and inequality (Western 2006; Western and Pettit 2010). The risk factors for youth growing up in poverty are similar for incarceration as they are for teen parenthood, leading

to a large amount of young, incarcerated fathers (Nurse 2002). Late adolescence and the early twenties is a time marked by contemplating life and one's future in the making of an identity, but those who are rerouted through jail and prison are expected to use this time to learn to flourish in their hardship (Comfort 2012). Research investigating young men in a juvenile detention facility found that reform school undermined the young men's desire to stay clean because they were not given opportunities to develop the self-control needed in the adult world, and are precluded from avenues that afforded them the adult masculinity of providing for a family and earning respect (Fader 2013). Other research in juvenile prisons finds that the hypermasculine and patriarchal prison structure fosters negative views of women, ultimately contributing to unstable and conflict-filled relationships with the women men have created children with (Nurse 2001). While these studies focus on the time just before the transition to adulthood begins, it is reasonable to imagine that some of the characteristics during this developmental stage, and encouraged by the prison structure, bleed into the traditional stage of early adulthood, with cumulative effects on family life. For instance, negative relationships with women fostered by the prison when children are born during juvenile incarceration may have different, and cumulative (Elder, 1994) effects for father-child relationships as children enter early and middle childhood while their parents are in emerging adulthood.

As prisonization processes occur while young fathers are incarcerated in jail, and incarceration more generally, the confinement structures become contexts that create compromised fatherhood and adult identities through physical spaces and relational turmoil. Many of the respondents in this project are not incarcerated for their first time, or their second or third, but discuss cycling in and out. At least half of these respondents describe entering a correctional facility before the age of eighteen, and about a fourth of them did so before they

turned sixteen. It is therefore important to investigate parenting and incarceration during the transition to adulthood to better understand the role of incarceration as children begin to age, and as fathers experience a delay in transitioning to adulthood in the same way they see their peers advancing.

With a large population of young unauthorized immigrants in America, estimated at 11.1 million in 2009 (Passel and Cohn 2010), and a volatile political landscape for immigration policy, incarceration and deportation become relevant as young fathers make the transition into adulthood. Results on young adults who learn of their undocumented status find that they are blocked from most mainstream pathways for successfully transitioning into adulthood, even with college attendance (Gonzales 2011). Ultimately, in the discovery of their status and learning to be illegal, undocumented youth face added challenges to adulthood; and, seeing a lack of hope, may seek other sources for financial independence (Abrego and Gonzales 2010). Young immigrants from multi-status families, who do not enjoy the benefit of a buffer in late adolescence as many of their U.S. born peers, must participate in a labor market that blocks their access to progress, measured by assimilation. As young parents faced with undocumented status and blocked access to supporting a family, these experiences can further contribute to the delay or perceived lack of success in transitioning to adulthood, as well as a compromised fatherhood identity under these circumstances. A portion of the respondents in this sample are themselves undocumented or reside in multi-status families and will be discussed as relevant throughout this paper.

THIS STUDY

This dissertation explores how a sample of young incarcerated fathers, 70% of whom are Latino, convey their concepts of parenting while in county jails in Southern California. Using a symbolic interactionist approach in the development of identities (Blumer 1986; Mead 1934; Stryker 1968), this project contributes to the literature to understand how perceptions of interactions shape role expectations, identity formation, and father-child relationships (Pasley, Furtis, and Skinner 2002) as fathers navigate parenting during jail. Following a life course perspective that prioritizes the timing of lives, and how lives are linked to mutually influence relationships and development (Elder 1998), this project contributes to the literature by investigating how young men form father and adult identities while incarcerated in a county jail as they transition to adulthood. Before discussing the empirical findings, an initial chapter describes data collection, methods, and other methodological considerations. The first empirical chapter of this dissertation illustrates how these young men evaluate their caregivers and recount their experiences with their caregivers growing up and while in jail. The second empirical chapter investigates how these men articulate what makes a good father and their adaptations to meeting expectations of fatherhood from the confines of county jail. The third empirical chapter takes account of the way these men describe their relationships with their own children before and during jail, and their expectations for parenting after their release. A concluding chapter summarizes the main findings, discusses implications for the findings, and overall contributions of this research.

The first empirical chapter, "Effort in Parenting," follows the stories of how incarcerated fathers describe their childhoods and their interactions with their parents and other members in their family of origin while growing up and currently. Embedded in these descriptions are evaluations of their family of origin as parental figures and caregivers. Fathers use processes of

evaluation that value their caregiver being available to them while growing up, and the effort the caregivers put forth in their support and presence in the fathers' lives separating caregivers into four groups. First, fathers describe caregivers who have always been there for them; second, fathers described caregivers who put forth effort, but were either unsuccessful, or who used strategies the fathers did not approve of (see Edin and Nelson 2013). Third, fathers evaluated other caregivers based on their lack of availability and lack of effort perceived by fathers. Fathers describe a final group of caregivers as irrelevant to their upbringing, lacking an evaluation as a caregiver.

These fathers also discuss their relationships with their parents while incarcerated. Fathers who describe parents who supported them as children incorporate perceptions of support from them during incarceration as well, through contact, financial contributions to their books, phones for calling, and to their children or romantic partner. Fathers who are isolated from caregivers during this incarceration stay describe less positive evaluations of them, or offer explanations that forgive their caregivers of their absence. Fathers who are connected, at least semi-regularly, value their caregivers' support and include in their descriptions that their caregivers have been there through the fathers' mistakes. Incarceration provides a context for fathers to be cared for by caregivers, even if they did not perceive such care while growing up. In this way, fathers evaluate caregivers favorably when they do not feel forgotten during incarceration. Through their interactions with caregivers growing up and their perceptions of adequate contact and support during incarceration, these fathers value financial assistance and caregiver availability as important for survival. For fathers who described absent caregivers, the one-sided nature of this relationship during incarceration allows fathers to feel supported in a way similar to childhood, allowing caregivers to redeem themselves.

"Obstructed Fatherhood," the second empirical chapter, chronicles how these young, incarcerated fathers describe good parenting while they are currently serving time in a county jail. The institutional context of jail, and incarceration more broadly, literally obstructs and therefore changes the ways fathers can parent. These fathers experience obstructed fatherhood while in county jail, noting how they are unable to contribute financially, cannot see their children grow up, and miss birthdays and holidays. In response to the structural limitations of jail, fathers adapt to their context in four ways, depending on their access to social capital found in their extended families. Fathers adapted to their obstructed fatherhood while incarcerated as follows: (1) collaborative fatherhood, where the father fulfills some aspects of fatherhood, but it depends on his social capital to facilitate it. This allows fathers to hold onto their fatherhood identity, but without contact with family members for visits and phone calls, the father's identity could diminish. This is when both the incarcerated father is involved, and other family members act as substitute for the father. These fathers experience the strongest fatherhood identities because they work with their extended family to be involved with children to fulfill parenting roles, but the father also perceives that he has an active part in his children's lives; (2) fatherhood by proxy, where someone else fulfills the fatherhood behaviors for him–a social capital substitute—but he accepts this based on the outcome of his child is receiving the care he wants for his child; and (3) determinate fatherhood which describes fathers who do not have access to children or other family members, having the least social capital while incarcerated. These fathers are least aided in maintaining a father identity and most likely to adopt an inmate identity. This is consistent with previous research that discusses managing dual identities, helplessness, and a dormant fatherhood identity due to a lack of social capital to foster it (Tripp 2009; Arditti et al. 2005). Given the large proportion of Latino men in this sample, the reliance on extended

family to support their fatherhood identity may be unique to the familism found in Latin American cultures.

These fathers also draw on definitions of adulthood as they define themselves as fathers, acknowledging the need to grow up, get their life together, get a job and be a man, perhaps in response to their reliance on social capital to overcome the structural and literal limitations on interacting with their children during jail. Navigating the institutional context of jail while trying to be a father defines their fatherhood identity as reliant on others, stunting their financial and social independence from their own caregivers. Fathers describe themselves as good fathers, but rely on descriptions before and after jail to define themselves through parenting. While this has been viewed as dormant fatherhood (Arditti, et al. 2005), many fathers are attempting and succeeding in engaging in some aspect of parenting from behind bars. While they choose to define parenting as behaviors on the other side of the bars, in the free world, it is misleading to describe them as not fathering, despite their definitions. Their forms of fatherhood may change as they adapt to their social capital and access to children from jail, but their identity is not completely dormant, they just define it differently, temporarily. A few fathers define their fatherhood within the jail as their emotions and imagined sacrifices for their children, such as choosing to not see their children while incarcerated. These fathers maintain their definitions of fatherhood, but adapt what behaviors make up this definition. Understanding fatherhood identities from the perspectives of young fathers in jail is important for understanding how they perceive the quality of their relationships with their children before, during and expectations for after jail.

Symbolic interaction states that identity formation and role expectations lead to role performance, or carrying out the behaviors that make up role expectations, confirming the

identity. The final empirical chapter, “I Can’t Do Much Right Now,” illustrates the consequences of the limitations in jail policies for family contact during incarceration. Having discussed altering a fatherhood identity during jail due to context-specific limitations, fathers describe a lack of power and agency in maintaining or developing relationships with their children during jail. Some fathers describe detailed accounts of their children’s lives, friends, and how they spend their time while the father is in jail. These fathers are embedded in a social network that facilitates regular contact and stable relationships between father and child. Whether through the mother of the child, grandparents, or extended kin who create moments of interaction, or fill the father in about their child, these fathers are connected to their children during jail. These fathers also have personal concrete plans with their children that they include in their own goals and expectations after release. These fathers evaluated themselves as being able to improve in being a father after jail, even just the simple act of getting out of jail as an improvement. Fathers who described themselves previously in chapter two, in a negative way without the ability to improve, did not mention future goals with their children in the long term, described little to no contact with children and other family during incarceration and prior to incarceration. These fathers’ relationships with their children’s mothers were marked by estrangement, instability, and a long period of time having passed since the father and child had contact.

The conclusion chapter offers a summary of findings and a discussion of how fathers navigate parenting in jail through recounts of how they perceive their caregivers, enacting their fatherhood expectations in jail, and how they perceive their relationships with their own children. The discussion includes how this project contributes both empirically and theoretically to the literature on incarceration and families, identity formation, and the life course perspective through the transition to adulthood. This paper lays out the processes of fatherhood identity

during the transition to adulthood, and how, through these processes, incarceration contributes to disadvantages among families and erodes father-child relationships. Incarceration, and particularly the instability of family members churning in and out of jail, leads to multiple changes in family structure, having effects for children when their children transition into adulthood (Fomby and Bosick 2013). This project fills an important gap in the literature about fatherhood identity during an incarceration experience in jail that is often more transitory than prison and inherently built by uncertain during pre-conviction stages.

Incarceration culture that fosters mistrust of female partners can lead to volatile relationships where ties are ultimately severed compromises co-parenting relationships and diminishes fatherhood identities (Nurse 2001), leading to an estranged father-child relationship. Fathers who describe estranged and hostile relationships with the mother of their children struggle to maintain relationships with their children both before and during jail, noting gatekeeping as strategies mothers use to control father-child contact and, by extension, relationships (Roy and Dyson 2005). Fathers without contact with their children in jail, and with intermittent contact before jail are likely to describe such experiences of gatekeeping, and weak fatherhood identities. Young men who describe a fatherhood identity that includes a component of loyalty and respect for the mother of his child can co-parent and build stability as a support system for the child by working together to facilitate the father-child relationship during incarceration. However, in the absence of this cooperative parenting, fathers rely on other family members and (rarely) current partners to navigate interactions with the mother of the child to overcome the fathers' experiences of obstructed fatherhood while in jail. Latino fathers and their families who have a strong sense of familism are further insulated from barriers that jail creates for fathers to maintain their roles and relationships with their children. Social capital within

families can mitigate consequences of paternal incarceration for family systems and child well-being. Having a functioning network of adults outside of incarceration to facilitate the father-child relationship is also important for building an identity that is inclusive of meeting role expectations as a father from jail to ease reintegration of the father into his family network.

Fatherhood, and transitioning into adulthood, have become the responsibility of individuals housed in the catch-all social welfare default of mass incarceration in America. As resilient children and adolescents, fathers see the best in their caregivers and appreciate the love and effort given to them, learning to blame themselves for being in jail despite generally forgiving the same experience for their own parents. Appreciating what caregivers do while fathers are growing up leads to similar notions of wanting to provide the same for their children, but they often lack the strategies, resources, and opportunities to do so. Fathers who evaluated caregivers as the opposite of a good parent lack concrete and affirming behaviors to be a good parent based on the formation of their model as what they do not want to do. Without meaning to, though, the fathers describe how they are not there for their children because they are in jail. Mitigating factors of obstructed fatherhood in jail are stable familial relationships with the family of origin or the mother of the child to facilitate presence of the father in the child's life, permitting the father to enact fatherhood by being available to children, though in a limited way.

The young men interviewed for this project are part of a population who are lumped in with adults in jail when they turn eighteen, but are still developing identities as adults and fathers. While legally adults, these young fathers heavily rely financially and socially on their family members, and in some ways their children, during jail. These fathers have experienced setbacks in work and family life during a time when they are expected to move toward independence, despite their own disadvantages and trauma from childhood (Comfort 2012).

These fathers are still developing impulse-control, like their similar-aged peers (Steinberg, 2008), while trying to raise children in a context that makes them highly dependent on others as adults and as fathers. Their presence in jail complicates expectations of adult and father, and removes their ability to explore how to be a parent and adult, denying them experiences to figure out how to be either outside the context of jail. In many ways, especially with repeated contact with the correctional facilities since early adolescence, these fathers are learning to be fathers while in jail, without similar experiences of learning to be fathers outside of jail.

Continuing to rely on incarceration as the context for teaching boys to be men in America while alienating them from roles they will enter as adults, such as parents, undermines the development of both identities in adolescence (Nurse 2002; Fader 2013), adulthood, and the transition between the two. A hyperpunitive approach to corrections and sentencing policies is weakening the infrastructure of future generations who one day will be become parents themselves. Children of incarcerated parents are left to create models of parenting while they are simultaneously expected to overcome their disadvantage in childhood, becoming the newest generation of young people expected to thrive in their cumulative disadvantage. The undercutting forces of prisonization on parental figures, co-parenting alliances, and child well-being are the mechanisms by which incarceration further exacerbates inequality across generations through parenting practices blocking the transition to adulthood for incarcerated young parents. Comfort (2012) states “That emerging adulthood is construed for the better-off as a time to indulge in privilege and promise while impoverished young adults are expected to learn from and even thrive through suffering”. This supports the account of these fathers who describe an intergenerational transmission of disadvantage through expecting generations of children to

endure hardship, trauma, and inequality across social institutions, and change this trajectory for their own families with limited resources beyond the social capital of their families.

This paper investigates how incarcerated young fathers, ages 19-26, navigate parenting while they are incarcerated. The paper follows an intergenerational approach by contextualizing father-child relationships in the fathers' evaluations of his caregivers, his fatherhood identity, and his self-evaluation as a father. First, examining this intergenerational process of developing parenting values is important for understanding how fathers learn to parent and subsequently parent their own children (Chapter 2). Second, understanding the historical influence within their lives on their parenting concepts can shed light on how incarcerated fathers adapt these concepts and identities as fathers during confinement (Chapter 3). Third, tracing fathers' development of parenting concepts from learning to identity will provide context for understanding father-child relationships and expectations for these relationships after release (Chapter 4).

Data Collection, Method, and Sample Characteristics

Chapter 1

METHODS

To investigate how young fathers parent from jail, the research team conducted interviews with men in jails who identified as fathers and volunteered to participate during recruitment. Recruitment took place during a variety of classes provided within the jails. This paper draws on 43 interviews with incarcerated fathers who were ages 19-26 at the time of the interview. These interviews with incarcerated fathers are part of the Jail and Family Life Study, a longitudinal qualitative interview project that includes interviews with multiple family members across three generations. This project began in the Oceanside County[2] jails in July 2015 and all interviews with incarcerated fathers were concluded in October 2016, spanning a 16-month period. Interviews with incarcerated men took place in three different jails within the same county. One jail is a minimum-security facility, and the other two are maximum security facilities. Previous research has focused only on minimum-security prisons (Arditti et al. 2005), and non-violent jail offenders who are predominately African-American and White (Tripp, 2009). This project expands investigations of identity work for fathers in jail to a diverse population of incarcerated fathers. Fathers were recruited from a variety of classes offered to the men in the jails including classes about substance abuse prevention, parenting, English as a Second Language (ESL), money management, computers, GED requirements, and food service preparation.

Data Collection

Logistics

[2] Pseudonym to help protect the county officials and respondents. All names of individuals are pseudonyms as well.

All interviewers received training for the purposes of conducting in-depth, open-ended interviews and to establish consistency of interviews across the research team. The research team was an all-female team including three white women, and two Latina women. At the start of conducting the interviews, one Latina woman was 25-years-old, the other 27-years-old; two of the White women were 28-years-old, and the other was 30-years-old. Only one woman, the 30-year-old, was married. None of the interviewers have children themselves, but could relate to the men in discussions of younger siblings or relatives they had cared for and experiences in nannying. All five members of the research team are graduate students at the University of California, Irvine. All forty-three interviews with young fathers were conducted in English.

Fathers were recruited from a variety of classes offered to the men in the jails as mentioned above. Enrollment in classes is voluntary for men, but restricted to men with low-level classification within the jails. This classification system varied by facility, but generally, the men who were determined to be least problematic within the facility (e.g., were not involved in fights) were permitted to attend classes. Classification of men in jail can change throughout time in jail. All fathers were classified as "low-level" and permitted to attend classes when they were recruited. Their classifications before and after recruitment, and even between recruitment and their interview, could shift bi-directionally. A change in classification could mean being transferred to a different facility where they were then interviewed, or to different living quarters under higher restrictions, but were still able to be interviewed. All fathers were to be 18-years-old, have at least one child they had seen in the two months before incarceration, have a jail stay of at least 60 days, and have contact information for the caregiver of the child they had contact with prior to jail. Due to jail being a pre-conviction detention facility, many of the fathers did not

know how long they would be in jail for, some anticipating years, others stating they could be out on bail any day.

The interviews took place in the jails, Monday through Thursday during non-visiting hours, and typically around their eating schedule in the jails[3]. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and six hours (only 10 were less than two hours), with an average of three hours per interview. Most interviews were conducted within one meeting, but seven needed two visits[4]. Interviewers were not permitted to record interview exchanges in the jails. This resulted in interviews being conducted with two members of the interview team, each of whom served a unique role: one person as the lead interviewer and the other as the secondary interviewer[5]. The secondary interviewer, referred to as the transcriptionist, recorded the interview verbatim to the best of their ability in a transcript on a legal pad with pen[6]. The transcriptionist wrote down the content of the interview as close to word-for-word as possible, noting direct quotes when able. Quotes were only noted when the transcriptionist was 100 percent confident the entire quote was recorded word for word. For example, if the transcriptionist was not sure if the respondent said "very" sure or "really" sure, it was not a quote. The number of quotes per interview varied more by the respondent and the speed at which he spoke than by the interviewer or the transcriptionist. The transcriptionist wrote everything, including tangents, distractions for the respondents as well

[3] This varied across the jails: at one, we interviewed at 8 am, 11 am, and 5 pm; another at 8 am and 11 am; at the third from 1-3:30 pm.
[4] This is true of this analytic subsample. The full subsample included interviews that took three visits, but this was overall rare.
[5] In addition to the five graduate student interviewers, three female undergraduate students did attend interviews on occasion, but only as a transcriptionist.
[6] There was an exception of one person who typed notes on a laptop at the minimum-security facility.

as interviewers, interruptions, and notes that depicted interactions with the deputies, the respondent, and others prior to and after the interview, for context.

The female interviewers always entered the jail facilities for interviews in a pair, wore non-descript clothing, dressing down, but also following the dress code rules of the jail[7], and deferring to authority. Interviewers typically wore a pair of loose fitting pants, not jeans as jeans were not permitted, a loose-fitting with high-coverage shirt free of writing, short- or long-sleeved, a sweatshirt or sweater, and tennis shoes or plain flat black shoes. We were careful to avoid or conceal any brand names to remove any indications of social class that may contribute to or hurt rapport. We wore minimal or no makeup, wore hair down, up, or half-up, and wore minimal jewelry, though the married interviewer wore her wedding ring. Presenting ourselves in this way was consistent with the jail policies, made us look young, relatable, and allowed us to blend in. This minimized any assumptions or judgements that could influence access into the jail or rapport with respondents. Dressing in this way permitted us to navigate interactions and boundaries with multiple groups, sometimes in conflict with one another—including jail deputies and staff, classroom teachers, and the respondents –and sometimes navigating many groups at once. Presenting ourselves in a fluid yet ambiguous role within the jails was also meant to minimize the effect our presence had on gleaning information about how fathers in jails navigate family life in this context.

Reconstructions

[7] In a required training within the jails, students were informed of dress code rules that, like previous research describes, were haphazardly upheld (Comfort, 2009).

Following the interview in the jail (whether part of an interview, or the complete interview), the interviewers left the facility and immediately found a quiet location to sit and reconstruct the interview while audio recording. The recording was the transcriptionist reading her notes from beginning to end, encouraging the lead interviewer to contribute clarifications and details when necessary. The reconstructions were without editorializing as much as possible, but when it did occur, the recording reflects what was part of the interview, and what was an opinion of an interviewer. Opinions are left out of data analyses, unless it was a confirmation or clarification of interview data that is made with accuracy. The reconstruction of the interview lasted about half of the amount of time compared to the interview itself, with an average reconstruction length of one and a half hours. After the reconstruction was complete, the lead interviewer wrote field notes, including any noteworthy occurrences from the interview to provide additional context during analyses. Field notes were helpful for confirming information about family structure and incarceration history. The reconstructions were then transcribed by a team of undergraduate students, and the author coded the transcribed interviews for themes.

Field notes included descriptions of interactions and particularly any problems with gaining access to the facility, or to the respondent, each day. Field notes also included descriptions of the facility and the location of the interview, summary characteristics of the respondents' demographics, and summary descriptions of each interview module. Field notes, as mentioned, included anything notable about the interview itself, the respondent's demeanor or appearance, his family members, situation and/or circumstances. There was a section describing his attitude and appearance during the interview, and a final section in the field notes was for anything the interviewers identified as unclear, needing to follow up on, and/or anything important for contacting the respondent and conducting the follow-up interview after release.

Analyses

The audio recordings of the reconstructed interviews were transcribed by undergraduate students and analyzed in Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analyses software program. Interview transcripts were coded using a grounded theory approach to allow the patterns and themes to emerge from the data. Following a grounded theory approach from Charmaz (2006), the transcriptions were open-coded, broadly, for themes and topics related to the research questions, and then more detailed coding allowed for more nuanced themes. I used three rounds of coding to analyze the data for themes around fatherhood and parenting before and during incarceration to answer my research questions. I used a very liberal approach where any mention of a child, parent, or experience including either was coded, in addition to general concepts of parenting. Additional rounds of coding varied based on the research questions being addressed and will be discussed further by chapter and research question.

Chapter 2:

To investigate how fathers parent from jail, it is important to understand the models of parenting they draw from, highlighting their own parenting values. This chapter investigates how fathers perceive their own caregivers as a source for developing their concepts of parenting. This is important because incarcerated fathers are blocked from many of the traditional methods of parenting due to their confinement in a local correctional facility, such as taking their child to school, for example. After the initial round of coding mentioned above, a second round of coding focused on descriptions of any mention of family members—mom, dad, siblings, stepparents, grandparents, and other extended family such as aunts, uncles, and cousins. A third round of

focused coding illuminated reflections on the father's parents as parents, separately for moms, dads, and being open to other parental figures such as stepparents, older siblings, grandparents, and aunts and uncles (see Figure 1.1 for an example). This allowed the different evaluations of each to be viewed together to reveal the patterns and analyses found in Chapter two.

[Insert Figure 1.1 about here]

Examples of research questions include asking for an example of a good mom and dad in your life. Many fathers would discuss their caregiver as a good example, or take this opportunity to state that their caregiver is specifically not an example of a good mom or dad. Furthermore, narrative information from fathers responding to requests for information such as "Tell me the story of your life," or "tell me about your [caregiver] while you were growing up" was coded as well. These descriptions were included and coded for context and for understanding these fathers' evaluations of their caregivers as parents both as children and as young adults currently incarcerated.

Chapter 3:

Chapter three investigates how incarcerated fathers adapt to being incarcerated and how they evaluate themselves as fathers. This chapter elucidates how incarcerated fathers adapt to being in jail to maintain their identity as a father. After the first round mentioned above, I used three rounds of coding to analyze the data for themes around fatherhood and parenting before and during incarceration to answer my research question. The second round of coding focused on descriptions of any mention of the father describing or evaluating a situation, person, or event as a good mom or dad, good or bad parenting, and evaluations of themselves. This round included answers when directly asked about what makes a good dad, examples they describe as good

dads, and evaluations of themselves as fathers. Mothers of children can influence men's perceptions of themselves as fathers (McBride et al., 2005) and fathers' involvement with their children (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008). Descriptions of the mother of children are included when fathers describe reliance on mothers as contributing to their identity as a father in jail. Fathers' descriptions of the mother of his children and his family of origin, and their interactions, are included in this round of coding to allow themes to emerge for understanding how fathers evaluate themselves as fathers while incarcerated. The fathers' relationship with and reliance on family as social capital provides context for understanding how these relationships contribute to fathers' identity management during jail. A third round of focused coding illuminated patterns about how fathers evaluated themselves after describing their adaptations of fatherhood in jail. These themes and analyses are presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4:

Chapter four discusses the relationships that fathers describe with their children and expectations for involvement after their release. I used three rounds of coding to analyze the data for themes around fatherhood and parenting before and during incarceration to answer my research questions. A second round of coding, beyond the initial round, focused on descriptions or any mention of the fathers' children, time spent with them, expectations for future involvement, stories, and his relationship with the child's mother (McBride et al., 2005; Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008). Narrative information from the fathers as well as responses to direct questions are included. For example, responses to "Tell me about your relationship with [child]," and responses to "What are your expectations for involvement with [child] after your release," are included. Responses to questions about the fathers' personal goals and plans after

release are also included to gauge how they envision their time and life in the future and whether they include children in these plans without prompting. A third round of focused coding revealed patterns of how the fathers described their time and relationships with their children before and during jail. I also coded how fathers described hopes and expectations for their children and involvement with children in the future. This allowed for patterns of change over time and across contexts of confinement and being free to emerge as variations in the father-child relationship.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

[Insert Table 1.1 about here]

Table 1 (above) lists the demographics of the sample of incarcerated young fathers in this paper. Fathers are between the ages of 19-26, and using self-identified race, 79% identify as Latino/Hispanic/Mexican (n=34), 12% as White (n=5), 7% identified as mixed (n=3), and 2% as Pacific Islander (n=1). It is noteworthy that 79% of this sample of young fathers identified as Latino/Hispanic/Mexican/Mexican-American, and that there is an underrepresentation of Black and Asian incarcerated fathers compared to national estimates. The racial composition of this sample is similar to the racial composition of the region from where it was drawn in Southern California, despite there being an overrepresentation of Latino men who are incarcerated. However, given the limited data on Latino/Hispanic incarcerated men, this is not considered a limitation, but instead a unique quality of the data. The fathers describe a range of relationship statuses with the mother of their children, both when the child was conceived, before jail, and during jail. At the time of the interview, a third of fathers described still being romantically involved with a mother of at least one of their children (biological or non-biological), 63% described being divorced, separated, or not together with a mother of their children, five fathers

noted specifically not having contact with at least one mother of their children, and four mentioned there being a restraining order.

The average age for when these young men became fathers is 19.2 years old, and the range in age is 15 to 23, with one father who became a father while in jail at age 26. Over half of the fathers became a father for the first time during adolescence (ages 15-19; n=26). The average age of their children is 3.3 years old, but their children range in age from being born while they were in jail during this current stay and were three weeks old at the time of the interview, to children in high school, possible because they are non-biological children (though this was rare, and only describes one family). Not including the outlier families, the height of the age range for biological, step, and social[8] children is eleven-years-old. The average number of children fathers identify is 1.8[9], but the modal number of children fathers have is one (n=22). Most fathers, about 86 percent (n=37), had at least one child five-years-old or younger, and twenty-eight percent had children between the ages of six and twelve, but children over the age of eight were rare. Twenty-nine fathers (67%) reported not living with any children prior to this stay in jail, but contact varied widely from living in the same apartment complex with daily contact to minimal contact the fathers contributed to substance use and their lifestyle. Twelve fathers (30%) reported living with at least one child prior to the current incarceration period. Four of these fathers specifically reported living with step or social children rather than biological children, one reported living with one of two biological children, and one reported living with a combination of biological and step children while also being non-resident to a biological and step child. Two

[8] A social child is a minor who the father considers his child, and is the biological child of his current partner.

[9] The average of children is calculated using all children fathers reported on except one father who was 21 at the time of the interview, and his current partner's six children were ages 13-25. His one biological daughter at age one-year-old, was included.

fathers reported not having lived with their child before jail because their child was born during the current incarceration period, but neither reported expectations for doing so after release. Thirty-six fathers (84%) reported substance use. Fifty-six percent of fathers who reported substance use specifically mentioned that their illicit drug use included meth, heroin, and/or cocaine.

Twelve fathers (28%) were living in motels, on the streets, or were homeless, twelve fathers were living with their parents, one parent, or a combination of parents and siblings. Eight (19%) fathers reported living in a nuclear family format with their wife and children or current girlfriend and children, including biological, step, and social children. Six (14%) fathers stated that just before jail they were living with a blend of their current partner, at least one child, their parents, and perhaps extended kin as well. Three fathers reported living with a friend or peers, and two stated living specifically with an aunt just before jail. Fathers described seeing their children as rarely as a few times in their life when they were young, to everyday before entering jail, and up to four times a week while incarcerated. The fathers describe a range of people who raised them from a traditional mom and/or dad, to siblings, stepparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, though they predominately discussed their biological and step mom and dads[10].

Jail is a unique correctional social position because people can be of varying statuses within jail, including pre-conviction, post-conviction, and post-conviction awaiting transfer. Some individuals in this study, after resolving their criminal charges, expected to be further detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). All men in this sample were being

[10] One father reported a legal guardian who took responsibility for him at age 17 when she was in her mid-twenties.

criminally charged, including misdemeanor and felony charges, and the application of strikes[11]. Twenty-seven fathers (63%) were still attending court, waiting for trial or waiting for a desired plea deal, consistent with national jail rates (about 70%; Prison Policy Initiative). Pre-conviction status is inherently marked by uncertainty of how long one will be in jail before a conviction or plea deal is reached, as well as how much total time will be served. Men who have experience with the criminal justice system prior to this interview describe estimates of total time and preferences for serving their time in jail or prison, but actual occurrences cannot be known prior to official decisions[12]. The average amount of time fathers spent incarcerated during the stay in jail when the interview was conducted was approximately seven months, and the range was the minimum for the study to thirty months in jail. There were six fathers who had missing release data, but at these fathers last recorded court date, they had spent an average of about 35 months in jail (the range was 25 months to 51 months).

Due to not being convicted, many of the fathers still face charges that will be negotiated, added, dropped or dismissed. This makes it difficult to classify the fathers as violent or non-violent offenders. It is important to consider how people are classified and labeled based on current or past convictions, but this analysis is beyond the scope of the paper. Data on charges are informal and were noted based on the fathers' knowledge of their charges—sometimes vague, forgetting, and again, charges change as different plea deals are offered. Of the fathers who were convicted at the time of the interview, all accepted plea deals, and charges ranged from

[11] California has a three-strike law against violent offenders. Once an individual has three strikes, they must serve a certain amount of their sentence while incarcerated.

[12] Two fathers state that this is their first time in jail or prison, and a few state this is their second time. We do not have reliable factual data about the number of times fathers have been incarcerated, but the majority of fathers describe multiple experiences of incarceration including juvenile detention, jail and prison.

involving substance use (selling, possession, and DUI), possession of fictitious money, burglary, assault and felony domestic violence. Other fathers still attending court include similar charges, but a few also face attempted murder, gun charges, gang enhancements, and murder.

Previous studies investigating jail populations include men who had already been sentenced, were classified as non-violent offenders (Tripp 2009), and did not include fathers with domestic violence or sexual assault charges (Arditti et al. 2005). This study includes a range of population characteristics regarding status in jail and charges. This helps to understand processes for fathers and families when charges include violent offenses, and with uncertainty for charges that may carry longer sentences. Of the fathers whose cases concluded during the study period, ten, or about a fourth of the sample, left jail for prison. While helpful for providing context about who the fathers are and what their lives were like before jail, retrospective information they provide is not meant to carry weight for causal relationships, but reflects their knowledge of their situations and their perceptions. Next, I will discuss methodological considerations.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Response Limitations

Social desirability response bias is a possible concern in interviews with the men given gender roles and wanting to appear a certain way as fathers to us as women, or to position themselves as desirable as a mate. This could result in men refraining from discussing apathy toward their family and previous partners, or refraining from outwardly talking negatively about other women and instances of violence. However, there were multiple occasions where the research team felt uncomfortable given the content of information revealed by respondents, so this is not likely a large issue for this project. Another possibility is they see us as someone with

status or power, such as social workers, or court officials. However, the research team, without being deceptive and when we felt comfortable, revealed personal details about ourselves to build rapport and create an atmosphere of peers, especially with the younger fathers included in this sample. Positionality within the interviews as young, female students promoted a context of comfort, lack of authority and power, and encouraged men to speak openly about their experiences. On multiple occasions the men told interviewers that they were the only people he had ever told some personal detail or story to.

Selection limitations

There are concerns of selection for men whom are permitted to attend classes compared to those whom are prohibited from attending classes. While this paper focuses on the processes and perceptions of fathers in jail about their role as fathers, and less about securing a nationally representative sample of all men within the jails, it is important to consider these implications. Men are permitted to attend classes following both formal and informal policies, the former upheld by the penal institution, and the latter by the residents of the jails. I will first discuss the formal selection process, followed by the informal, both with discussions about how this influences the data collected.

Men in jail at the minimum-security jail can attend classes because they have all been granted a status that warrants them minimal security and low bail bond amounts because they are low-risk for escaping the purview of the criminal justice system, or are nascent offenders in the eyes of the courts. In one maximum-security jail, men with a white band are permitted to attend classes, and in the other maximum-security jail, both yellow and white banded men are permitted to attend courses, as explained by the class facilitator who escorted us to the various classes for

recruitment. Given the band designation of requiring less surveillance, it is possible that fathers who are in classes, compared to those who are not in classes, are less violent, have a smaller criminal record, and are going to be more involved in improving their current situation and set of skills once they exit jail. However, the larger sample, and subsample used in this dissertation, include charges from attempted murder down to probation violations due to a dirty drug test, offering a full spectrum of charges from fathers attending classes.

Attending classes may also mean that those men's views about relationships and parenting are more developed given a possible proclivity to learning generally, though many of the men in classes describe watching movies most of the time during classes. Attending classes for computers, GED, substance abuse, ESL, and food services might reflect fathers' priorities on improving themselves compared to their relationships with their children. Some fathers spoke of improving themselves as part of being a better father, and might reflect their dedication to their fatherhood identity while in jail. Attending classes could also mean they are less embedded into the system, making them more attached to, and involved with, their families, and more committed to life on the outside, such as school or employment. On the other hand, class attendance could reflect being more embedded in the system and low expectations to remain on the outside once released because attending classes is part of the daily routine of being in jail. While the selection into classes is unknown, the full sample of fathers includes a wide range of criminal records from first-time offenders, to those who have spent 80 percent of their adult life behind bars in jail and prison.

There is also a large range in the amount of contact a father had with their children prior to jail, even for fathers with multiple children, seeing one child every day before jail, to having never met another. Therefore, it is not obvious how selection into classes during jail influences

these men's connections to their families or the outside world. It becomes even harder to consider a systematic selection when the system used by the jails to categorize men by color of wrist band varies by jail. In discussions with the men about their lives inside and outside of jail, the wrist band designation seems rather ambiguous and inconsistent. It is possible that those who we recruited in the parenting classes are more dedicated to their family life and children than men from other classes, but through discussions, it became clear that many of the men take multiple classes while in jail, some simultaneously. Regardless of the classes direct relevance to their current lives, as revealed during recruitment when we spoke to men in these parenting classes who did not have any children, men may take classes for something to do outside of their living quarters.

Southern California has an especially low rate of Black residents. Los Angeles is the largest city in the area, and has the highest rate of nine percent Black people, not just men, in the population, but two to six percent is more the average of Southern California. In this same area, White people make up about 60% typically, and the Latino population is between 30-40% across larger cities, but in some cities, the Latino population is about 78%, and White people make up 45% of the population (possible because people can cite more than one group) (suburbanstats.org, accessed Sept 25, 2017). In 2014, an article published by the Pew Center found that the Latino population has reached a majority of the state population in California at 39 percent, the White population at 38.8 percent, and the Black proportion at 5.8 percent (Lopez 2014). Our sample is certainly unique in the incarceration literature, different from the prison population, but it is consistent with California's racial and ethnic breakdown. It is important to consider how this sample of predominantly Latino fathers can contribute to the incarceration and

family literature because it may reveal different processes for navigating parenting and father-child relationships that have been found among White and Black families in previous research.

Positionality

As a young, White woman entering the county jails where the interviews with fathers took place, resulting in the data used for this dissertation, I entered the space from a certain perspective. In my late twenties and dressing casually, having removed my facial piercings, and having streaks of purple in my hair, I oriented myself to the incarcerated fathers as a peer. Prior to my time interviewing these men and their families, I spent time in multiple volunteer positons, including working with children attending inner-city schools in Denver, Colorado, helping homeless individuals and families access services in Denver, Colorado, and volunteering with a local chapter of Stand Up for Kids. I volunteered with Stand Up for Kids for three years, working with young adults, 18-24 years old, in a mentorship capacity. I worked with youth who spoke of histories of family violence, personal substance abuse, incarceration histories, poverty, and navigating the family court systems as they fought for reunification with their children. These prior experiences made me very comfortable entering the jails and speaking to these fathers about their life histories, asking questions to gain their insight into their lives and their families.

Differences in racial composition and the constant difference in gender proved less consequential than might be expected. Racial differences did not cause difficulties in building rapport, and instead fathers would take time to explain phrases from their worlds in the street and gang life. Fathers would also assist in my understanding of phrases spoken in Spanish, very aware of racial differences, but choosing to use it as a moment to teach me more about their life

and language. There were language difficulties in interviews from the full sample of 123 fathers as several interviews needed to be conducted in Spanish, but all the interviews used in this dissertation were done with fathers who spoke fluent English. One might expect that as fathers spoke of the racial differences and division of incarcerated men by race within the jail, they would be concerned with my response as an interviewer. In these instances, I approached the interactions as one in which I was the student of his life and he was the teacher, encouraging fathers to speak their minds freely, as many of them did. Some fathers would qualify responses with phrases such as "not to be racist, but…" or let me know that they were not racist, and then continue with whatever they had to say about their experiences and opinions. Being interested in their experiences and perceptions, these qualifiers did not change how I reacted to their comments, which was simply to listen and encourage honest discussions and responses from the fathers.

The gender mismatch of an all-female interview team and all-male incarceration population might incite possible discomfort in discussing topics. Each interviewer approached interviews with their own interview-style. As mentioned before, I approached as a peer and platonic confidant. In many instances, I felt as though I was being treated as a platonic female friend, but more often was treated like a sister or even one of the guys. I would joke with the fathers, I would challenge them in responses or opinions they held, and I went out of my way to make them feel at ease when discussing their romantic partners. When fathers spoke highly of romantic partners, I listened intently and affirmed their feelings by nodding and continued eye contact, displaying active engagement in the conversation. When fathers spoke poorly of their romantic partners or discussed issues, I also actively engaged and paid careful attention to asking probing questions in neutral language, or affirmed their feelings with comments such as "that

must have been hard when she wouldn't let you see your child," for example. Despite different gender and racial identities that the interview team and the fathers brought to the interview, there did not appear to be obstacles to building rapport.

Fathers were not shy about discussing illegal activity unless they were concerned about the jail recording the conversation. Some fathers declined to discuss activities, others spoke of them freely. Fathers who were pre-conviction tended to be less forward about illegal activities than those who had already signed a plea agreement. The only thing that fathers would consistently enter the conversation with reservations about were discussions or comments referencing sex. Many fathers did not have a problem discussing sex, but some would need encouragement from us that it would not offend us to discuss such topics. Topics regarding sex that came up were about his relationship and time spent with the mother of his child, or were in response to the easiest thing about parenting, prostitution or pimping women. In many cases, after we encouraged them to continue, they might still use vague language, but more to protect themselves from perjury than to protect us.

I am sensitive to my positionality entering the jail and speaking with these young fathers. I did my best within my comfort levels to accommodate them and build rapport. Moments when I was uncomfortable were almost exclusively in responses to hearing narratives and memories of trauma that these fathers have endured. In these instances, I allowed my response to be expressed, verbally or nonverbally, whichever felt appropriate in the interaction and moment of vulnerability that the respondent shared with me. There were times when the father relayed memories factually, lacking any emotional reaction themselves. These were the hardest moments because I felt compelled to temper or conceal my emotional response to mirror that of the father. I did not think it was my position, as an interviewer and researcher without counseling training,

to convey that an experience a father had was problematic if he himself did not view it as such. If directly asked my opinion, I did not lie, and focused on how such an experience would make me feel. As a person who sympathizes with their variegated hardships and the inequality they have faced, it was completely natural for me to engage with them the way I did during interviews. As a young woman who grew up around predominantly male family members, being a platonic friend, sister, or cousin hanging out with the guys is also a natural role for me. Finally, my natural use of "curse words" in my casual language with friends and peers allowed the fathers to feel at ease and conduct themselves in their natural state as well, not feeling pressure to change their language to accommodate me, and instead became a relatable similarity, signaling my informality and non-authority position.

Navigating the Two Populations in Jail

A final obstacle to navigate was interacting with facility personnel, while also interacting in a completely different way with the fathers. For instance, our approach to, and engagement with, deputies and other jail employees (excluding teachers who are not employed by the county, but by their school) was one of conformity to facility policies, and doing what we could to go unnoticed and not cause problems. This allowed deputies to maintain their position of authority and explain to us about the fathers and their families. We listened and nodded along with the deputies, but were concerned about information getting back to the fathers that we were actually loyal to the deputies. We quickly learned that the structure of the jail kept our interactions with deputies separate from our interactions with the fathers. Jail personnel were privy to our interviews as we became aware of when they were likely listening to our interviews, but they never directly brought up interview content. They assumed we were naïve listeners to the

fathers' tales, and chose to educate us with their opinions, assuming we were just playing a part, or they did not pay much attention to our interactions with the fathers. Despite these possible obstacles in data collection—from selection, positionality, and interacting across authority levels in jails—the main obstacle proved to be bureaucratic ineffectiveness across all three jail facilities, and within the administration. Routinely there was a lack of communication across multiple facets of the jail operations that lead to us regularly renegotiating our presence in the jails. Overall, though, issues gaining access were usually solved quickly and without large consequences to the data collection effort.

Figure 1.1: Grounded Theory Coding Process (inductive coding)

Table 1.1: Demographics of Incarcerated Young Fathers (N=43)

	N	%
Age		
19	1	2
20	3	7
21	8	19
22	7	16
23	7	16
24	3	7
25	7	16
26	7	16
Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity*		
Latino	34	79
White	5	12
Mixed	3	7
Pacific Islander	1	2
Education		
Less than high school	21	49
High school/GED/or equivalent	17	40
Some College/Trade School	5	12
Not Convicted	27	63
Number of kids		
Range	0-3 †	
Average	1.8	
Average age of Father when Became a Father	19.2	
Fathers with Children in Each Age Group		
< 5 years old	37	86
6 - 12 years old	12	28
13- 18 years old	1 (social child)	0.02
Age Range of Children	3 weeks to 8 years old^	
Average age of children	3.3 years old✓	
Relationship Status with the MOC during Current Jail Stay		
Together⌽	15	35
Not together with at least one mother of child	33	77
Not in Contact	5	12
Restraining order	4	9

Note:*Self-reported race/ethnicity: Latino includes answers of Hispanic, Latino, Mexican, Mexican-American. Relationship status: Together can mean married, not married but living together prior to jail, and neither married nor co-habiting, but in a relationship. Not together includes divorced, separated, and not together. Not in contact is if the father mentioned they are not in contact. Numbers do not add to 100% because men with more than one mother of child can fall into more than one category based on the relationship of each mother of child. † This is the range of number of biological children. The range goes up to 6 including step, and social children. The modal number of children is 1, and the average is 1.8 children per father. ^This is the age range for biological children. Excluding an anomalous father's family structure, the height of the age range becomes 11 years old including step and social children. ✓This is the average age of children, not including the anomalous family child ages. ⌽ Refers to married, engaged, or in a relationship with the mother of a biological, step or social child. Fathers can be in multiple categories because they have multiple children and partners.

Effort in Parenting: Jailed Fathers' Perspectives on Caregivers in their Family of Origin

Chapter 2

It is no secret that since the 1980's in America, incarceration rates have increased dramatically (Western and Pettit 2010). Incarceration is concentrated among low income, low education, minority, young men (Clear 2007; Clear 2009; Pastore and McGuire 2010). Estimates suggest that over half (809, 800) of the 1.5 million people incarcerated in United States prisons, are parents (Glaze and Maruschak 2008)[13]. In 2007, an estimated 1.5 million children had an incarcerated parent in prison in the United States, and 46% of them were children of Black fathers (Glaze and Maruschak 2008). However, this count does not include the children of the additional 700,000 fathers found in other facilities across the country who are often left out of these figures, bringing the number to about 2.6 million children affected by incarceration in 2012 (Sykes and Pettit 2014).

Research in the past fifteen years on the collateral consequences of incarceration is characterized by examining incarceration effects on individuals, such as fathers, children, and romantic partners. However, there has been a limited amount of research exploring family processes, especially intergenerational family processes. Further complicating these processes and our understanding of intergenerational transmissions of parenting concepts among incarcerated men are the criteria fathers use to evaluate their caregivers and how those evaluations inform how they parent their children from jail. Changes in family structures, such as divorces, second marriages, and higher rates of cohabitation and single-parenting (Cherlin 2010) further complicate family dynamics. As family structures become more complex, the roles people occupy within the family to complete different tasks for children and promote their well-being become more complicated and ambiguous as well.

[13] More inclusive estimates beyond prison and jail estimate 2.3 million people are confined in America (Wagner and Rabuy 2017).

Having any father figure in a child's life so they can learn about the role of a father for when they become a parent is important (Guzzo et al. 2011), suggesting the network of people that are involved in a child's life are important for how people develop their own concepts of being a good parent. For instance, outside of incarceration, research on the role of social fathers compared to biological fathers suggests that social fathers have equal or more involvement in children's lives (Berger et al. 2008). This means, as family structures diversify, especially among families experiencing incarceration, the caregivers that children model parenting from might be expanding from the traditional nuclear family setting. Some work has started to bring aspects of the family into focus by tracking residential and family structures over time (Arditti 2005) to begin to examine family processes in more complex family webs. Intra-individual and relational processes during incarceration, referred to as "relational maintenance," (Beckmeyer and Arditti 2014), are helpful to understand how incarcerated fathers navigate parenting in jail, but more work is needed on the intergenerational processes of understanding and developing concepts of parenting.

The research that has begun looking at intergenerational relationships among incarcerated individuals is limited, and has been sporadic over the past couple decades. Martin (2001) examined how jailed fathers' discussions of their family of origin fathers informed the fathers' perceptions about separation from their own children. She found that jailed fathers discussed their own fathers' parenting along positive and negative dimensions, categorizing male caregivers based on presence and type of absence of the father (Martin 2001). This paper extends Martin's (2001) work from over a decade and a half ago by focusing on *how* the fathers describe and evaluate their caregivers. This paper investigates young fathers' evaluations of both parents while growing up and presently to understand how these fathers value aspects of parenting as

they apply parenting concepts to parenting their own children. Focusing on the processes fathers use to evaluate their caregivers is better suited to extend intergenerational transmissions of parenting behaviors. Studying perceptions is important for understanding how beliefs and evaluations—more than enactment—matter for well-being, as found in the social support literature (Wethington and Kessler 1990). Perceptions of care and presence of caregivers can help decipher the complicated and sometimes conflicting descriptions of caregivers and how parenting values are developed across generations.

This paper investigates how incarcerated young fathers, ages 19-26, describe and evaluate how members of their family of origin parented them during their childhood and during their transition to adulthood while incarcerated. First, examining this intergenerational process of developing parenting values is important for understanding how fathers learn parenting values and subsequently parent their own children. Specifically, incarcerated fathers may draw on different qualities of parenting from jail to evaluate their caregivers given their reliance on others within the confinement context. Additionally, understanding the historical influence within their lives on their parenting concepts (this chapter) can shed light on how incarcerated fathers adapt these concepts and identities as fathers during confinement (Chapter 3). Third, tracing fathers' development of parenting concepts from learning to identity development will provide context for understanding father-child relationships and expectations for these relationships after release (Chapter 4).

Throughout this chapter, I strive to use the term "caregivers" to be inclusive of the people fathers describe as having raised them. When I use more specific terms, such as "father," "mother," "stepfather," or "grandma," for example, I am drawing on the term the fathers assigned to that caregiver. Fathers tended to draw on blood or legal relation to caregivers when

they used the latter terms, but designations of step-parents do not necessarily mean a legal marriage between adults occurred. First, I will discuss relevant previous literature, followed by the results which are presented thematically by fathers' evaluations of their caregivers as individuals[14]. This chapter concludes with a discussion of theoretical contributions and policy implications.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION AND PARENTING MODELS

Symbolic interaction theory states that through social interactions with others, people form identities and learn behaviors that fulfill the expectations of that identity (Stryker 1968). Social learning theory posits that people learn through observing, modeling, and imitating others (Bandura 1978). Through observations, replicating behaviors, and reinforcement, people learn behavior. Identity theory states that attached to behaviors are social meanings that carry expectations of given roles, such as parent or adult. To the degree that a person is able to fulfill the expectations of a role through prescribed behaviors, then that person's role identity is strengthened or weakened. For example, during incarceration, if a father is unable to fulfill roles such as disciplining or providing financially, then his identity as a father might diminish. However, other expected behaviors of fatherhood, such as calling regularly to talk to his daughter, might strengthen a fatherhood identity by fulfilling other accessible behavioral expectations of being involved in an alternate way.

Through social interactions, identity development in a role becomes an iterative process that gives some behaviors more meaning than others, particularly in a certain context. While

[14] Caregivers are described separately, such as mom, dad, and grandma, compared to evaluations of caregiving overall.

incarcerated, fathers may experience feelings of involvement with children through phone calls and therefore prioritize this behavior in being a father. Finding it difficult to stay in contact with children, or if there is hostility with the mother of his child, fathers may find their emotional attachment to children is a source of fulfilling their fatherhood identity while incarcerated. However, the behaviors fathers learn stem from their relationships with their caregivers. As fathers evaluate their own caregivers from jail, the perceptions of their caregivers as parents may include interactions related to their current situation. For example, fathers' context of jail may alter their evaluations of their caregivers depending on their caregivers' involvement during incarceration now, as they are older. For instance, while fathers might note that caregivers did their best when they were young, they may note how great their parents are for supporting them through incarceration periods and other times of hardship. Through this evaluation updating process, behaviors originally modeled or imitated from caregivers can be modified and become integral to maintaining their identity as fathers during jail. For example, children learn behaviors from their parents, teachers, peers, etc., and through reinforcements, imitate, modify, or cease behaviors. This same process can be applied as children become parents themselves later in life.

Life course theory asserts that human development is a life-long process where early experiences influence pathways to later life experiences (Elder 1994; Crosnoe and Elder 2004). The principle of linked lives explains that the social learning and identity formation processes outlined above are mutually influential, for example between parent and child. As development occurs over time and through interactions, the timing of events in lives can further influence behavior and life course pathways. For example, a young father who gets into trouble and is incarcerated in adolescence is likely to experience later difficulties in employment (Pager 2003) and relationships (Turney 2015). Navigating how to be a father, drawing on references to his

own caregivers, he can create expectations of himself as a parent to his child. However, upon entering incarceration, the fatherhood expectations he once had may need to be altered. It is also possible that being incarcerated requires a shift in expectations of fatherhood because the incarcerated father experiences a change in his relationship with his own parents. For example, a father may evaluate his caregiver more favorably while incarcerated when he relies on them for resources such as contact with people outside of jail—confirmation he has not been forgotten—and monetary support to purchase items while in jail.

Additionally, being in jail might shift his evaluations of his caregivers if one of his own caregivers was incarcerated. This insight might allow more empathy in caregiver evaluations while incarcerated, and the father can draw on those experiences in childhood to inform expectations of fatherhood during his own confinement. Fathers may have to adapt their role expectations for parenting while incarcerated, so it is important to consider the original model of parenting and the process of creating this model from their experiences and evaluations with their caregivers.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSIONS OF PARENTING

Intergenerational transmissions of parenting reflect origins of parenting and attitudes of the earlier generation (Feldman and Goldsmith 1986) through parents' experiences in their family of origin and applying those values to their own childrearing practices (Van IJzendorn 1992). Van IJzendorn (1992) reviews different models of transmitting parenting practices across generations, as well as other factors such as genetics and contexts. Changing structures in families and households have led to multi-generational households as unemployed college graduates return home and families living in poverty "double up" in traditionally single-family

dwellings and apartments (Weimers 2014). Given these shifts, it is reasonable that in addition to parents, grandparents might also have a direct parenting influence on their grandchildren.

Crittenden (1984) explains three possible mechanisms of intergenerational transmissions of parenting: observational learning of caregivers parenting others, interactional learning from experiences with caregivers being directly parented, and parental coaching of a child during interactions with sibling. An example of the last model would be a child hits a sibling, and the mother instructs the child not to hit, thereby the sibling learning that part of parenting is teaching non-violence. Advancements in this literature find mediating and moderating links for understanding intergenerational transmissions of parenting (Belsky et al. 2009). Marriage conflict (Caspi and Elder 1988) and anti-social behavior (Capaldi et al. 2003) in the middle generation suggest that individuals reproduce destructive parenting practices with their own children through these mediational processes. Similarly, through both mediational and moderating processes, supportive parenting can reproduce supportive parenting, or break the cycle in problematic parenting practices (Chen and Kaplan 2001; Egeland et al. 1987). This research highlights the importance of evaluations of caregivers for understanding different methods of reproducing parenting behaviors. There is little information on the role of empathy created by similar experiences in transmitting parenting practices and values, such as substance abuse and incarceration. These family processes provide a perspective to understand how incarceration may not be an important factor in evaluating parenting practices of caregivers. Instead, other evaluation criteria may be highlighted or change once fathers are incarcerated themselves.

This literature is helpful in thinking about the pathways of how parenting is shared, or disrupted, across generations. Context as an additional factor for how parenting behaviors are

transmitted from one generation to the next is an important consideration because contextual limitations may force temporary or long-term changes in parenting behaviors. Incarceration, for instance, could create a break in a cycle of supportive parenting, or could serve as a facilitator of passing down parenting practices that were not intended to be passed down, such as absence. Another influence of incarceration in transmitting parenting practices is forcing a shift in parenting values or priorities. For example, a father may value physical presence and accessibility to children, but this is compromised during incarceration, and may result in more value placed on any type of communication with the child, given the limited availability for communication during incarceration. For young fathers who are still learning and implementing parenting behaviors as they develop their parent identity, these changes early in the process of identity formation could have lasting effects for relationships with their children, and for the practices they will pass down.

FAMILY OF ORIGIN, INCARCERATION, AND THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Growing Up in their Family of Origin

Life course perspective posits that lives are linked, meaning that people influence one another mutually. While parents and children are theorized to create "mutually influential developmental trajectories," (Greenfield and Marks 2006), little work examines incarcerated adult children's perceptions of their caregivers as parents. Work in psychology has examined perceptions of childhood relationships with parents, but this work relies heavily on links to attachment theory, personality disorders (Brennan and Shaver 1998), and adult outcomes such as intimacy and distress (Mallers et al. 2010). Work in sociology investigating social learning theory as applied to dating violence among adolescents find that the association is from

acceptance of the violent behavior from the family of origin, and for males, the belief in the conventional rules of society (Foshee et al. 1999). Martin (2001) categorizes family of origin relationships between jailed fathers and their own father into five groups with a focus on descriptions of absence, abuse, or addiction to a substance. While these contexts and risk factors are influential in father-child relationships, it is not clear how perceptions of one's caregivers, both male and female parental figures, may contribute to learned parenting qualities. Furthermore, it is not clear how perceptions of childhood and current experiences with caregivers from the perspective of an incarcerated father might influence his own concepts of fatherhood in a context where he is considered absent from the family system. Understanding models of parenting from incarcerated parents can highlight intergenerational transmissions of parenting values and reveal how fathers adapt to their absence in their children's lives. It is possible that adapting to parental absence is a parenting quality that is passed down through altered expectations of parental involvement.

Using a sample of people who were incarcerated and had histories of substance abuse, Sheridan (1995) found a negative relationship between family of origin competence and parental substance use. He proposes an intergenerational model where parental substance abuse is associated with child neglect/abuse through levels of family competence. However, family competence can be described in a myriad of ways, especially as trends in family structures becomes increasingly varied (Cherlin 2010; Sykes and Pettit 2014), and as immigration contributes additional challenges to family functioning and family structures. The linked lives tenet in life course theory suggests that caring and supportive parents are key to healthy psychosocial development (Furstenberg et al. 1999). However, it is possible that an incarcerated father describes his parents as just that—loving, supportive, and always there for him. The

question becomes, then, what are we missing about child development that results in a person who describes a healthy and caring home life still residing in jail. What is missing are investigations of the ways these fathers perceive their childhoods, their caregivers, and how that translates into their behaviors and their parenting strategies if we are to understand family processes for child development and well-being.

Incarceration and the Transition to Adulthood

Life course theory states, as another tenet, that the timing of life events is critical for developmental outcomes (Elder 1994). It is possible that experiencing parental incarceration as a child may result in acceptance of this behavior, normalizing it as a common aspect of life. The timing of incarceration or involvement with the criminal justice system can have broader implications for other life outcomes (Shannahan 2000), such as health, income, and education, but these are not always apparent or known during childhood, concealing the consequences of parental incarceration as a child. As children age, perhaps modeling behavior, they also engage in activities that might lead to incarceration. Incarceration in early life can be especially damaging for already disadvantaged youth (Duncan et al. 1994; Grubb 2002) and can lead to the accumulation of disadvantage (Sampson and Laub 1997). This can have implications for forming expectations of parenthood if avenues for personal development are blocked due to the accumulation of disadvantage early in life. Young fathers already experiencing incarceration, and often with multiple bouts of incarceration, face challenges of developing parental ideals from their experiences with their caregivers, and then additionally adapting them to their current incarceration. Expectations of release might also carry additional adaptations that young fathers may or may not have models for as they reintegrate into their family lives.

The life course perspective uses the principle of linked lives to articulate how people influence one another across generations. This principle suggests that the way fathers perceive and evaluate the quality of parenting they experienced may shape the ways they subsequently parent when they have children of their own. Given the changing family structures and large proportion of young fathers incarcerated in America, it is important to elucidate how these young men evaluate the way they were parented. This can have consequences for their well-being, how they evaluate themselves as parents, and the way they describe their relationships with their children from jail.

Incarceration in adolescence and early adulthood can negatively impact maturation and psychosocial capital (Chung, Little, and Steinberg 2005). Risk factors for early incarceration and early parenthood are similar, explaining disproportionate amounts of young, incarcerated fathers (Nurse 2002). Adolescence and emerging adulthood (Arnett 2000) are marked by psychosocial development such as mastery of skills and competence, interpersonal relationships and social functioning, self-definition and self-governance. Some level of rule-and law-breaking is normal during this stage, and most people conclude such behavior in their twenties, but adolescence is a critical period for persistence versus desistence (Piquero et al. 2002; Piquero et al. 2004). It is possible that juvenile offenders are kicked out of their homes, sent to live with another relative, and ultimately suffer a loss of support from their caregivers (Hughes 1998), in addition to experiencing a change in relationship. These experiences contribute to experiences of cumulative disadvantage (Elder 1998), but it is unclear how they influence the concepts that these youth might develop in regards to parenting.

Emerging adulthood is defined by ages 18-25 and is an increasingly important stage in the U.S. as the length of time it takes to transition to adulthood increases. Emerging adults are

now finding themselves less defined as adults by role shifts (Arnett 2001), and more by financial independence, establishing an independent belief system, and being considered equal in their relationships with their parents (Arnett 2000; Steinberg 2008). However, critics of emerging adulthood argue that it is specific to populations entering college and of higher socioeconomic status, and prefer a more fluid concept of the transition to adulthood (Hendry and Kloep 2007). Comfort (2012) argues that African American youth in this stage of development are more likely to spend this time incarcerated as an alternative to college, expected to thrive in their hardship as they transition to adulthood, rather than explore possibilities. Limited research has investigated the transition to adulthood for Latino populations, but has found unique paths of learning illegality in adulthood (Gonzales 2011). Utilizing a more fluid, yet jagged approach to the transition to adulthood for incarcerated young fathers, incarceration is framed as a reversal in this transition (Hendry and Kloep 2007). As a context for symbolic interaction and identity development to take place, incarceration is a context of dependency where men are highly limited in agency. Ultimately, incarceration becomes an opportunity for young men to be parented and cared for by caregivers, influencing evaluations of caregivers. This chapter examines the collision of intergenerational transmissions of parenting among an incarcerated group of young men who predominately self-identify as Latino as they evaluate their caregivers as parents.

Differences in fathers' perspectives by racial groups has not been found in previous literature for fathering perceptions between White and Black nonresidential fathers (Walker et al. 2010). However, research investigating racial differences in incarcerated father contact with children revealed that White fathers saw their children less, and partners trusted them less, than their Latino and Black counterparts (Swisher and Waller 2008). Given the literature showing that

men of color and families of color have higher rates of poverty, economic strain and instability, especially among those affected by the criminal justice system (Alexander 2012), it is reasonable to imagine that this sample of majority Latino men and their families may be more impoverished than their White counterparts. Consequently, then, the Latino men and their families may have less access to the economic resources required for children and fathers to maintain a relationship during jail. For example, family members must first have a phone able to accept collect calls, money for collect calls, money for materials for letters, an address that can accept mail, and transportation costs associated with visiting.

On the other hand, in a comparison of Latino men resident in Mexico, in southern California, and in Utah, cultural differences did emerge between Latino fathers in Mexico and the US where US Latino fathers held more gender progressive notions of parenting, but fathers in Mexico also displayed complex ideas about equality of mothers in families (Taylor and Behnke 2005). This suggests cultural differences might relate to fathering perceptions, more so than racial identity. Research on Latino/Hispanic fathers is rare, and conflates minority status with low-come (Fitzpatrick et al. 1999). Fitzpatrick and colleagues (1999) investigate fathering among middle-class Latino mothers and fathers to find the relevance of active interactions with children in daily routine activities. Perhaps among incarcerated Latino fathers, big events, such as trips to Disneyland, become more valued in the absence of routine activities for periods of time while incarcerated to make up for absence. The role of familism in Latino cultures would lead us to expect more contact between father and family members due to obligation and prioritizing support for the incarcerated father, helping to maintain his role in the family system, and his relationship with his children. Adaptations to fathering, with the support of extended kin, has been found among non-incarcerated African American fathers who experience low wages,

low public assistance, and informal custody of children which make fathering challenging (Hamer and Marchioro 2002). Given extreme forms of these challenges while incarcerated, it is expected that this sample of Latino fathers will also experience such obstacles to fathering and may lean on family networks for support. Among crime-involved African American and Latino fathers, research found negative modeling and attempts to father better than their own fathers but face constraints (Wilkinson et al. 2009).

The life course perspective allows for a diverse array of trajectories of development based on the described tenets of how caregivers and children influence one another, and how the timing of life events further diversify possible trajectories of development and formations of worldviews. Social learning theory would suggest that the incarcerated fathers in this study evaluate their caregivers' parenting behaviors, and then choose to model, modify, or discard these behaviors as they enact fatherhood. For example, fathers may describe positive evaluations of caregivers and view their behaviors as a good example. On the other hand, they may note caregiver absence, abuse, or neglect and choose to alter their own behavior as a parent. There are of course variations in between or in combination of these two extremes. However, because the context of enacting these behaviors might warrant additional modifications while fathers are in jail, I focus on the qualities of caregiver evaluation that fathers use to learn parenting behaviors and define good parenting. By investigating how incarcerated young fathers describe and evaluate their caregivers in their family of origin, this paper seeks to explore the intergenerational transmission of parenting among young, incarcerated fathers as they build and adapt their standards of parenting while in jail.

RESULTS

To describe fathers' perceptions of their caregivers' parenting (defined broadly here including extended kin), I have outlined a typology of evaluations that fathers used to describe their caregivers as parents. Themes are from fathers' descriptions of their caregivers, evoking feelings about their caregivers, and evaluations of each person as a caregiver to the father. As mentioned in the methodological chapter, 79% of this sample self-identified as Hispanic/Latino. Of the nine remaining fathers, one of five White fathers mentioned being in regular contact with his own mother through mail, primarily, and sometimes phone contact. The rest of the fathers, (three Mixed and one Pacific Islander) described minimal or no contact with any members of their family of origin. The goal of this paper is not generalizability, and patterns found may be specific to the large proportion of Latino fathers and families in this sample. Very little is known about the experiences of the incarcerated Latino population and this is noted throughout the results.

Fathers evaluated caregivers in one of four main patterns: (1) caregivers who were always there, (2) caregivers who were reevaluated, and (3) uninvolved caregivers, and (4) irrelevant caregivers. When fathers evaluated their caregivers, some included current representations of their caregivers, noting consistency over time, redemption, and general irrelevance. Fathers, during this incarceration stay, noted contact and support from their parents, describing reliance on caregivers for "money on their books" and for social contact outside of jail. Jail, and incarceration more broadly, is an institution that strips people of their agency, forcing them to rely on the criminal justice system for food, shelter, and general care. However, family members are able to supplement food and care by becoming actively involved in their incarcerated family members' life by offering financial support for other options for food, hygiene, better bedding materials, and social engagement and support. In this way, fathers

describe reverting back to previous stages of development and describe once again being a child and dependent on caregivers during incarceration. Fathers describe needing to grow up and exit jail, needing to prioritize their life, and even reference being kids when they had their own children.

Incarceration represents a reversal in their transition to adulthood, regressing to childhood and depending on others for care and development. However, these fathers also recognize their own role as fathers, simultaneously being cared for, and knowing they have responsibilities for others. This creates an interesting nexus of both being parented while also forming notions of being a parent to their own children. The remainder of this chapter explores the ways these fathers evaluate their caregivers as parents, elucidating the parenting qualities these fathers value from their own caregivers. Each theme of fathers' evaluation of caregivers is described in more detail.

'They were always there'

The first group of father evaluations described these caregivers as always being present in their lives, providing support, financially contributing to their well-being during childhood, and making attempts to guide them. Fathers might describe guidance as vague lessons in life, or specific examples such as pushing children in school or telling them to avoid drugs. Fathers described at least one parent who worked regularly, though many described two caregivers who worked throughout their childhood, and work currently. As noted, fathers described these parental figures with high esteem, evoking descriptions such as he/she has always been there for the respondent, even through the fathers' mistakes, no matter what. Fathers who describe their caregivers this way conveyed appreciation and admiration in their recounts of stories growing up

with these caregivers. Daniel, a twenty-three-year-old father of a fifteen-month-old son, talks about his mom: "No matter what, she's there." *He says no matter what, and he says that she's always been there.* Daniel's father was absent as a child and was in prison for transporting drugs and stealing cars. Daniel's mom raised him and his sisters and now takes care of his son while he is in jail. Daniel values his mom's support and guidance when he was a child, but he also values that she visits him, puts money on his books, puts money on the phone for him to call her, and is helping raise his child, even though he is in jail. Daniel depends on his mom for financial support in jail, for contact with his family, and for her to care for his child. Daniel, in many ways, does not need to be an adult, or a parent, in his current situation. Instead he learns the value of parental presence and support in the form of making effort to be involved with children, providing financially, and learning from his mom in childhood, teaching children to value education. He learns this as someone who is in a positon of dependent child from jail.

The fathers who describe parents here are most often both caregivers (can be a stepparent with a biological parent, but a stable unit) of the same father, and describe stable homes with parents still residing together, or consistently single-parent families with characteristics of stability, sacrifice, and hard work on the caregiver's part. Fathers who describe their caregivers in this category also use detailed stories to describe their caregiver, noting specific instances and memories that depict the qualities they have mentioned, creating a cohesive narrative of how they have reached this conclusion that their caregiver is a good example of a caregiver. While fathers evaluated each caregiver separately, it was common to have a set of caregivers—like two parents or two grandparents—placed in this category. Mario, who became a father of his four-year-old son at age sixteen, talks about his mom as a good example:

> "she never left any of us alone." *And then he says,* "she always [was] there for us." *You know she would like, if he—[we] were hungry, she would get [us] food. If, you know*

> *[we]—she would give [us] money if [we] needed it… she was a good mom. She would tell us help out—to help us and do things, and do this do that. You know, [interviewer] asked if she was strict and he says yes. She was always on us, she would tell us not to do drugs.*

Mario spoke equally highly of his dad, and cited his own father as a good example saying his dad and his brother are always with their kids. The interviewer asked Mario if he sees himself as a good father and Mario replied that *[my] dad always tells [me] what to do with [my son] you know, to be there so [I] just [do] what [my] dad says.* Mario goes on to state that *my grandpa says you know stay busy for your kid and to be there.* Mario describes less of a reversal in his transition to adulthood, and instead describes not having transitioned in many ways. Mario still lives with his parents in the same apartment complex of the mother of his child and sees his child every day. However, much of Mario's parenting is still dictated by his father, grandfather, and brother as people he is learning from. While in jail, Mario relies wholly on his parents for care and social support, but this is not very different from prior to jail, except in access to his son. Mario is in the role of child during incarceration, but is limited, and blocked, in his capacity to be a father himself, even so far as "being there" for his son as he has learned to value. Fathers in this group evaluated their parents along dimensions of effort and performance as caregivers. Fathers described these caregivers as "being there" for them, putting forth effort to be available, putting forth effort in teaching them and guiding them, even specifically teaching them to be a father to their own child, like Mario describes. These fathers, through their assertions of these caregivers as good examples, validate their caregivers' performance and strategies of parenting while they were children and as adults in their regression to a childlike role in jail.

These fathers evaluate and remember extremely positive qualities of their parents growing up, creating tones of admiration and appreciation as they talk about the parents in this category. The fathers with caregivers in this group defined fatherhood as "being there" and all

specified financially supporting his child, partner, and/or or family. There was a gender difference in ways fathers described male and female caregivers in this group. Fathers described male caregivers as good fathers who worked and financially contributed to children. Fathers discussed female caregivers as good mothers who cared for them as children, sacrificed for them as children, and maintained the household. Interestingly, fathers who placed their mom in this group, but not a father, defined a father as being the same as a mom, and being a bread-winner. Despite some gender differences, there were circumstances in which fathers learned to value female caregivers as bread-winners and for other forms of support.

These fathers described qualities of both genders as caregivers, but primarily assigning financially responsibility and employment to the father. These young fathers also evaluated their caregivers currently, offering financial support in jail, visiting, facilitating contact by putting money on phones and attending court dates. A couple fathers noted present caregivers in childhood but had not had contact with them during the current jail stay. These fathers did not disparage their caregivers, however, but described how these caregivers were working or in Mexico and lack of contact was for admirable or acceptable reasons—financially providing—or beyond their control (collect calls and mail are difficult in Mexico).

Fathers in this group learned to value access to parental figures across context, over time, and in the face of mistakes. Reverting back to positions of being dependent children of caregivers during incarceration, or remaining in such roles, creates additional experiences to learn parenting qualities while relinquishing adult and parenting roles.

Caregivers Reevaluated

The second group that incorporates an overall positive evaluation of their caregivers is the group that acknowledges effort and an attempt at good parenting, though fathers still highlight how their caregiver somehow fell short. The fathers who describe their parents in this category have a resolved attitude about their caregivers and excuse or accept the negative aspects of their caregivers' parenting. These fathers might describe their parents as not great parents, but having tried, these fathers focus on the attempt, effort, or care that was evident to them in their childhood. Despite noting these positive aspects to parenting, fathers do not see their caregivers as choosing great parenting strategies, or they note mitigating circumstances. Fathers in this group would describe caregivers who had somehow redeemed themselves in the fathers' evaluation of them. For instance, caregivers who had once been absent when they were children were redeemed when the caregivers provided support while they were in jail. Several fathers described caregivers who were absent because they left the family, were incarcerated when the father was young, or were alcoholics and/or abusive during the father's childhood. However, being in a dependent position and desiring care, including accessibility to children, efforts made by caregivers, as described above, were enough for these fathers to find redeeming qualities in their caregivers during jail.

Fathers who evaluate their caregivers in this group recognize caregivers for their efforts and positive aspects of being caregivers, even if the effort and involvement came later in life. Joe, who evaluates his mom and dad in this group tells the interviewer about his mom: *She was forced to work early herself. She's been through a lot; she's a wonderful woman, and she puts other people first.* He goes on in detailing more about his childhood,

> *[I] would worry that [my] mom would go to jail because she partied and [I]- but that [I] encouraged it especially after [my] parents split up. He said his mom is wild and she drinks. She got a DUI once and he said before [I] was born- [I] was born [my] dad got a drunk in public.*

Joe, a twenty-five-year-old father of three girls from a previous relationship that he has no contact with, and a one-year-old daughter from a current relationship, describes how his mom is great and puts others first, but simultaneously described her wildness when he was younger. Joe's dad left when he was young and there was not much contact with him, but he also states his father was stricter because he put the respondent in his place growing up. Joe, youngest and only boy of eight children, recounts how his mom let them do things she should not have, such as let him and his friends smoke in the house. He described his mom as more of a friend, but also specifically as a good mom. He goes on to describe himself as a father: *He said in terms of [my]self as a father he said [I'm] wild like… Like [my] mom. But [I'm] more mature now. He says* "I'm still making dumb decisions, but I know my priorities".

Joe's evaluation of his caregivers portrayed how he thinks highly of them as caregivers overall, but also describes poor choices on his mom's part as a caregiver. Joe's mom currently puts money on his books, and brings his daughter to the jail to visit him once a week. Joe's evaluations of his mom and dad as caregivers reveal the primacy of prioritizing children even if a parent makes mistakes. Joe describes his mom's selfishness when he was growing up, going out and behaving more as a friend; but now, he describes how his mom is providing for him while he is in jail, and helping with his daughter when he cannot be there. Applying to himself the importance of working and putting others first, he states that he has made bad decisions but his priorities are in the right place and he is transitioning to adulthood through maturity, like his mom's progression. Joe's evaluations of his caregivers and himself as a father depict how models of parenting that prioritize presence and accessibility, rather than specific parenting strategies, are passed down between generations. This reflects acceptance of caregiver behaviors in young adulthood, despite not preferring them as young children. This is an important

component in modeling behavior according to social learning theory and can explain how reevaluations of caregivers in later life during reversals in transitions to adulthood can shape the development of parenting models of behavior.

A few fathers in this group did discuss a caregiver specifically as a good example, but throughout the interview recounted experiences with this caregiver as abusive, absent for years due to prison, and living with a female relative for some portion of their childhood. The fathers who described these caregivers and labeled them as good examples were without another stable parent as a caregiver. Both fathers experienced instability in caregiver alliances with the mothers of their children, relying on their own caregivers for any contact with the respondents' children. This group of fathers describe caregivers as supportive and intentional in being available to them later in life, while also demonstrating the complicated and contradictory processes used to evaluate our caregivers. Fathers who have caregivers who were absent, but describe them as being in this group, support notions of improved parenting behavior with more involvement and effort given to offspring. This also reflects fathers being able to repair family cohesion even after a caregiver makes a mistake. This encourages models and interventions of intergenerational transmissions of parenting with incarcerated caregivers to implement strategies that promote forgiveness of caregivers to interrupt cycles of maladaptive parenting practices (Capaldi et al. 2003).

Uninvolved Caregivers

This evaluation of parenting is characterized by the father focusing on the caregiver's lack of involvement, sometimes specifically saying that his caregiver in this category is *not* an example of a good parent. The fathers who evaluate their caregiver as being in this category

describe their caregiver as the anti-example of a good parent. They do not necessarily clearly articulate how or why following this characterization, but they are definitive in this label. Their stories and descriptions are often marked by frustration with their caregiver, disbelief, and anger in their caregiver for thinking that the parenting behavior was acceptable. Tiny evaluates his father in this category, a man who abandoned him while Tiny was in high school. Tiny moved in with a previous neighbor who accepted legal custody of him as his guardian. Tiny's biological mother passed away when he was two, and as of the interview, Tiny's father continues to disown him. Tiny told the interviewer that his father was physically abusive, isolated Tiny from the family, and that *the final straw was when [my] dad actually typed out a letter for [me] saying that… and [my] dad said,* "I don't see you as a son". Tiny's story depicts how caregivers in this category are evaluated exclusively on their lack of effort and poor performance as caregivers that has carried on over time. While fathers absent in childhood who returned during jail wanting a relationship were redeemed in the former category, uninvolved caregivers remained absent as of the current incarceration stay. Even in moments of need, Tiny's father had not come to his aid to support him or his now eight-year-old son. Tiny does not have any contact with his own child, cut off by the mother of his son. He and the mother of his son only talk on Facebook occasionally, and usually when she wants money for their son. Fathers with caregivers in this group are not typically in contact currently with caregivers in this group, and describe high levels of abuse, alcoholism, abandonment, and caregiver incarceration history.

Fathers who perceive their caregivers to be the opposite of an example of a good parent explain the things they wanted or needed, and the things that their parent did not do. Fathers might detail the negative behaviors of their parent, like leaving their family and not being integral to development of the father as he grew up, or how the caregiver was a negative role

model, exclusively focusing on negative aspects of parenting. Carlos describes his father as drinking most of the time,

> *And that he turns [his] back to his families- his family to drink a lot. He says that you know when you watch your parents drinking growing up that you kind of turn to it too. He says that [I] gets that [I have] a drinking problem. But [I am] trying to change because [I] [want] to be a better father for [my] step-kids.*

He sees his father as normalizing excessive drinking, sees his own behavior as a problem, and wants to change for his kids. Having a reference of someone who is not a good example does not clearly demonstrate what a good parent does. Instead, problematic caregiving behavior is associated with antisocial or other problematic developments in their children, operating as a mechanism to continue intergenerational transmissions of negative parenting practices (Belsky et al. 2009). Fathers who describe at least one caregiver in this group are likely to describe disconnected relationships with their own children during their current incarceration period, and being disconnected from many family members other than children.

Carlos and Tiny's evaluations reveal, once again, the value these young fathers place on accessibility, presence, and effort given from caregivers. While incarcerated, and still without the support from caregivers they seek, often receiving it from friends or current partners, fathers in this category learn the behaviors they want to avoid, but without role models or training for parenting strategies to specifically parent differently, they may inadvertently repeat the absence of caregivers they experienced. Volatile relationships with mothers of children also contribute to this absence. Without skills or models for cooperative co-parenting, these fathers remain in jail, once again uncared for by a parental figure, and learn that absent parenting may be irreversible as they do not have an example that suggests otherwise. Carlos discusses the importance of

having a parent be there to discipline children, and goes on to point out that some ways are better than others, and he wants to learn effective methods of parenting.

Irrelevant Caregivers

The final category is marked by a lack of emotion about their caregivers, limited and vague details, with short descriptions of the caregiver or the relationship with the caregiver. These evaluations of caregivers were marked by a lack of feeling evoked from recounting childhood experiences and his caregiver. For example, Manuel describes growing up with his dad who drank a lot, and who is not around anymore, and as a dad did not try hard enough. Ultimately, he says his dad was a nice guy and that he now has cirrhosis of the liver. Similar to how it was just written here, Manuel spoke about his dad as relaying facts rather than describing memories or experiences.

Chris, who was raised by his mom and stepdad said he met his dad once during a time where he was living in a different state than his mom. He says, "the dad did come to talk to [me] and told [me], oh, I am your father. And [I] said, no, you're not. I have a different father, meaning [my] step dad. Because, he- that's who [I] saw as a father figure." Chris's step dad is classified as a good example of a father, a person he says is a good role model, spent his time with his family, and was never violent or physical. Chris also talks about his uncle as a father figure for him because his uncle gave him a room, welcomed him there anytime, and bought him clothes, but gave Chris boundaries for guidance.

Fathers who have caregivers in this group described a substitute caregiver, such as the stepdad Chris mentions. The indifference that characterizes the fathers' perceptions of caregivers—exclusively biological parents—in this category comes from the addition of a

different caregiver that stepped in and did a better job than the caregiver he already had. Chris was indifferent to his own father because his step-dad and uncle were positive fatherly role models in his life.

A group of several fathers evaluated caregivers with irrelevance to caregivers, even if they described them as nice, decent, or cool people. One father, Paul Padilla, even called his own father a good father, but given details of his life, Paul Padilla felt as though both of his parents were irrelevant to his upbringing over his life course. When Paul has been in jail, and he has been in jail many times, he has no expectations for his caregivers' support and views his caregivers as needing to take care of themselves. Paul Padilla says,

> "My dad did his best." *He says,* "Jail made me a man," *he says jail taught [me] to pick up after [myself] and [I]- [I] pick stuff up from other people who are like praised as being good dads. When we ask about his dad he says that he can't- he kind of struggles because he can't be there for [me] and he's not mentally fit to give emotional feedback. He says that oh oh about the head injury his dad has. He says that when [my dad] was young [my dad] flew out of a car and like [my dad was]- he was 18- years old his head slit open and [my dad] had to go to the hospital. He also says like I guess [my dad] was like on a bike another time and [my dad's] head was split open that time*.

Paul Padilla lived with his father until about age seven when his father was sent to prison. With the exception of a couple years when he lived with his grandma from ages 12-14, he spent the rest of his childhood institutionalized, homeless and with fellow gang members, in foster care or group homes, or incarcerated. He spoke of his father abusing his mother, which is why she left him and his brothers with the abusive father until he was removed at age seven and placed in foster care. Paul Padilla talks about the things his dad did not do well, such as the abuse, but he ultimately concludes that his dad did his best and suffered from external circumstances that prevented him from doing a better job at being a dad.

Paul Padilla uses careful attention in narrating a story about how he made a sandwich for his mom who never came to the park to get it because she smoked meth instead, and how his

father waited for hours with him, consoling him after his mom never showed up, and concluding with an assertion that his dad loved him. His mom is in the subcategory of indifference, focusing on how his mom is a cool person, but how his grandma raised him. Another evaluation of parenting in this category is describing how the respondent's behavior affected the ability of the caregiver to parent successfully. Paul Padilla describes his grandma as having a lot of love for her and that she did her best, but that she could not control him. He exudes admiration and appreciation for his grandma for trying to care for him, and endearingly recounts a story where she fed his "friends" who, unbeknown to his grandma, were other gang members, but acknowledged that he did not stay out of trouble. Despite Paul's detailed descriptions of his multiple caregivers and institutionalizations, he described learning to be a father from other random people described as good fathers, many of whom he has met in jail and suffer from the same substance use and trauma his own caregivers and himself struggle with. Ultimately, Paul Padilla describes notions of caregivers as irrelevant to child development.

Fathers who described caregivers in this group were almost exclusively caregivers associated with violence, abuse, substance use, homelessness, and gang involvement. These fathers do not describe parenting as anything their parents did, given their experiences of childhood and adulthood in institutions and gangs as pseudo contexts of caregiving. These fathers do not have a clear conception of parenting and can only describe what they know, which includes institutionalization, trauma, and violence. This is evident in Paul's response to parenting about how jail taught him to be a man. Paul has a biological child who he sees sporadically, and is a social father to a four-year-old son with his current partner who he put in the hospital at one point.

Another example is Johnny whose dad died before he was born, and his mom went to prison for about four years when he was seven, so he lived with his grandma and aunts. Johnny talked about his mom coming back out of prison, and how

> *she tried to pick up where [we] left off and he said* "she wasn't really successful." *When [I] was 14 [I] started to run away. When [I] was 15 [I] moved in with [my] aunt. When [I] was 16 [I] was arrested for armed robbery. 16 through 18 [I] was in and out of juvy and when [I] was 18 [I] started coming here—here referring to jail. He says* "it's pretty bad."

Johnny spent a lot of time in juvenile hall growing up, being in different aunts' care and his mom's care, but *he said his mom just stopped caring so he stayed back in Anaheim* with his aunt, who he listened to more than his mom even when his mom returned to live with the family. When asked what makes a good mom, Johnny says:

> *someone who is there for the kid, who's positive in their life and who does what's best for the child and they don't have to be their financially, just someone who's there. [Interviewer] asked if he could tell [her] an example of someone who's a good mother, he said,* "no one in my family, we're all fuck ups." *And [interviewer] said anyone, you know, doesn't have to be in your family. And he still said no.*

Johnny spoke of caregivers with irrelevance as such, and certainly not good at it if they were. Johnny states that his mom currently has boyfriends who hit her, and his aunt tells him she wants to come visit him, but he says "she ain't gonna do nothing for me here." As evident in Johnny's interview, he does not imagine caregivers as being able to help him in jail, despite being in a dependent position. While these fathers may indirectly describe the value of caregivers being in their lives and caring about them, these fathers do not describe valuing a traditional family system where caregivers parent children and care for them.

The fathers who described caregivers in this group had an air of relinquishing their caregiver from their responsibilities as a caregiver, and instead evaluated these caregivers as people instead. Fathers described caregivers in this group neutrally or positively as people, but

evaded evaluations of them as caregivers. Paul Padilla who said his grandma raised him, described his mom as a caregiver with indifference, but noting that she is cool. Others talked about caregivers as sisters or friends, removing their caregiver from the caregiver role. In this way, these fathers have probably never been cared for in the traditional way we think about how parents care for children. Without even a semblance of this model, it is not surprising this group of fathers and caregivers discuss the most instability and trauma across generations. I turn now to the discussion.

DISCUSSION

This article uses in-depth interviews with 43 incarcerated fathers (ages 19-26) to explore how young fathers describe and evaluate the parenting practices of their caregivers as they develop their own parenting practices while in jail. Results show that fathers evaluate their caregivers along four dimensions of "being there" for them. During their transition to adulthood, these young fathers experience a reversal in their adult identities (Hendry and Kloep, 2007) as they become reliant on family members and the criminal justice system for food, money, social support, and contact with their young children. Fathers discuss their need to grow up and take responsibility for their actions. For fathers who describe caregivers as "always there for them," they learn the primacy of accessibility of caregivers to children for support. In this way, fathers learn to model accessibility, and as fathers in jail, must navigate the inability of children to readily access their fathers. Fathers who describe caregivers in the 'reevaluated' group describe caregivers who maybe did not do a great job at parenting while growing up, but in this current context are able to provide support for fathers during this set back in their transition to adulthood. These fathers described caregivers as people who tried to guide them and remove

them from problematic environments, but were unsuccessful either because the father's choices, or because the caregiver was ill-suited to help, for example due to mental health challenges. Despite these evaluations from childhood, perceived financial and social support from caregivers while incarcerated allows fathers to currently reevaluate their caregivers with their support and acknowledge the ability of caregivers to improve their parenting at later times of child development.

Third, incarcerated fathers perceive caregivers in the uninvolved group as having not been there during childhood, and currently are not available or present for fathers. When asked about an example of a good dad or mom, fathers would respond starkly with comments such as "not my dad," and explain a lack of involvement and wrong-doing as a caregiver. These fathers are only able to draw on a lack of involvement and support from childhood, and currently during their identity reversal in their transition to adulthood. These fathers learn models of absence in parenting that do not change as fathers age. Fathers hold on to a static view of parenting over time and create an anti-model of what they do not want to do as fathers. Unfortunately, anti-models of behavior are not as effective in governing productive behavior as positive models—choosing not to hit their child does not necessarily give them the tools to discipline effectively or provide emotional support, even if those are their goals. Fourth, fathers note a final group of caregivers, the irrelevant caregiver group. Fathers describe a lack of support and effort with emotionless affect toward the caregiver. Fathers describe these caregivers as nice people, or as friends, but do not discuss them as caregivers. These evaluations of their caregivers highlighted their irrelevance to fathers as people who contributed to their development into an adult. These fathers describe other caregivers who cared for them as a parent, noting the sporadic or absent nature or these caregivers currently during their jail stay. These fathers did not typically discuss

caregiver figures as contacting or supporting them during this current stay in jail. These fathers created models of parenting of indifference and ambiguity in that it was not clear that parents or caregivers have a role in raising children at all.

Incarcerated, young fathers' evaluations of their caregivers reveals important processes for how young adults understand roles of parenthood, and how early incarceration creates an opportunity for fathers to be cared for by parents. These fathers love their children, and do not describe regretting their existence, but they do acknowledge that they were young when they had their first child, and perhaps were not ready: "kids having kids," as one respondent noted. Some fathers drew specifically on their youth as a father and stated that they do not know how to be a father. These feelings of youth and lack of clarity in being a father might be related to a reversal in their transition to adulthood (Hendry and Kloep 2007) where they define themselves as still needing to grow up. Life course theory asserts that becoming a father in adolescence when youth are still developing themselves contributes to a change in their life course, a turning point, leading to cumulative disadvantage. Young fathers who are also incarcerated are at an additional disadvantage for parenting and making a successful transition to adulthood. While many young people may experience various pathways and reversals in transitioning to adulthood, as in living back at home after being independent during college, incarcerated fathers experience unique and detrimental setbacks during their reversal. Living at home after college can include social and emotional support from parents, allow young people to save money in preparation to go out on their own, and allow a low-risk time period to explore options in career choice. Incarceration as a setback in transitioning to adulthood—despite many of these fathers' recounting exits from previous incarceration stays, finding work, and being involved with their children once more—includes collateral consequences of difficulty in finding employment, lower wages, and

restrictions to manual labor market industries. Previously incarcerated fathers must also navigate relationships with current and previous partners that may have suffered from time apart. While many of these fathers appreciate, and enjoy, support from their caregivers during jail, they are creating models that value accessibility and care, but are not necessarily learning specific parenting strategies to develop their children and provide a roadmap of being a father. Their identity in jail becomes further complicated by navigating not only father and inmate (Tripp 2009), but also dependent child for many of these men. For others, with this reversal to being cared for, are once again dependent on an absent family system and a criminal justice system, neither of which provide the support they seek.

Focusing exclusively on simplistic positive and negative descriptions of their family of origin without also noting the processes of evaluations fathers use to assess effort and performance of caregivers, both in childhood and currently in jail. Expanding to examine fathers' evaluations of care can reveal the processes of understanding parenting that serve as mechanisms for intergenerational transmissions of parenting models. Respondents' processes of evaluations expose how a caregiver's absence is not always viewed as the criterion for evaluation. Instead, this chapter reveals how incarcerated fathers prioritize positive aspects of their caregivers' parenting. While valuing accessibility and care does not offer these fathers clear prescribed strategies or behaviors for parenting, it might provide them with fluid and transferrable expectations of fatherhood they can meet across contexts and overtime. Illuminating the ways these young incarcerated fathers evaluated their caregivers' parenting is important and reveals that, like other research shows, parenting begets similar parenting, both constructive parenting and maladaptive parenting (Capaldi et al. 2003; Chen and Kaplan 2001). However, by elucidating these evaluative processes, parenting can be improved upon through teaching

constructive parenting behaviors and the role of families in raising children. Providing the fathers who construct models of family as irrelevant to child development with alternative models and behaviors can interrupt models of caregivers as irrelevant and uninvolved. This could build cohesion among fathers and children as well as cooperative co-parenting skills between separated partners.

My findings move beyond affirming how incarcerated young men have often experienced parental absence, abuse, addiction, and some did not. I incorporate processes of social learning in developing parenting values as these young men exist in a state of both parent and dependent (child) during incarceration. Analyses of these incarcerated young fathers' evaluations of their caregivers suggest that the absence of a parent is different than a child's perception of what that absence means, and how they make sense of it. Rodriguez and Margolin (2015) examine patterns of mechanisms, such as communication, parenting, and role shifts, in families to conclude that research is missing the family relational dynamics that occur during times of change, such as parental absence. I would argue that multi-generational family dynamics are important for also considering times of change in children's development, such as the transition to adulthood and changes in their life course trajectories. For the respondents in this research, the salience of their caregivers as parents was not their absence or addictions, but in the way the fathers perceived how their own caregivers were accessible to them in times of need. I extend the transition to adulthood literature by evaluating changes in adult identity in a context that requires an extreme role reversal to childhood and dependence. Incarceration carries consequences that differ from previous studied contexts of college and career exploration that encourage movement back into adulthood. After release from incarceration, young fathers suffer from obstacles that compromise their ability to move into adult identities, some of which also hold importance for fatherhood.

The young fathers that spoke about their families for this study are part of a large group of young men who are responsible for future members of society, just as their parents were of them. The literature outlining the vast collateral consequences of mass incarceration suggest that paternal incarceration harms families and creates inequality through systematically incarcerating young, lower educated, men of color, many of whom are fathers (Wakefield and Uggen 2010; Nurse 2002). The jails we entered for this data did provide parenting classes that describe child development, but men also describe instructors often showing movies. As young men sit in jails, there is an opportunity to provide them with the tools to behave in a way that is expected of them in society. Policies that have removed educational funding for incarcerated persons is doing a disservice to the families and children in America. Classes in jails could provide fathers with skills that would afford them jobs and incomes beyond manual labor, giving them opportunities to make wages that promote them fulfilling expectations of adulthood and fatherhood, such as providing financially. This could reduce the higher rates of poverty for children who have had incarcerated parents. Parenting classes in jails could provide concrete and specific parenting strategies and behaviors for fathers to enact during jail, and then provide models of adapting the strategies for outside of jail. Classes such as these might prepare fathers and families for expected challenges after release, but also create models of their role in the family regardless of how the family changed in his absence.

As a society, we must consider that the current political hypocrisy in the culture of over punishing young men in efforts to reduce crime might be creating the stereotype of absent fathers that learn to parent from models developed in jail. As caregivers and children mutually influence one another, caregivers theoretically parent and retain caregiver roles throughout the life course.

This sample of young men is primarily Latino, and they may have different childhood

experiences than other samples due to differences in immigration and documentation status in their families, influencing access to jobs and education (Gonzales 2011). America's population of immigrant families is growing, and as correctional facilities are "[i]ncreasingly called upon to house the country's destitute who are mentally ill, physically sick, and homeless," (Comfort, 2007), it is a shame to add immigrant and Latino families to these groups. Given the current political climate and immigration laws in America, however, this may be the direction of the role of incarceration in the next decade.

Obstructed Fatherhood: Young Fathers' Perspectives on Parenting from Jail

Chapter 3

Multipartner fertility rates have increased among men in jail and prison (Sykes and Pettit 2014), contributing to shifts in trends of family structures in the United States. This includes changes such as increases in divorces and second marriages, more cohabiting with partners both before and after first marriages, and single parents with nonmarital births (Cherlin 2010). These changes in family structures complicate family dynamics and the roles people occupy within the family to complete different tasks for children and promote their well-being. The growing complexities in family structures lead to changing dynamics and complicated roles for navigating parenthood, with additional challenges from incarceration. After incarceration, the role of a father becomes more ambiguous with additional caregivers, or replacements of the father (Tripp 2001), entering their children's lives during incarceration. With growing amounts of children with incarcerated parents, and increasingly complex family trees, understanding how fatherhood is defined and negotiated during incarceration is important for improving family and child well-being as families cope with incarceration and reentry (Laub and Sampson 1993; LaVigne et al. 2005).

When a parent is incarcerated, parenting and other familial relationships are altered because of the potential void in the father-child relationship. Fathers may experience a period of "dormant fatherhood" (Arditti et al. 2005) due to their helplessness in fulfilling the expectations that make up a fatherhood identity. How fathers adapt to changes in their environments and their ability to meet expectations as a father can highlight the role of incarceration in managing dual identities (Tripp 2009), identity disruption (Dyer 2005), and diminished father-child relationships. Understanding incarceration as a context that influences the identities and role fulfillment of incarcerated fathers (for a review, see Dyer, Pleck, and McBride 2012) is crucial to mitigate the collateral consequences of mass incarceration. However, the helplessness men

describe during incarceration presents obstacles to being involved in children's lives and requires fathers to rely on social capital in their family systems to maintain contact with minor children.

The population of incarcerated young men has increased considerably from 1990 to the mid 2000s ("Young Adults in Jail or Prison" 2012). Emerging adulthood in the life course perspective is defined as the period from 18-25 years old, and is marked by identity formation and psychosocial development (Arnett 2000; Elder 1998; Steinberg 2008). Life course theory posits that the timing of events in life can significantly alter one's life trajectory and development, such as early parenthood (Elder 1994). Men who became fathers early in life discuss becoming a dad as "a jolt" (Palkovitz et al. 2001) and perhaps unexpected. Risk factors for young out-of-wedlock births and being incarcerated are similar, and are concentrated among impoverished Latino and Black communities, leading to high rates of young fathers in prison (for a discussion, see Nurse 2001, 2002). Statistics on fathers in jail remain largely unavailable, and this age range for being a father has previously been included in adult statistics, despite this being a unique time in development. This has resulted in limited research at the intersection of incarceration and the transition to adulthood for understanding parental identities.

Emerging adulthood represents a stage in development where people are finishing high school, some people are extending school to enter college or technical training, or finding employment. Entering jail, or parenthood, and perhaps both, changes the pathways of traditional transitions to adulthood and identity development. For instance, schooling may become stunted, having effects on immediate and long-term employment prospects, but research examining the transition to adulthood among young Black men reflects an altogether different process for transitioning to adulthood (Comfort 2012). Gonzales (2011) describes "learning to be illegal" in the transition to adulthood for undocumented Latino youth. Additional critiques of emerging

adulthood as a separate stage of development argue the fluidity of the transition to adulthood, including reversals and various pathways (Hendry and Kloep 2007). Heterogeneity in the transition to adulthood, such as experiences of incarceration and early parenthood, may shape young people's ability to meet expectations of adulthood, and parenthood, altering the identities that develop around those expectations, and the roles a young father can fill (for a review, see Marsiglio 1994). For example, terminating schooling early to enter the job market prematurely can hurt wages and the ability to provide for one's family. Entering jail further depletes a father's ability to provide for his family (Pager 2003) and meet financial and other expectations of fatherhood (Clarke et al. 2005; Dyer 2005, for out of the incarceration context, see Olmstead, Futris, and Pasley 2009).

Young families, now with fewer economic contributions because of diminished labor market prospects before and after jail, must navigate the ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity (Boss 2007) for the functioning of their family and the roles within it. Remaining partners may choose to sever ties, or maintain the relationships with the fathers of their children; both options have consequences for how these men are to be involved as a parent to their children. Research examining the roles and identities of divorced, non-residential fathers find challenges to renegotiating the role of a non-residential father (Olmstead et al. 2009) without the added limitations that are unique to incarceration. Examples of additional challenges of incarceration are undefined times of separation, uncertainty in legal status—especially in jail where people can be pre-conviction—and limited forms of contact compounded by strict and sometimes costly institutional rules of the correctional facilities.

This chapter explores how fathers in jails in Southern California describe qualities and practices in defining a good parent, and how this informs their fatherhood identity while

incarcerated. I find that young fathers must adapt to their lack of control in being able to be present in their children's lives and must rely heavily on their families as social capital in navigating fatherhood from jail. Fathers discuss challenges to being present in their children's lives, and either adjust their fatherhood behaviors to account for altered fatherhood expectations they can meet, or, fathers abandon their ability to meet expectations of being a father while incarcerated without access to family members outside of jail. Building on previous identity scholarship and life course theory, this chapter offers an examination of the ways the incarceration context and fatherhood collide to alter young fathers' identities as they transition to adulthood. I first discuss the transition to adulthood literature. Next, I discuss previous work on incarceration and fatherhood, focusing on challenges to meeting expectations of fatherhood during incarceration. I outline the themes of young fathers' adaptations of fatherhood and reliance on their family networks as they evaluate themselves while in county jail. I conclude with a discussion of how incarceration shapes fatherhood identity that may extend beyond the incarceration period. Reliance on others for father-child relationships during incarceration alters both a fatherhood identity and an identity of being an adult, compounded with collateral consequences to entering adulthood after release. I end with limitations and future directions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Incarceration and Identity Theory

Identity theory provides a pathway to understanding how internal processes affect evaluations of meeting the expectations of a role, such as fatherhood. When external factors intrude, expectations and the performance of a role may change, altering the adoption of the identity. Incarceration, for example, creates additional challenges, or exacerbates preexisting

challenges, for fathers beyond relational, residential, or economical obstacles that existed before entering jail. Compared to married fathers, divorced, non-residential fathers experience ambiguity and altered experiences of being a father (Olmstead et al. 2009). Similar to non-residential fathers, incarcerated fathers may experience ambiguity and even confusion in how to behave as a father and what is expected of him. Different than non-residential, non-incarcerated fathers, incarcerated fathers are extremely limited in their agency to contact children and arrange spending time together. Not only are they restricted in agency to initiate these behaviors and interactions with children, but incarcerated fathers also must rely on other adults outside of confinement to take an active role in children's lives if fathers are to have any contact. This is especially true for young children under the age of five who developmentally are limited in their agency to be receptive to incarcerated fathers. For example, a twelve-year-old can apply chore money to a phone, and communicate her desires to be in contact with a father; a three-year-old not only is unable to communicate desires and make her own money, but a three-year-old child and father are limited in the meaning of a phone call for building a relationship.

Additional challenges for incarcerated fathers include navigating new partners of the mother of the child and their lack of agency to be involved and interact with this new male spending time with his children. Berger et al. (2008) found that mother's current partner, cohabiting or not, may have a larger role in children's lives as a father than the biological father, illuminating the importance of in-tact relationships for access to children. Non-residential fathers may have some recourse to insert themselves into the lives of their children in such situations. Contexts, such as incarceration, relationship dynamics, and other impediments to meeting fatherhood role expectations can shape how a person views their identity, with implications for future role performance after release (Fox and Bruce 2001).

Beyond the role of mothers as a moderating force between fathers' identity and their involvement with children, other structural factors can interrupt or create challenges in fathers meeting expectations of a fatherhood identity. For example, changes in residential status, introductions of non-biological fathers (including step and social fathers), relationship dissolution, and repartnering all could introduce new members to the household, including new father-figures for children. These scenarios have the possibility of complicating and confusing role expectations and role fulfillment. Once incarcerated, men have very little control over navigating these changing family structures and dynamics from behind bars, further limiting how they are able to enact fatherhood in their children's lives. In instances when the mother of a child has moved on, or there is hostility between parents, fathers must rely on other extended family members to aid in maintaining connections to children, or they risk further consequences to the father-child relationship.

Most of the literature on fatherhood and identity investigates these processes of role salience, performance, and expectations using married, white, middle-age and middle-class samples, not in confinement, as predictors of behaviors (for a review, see Morman and Floyd 2006; Pasley et al. 2014). These studies assume levels of agency in identity construction and performance that may shift, but cannot account for how people behave when there is separation that removes a great deal of agency the way agency is typically conceptualized, such as during an incarceration period. There has been a shift toward diversifying samples to better understand fatherhood in the changing and more complex family structures that have been emerging for the last couple of decades. While the anticipated relationship holds strong that more positive fatherhood role perceptions are associated with more father-child activities, low-income, less-educated, unmarried, and fathers identifying as Other race or Hispanic have less positive

perceptions of their roles as fathers (Bronte-Tinkew et al. 2006). More research is needed that explores identity evaluations among incarcerated parents who also identify as Other or Latino to better understand how they navigate fatherhood while confined.

The literature investigating the development of fatherhood identity, namely identity theory, is vast in its decades of findings on role salience, role satisfaction, and reflected appraisals. However, the original theory lacks the role of context and external impediments to the agentic forces that are assumed for satisfying a role (despite its salience), and appraisals of role performance. For example, while previous research using identity theory investigates how fathers rate the importance of being a father (salience), the behaviors to meet expectations of being a father (satisfaction), and the feedback from others having met expectations (appraisal), it lacks a conceptualization when there are circumstances that alter the ability to satisfy a role. Previous research on fatherhood identity in jails and prisons addresses fathers' managing dual identities, both father and inmate, and the salience of each (Arditti et al. 2005; Tripp 2009).

Advancements in identity theory address this theoretical deficit of context and explicate how relational and physical environments can be supportive or unsupportive of identities (Adamsons and Pasley 2013; Roy 2005; Snow 2001). Incarceration is a context in which fathers are highly controlled and are isolated from minor children unless another adult takes steps to connect fathers and children during an incarceration period[15]. As correctional facilities are often described as places that result in children and family members being traumatized (but see the review, Poehlmann et al. 2010), the contextual advancements of identity theory suggest jail is an

[15] Policies vary by facility, but a universal policy is that children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult to enter a correctional facility. Often times, the adult must have a form of government approved identification for the child such as a birth certificate, driver's license, or passport.

unsupportive context for fatherhood identity development and maintenance. This would suggest that incarcerated fathers must adapt their identities, or means of identity performance, in order to maintain their identity as fathers in the unsupportive context of jail.

Incarceration, Parenthood, and the Transition to Adulthood

Incarcerated fathers are typically men who are young, the least educated, disadvantaged economically, men of color (Pettit and Western 2004; Binswanger, Krueger, and Steiner 2009), are often unmarried, and their residential and biological status varies depending on each child (Hairston 1998; Lopoo and Western 2005). This creates a disjointed identity as a father, though evaluations as a father may vary by child, and is further complicated by the father's incarceration status. Part of the changes that may occur in family structure are a result of changes in relationship quality and father engagement during incarceration, driven by the unique challenges that arise from involvement with the criminal justice system (Andersen and Wildeman 2014; Lowenstein 1986; Turney and Wildeman 2013; Turney et al. 2012).

Fathers typically have some level of involvement with their children prior to incarceration (Nurse 2002), whether through co-residence or visitation (Geller 2013), even when children are from multiple partners, creating access to children for fathers to enact fatherhood roles. In other instances, conflict with the mother of the children can create additional difficulties in having contact with children, prior to and during incarceration. Incarcerated fathers often describe gatekeeping as a tactic mothers use that inform the fathers' roles in their children's lives, and their fatherhood identity (McBride et al. 2005; Roy and Dyson 2005). Further complicating the ability of fathers to have contact with their children during incarceration is when children are pulled from parental custody and enter foster care for reasons beyond family

finances and structure (Andersen and Wildeman 2014; but uses data from Denmark). The involvement of child services, can make it more difficult to see children compared to family members bringing children to visit their father; however, it can also increase contact with their father if conflict with the mother had been preventing contact prior to incarceration.

As fathers are removed into custody, they may experience a change in their identity and role performance, and even role commitment as a father. Previous research finds that fathers experience a dormant period in their role as a father during incarceration wherein they report feeling helpless due to relying completely on the mother or caregiver of their children for contact with children (Arditti, Smock, and Parkman 2005). Another challenge for fathers in jail is managing dual identities, father and inmate, having to manage both in visits with family members, navigating both the adoption of and resistance to prisonization as they survive incarceration and attempt to maintain relationships with their children (Tripp 2009). Men in these circumstances also report feeling that their fatherhood identity is lost (Dyer 2005), potentially shifting meanings of identity and responsibilities both during, and upon release, from incarceration.

Research also indicates that jail policies and the environment in jails for families as visitors are an inhibitor for encouraging children to visit. Fathers will insist that their children do not visit them while incarcerated due to the dismal facilities, transportation costs, and long wait times that characterize visiting in jails and prisons, which is consistent with research that shows traumatic experiences for child outcomes after visiting (Loper et al. 2009). Protecting their children from the context of incarceration is one form of agency that incarcerated fathers are able to use in being a father. A study of British incarcerated fathers found similar concerns about children visiting because of the context and ability to create meaningful and natural interactions

(Clarke et al. 2005). Fulfilling their fatherhood identity while incarcerated might shift to being protective and shielding their child from visiting in jail during a time where they cannot provide financially, cannot be present for life events, and cannot initiate father-child interactions to show they care and are accessible for children. Fathers use this form of protection to show they care for children and desire to be involved in their children's lives in a meaningful way.

Contact between incarcerated fathers and their children suggests that visitation to prison (research on the jail context for parent-child relationships is limited) is traumatic for children, resulting in more attention deficit problems (Poehlmann et al. 2010) and behavior problems at school as reported by teachers (Dallaire, Wilson, and Ciccone 2010b). However, contact with fathers through mail and phone calls has been associated with less child depression, benefits at school, and less alienation (Loper et al. 2009). This research has primarily been done in prisons (Comfort 2016), but jails as a context for father-child interactions offer reduced visit time and more restricted access to contact during visits, beyond similarly dismal visiting environments and wait times. Seeing children suffer during in-person visits can create guilt and may result in parents terminating the practice of in-person visits for their children (Arditti and Few 2008), perhaps enacting the protective fatherhood role.

Perhaps visits are problematic given the conditions of visiting for children and family members in prisons and jails, subjecting families to harsh institution employees, dilapidated and dirty waiting areas, long drives for short visits, and high costs, particularly with additional travel associated with prisons, such as hotel stays. Moreover, in-person visits between partners can exacerbate relationship problems if the relationship, prior to prison, is already unstable (LaVigne et al. 2005). However, visitation between family and father can also be helpful for the alliance between caregiver and incarcerated parent (Loper et a. 2009). This could help mitigate

gatekeeping between caregiver and father, perhaps rebuild lost trust due to incarceration (Swisher and Waller 2008), focus on higher father involvement during incarceration, and increase stability and quality of the father-child relationship in preparation for father reentry. Research on the role of in-person visits with fathers is inconsistent regarding benefits and risks to visiting family members. Given that mail and phone contact are beneficial, contact between father and children in an environment that is safe and pleasant for children, where the diad can create naturalistic moments of interaction, might be crucial for fathers' presence in their children's to satisfy the core of fatherhood identity, the "being there" that many fathers describe (Forste et al. 2009:57).

It is particularly important to consider how identities around parenthood are formed in contexts such as incarceration for young adults because the early twenties are a crucial time in the transition to adulthood for psychosocial processes and identity development (Steinberg 2008; Arnett 2000). For young fathers in jail who feel they have limited access to children and limited potential for success in fulfilling the behaviors of a father, they may create an identity absent of fatherhood. Given the recent focus in policy for encouraging responsible fathering and promoting involvement of fathers in child-rearing, it is important to understand how identities around fatherhood in early adulthood and in the context of incarceration are navigated. Statistics for fathers between ages 18 and 26 being incarcerated have been rising in recent years, supporting the relevance of understanding how they perceive themselves as fathers from inside jail. In order to investigate the intersection of fatherhood identity for incarcerated fathers during their transition to adulthood, this project explores the following research questions:

Research Questions

- RQ1: How do young incarcerated fathers evaluate themselves as a father?
- RQ2: How do young incarcerated fathers negotiate fatherhood expectations while they are detained in a county jail?

This Project

This paper will contribute to the current literature in two ways. First, this is the first qualitative, in-depth investigation of the parenting perspectives of young men who are incarcerated in a county jail (but for research also in jail, see Arditti 2003; Arditti et al. 2003). There is extant research on men, and fathers, in prison, investigating their experiences during and after incarceration. Prison research focuses on consequences of material hardship for men and families (Schwartz-Soicher et al. 2011, but includes jail, too), and discusses constraints from policies and circumstances to visiting (Hairston 1998), such as reliance on the mother or other family member to see the child and parent from prison (Arditti et al. 2005). Father re-entry to families after prison with concerns of both men and their families has also received attention (Arditti et al. 2005; Day et al. 2005). However, there is limited research on the perspective of being a father for men who are also faced with incarceration and are experiencing shifts in the transition to adulthood between being a parent, and being a child themselves. Roy and Dyson (2005) examine, from the fathers' perspective, how fathers experience re-entry into their child's lives during a work release program, noting the mothers' encouragement or discouragement of the fathers' involvement, informing the father-child relationship and how the men negotiate their fatherhood identity. Arditti et al. (2005) conducted qualitative interviews of 51 men in prison and found that these men experience prison as a dormant period to fatherhood, especially when fathers are absent for years at a time. This paper extends this work by expanding on how young

fathers, ages 19-26, negotiate fatherhood while relying almost entirely on others for their relationship with their child before and during incarceration in a county jail.

Second, this project will build on previous knowledge that investigates perceptions of father-child relationships from the perspective of the fathers in prison (Hairston 1990). Other prison research implores incarcerated mothers and fathers to discuss what services would be helpful for them and their families, including information about visiting for their families, family days, better visitation environments, family planning, what to expect after release, rebuilding trust and communication between parents, and to help learn to deal with loneliness, depression and irritability after release (Kazura 2001). Many of these services and resources do not exist and are worse or currently unavailable in county jails (Travis and Visher 2005). Jail is a different experience than prison with different policies, constraints, and funding that influences resources, and shapes experiences and relationships.

Jail is an often-transitory experience, with shorter sentences, which may alter father-child dynamics (Schlafer and Poehlmann 2010; as does prison time, Hairston 1998), but may not create the feelings of dormant fatherhood (such as Arditti et al. 2005 describe). For instance, given the potential for shorter sentences and pre-trial status in jail, uncertainty and shorter father absences could result in different adaptations of identity than making the fatherhood identity dormant to the prisonization identity. However, with more experiences in and out of jail, adaptations may be easier to adapt across contexts of jail and being free. Continual entry and exit of jail might also create other feelings that influence their identity of fatherhood. Other factors, like closer proximity to home-life, may create higher expectations for family visits, even if there is no expectation of a contact visit, and increased contact through mail and phone calls. Furthermore, being in jail is unique because a person can be in jail for years without having gone

to trial or determined guilty of any crime. This can create uncertainty about how long a father is removed from his family, making any sort of planning or stability difficult. It might also create uncertainty around identities and roles within the family because it is unclear for how long family members outside of incarceration need to cope and adapt to the absence of the father-figure, placing the family in a state of limbo, indefinitely. Therefore, the current investigation explores how fathers experience their role as a father during their confinement in jail.

RESULTS

Fathers describe multiple qualities that make up being a good father; however, most fathers describe "being there" for children and financially providing for children. The concept of "being there" that fathers describe is generally vague, but among fathers who elaborated on this term in any way, fathers seem to be describing general support or accessibility of fathers for children. In other words, it is important for a good father to be available to his children if the children need anything. Fathers also describe the importance of guiding children by teaching them skills, teaching them right from wrong, and being a good role model. Figure 3.1 displays a variety of qualities fathers name that make up good fathers, but the accessibility of fathers and the ability to provide financially are of interest because incarcerated fathers seem to be primarily blocked from meeting these two expectations of fatherhood while in jail (Table A1 with corresponding numbers can be found in the Appendix).

Almost unanimously, fathers describe some level of feeling blocked from being able to be fathers while incarcerated. Incarcerated fathers use language such as not being able to do much right now, regarding being a father, and describe their absence from children's events such as birthdays and missed holidays. Some fathers also describe their lack of knowledge of their

child's daily routine, friends, preferences in toys, and how they are doing in school as part of aspects of fathering they are blocked from. I have termed this *obstructed fatherhood* while incarcerated to illuminate the limited agency fathers describe while in jail. However, fathers draw on their family members as social capital in different ways to adapt to their limited agency while in jail. Differential access to family members and different strategies of adaptation resulted in three main forms of fathering from jail: (1) collaborative fathering, (2) fathering by proxy, and (3) determinate fatherhood. I discuss each of these themes in depth and throughout I discuss fathers' self-evaluations during their time in jail. This chapter concludes with a summary of findings, empirical and theoretical contributions, and implications for policy reform.

[Insert Figure 3.1 about Here]

Collaborative Fathering

Incarcerated fathers spend twenty-four hours a day in confinement, removed from their social networks and social positions outside of confinement. They interact most regularly with correctional officers and discuss being treated without respect, having many of their possessions, including family photos, letters, and cards, destroyed as deputies turnover bunks in a random search. However, fathers are permitted to make collect phone calls at certain times of day and in limited increments of time, during when "day room" is open. This is when the fathers in minimal security status can leave their living quarters to spend time in a community room where there is a television; they can socialize amongst themselves, write letters, and take turns making phone calls. On Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, fathers may receive one visit a day, timed at thirty minutes, limited to three persons, and minor children must have a birth certificate or identification card and be accompanied by an adult over the age of eighteen (see the

methodological chapter for more specific details on visiting). These different methods of communication with family members, friends, and other contacts are the extent to which incarcerated fathers are able to engage with children. Given the various structural and social obstacles, fathers are forced to rely on others outside of the jail to contact minor children. In an attempt to overcome these obstacles and engage with his children, fathers recruit family members to participate in collaborative fathering.

Collaborative fathering is when both fathers and extended kin engage in parenting behaviors that fulfill the father's identity. For example, fathers describe having phone calls with children, talking to them when children were old enough, and small children listening to the father's voice when children where too small to really be involved in a typical phone conversation. Fathers involved in collaborative fathering may also describe in-person visits with children where they are able to directly engage children in asking children about their lives, such as school, current interests, and personally view their child over time. Finally, fathers may also describe writing letters to children who are old enough to read the letters and respond by writing letters or drawing pictures in return.

In addition to the direct father-child interactions and engagement—facilitated by the mothers of children when their relationship is still intact and there are no court restrictions to mother-father contact—fathers describe their extended kin engaging in parenting behaviors as well. For example, fathers may describe their mothers, the child's paternal grandmother, providing child care, transportation to and/or from school, and providing financial assistance to the child by buying diapers or meeting other financial needs of children. Many fathers described this adaptation to fatherhood, prioritizing the outcome that their child was cared for by themselves or someone on their side of the family. Fathers described cousins and siblings

spending time with children as involvement and integration of children with his side of the family. While no fathers explicitly stated that their behaviors and interactions with children during jail were parenting behaviors that made up their fatherhood identity, these behaviors did reflect expectations of being involved in children's lives. The behaviors helped make fathers be accessible at times to children, and with the help of their extended kin, even provided for children. Together, with family, fathers adapted to incarceration through group fathering, all working together for children's well-being.

Fathers engaging in collaborative fathering with other family members do not self-evaluate as bad fathers, but do highlight their position in jail as contributing to poor performance as a dad, and diminished involvement with children. Michael, (White, 24), father of a two-year-old daughter and still together with his wife, explains

> *"*I'm not a very good dad, I'm sitting here." *And then he said but when- you know when I'm out I'm, you know, before [I] was a good dad and [I'm] gonna be a good dad again. Says [I need] to work on the stuff that [I've] missed out on, so like figuring out- catching up with [my daughter] basically.*

In evaluating himself as a father using his past and expected future performance, and allowing for change in performance, Michael has created a sense of hope for his involvement as a father in his child's life, catching up on things he has missed. Michael sees his daughter regularly when his wife brings her every other week because his family lives about two hours away by car. He also talks on the phone to his wife multiple times a week. Michael does not label his behaviors in jail as parenting, such as working on words and colors with his daughter at visits, but he is engaging in fathering and prioritizing his fatherhood identity. Michael talks about their savings money they used to bail him out while he attended court for nine months, and notes how his own

mom and mother-in-law, have helped with his daughter while his wife works. With the help of his wife, Michael is able to adapt and maintain his fatherhood identity while he is in jail.

Like Michael, some fathers evaluate their performance using temporal dimensions that demarcate the current situation of jail as temporary, again allowing for possibilities of change in behavior to improve themselves as fathers, empowering them to have agency over their futures as fathers and their relationships with their children. Other fathers, who are less certain about their sentencing and expect to go prison, and are not together with the mother of their child, describe collaborative fathering with the aid of their extended kin. Joel, (Latino, 26) is no longer with the mother of his eight-year-old daughter, but he discusses how his daughter stays at his mom's house sometimes, and his mom brings his daughter to visit him every few weeks. He talked about his sister visiting him and updating him about his daughter in the interim times between visits. When he wants to talk to his daughter on the phone, his sister sets up three way calls through the jail collect calling system. He talked about how his daughter wrote him back twice in response to his letters, and how he is having a handkerchief made for her by one of the men in jail. While Joel is limited in his ability to engage in fathering behaviors, his family facilitates him and his daughter interacting, allowing Joel to adapt to jail and maintain involvement in his daughter's life. Even when fathers describe themselves in terms of being in jail as defining their self-evaluations of being a father, I argue that they are adapting to their context and lack of agency by working with family members to integrate into their children's lives, resisting their fatherhood identities being lost or going dormant. Joel identifies as a good father, noting his love for his daughter, their current communication, her love for him, and her missing him. Fathers who adapt their expectations of fatherhood to performance-based behaviors

and have access to other family members who help contribute to their children's well-being, can maintain their fatherhood identity during incarceration.

Fatherhood by Proxy

Fathers who describe fathering by proxy may be more restricted in their involvement with children for various reasons. Fathers who describe interacting with their children by proxy describe indirect communication with children. Chris (22, Latino) has never met his child because he only found out about his son since he was in jail, where he has been awaiting trial for almost three years. His three or four-year-old son is too young to read and write, and phone calls are rather expensive because the mother of his child lives in another state. Chris is restricted to writing letters to the mother of his child, which was a short high school relationship and he did not know she was pregnant when he left the state she still lives in. Chris is being charged with attempted murder on a witness saying he was in the area, but he says he was with his current girlfriend at the time.

Being in jail awaiting trial for most of his son's life, and the entire time he has known about his son, Chris relies on his son's mother to serve as a proxy for involvement with his son for engaging in fathering behaviors. Chris sends letters to his son that the mother of his son reads to his son to allow their son to learn about his dad and his dad's engagement in his life. The mother of his son will send pictures of their son and scribbles from the son to the respondent in jail. The mother fills Chris in on their son's life to some degree, but Chris does not know much about his son. Through the mother of their child, Chris can communicate, learn about his son's life, and witness his son's development. In this way, Chris and the mother of his child adapt to

his incarceration by substituting himself with the mother of the child to carry out the parenting roles and behaviors.

Mario, mentioned in Chapter 2, participates in fatherhood by proxy because while the mother of his four-year-old son ended their relationship during this jail stay, Mario's parents bring his son to visit him. Mario's son is too young to connect over the phone and behind glass in jails, but Mario's parents help transmit parenting for Mario in person. In calling his parents, Mario can talk to his son on the phone as much as a four-year-old can, and his parents financially contribute to their grandson because Mario is unable to do so while in jail. They will buy him diapers, clothes, and food for the mother of the son's residence. In place of Mario, who used to work doing landscaping and worked at a body shop to support his son financially, his parents also watch their grandson overnight and during the day when the mother of the son has work, aiding in childcare that Mario used to do with his flexible work schedule.

While these fathers are working to be good fathers and still figuring it out, other fathers who describe fathering by proxy are also able to retain part of their fatherhood identity. Mario says he does not really know how to be a good dad, but describes spending time with children as important, and although he is not able to do this while in jail, as he did every day before jail, his parents are filling in for him and reminding his son of Mario's role in the son's life.

Determinate Fatherhood

The final group of fathering that these men describe is determinate fatherhood. These fathers describe minimal to no contact with children and extended family, and cite additional obstacles beyond jail. These fathers describe hostility with the mother of their child, or being cut off from children, initiated by the mother of their children. Unable to overcome locating their

child and his/her mother, these fathers are limited to describing themselves as fathers prior to jail, which generally is also characterized by little to no contact. This group is the smallest group of fathers, but perhaps the most worrisome. These fathers are fathers who described uninvolved or irrelevant caregivers in Chapter 2. These father-child relationships were marked by ambiguity in the role of being a father, and childhood trauma. Learning the irrelevance of caregivers in their own lives, as well as remembering their own experiences, these fathers may imagine their minimal role as fathers for their children as inconsequential. All fathers describe wanting to be involved with their children and see their children, but to varying degrees.

These fathers describe visits with children at most, and seem to prioritize other identities over their fatherhood identity. In descriptions of other aspects of their lives, these fathers less often include children. For example, fathers in this group describe other factors that contribute to sadness or happiness, and in describing their future goals, remain more focused on their personal development than their children's development. Fathers participating in determinate fatherhood are fathers who most closely abandon their fathering identities, at least regarding children they do not have contact with. Their interactions with children, minimal as they are, are unchangeable and being a father was not before jail and is not a large part of their daily life during jail. Expectations for changes in access to their children or the mother of their children are dismal for these fathers, and they do not have social capital to access for aid in adapting fatherhood to incarceration. Even if they had family to help these fathers remain connected to children, these fathers first need the cooperation of the mothers of children. This group experiences gatekeeping of mothers as described in previous research (Arditti et al. 2005), which shapes their fathering identities more than jail. The other two groups of fathers who describe collaborative fathering and fatherhood by proxy describe the lack of agency in jail to be more involved with children.

However, these formerly described fathers are able to adapt to jail to maintain their fathering identity through their access to and cooperation of their social capital networks of kin.

Performance vs. Internalized Fatherhood Qualities

In describing themselves as fathers while incarcerated in a county jail, two main themes emerged—fathers evaluating themselves based on their performance as a father, and second, self-evaluations based on an internalization of blocked access to enact a fatherhood identity. Fathers in the former group evaluate themselves based on their performance as a father, discussing how they have behaved as father, how they could behave, note bad choices that have resulted in their performance, and highlight their physical placement in jail as impeding performance of the activities described above that make a good father. These fathers, in the descriptions of their performance, describe fluid evaluations of themselves, capable of change. In an interview with Alex, 23,

> *[Interviewer] asked what makes for a good dad. He says "*being there*" and that "*interacting with my kid*." And then says unprompted "*I haven't been doing a good job*." He says "*I'm not there through her growing up*." He says that [I need] to work on [myself]f, "*being there*" and changing [my] life- or and "*changing my life so I can stay out there*," meaning out of jail. What he says what he does well as a parent is that [I] still [communicate] with her and [talk] with her when [I'm] in jail.*

Alex describes how his situation being in jail is impeding his ability to be present for his daughter while she grows up, but his focus on his situation as temporary permits him to think about what he can work on in the future to improve himself as a father. Other fathers discuss needing to get sober as ways of improving for their children, and several fathers talks about needing to grow up or be a man, highlighting maturity as a means of improving their performance as a father. The fathers who focus on their performance in their self-evaluations of fathers create a fluid concept of fatherhood that can be improved, and even planned for. Many of

the fathers who describe their behavior also use futuristic language. Identity theory and the life course perspective posit that agency, or the perception of agency, is important in planning for the future and perceiving the ability to change something about one's self (Hitlin and Johnson 2015).

Alex also discusses that he is communicating with his daughter while in jail, a quality of fatherhood that is possible for him and his daughter with the help of the mother of his child who he is currently in a relationship with. Through this contact, Alex is able to evaluate himself as a father in a way that allows him to fulfill an aspect of what, for him, it means to be a good father. As roles are negotiated and renegotiated through behavior and interactions, it is possible that Alex, and the other fathers, have created an evaluation of themselves that allows for partial fulfillment of a fatherhood standard, and improvement. Renegotiating a fatherhood identity in this way during jail can be a protective form of maintaining a fatherhood identity because it allows for fathers to have hope and agency in future involvement with children. Asking Alex about his plans after he is released, he talks about being close to his daughter, being there for her, getting a job, and getting in a rehabilitation program.

The other group of fathers internalized their evaluations and in contrast to the group above who evaluated themselves on performance, this group evaluated themselves based on their being, highlighting an internalized and static form of self as fathers. These fathers were not the majority at only about ten fathers used this evaluation strategy, but these fathers have a more nihilistic perception of agency in fathering, and therefore their relationships and involvement with their children. These fathers evaluated themselves as being bad fathers, or not fathers at all, without the hope or expression of being able to improve in the future. These fathers used language that conveyed an abandonment of being a father to one or more children. After describing a good father as someone who sets boundaries for his children and does not let them

go sideways, even if that means sacrificing the ability to provide financially, Guy, a 22-year-old of two biological children who he does not know and has not met one of them, and two step-children with his current girlfriend of six months says, *[a]bout himself as a dad, he says I haven't been a father. Maybe I'll get to be with my step kids, hopefully. But I wasn't with my biological kids.* Guy has completely lost hope and abandoned being a father for his biological children. This reveals the complicated nature of being a father to multiple children and how fatherhood can vary for different children, including the expectations of future involvement after incarceration.

The fathers who internalized themselves as bad fathers and did not have an outlook for future involvement with their children, or felt they could not change their behavior as a father expressed powerlessness in their futures and their impact on their children's lives. Alberto, 20, and separated from the mother of his children, *says, "*Sometimes I don't feel good with myself because I disappointed a lot of people, mainly my kids*." He says because of this, like jail, that [I] can't do half of what [I] wanted to do. And [Interviewer was] like well what do you need for this to not happen when you get out? And he's like luck, luck is what I need. And [Interviewer was] like what do you mean? He's like I don't know I just need to be lucky.* These fathers were primarily very young fathers in the sample, being between twenty and twenty-two years of age, and the few older ones in the sample entered jail for the first time in their early-mid teenage years at around thirteen or fourteen years old, and all were estranged or had volatile relationships with the mother of the child the father is referring to. When asking about their future plans after release, these fathers described plans that primarily involved a focus on themselves and only one father mentioned his child being in his life after release without interviewers specifically asking about the child. Some of these fathers, similar to the example above, did not have long term

future plans for their lives, demonstrating the powerlessness these men feel in regards to determining their own lives, as well as impacting the lives of their children.

DISCUSSION

Fathers in jail are extremely limited in their ability to enact fatherhood behaviors and fulfill these roles and expectations for their children, and other family members. To some degree, this is dependent on their current relationship with the mother of the child, and their own family. This is especially true for the group of fathers who express dejected evaluations of themselves as fathers and lack hope for involvement with their children after release. However, the majority of these fathers display resilience to their current position in jail by engaging in adaptive forms of fathering in response to the obstructed fatherhood that the context of jail presents. These men are all too aware of their inability to meet all or any of their expectations of being a good father, and are aware of how being in jail changes their agency in fulfilling the roles they define as fatherhood. In response to this, incarcerated young fathers rely on the social capital of their families to continue fathering together, or as a substitute, prioritizing their child's well-being over the exact actors of the parenting. Fathers who evaluate themselves temporally around being in jail, evaluate themselves as fathers based on before jail and after release. This creates a fluid evaluation that permits them to assign poor fatherhood performance as something that can be altered and improved upon. Some of the fathers specifically stated that they were working up to being a good father, expressing hope and future-oriented involvement as a father.

Young fathers, ages 19-26, in county jails in Southern California adapt their fatherhood identity while in jail, utilizing kin social capital to facilitate and maintain their roles in children's lives. Some adopt a nihilistic identity of being bad fathers, while others create an identity that

they are good fathers, but have had bad situations. These fathers create a distinction between who they are and choices they have made that make any lapse in being a good father unrelated to who they are and expectations for their future. Fourteen of the thirty-seven fathers who gave self-evaluations as fathers described ambiguity in their fatherhood identity while in jail, eight of them citing jail or drug abuse as contributing to the ambiguity. These fathers seemed to have a fatherhood identity that was in limbo, undeveloped, or in transition due to their circumstances, being both good and bad fathers. Roy (2005) also found liminal fathering for men in a work-release program. This form of incarceration may be more similar to the transitory experience of jail compared to experiences of fathers in prison. This complexity reveals the detrimental toll jail can take on fathers and how they see themselves, having implications for their interactions and relationships with their children during and after jail.

The majority of young fathers may be able to create an adaptation of their fatherhood identity that can survive their period of confinement; however, the group who abandons their fatherhood identity during jail may not be able to overcome the challenges of incarceration on family relationships, especially without access to social capital that can support father-child contact. Jail, and the requisite confinement to one traceable place, becomes an opportunity for fathers to reconnect to a fatherhood identity through regular and meaningful contact with family members. Through the development of expectations and roles with children that can be enacted during incarceration and post-release, fathers can begin to fulfill role expectations before release as part of the transition back into their families after release. Many of these families suffer from additional strain, such as poverty or domestic violence, which needs to be addressed, making this rosy policy reform much messier than written here. Though, jail does not have to be a force of inequality and cumulative disadvantage in every aspect; it can be an opportunity to provide

young fathers with parenting strategies to build stable relationships with children and reintegrate into their family systems after release. This is especially true for fathers who are unable to access or mobilize social capital to assist in parenting and reserving fathering roles while incarcerated.

Men's expectations for their relationships with partners and children have been found to be vague, inconsistent, and often unrealistic (Day et al. 2005) upon being released, but meaningful expectations are equally unrealistic when recent contact, if it existed, was characterized by poor circumstances in a detention facility. Conflict in relationships and an inability to create natural interactions, make meaningful interactions among family members difficult. These fathers do not exist in a vacuum, and more accurately, are embedded in a dense network of people who are directly and indirectly impacted by their incarceration (for a review, see Comfort 2007). Incarceration adds a new level of challenges to contact, involvement, and father identity, working to disrupt united families, especially when fathers resided with their child prior to incarceration (Geller 2013). Time in jail is often shorter than in prison, and can include more churning, but both scenarios include the father re-entering society and their families. Broken romantic relationships, broken father-child relationships, and lost employment prospects and contacts do not immediately recover from this dormant period of incarceration. There are also few services that exist for families and fathers to regain family cohesion and reestablish fatherhood responsibilities when a different family system developed in his absence.

Challenges occur for fathers, partners and caregivers, and children. Fathers must rely on others to maintain their relationships with children because of the structural limitations from the jail policies that alter the ways men can relate to their family members. Fathers' contact with children depends on one or more adults having economic flexibility to load money on a phone to accept calls from jail, and to pay for transportation to the jail facilities. Contact for fathers and

children is contingent on adults having access to minor children themselves, their birth certificates, and flexibility in time to bring children to visit during visiting hours where they often wait for hours for a 30-minute visit. Contact with children also depends on the availability of adults and children to answer a phone call from jail because the time varies, and calls between people and jail are unidirectional, from incarcerated father to the outside world. Depending on the family dynamics and violence in the relationship prior to the incarceration period, access to family can vary widely, with changes that can be positive, negative, or null (Western 2006; Turney and Wildeman 2013; for a review, see Poehlmann et al. 2010). Regardless, changes in the way the father can enact his fatherhood roles must be navigated for children and partners alike. This chapter extends identity theory by seeking to understand how contexts of limited agency shape fathers' adaptations to sustain a fatherhood identity during jail (Roy 2005). Expanding research on identity theory and how it is impacted by different contexts, particularly unsupportive contexts (Adamsons and Pasley 2013), this chapter traces how fathers create opportunities to fulfill fatherhood expectations within jail by allowing for fluidity in role performance that can be enacted during confinement.

Possible reforms include making fathers less dependent on social capital to maintain connections to their children. Specifically, this could mean universal access to phones to call family at times that work for talking to children, such as in the afternoon or evening if they are school-aged children to encourage role fulfillment through increased contact with children. Free phone calls for families—in the 21st century phone calls are cheap, especially from landlines, and if the jails have internet, can even be completed without cellular access. Some jails around the nation only permit postcards for mail correspondence, but sending letters, which are permitted in the jails included in this project, is an integral part of maintaining relationships and enacting

some aspects of fatherhood, such as guidance, support, expressing love and care, and generally being involved in children's lives during incarceration. Permitting physical contact for children and parents in jail can change the entire context and environment for both, creating a supportive environment. An environment that encourages shared moments of interactions, the foundation of building healthy relationships, can allow fathers to fulfill emotional aspects of fatherhood identities enacted through hugs and other physical contact.

Finally, improvements to the waiting rooms of jails so that children feel welcome, and fathers feel comfortable about their children visiting and not being traumatized (for a review, see Poehlmann et al. 2010). Waiting areas do not need to be extravagant; but, a room with pictures on the walls and carpet on the floors, tables and maybe a few toys for kids, and sanitary bathrooms for children and the caregivers bringing children could improve visiting experiences for families. Creating an environment similar to a private doctor office waiting room can set children and parents at ease to enjoy their limited time with their family member. These are a few changes that could foster fatherhood identities among young men in jail, depleting identities of inmate and conforming to a prisonization culture that further complicates father reintegration. Altering jail to become a supportive environment for father-child relationships, without dependence on others, rather than jail being a context that forces identity renegotiation to survive is important for stabilizing family roles in families who experience paternal incarceration.

Other policy reforms for fathers who reside in county jails for longer periods of time could include more and better classes in jails regarding parenting, including instruction on specific parenting strategies that are effective for specific goals for child outcomes and development. Re-entry programs for fathers being released could also take a family-centered approach during incarceration to develop co-parenting relationships between caregivers that

encourage cohesion and access to children during and after release. Approaching release, and post-release, sessions with family members could assist in easing the transition back to the family, whatever structure it takes on, while the father adapts once more to agency in the free world. To be fair, some father-child relationships are problematic for children, and this is important for reforming restrictions between fathers and children during incarceration. However, it is beyond the purview of this paper to discuss the complicated nature of relationships with children and decrees of appropriateness.

Contributions

Incarcerated fathers, regardless of their circumstances prior to jail, are controlled in almost every way while in jail, including their ability to interact with their children. Fathers in jail experience unique challenges in interacting with their children such as long wait times with short, non-contact visits, and expensive and short phone calls at odd times. More profoundly, fathers in jail must also contend with stigma, shame, and separation in jail prior to being given a trial or being found guilty. Uncertainty, at the least, must be extremely hard for children to comprehend, and for fathers to reconcile as they must negotiate a father identity while being a person who is also incarcerated. In managing a dual identity of both father and inmate (Tripp 2009), these fathers create fluid expectations for their role performance to fit the context of jail.

This paper extends research on identity processes by discussing how contexts can present challenges to identities, just as appraisals from others can encourage them. As fathers in jail, these men renegotiate a fatherhood identity that allows for change, enabling them to maintain their fatherhood identity in a context of high restriction and limited agency. The fathers who did experience an abandonment of their fatherhood identity tended to be younger or embedded in the

criminal justice system at an early age. For these fathers, incarceration during a time when fathers are transitioning to adulthood can create additional obstacles to both fulfilling adult roles and fatherhood roles, while reformulating a fatherhood identity post-incarceration. These cumulative pressures of employment, managing substance use, and reintegrating into family can further complicate readapting parenting once fathers' agency is less restricted. Future research should consider incarceration, parenthood and the transition to adulthood in understanding family well-being.

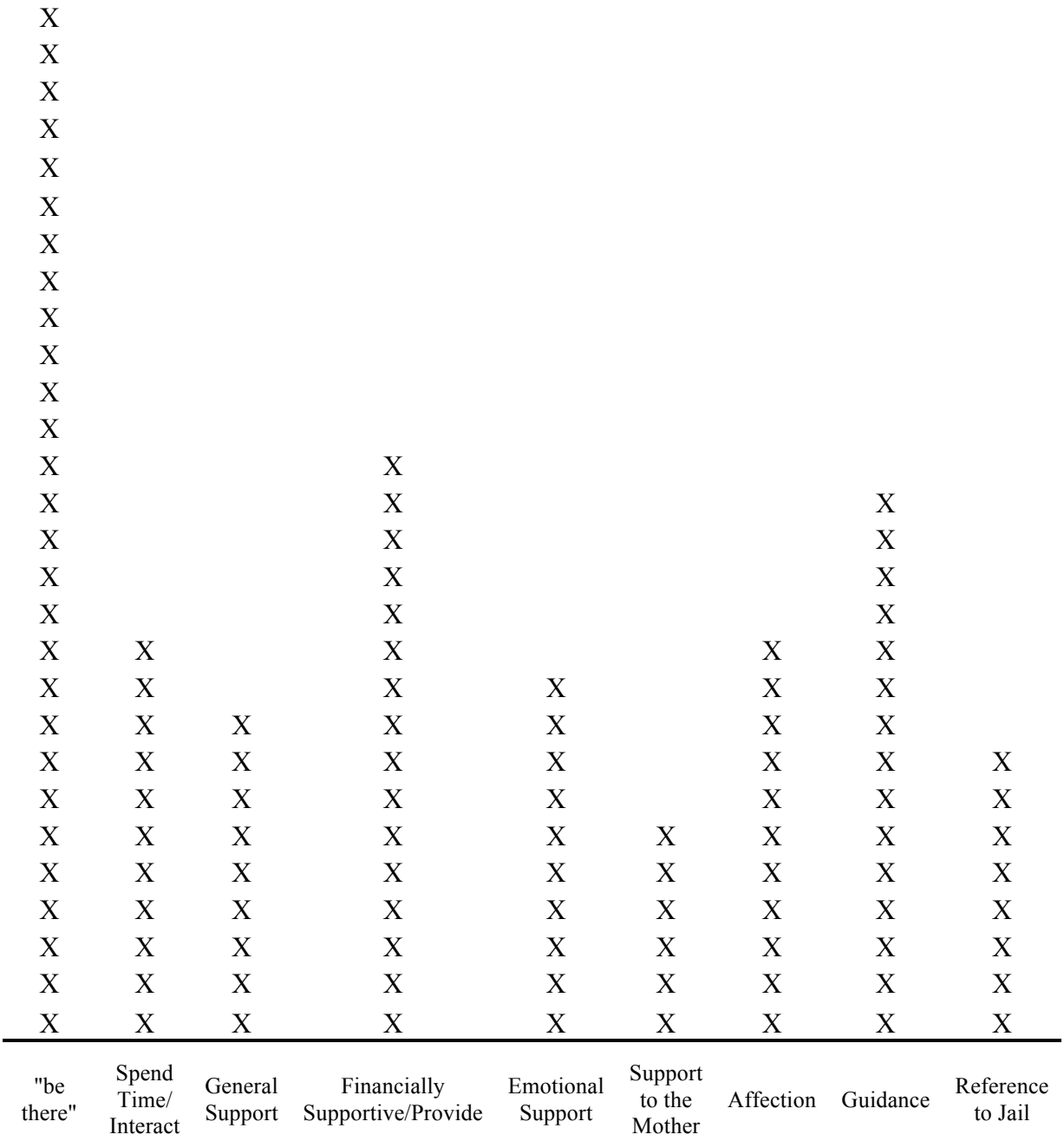

Figure 3.1 Characteristics of a Good Father

‘I Can’t Do Much Right Now’: Young Fathers’ Relationships with Their Children While in Jail

Chapter 4

Estimates from the mid 2000's reveal that over half of the 1.5 million people incarcerated in state and federal prisons are parents (Glaze and Marushak 2008). While estimates for parents in jail are not readily available—jails are where those arrested are housed until either released or sentenced to prison—so it is reasonable to conservatively estimate that about half of men in county jails are also parents. It is possible, however, that fathers select into certain types of crime that preclude them from being sentenced to prison compared to men without children, such as property related crimes, or misdemeanor level crimes. It is also possible that we could expect higher rates of fathers to be in county jails compared to prison. As time spent in jail is intended to be shorter than in prison and includes large variation in the population, including pre- and post-conviction statuses, it is also expected that the number of children of fathers who have ever had a father incarcerated is higher than the more than two million estimated (Sykes and Pettit 2014). Given the widespread experience of parental incarceration, research investigating father-child relationships during incarceration has been a topic of interest (for reviews, see Poehlmann et al. 2010; Dyer et al. 2012). Most of this research focuses on maternal reentry to families (Arditti and Few 2006, 2008), has been conducted in prisons, (Arditti et al. 2005; Day et al. 2005; Foster and Hagan 2009; Petersilia 2003), or includes the perspectives of family members due to limited or denied access to the incarcerated fathers (for exceptions, see Arditti 2003; Arditti et al. 2003; Tripp 2009).

The life course perspective posits that people act with agency, within in the constraints of their environments (Elder 1994). People plan and make choices that develop into their life course trajectory, but individual differences, changing environments, and selection into environments play a role in behavior. Extensions of symbolic interaction incorporating agentic action argue that structural and cultural constraints to agency are hidden from consciousness when behavior is

routinized; but, when a disruption to routine or contradiction to an identity occurs, these constraints become visible once more (Snow 2001). There is minimal research regarding theories of human agency and incarceration. However, this extension of symbolic interaction and components of life course theory would suggest that contact with children becomes routinized within the choices and environments available to these young fathers. When fathers are incarcerated, though, goals of the contact they had with children prior to incarceration are no longer available to them, resulting in acute awareness of a lack of agency. Within their new environment, incarcerated fathers are forced to confront their lack of agency and forced reliance on family and friends outside of the correctional facility. This "constraint awareness" (Snow 2001) may have consequences to their identity fulfillment within jail, and perceptions of their relationships with their children. As young fathers, incarceration can be a disruption in father identity fulfillment that constrains fathers within their capacity to be involved with their children can be devastating if throughout their transition to adulthood, their identity as fathers and their perceived agency to fulfill that role is whittled down each time they are incarcerated, having similar whittling effects on the father-child relationship.

Research investigating father-child relationships in relation to paternal incarceration has focused on four main topics: (1) how paternal incarceration affects father-child relationships (for a review on incarceration and family relationships, see Dyer et al. 2012); (2) how contact during incarceration affects father-child relationships (for a review of literature including maternal incarceration as well, see Poehlman et al. 2010); (3) how the mother-father relationship during incarceration influences the father-child relationship during jail (Roy and Dyson 2005); and (4) how incarceration affects fatherhood identities (Clarke et al. 2005; Tripp 2001), which has implications for father-child relationships. Paternal incarceration influences relationships with

their children through separation (Hairston 1998), contact before incarceration (Geller 2013), and contact during incarceration. Overall, paternal incarceration harms father-child relationships, which is associated with diminished childhood health (Turney 2014b, 2015c), cognitive development and school performance (Haskins 2016; Turney and Haskins 2014), and behavioral problems (Wildeman 2009, 2010) placing children at a disadvantage (for reviews, see Wakefield and Uggen 2010; Uggen and McElrath 2014). Paternal incarceration can also harm children through parental relationship dissolution and maternal neglect (Turney 2014a, 2015b, 2015c).

The literature exploring how father-child contact during incarceration affects children and father-child relationships is mixed due to negative consequences from trauma during visiting experiences, but positive effects of phone calls and letters for reducing child alienation, for example (Poehlmann et al. 2010). Research investigating the role of mother-father relationship status and quality shows consequences for the fathers and their children due to gatekeeping (Roy and Dyson 2005) and consequences for co-parenting alliances (Loper et al. 2009). Research on fatherhood identity in jail and prison illuminate how incarceration interrupts identity confirmation processes and results in periods of dormant fatherhood (Arditti et al. 2005). This paper extends previous research on fatherhood identity during incarceration in three ways: One, this research is one of few studies conducted in the jail context to understand how this affects fatherhood identity and navigating parenting. Two, the sample is mostly young, Latino fathers, a difficult population to access in incarceration research; and third, extending the literature on incarceration and the transition to adulthood by focusing on fathers in emerging adulthood as they navigate parenting and adulthood to connect with their children while in jail.

To better understand how incarcerated fathers perceive their relationships with their children during their time in jail, this study uses grounded theory to analyze 43 in-depth

interviews with young fathers (ages 19-26) currently serving time in jail. Findings indicate that fathers who are embedded within their family networks during jail, have regular contact with their child in multiple communication formats (letters, phone calls, and in-person, but non-contact visits), know more about their children's daily life, and have realistic expectations for reunification after release. Furthermore, fathers who describe disconnected or inconsistent relationships with their children have less contact with their children before and during jail. Expectations for their relationships with their children after release reflect inflated representations of themselves as fathers, and a lack of power in influencing their children's lives. This chapter extends the literature on paternal incarceration and consequences to family by talking to young incarcerated fathers in a jail setting while they experience changes in father-child relationship and prepare for release. Findings support theories of agency that highlight the integral role of perceptions of future expectations in expected life chances. Young incarcerated fathers who do not describe stable relationships with their children and families have empty expectations for future involvement and do not imagine impacting their children's lives. First, I review the current literature on incarceration and families using a life course perspective. Next, I outline the results before I conclude with a discussion of theoretical contributions and policy implications.

THE LIFE COURSE AND SYMBOLIC INTERACTION

The Life Course Perspective

The life course perspective was developed to understand different life trajectories of people born around the time of the Great Depression in America (Elder 1998). It has been applied to understanding how incarceration affects individuals' life course trajectories, while also influencing those they are connected to (Dyer et al. 2012). The principle of linked lives asserts

that the social learning and identity formation processes outlined above are mutually influential, for example, between parent and child. As a father behaves in a way that meets expectations of being a father held by himself and child, his identity is affirmed (Fox and Bruce 2001). However, being unable or choosing not to behave in a way that is expected of a father may lead to a diminishing fatherhood identity through poor appraisals from others, reduced role importance, or reduced commitment to the role (Pasley et al. 2002).

Another aspect of life course theory and identity formation is human agency. Human agency is the belief, or actual ability, to intentionally plan and make choices about one's life within the constraints of their environments (Elder 1994). Snow (2001) expanded on the concept of human agency and articulated how disruption in routine, identity, or the pursuit of goals can change one's awareness of constraints to agency. With this conception, we could argue that fathers have developed routines of contact and involvement with their children, prior to incarceration, that define the father-child relationship within the current constraints. Entering jail and changes in the environment disrupt this routine of involvement, highlighting structural constraints that prevent the previous routines from taking place, and have the potential to alter the father-child relationship. Furthermore, aspects of context within identity theory suggest that fathers' daily interactions primarily with other residents and jail personnel—the relational context—and the physical infrastructure of jail—the environmental context—are unsupportive contexts for father identity enactment (Adamsons and Pasley 2013). Close relationships with family and children can thwart against the impact of these contexts by providing opportunities to develop the fatherhood identity. In the absence of contact with family members and children, the unsupportive environment of jail and interactions as inmates, it might be harder to overcome the lack of support for fatherhood identity, resulting in less role behavior.

INCARCERATION AND FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship Quality and Family Dynamics

Research investigating how incarceration affects relationship quality and father engagement during incarceration is important to understand how incarceration contributes to inequality in families. Depending on family dynamics and the presence of violence prior to the incarceration period, both positive and negative associations of incarceration (Western 2006; for a review, see Poehlmann et al. 2010) can exist for romantic partners and children. Research has found that separation, more than stigma of incarceration, can have deleterious consequences for the mother-father romantic relationship, ending in absolving the relationship (Massoglia et al. 2011). Cohesion between parents, and caregivers broadly, is important given research that shows how the mother of the child can impact father involvement (Roy and Dyson 2005). For the most advantaged of these families with a resident father, incarceration is associated with negative effects on the father-child relationship, relationship with the mom (Turney and Wildeman 2013), and maternal neglect (Turney 2014a). It is possible, depending on family circumstances and child custody, that children are pulled from parental custody and enter foster care for reasons beyond family finances and structure (Andersen and Wildeman 2014; but uses data from Denmark).

Research that observes how incarcerated fathers experience feeling helpless and must rely completely on the mother, caregiver, or other family member for contact with his children, describe gatekeeping as a tact mothers use (Roy and Dyson 2005) in controlling the father-child relationship. When a father is incarcerated, there is little autonomy or control over his connections with his family. Phone calls are expensive and only possible when a phone has money pre-loaded onto it to accept collect calls, letters are highly monitored and without

additional money, only a limited number of envelopes, paper, and stamps are supplied free of cost. Visitation includes other rules and regulations that are ambiguously enforced (Comfort, 2003, 2007, 2008), including dress policies, and paperwork policies. For example, minors must be accompanied with an adult over 18, must have a copy of their birth certificate in hand, and only three people per visit are allowed (these vary by facility, but these are some standard requirements). There must be an adult outside of confinement willing to gather the required items, have the amount of money for transportation and parking, and be able to enter the jail or prison for a father to see his child. In this way, not only is the remaining caregiver, and/or other family members, responsible for maintaining the family, they are also responsible for the father-child relationship, though it may be a shared responsibility.

Comfort (2007) asserts that incarceration has become the source of housing for the destitute, mentally ill, physically ill, and homeless, "a situation that has a paradoxical impact on the kin and loved ones left behind," (pg. 285). Unique to jail is a diverse population of men with a wide range of charges. Fathers who are detained, can be pre-trial, convicted, or awaiting transfer to prison. Recent research using ethnography to follow families over three years concludes that the cycle in and out of jail "continually undermines efforts to stabilize," (Comfort 2016: 74) for the individual and his family who are mobilizing support and resources while managing their own hardships, such as illness and poverty. Jail becomes a place of chaos and uncertainty, placing families in limbo without answers. Families must decide what to tell children about jail, and what to conceal, which can add more stress on familial relationships and the way individuals process their circumstances, influencing intra-familial dynamics and sources of support.

Father and Family Involvement

Fathers typically have some level of involvement with their children prior to incarceration (Nurse 2002), even when children are from multiple partners, creating changes to routines. Extended family and siblings may become a larger financial supporter for their son/brother and his family during incarceration as well, offering to have his family live with them, or offering money for housing and necessities for survival. Contact between incarcerated fathers and their children suggests that visitation to prison (research on the jail context for parent-child relationships is limited) is traumatic for children, resulting in more attention deficit problems (Dallaire, Wilson, and Ciccone 2010) and behavior problems at school as reported by teachers (Poehlmann et al. Ciccone 2010). Exposure to arrest and sentencing is detrimental to children (Dallaire and Wilson 2010), and the current conditions of visiting an incarcerated loved one is likely to create similar maladjustment in children. Some fathers will insist on children not seeing them while incarcerated as visitations can traumatize children (Loper et al. 2009) and do not allow an ability to create meaningful and natural interactions (Clarke et al. 2005). However, contact with fathers through mail and phone calls has been associated with less child depression, benefits at school, and less alienation (Loper et al. 2009). Perhaps visits are problematic given the conditions of visiting for children and family members in prisons and jails, but other challenges can also arise. To better understand how incarcerated young fathers describe relationships with their children, this chapter seeks answers to the following research questions:

Research Questions

- RQ1: How do incarcerated fathers describe their relationships with their children?
- RQ2: What do incarcerated fathers expect their involvement with children to be after release?

RESULTS

Research investigating incarcerated fathers' perceptions of their relationships with their children has predominately been in prisons (for reviews, see Dyer, Pleck, and McBride 2012; Poehlman et al. 2010), in juvenile facilities (Fader 2013; Nurse 2002), and limited explorations in jail (for exceptions, see (Arditti 2003; Arditti et al. 2005; Arditti et al. 2003; Martin 2001; Tripp 2009). To extend this field of research, this paper investigates how young fathers in county jails describe their relationships with their children *while they are in jail*. First, I discuss the general themes fathers draw on when describing their relationships with their children, and time spent in jail for their current stay as a general context for the rest of the paper. Next, I expand on the major themes that emerged about the ways fathers talk about and relate to their children during jail. Finally, I discuss how the different ways these young fathers describe their relationships with their children during jail have a bearing on their future hopes for children, involvement with their children and the mother of their child, and their expectations for themselves after release.

Missing Out and Lack of Agency

The fathers describe a wide range in the amount of contact they have with their children both before being incarcerated this current stay, and during this current stay in county jail. Variation in contact before jail ranges from no contact in a few years before jail, to living with their children and taking part in daily activities. During jail, the range is daily contact in jail through phone, mail, or visits, to not being able to contact anyone since entry. However, most fathers, regardless of level of contact before and during jail, describe missing out on time, experiences, or just knowing about their child. For these fathers, their position in jail removes

their accessibility and perception of agency to be involved in their children's lives. Fathers describe missing out on birthdays and holidays such as Christmas, knowing if their child has a Mohawk haircut, or being available to comfort their child if they have a problem at school. They are, simultaneously, acutely aware of this absence, and their inability to do anything about it while in jail.

Chris, who was nineteen when he entered jail, was twenty-three at the time of the interview, and ultimately spent five years in jail before being released after he was found not guilty at trial. He says about trying to meet his now five-year-old son for the first time,

> *[I] told [the mother of my child] that we'll meet up as soon as possible when I'm out. He says,* "I'm not messing with you"*, but it's not my choice that my case gets postponed. And this is in response to [the mother of my child] saying when am I going to see you. She-. He says that she's very afraid that [I'm] going to just completely just stop talking to them that definitely not [my] intention, but that [the mother of my child] needs to understand that these things are not in [my] hands when [I get] released or when [my] court dates are and all of that stuff. He says* "it sucks, but there's just nothing that I can do about it, you know?"

Chris expresses his distress about his lack of power to do anything to change his situation for his family. He did not know about his child before entering jail, but after the mother, who lives in a different state, told him, Chris felt he had no agency to change the circumstances until he was released, which he further had no control over. In addition to feeling a lack of agency in impacting the world outside of jail, the fathers often noted a back-and-forth of going to court and being offered plea deals based on time and what they were pleading guilty to. Like Chris, many young men in jail may go to court for months or years before their case closes on a trial outcome, or more likely by the father signing a confession, called a plea agreement where he agrees to accept the consequences of guilt in exchange for a given sentence, waiving his right to a trial.

Unlike Chris, many young men decide to accept guilt in favor of a determined sentence and time of release that is shorter than, per say, waiting five years for trial. Within this process are court dates where men go to court, are offered a package of consequences including time in jail, prison, probation, strikes in California, level of charge—misdemeanor or felony. The fathers may be offered a different charge altogether, often described as reduced compared to what would be offered at trial, and encouraged to take the plea. Fathers described most often serving fifty percent of their sentence, a deal that sounds favorable to five years of uncertainty and time away from families. Fathers described a great deal of uncertainty in how long they would be in jail, if they would go to prison, and generally a lack of knowing what to expect for their future. Only a third (n=16) of respondents had a release date at the time of their interview, meaning over 60% still had an undetermined future for how long they would be spending in jail. At the time of the interview, time in jail ranged from three days to thirty-five months, with the average being about six months for all respondents. Among the men who were not yet convicted, average time in jail at the time of the interview was about six months and three weeks. Fathers experienced a large range of time in county jail, but on average they had already spent over six months away from their families and children.

Young Fathers' Relationships with Children During Incarceration

Fathers were asked a variety of questions about their children's typical day, contact with their children, characteristics of their children including what they are like, what they struggle with, what are their strengths, and how they spent time with their children before jail, among others. Three main themes emerged regarding how the fathers illustrated their relationships with their children: (1) disconnected relationships, (2) inconsistent relationships, and (3) stable

relationships. Each are considered, and are followed by hopes and expectations for the future.

Incarcerated fathers' experiences in jail can vary from facility to facility, classification within a facility, and their access to work and classes within a facility. One thing that remains the same is that they are confined and restricted from accessing the outside world. This criterion removes their ability to choose how and when they can contact their families, and limits their access to information regarding contact because there is no access to the internet, and all of their personal belongings are removed from their possession when they are processed into the facility after arrest. Though fathers are able to periodically communicate through phone calls and mail, these require families to know how to add money, and have money to spare, to add to a phone account, and the men need to have money for multiple envelopes, letters, and stamps, respectively. Additionally, fathers have no control over their visits—not who visits, not when they visit, and they only get one visit per day on days restricted to general visiting, most often on the weekends[16].

Disconnected relationships

One theme among fathers' descriptions of their relationships with their children is a lack of connection between father and child. These fathers do not know much about their children's lives while they are in jail, sometimes drawing on information prior to the incarceration if they knew, but often, they just do not know. Fathers might discuss where their child lives or who with, and know general information about their child, like he or she is smart, or that they do well in school. These fathers may have had some contact with the mother of the child or another

[16] This varies by facility, and county, and can be changed without notice, adding or removing visiting days. Some facilities also use an appointment-based system for general visiting, or a combination of appointment and first come basis.

family member, through phone, or mail, or visits, but usually only one form of communication was accessed. The fathers might learn limited information from these contacts, but more pronounced in this group of fathers was their lack of direct communication with their children since they have been in jail. Only three of the fifteen fathers in this group had direct contact with their child during this jail stay, and it consisted of a few letters that went mostly unanswered, and the other father had phone calls and visits with one daughter, and no contact with his daughter from a different relationship. Two fathers described currently being in a relationship with a mother of their child, but only one also has regular contact with his child. However, his child is a six-month old son, so direct contact includes seeing him on the other side of glass and maybe the son hearing his voice through the phone if he will tolerate the phone near him. The other father who is in a relationship with the mother of his child does not see his child because both the mother and himself use illicit drugs, have been in jail recently, and do not have custody of the child.

This group of fathers has wide variation in circumstances that result in a lack of contact with their children and disconnected relationships. Several (n=6) of the fathers in this group describe relationships with their children and minimal time spent with their children before jail due to at least the father not having custody of the child, if not both, or unrepaired historical animosity with the mother of the child. Three of the four fathers who experienced their child being born while they were in jail this time discuss disconnections from their children because they have yet to hold their children, and for two to even see their children. These babies are months old, except one, who is the child of Chris we spoke of before. Chris entered jail shortly after his child was born, found out about having a child during jail, but stayed in jail for multiple years. While he sends letters to his child and the mother of his child, his family lives in another

state, making phone calls and visits costly and impossible. Despite regular contact through letters, these relationships were still marked by a separation of lives. Interestingly, the fathers who had been in jail the longest at 35 months, 20 months, and 18 months at the time of the interview, have disconnected relationships with their children, and all three are also still attending court before trial. This suggests the toll that distance, length of time in jail, and uncertainty can take on families. Another father discussed his family being in Ohio making contact expensive. All but three of the fourteen fathers in this group are still going to court. A portion of this group have not had contact with their families during this stay due to a lack of response from family members outside of jail. Poncho, father of a two-year-old son, in jail for almost seven months, explains how

> *[I think my son is] in daycare but [I'm] not sure. [I haven't] talked to the mother of [my] child in a while. He says [I try] to get in contact with her, but she never writes, no one ever sends letters, [my] dad doesn't know. Um, so he seemed- throughout he mentions this fact over and over, that [I try] to get into contact with her but [I] just can't, and she, she doesn't, um, get in contact with [me].*

Other fathers echo this sentiment, not sure why they have not had contact with family despite their efforts, but are aware that he can only do so much until people on the outside make efforts to be in contact with him. These fathers' relationships with their children and the circumstances surrounding a disconnect between knowing about their children shows three main findings. First, the heterogeneous circumstances around these fathers disconnected relationships with their children demonstrates the complex family systems and relationships from before jail. Moreover, the challenges of distance, and multiple years of fathers in jail may be too much for families to overcome, or sustain over long periods of time to maintain father-child relationships. The inherent uncertainty of jail for fathers and families waiting for an outcome for each case, especially sustained over long periods of time, breed more uncertainty that characterizes this

group of fathers and their relationships. Finally, the consideration of child age in connecting with fathers within the policies of jail are pronounced in this group because fathers have children of young ages who are in stages of child development where touch and the repetition of caregiver voices are crucial to building the foundation of father-child relationships. Following attachment theory, a one month old child hearing a disembodied voice as his father for the next few years of life may have implications for that child's development and the father-child relationship (Bretherton 2010: Bowlby 2008).

These father-child relationships might be the most impacted by the context of jail due to a lack of contact and fatherhood role fulfillment prior to jail, followed by the uncertainty of minimal to no contact during jail. The lack of contact prior to jail was described as the result of various constraints including distance, lack of contact or estranged relationships with the mother of the children, and long periods of time for the current incarceration stay. For theses fathers, there was contact before jail, so upon entering jail, they felt a change in their agency to connect with their children, potentially diminishing the father-child relationship further. Three of these fathers had never met children who born during jail, learning of this new life-altering role (Elder 1998a), but being unable to take any action to begin role fulfillment and fatherhood identity formation. This group was plagued with uncertainty as a disruption to their routinized constraints of life before jail. These fathers entered jail with expectations of their father-child relationship, but the uncertainty and the inability to act with agency to mitigate that uncertainty, as well as the lack of a network to ameliorate the uncertainty around the father-child relationship, these fathers experienced continual disruption in their fatherhood identity and disconnection from children.

Inconsistent relationships

The second group of fathers describe relationships with their children marked by inconsistent interactions both before the current jail stay and during the current jail stay. These fathers discuss intermittent direct contact with children, typically through one form of communication, but sometimes two. Other fathers only experience intermittent contact with other family members such as parents, aunts, or siblings to know about their children's lives while in jail. Charlie, father of two sons, ages two and four years old, describes how he talks on the phone to his own mom periodically because of the cost, and asks about his sons because his mother helps the mother of his child with childcare. He says he also *sends a letter to [my] sister about once in a week to keep up-to-date on what's going on. He said, [I] sent a birthday card to [my] younger son with a photo of – [a picture].* Charlie describes knowing about his younger son and how his younger son likes minions and he paid another man in jail, an artist, to draw this minion card for his son. Charlie talks about it costing him a bag of coffee, which is about nine dollars in jail. Like Charlie, these fathers might be able to have some communication with children, but it is inconsistent. These fathers, however, do know some about their children's lives, often through other family members.

The ten fathers in this group describe the most instability in their lives prior to incarceration, and specifically discuss the mother of their children in negative ways. Charlie, for instance, has been in jail eight or nine times, struggles with substance use of meth, and

> *He says, he – he says Rachel hates [me] and has a restraining order. She's trying to get at [me[and the only way – she's trying to get at [me and] the only way she can. He says, "*she's not hurting me, she's [hurting] my kids". *So – [I, I] had his – [I] had to turn [my]self in on this warrant, by Easter, but [I] didn't want to do that because then [I] was going to miss Easter with [my] kids.*

Charlie described being in and out of jail just after his youngest son was born, meaning a large part of the past two years have been spent in jail. About a third of the fathers in this group

describe having custody issues and restraining orders between them and the mother of their child. One father has court-ordered visits with his two-year-old, but he does not come regularly, the visits are from behind glass, and the quality and length of the visit depends on how long the son was waiting prior to the visit starting. If the son waited over an hour in the jail facility waiting room, he is described as tired, making visits difficult and short. Again, the age of children and the developmental importance of building father-child relationships becomes extremely relevant to understanding effective forms of contact and involvement during jail.

All ten of the fathers in this group explicitly mention their struggle with substance abuse, and all but one man (who described using heavy prescription narcotics), named heroin or meth as the drugs they were using prior to their current stay in jail. Most of them also mentioned periods of homelessness, sleeping in cars, sleeping in motels, on the streets, or generally not sleeping from their drug use. While only one of these fathers explicitly stated that their contact with children in jail is more than when he was out, this is possibly true of more of the fathers. At least five of these fathers experienced abuse, child homelessness, foster care, witnessing the death of an adolescent friend, or some combination of the above. This group, as a whole, described the most unstable of personal circumstances, and father-child relationships.

Interestingly, these fathers did not discuss the same feelings of distress related to lack of contact with children as the other two groups. These fathers explained missing out on child events, child development, and expressed concern about their children, but not with the same fervor as the other groups of fathers. It is possible, that these fathers experience such inconsistency and trauma in their own lives, that their inconsistency with their children did not seem problematic. Additionally, it is possible that these fathers are less concerned with consistent contact with their children, compared to the other groups, because they are focused on

the turmoil between themselves and the mother of their child, or their own unstable life circumstances. It is also possible, as a few of these fathers directly state referencing needing to grow up or be a man, that these fathers are aware of their inconsistency as a problem, but view the process of getting their life together as starting first with a focus on themselves. Focusing on themselves first, as a step in being a better father, spending more time with their child, and staying out of jail, then focusing on their child becomes a distant priority. However, the focus on themselves could be in response to the disruption in being able to contact their child, despite the irregularity of contact prior to incarceration. Viewing improvements in themselves as an avenue to increased access to children after jail, and to prevent them returning to jail, then self-improvement becomes the priority they choose first.

Stable relationships

The final and largest group of fathers is the group of fathers who describe relationships with their children marked with consistency, stability, and involvement in their lives. The fathers recounted full narratives about their children's lives during the current incarceration period, and described having regular contact through multiple forms of communication. These eighteen fathers chronicled daily activities, who children spent their time with, recent events children experienced, and developmental advancements or struggles. Fathers in this group were more likely to have lived with their children prior to incarceration, and most had daily contact with their child, even if they did not technically reside together before jail. These fathers are embedded not only in the lives of their children, but in their family members lives, and for the majority of them, the lives of the mother of their children as well. Manuel, a stepfather for a six-

year-old daughter and biological father for his ten-month old son, describes his contact with his family:

> *So on Friday [my] wife Jade comes with both children to visit. So [we] have [our] thirty-minute visit. And during these visits [we] talk about what's going on. Manuel says* "I'm not there and I can't see him grow." *And talks about how tough that is. [We] also on… during [our] visits [we] talk about how [I am] doing. [My stepdaughter] talks about wanting to go to Disneyland. And then so… on Saturday… so [my] daughter… stepdaughter is with her dad, so just [the mother of my children] and [my son] come to visit on Saturdays. And on Sundays [my]… [mother of my children] and [my son] and [my] mom come to visit. When the three of [us] are together… so [my] wife and son and mom are together, you know, we asked what they talked about. And he says* "you know how girls are. They like to gossip."

Manuel describes how he receives multiple weekly visits from his children, his wife, and his mother. He also discusses calling his wife, and writing letters to family members. Manuel, 24, has been in jail for about fifteen months, and is still waiting for his case to reach a resolution. Like Manuel, ten other fathers in this group are currently in a relationship with the mother of at least one child (biological, stepfather, or social father), six of which describe themselves as married or engaged, and another two fathers describe wanting to be with the mother of at least one child. Similar to Manuel, other fathers in this group describe contact with multiple family members who facilitate the father-child relationship and maintain his social presence in the lives of the whole family, even when the father and mother of the child are not together.

Relationships with the Mother of the Child

Eight of the fathers in the stable relationships group are not currently with the mother of their children, but three describe their relationships characteristically as "on and off" and the other wants to be with the mother of his child and discusses how he is messing it up. As mentioned, the fathers who are in relationships with the mothers of their children describe stable relationships, noting marriage and engagement. The fathers who are not with the mother of their

children describe help from their family of origin in maintaining regular contact with their child and a stable relationship. Mario, who had his four-year-old son when he was sixteen, and who notes that his son's mother left him during this incarceration period, describes how his dad brings his son once a week for a visit, how he can call his mom's phone to chat with her and his son during the week, and how periodically he will send drawings home to his parents for his son. Mario says his son's mother used to bring the son to visits before she left him, but she now, as Mario describes it "lets them borrow him," referring to his parents having his son to visit. Mario also describes how his parents will buy his son clothes, food, diapers, and contribute to childcare when the son's mother needs help. This is characteristic of these fathers in this group, where family of origin members will facilitate regular contact, and contribute to the child's development and needs.

These families are not without their problems, however. Fathers who are with the mother of their children still experience challenges of instability and uncertainty. Joe, who is not with his ex-wife and biological children who he does not have contact with nor custody, but is with his current partner who is the mother of his biological two-year-old daughter, sees his daughter at visits with his own mother because his girlfriend is on probation and is not permitted to visit. Other families face deportation and various citizen statuses when facilitating contact between father and child. Joel, who has a release date from jail, and is not with the mother of his eight-year-old daughter, sees his daughter about once a month when his mom brings her for visits. He said he will regularly call his sister, who will do a three-way call to his daughter when he wants, and he sends cards and drawings of things she likes, such as from the Disney movie *Frozen*, on holidays. But,

> *He says that when [I] – [my] release date technically on March 11th is a release date to then be sent to a detention center. So he said [I]'ll probably go to [jail] or to [a different*

> *jail facility] to be in detention, to be held by ICE. He says you know even if you're a legal resident they'll put a hold on you. He says that they're starting to do this a lot and he says that for [me] it was because [I] was born in Mexico specifically.*

Joel is embedded in his family of origin, and his family of origin has mobilized around him to support him having regular contact with his daughter. Fathers in the stable group, whether they are with the mother of their child or not, have consistent access to their child during jail through multiple family members. Many of the family members also take an active role in the fathers' children's lives, and many of the fathers lived with their partner and children before jail. Still, about half of fathers in this group described active drug use before jail, with an additional few talking about it in the distant past, again with high use of meth, cocaine, and heroin.

These fathers, whether in a relationship with the mother of their child or not, depict family cohesion and a mobilization of resources to facilitate the father-child relationship. Prior to jail, these fathers typically had more contact with their children compared to fathers in other groups, and might have experienced heightened awareness of their inability to connect with their children. However, the involvement of family members to maintain a stable relationship between fathers and at least one child, attenuates the disruption to father role fulfillment. Having taken account of how the fathers narrate their relationships with their children, I will next detail how each group discussed hopes for their children's futures, expectations for involvement with the mother of their children and their children, and their own future plans.

Hopes for Children and Future Expectations

Disconnected relationships

Fathers in this group describe expectations for their relationship with the mother of their child as planning to keep it professional, civil, and working together to co-parent for the sake of

their child. These fathers also describe grandeur involvement with their children, gaining full custody, or seeing their child every day when before they saw their child sparingly, and do not currently have contact at all. These fathers describe hopes for their children's futures vaguely, noting life tasks such as having a house, a career, finishing school, not being like the father, and when asked how this will happen, they describe equally vague means of this happening. These fathers might also, when asked about their own future plans, describe a dramatic shift in involvement with their child, or not mention their child at all. For example, Tiny, who has not been in direct contact with his eight-year-old son in a few years, expects to own a house and car in a year and a half or so, and with that stability, the mother of his child will let him see his son again. Tiny explains,

> *He says that [I]'ll just hit [the mother of my child] up on Facebook when [I get] out and that [I]'ll tell her that [I] got busted and then he says,* "she really doesn't care it's just all about the money*". And then [interviewer 1] asks about how he expects his relationship with [his son] to be and he says, you know, once [I get my] own car and [my] own house hopefully things will look more stable to [my son's mother] about [my] situation. And then he says and then [my son] or him and… or her and [my son] can come around.*

Tiny plans on continuing his business of pimping women, which the mother of his son disapproves of, but expects for his son to be around again. Tiny focuses on himself in his future plans, and does not mention his son without the interviewers asking about his son specifically. Tiny describes his hopes for his son:

> *And he says,* "just for like the best", "that he doesn't end up going down the same path as me". *He says that [I hope] for him to have a stable career.*
> *So at 30 [I] would want [my] son to have a stable career. And he says that [I]'ll probably be starting a family by then. And [interviewer 1] asks what he'll need to do to make that happen and he says…Yeah and he says well you know [the mother of my child] is very on top of everything so as long as she stays on track it should be ok for [my son].*

Taken together, like most of the fathers with a disconnect to their children and minimal contact, it is not far-fetched that the fathers do not reactively imagine their children embedded in their

lives after release, despite fantasies of hoping for it. Given the stage of development of fathers in the sample in emerging adulthood, it seems expected that the fathers would be focusing on their personal development and plans after release, as their peers are doing in other contexts. Finally, fathers in this group, like Tiny, consistently describe vague strategies for their hopes for their children to occur, and do not cite themselves as having an impact on their children's future development. The disconnect between father and child for these families, combined with the powerlessness during incarceration they describe, becomes a state of the relationship expected to carry on overtime, doing further damage to father involvement.

Inconsistent relationships

Similar to the group above, this group of fathers also describe unrealistic expectations of involvement with children and fail to highlight the potential for challenges upon reentering family life after being incarcerated. This group of fathers describe similar vague hopes for their children, and future plans for themselves that include self-improvement as a priority. In addition to a focus on self-improvement, these fathers also describe more antagonistic reunifications with the mothers of their children. Recall that these fathers universally struggled with substance abuse, trauma and homelessness, and general instability both personally and with their children. Given their circumstances, feelings of powerlessness, inconsistent involvement with their children, and turmoil with the mother of their children whom they are most consistently not in a relationship with, these fathers' expectations for the future make sense. Derek, stepfather to a five-year-old son and biological father to a 2-year-old son, both of whom reside with their mother in another state, says that for his hopes for his children to happen, *he says they need the right guidance. Somebody to teach them right from wrong. Somebody to teach them morals. And*

like steer them in the right directions. His use of language about 'somebody' helping his sons depicts a lack of him impacting his children's future.

Some of the fathers in this group did note their direct involvement in shaping their children's futures, albeit vague future hopes. In descriptions of involvement with their children after release, these fathers use language that conveys part-time involvement with their children. Regular, part-time involvement for these fathers is still a dramatic shift in their most recent involvement patterns of erratic contact before and during jail. This does not seem problematic to fathers, or viewed as something that needs to change, reflecting their acceptance of the current involvement, and hoping to avoid contact with the mother of the child.

Stable relationships

The final group of fathers describe their futures as involving their children in a more specific plan for themselves upon release. These fathers detail efforts to secure a job pre-release, or specific plans to do so post-release. Most fathers plan on returning to homes where they reside with their children and the mother of their child, often times also being with additional family, usually parents. These fathers, having had continual involvement with their children and aware of their children's and his partner's well-being throughout this incarceration period, expect regular involvement and improved relationships upon being released. However, notably, these fathers consistently include expected challenges with both children and partners. Michael describes reuniting with his wife and two-year-old daughter,

> *Um, so he said [I'm- I'm] prepared for [my daughter] to not be fully attached at first, and [I think] it'll be awkward for a few days but she'll warm up quickly…He said it might be- [I] thinks it'll be weird with [my wife] because in here, like, in jail, you can't even look at a woman.*

These fathers, because of their regular contact with children and partners during jail, and the foundation of relationships they built before this incarceration stay, the fathers have realistic outlooks for their futures and their children's futures. With the stability of their family members, and their previous life carrying over, these fathers are able to formulate more concrete plans for reentry. Maintaining their social networks across the context of jail and across the time spent in jail becomes an integral part of developing expectations and plans for post-release, and imaging having an agentic role in those plans, and in parenting.

DISCUSSION

Fathers who are incarcerated during their transition to adulthood in the life course reveal how instability and inconsistency in connections with their families have detrimental consequences for father-child relationships and family cohesion after release. The incarceration and family literature has made great strides in understanding parent-child contact, relationships, and child outcomes during incarceration in prisons (Arditti, Smock, and Parkman 2005; for a review, see Poehlmann et al. 2010). However, research in this area has neglected fathers' perceptions of their relationships with their children and the impact this has on expectations for future involvement (for an exception, see Martin 2001; Tripp 2009). As Arditti et al. (2003) found in her research exploring how the most vulnerable families with a partner in jail suffered additional financial strain after incarceration, the most vulnerable of these respondents experience similar strains regarding father-child relationships.

The foundation of support in maintaining fathers' involvement with their children during jail becomes a protective factor allowing fathers to imagine realistic entry back into communities and families. This foundation also mitigates the powerlessness of jail by giving fathers a source

of stability that enables them to imagine an active role in their children's lives after release. While jail removes fathers' agency in maintaining relationships with people, and specifically their children in developmentally appropriate ways, families that can supplement the father-child relationship allow fathers to have an active role in their children's lives during incarceration, albeit limited in agency to the moments of orchestrated contact. This active role, and minimally agentic role, stabilizes the father's place in children's lives across contexts and reduces the number of roles that need to be filled in the fathers' absence. There were a few fathers who chose not to see children during jail, hoping to spare them the conditions of the facility and interactions with jail personnel (Poehlmann et al. 2010). In this way, these fathers, despite having a network that would facilitate visits, used their agency within their environmental constraints to protect their children from potential harm, thereby fulfilling their fatherhood identity.

The other two groups of fathers who describe disconnected and inconsistent relationships do not have the foundation of involvement prior to jail, nor the involvement during jail, that would allow them to be active in their children's lives, even if they cannot be agentic in initiating involvement or contact. In this sense, incarceration disproportionately houses fathers from already disadvantaged families and further deteriorates father-child relationships by impeding involvement through additional obstacles that families are expected to rally around and overcome. The most advantaged and cohesive of the families with an incarcerated loved one may be able to endure incarceration and facilitate father-child involvement during jail, but at perhaps extreme costs to time, energy, and money. Fathers who had limited involvement with their children were unable to maintain any form of agency within jail to connect with their children in a meaningful and stable way. This lack of or inconsistent contact disrupted these fathers' ability to fulfill fatherhood roles. These fathers continued to experience lapses in their relationships with

their children, and had difficulty imagining realistic futures in which they were involved in their children's development.

Embedded and stable relationships with family and children mitigate the impact of the jail as an unsupportive context of family and fatherhood identity by providing opportunities to develop the fatherhood identity, at least relationally (Adamsons and Pasley 2013). These findings have implications for improved visiting facilities and less restricted access for family contact during in-person visits to encourage fatherhood during incarceration. The other two groups with inconsistent and disconnected familial relationships, the unsupportive environment of jail, and a relational context that prioritizes an inmate identity, are less able to overcome the lack of support for fatherhood in jail, are less able to enact role behavior, and may experience cumulatively diminished relationships with children. Hiltin and Johnson (2015) advance the concept of agency in the life course to be multidimensional and note the importance of being able to imagine one's future self. This project supports their conceptualization that agency influences the ability to see one's self in future roles. Applying human agency as Snow (2001) describes it, awareness of constraints after a disruption, such as being incarcerated, may influence a person's ability to reestablish roles once agency returns. During the transition to adulthood when young people are gaining agency over life choices and becoming increasingly independent, incarceration acts a disruption to all role identity formation processes, except perhaps one of criminal, communicated through their status as "inmate" to facility personnel whom they come into contact daily during incarceration. Compromising any identity formation during this critical developmental period can have lasting effects over the life course, but especially for young fathers who are navigating multiple roles as they transition to adulthood.

CONCLUSION

The three substantive chapters (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), together, describe an intergenerational approach for understanding how incarcerated fathers parent from jail. First, understanding what incarcerated young fathers experiencing a reversal in their transition to adulthood value in their own caregivers provides context to the strategies they use to adapt to being incarcerated. Second, illuminating the adaptations to their strategies for maintaining a fatherhood identity while in jail reveals their resistance to prisonization regarding their children. However, adaptations rely heavily on their access to social capital within incarceration, an institution of limited agency. Finally, fathers' descriptions of their involvement with children prior to jail, relationships with children during jail, and expectations for involvement after jail reveal the way adaptations to identity expectations during jail may shape future contact with children. This project also highlights the role of mothers of children in social capital, and the ability of social kin to navigate hostile co-parenting relationships to provide an opportunity for fathers to be involved with children. Using a predominantly self-identified Latino sample, the reliance on and integral role of extended kin and social networks may be unique to this sample. Familism found in Latino cultures may be at play within the criminal justice system and allow fathers to adapt and maintain fatherhood roles during jail more easily than other racial and ethnic groups. The other groups may rely more on the nuclear family for support, but when the nuclear relationships are damaged, before or during jail, fathers may experience less social capital to assist them in defending against the correctional facility prisonization.

This dissertation draws on forty-three in-depth interviews with young men, ages 19-26, incarcerated in county jails, and who are the father of at least one child. Empirically, this project adds to the literature in three ways. First, this project is one of a few explorations on how a large

sample of Latino families navigate parenting and incarceration. The sample is over three-fourths self-identified Latino/Hispanic, a difficult population to access who also experience challenges with immigration status. In a study of fatherhood with Latino fathers from Mexico and the US, Taylor and Behnke (2005) found that fathers from Mexico were more likely to describe gender essentialism and immigration challenges to fathering. Mexican-descent Latino mothers and fathers share in perceptions of the role of the fathers, similar to US born parents, but in the context of Hispanic culture can create different expectations (Fitzpatrick, et al., 1999). Given the sample in this project, predominantly Latino, and of varying immigration statuses, this project is uniquely positioned to examine fathering for this population when they are also navigating jail and face additional challenges, such as deportation. Moreover, because of the disproportionate incarceration rates in prison, especially of Black men, research has focused on Black-White differences in incarceration and parenting experiences (for an exception, see Swisher and Waller, 2008). Latino men, experiencing rates of incarceration between that of their White and Black peers, are recently entering scholarly discussions of incarceration and families. It is of interest to focus on their experiences in jail because Latino families can have multi-status families, influencing obstacles to visiting and contact in jail, as well as have additional consequences after release, such as deportation. Expectations or uncertainty related to deportation and separation from children after jail shapes the ways fathers adapt their identities for short periods of separation, but may be unsustainable over longer periods of time, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Second, this dissertation is exclusively about young men in county jail. Given the unique characteristics of jail described before, this paper brings to the light the mismatch of jail facilities and how families must navigate jail in the era of prison overcrowding and overburdened court systems. This paper comes at a time when the paucity of family research in jails (for exceptions,

see Arditti et al. 2003; Martin 2001) is also over a decade old. Over 20 years after federal funding for the Pell Grant to help further education of incarcerated men has been eliminated and attempts at reinstating it have been largely squashed, it is easy to see the cumulative disadvantages for families and young fathers who are removed from education and the job market. These respondents continually discuss the struggle to meet the one expectation that transcends both parenthood and adulthood and is structurally blocked in jail: financial independence. This integral role behavior of financially providing, and the inability to meet it from jail, may become less important in jail, but fathers struggle to meet it after jail with their criminal record (Pager 2003). The final empirical contribution is the intentional age bounded sample of young fathers in jail. Life course theory posits that early transitions into new roles and stages of development can result in the accumulation of disadvantage across domains (Elder 1994), but much less is known about how incarceration and parenthood collide for young people. This paper contributes to the incarceration and family literature by elucidating the processes of learning to parent across generations when fathers are incarcerated, redefining and reshaping fatherhood identities from behind bars. Adapting identities to parent while incarcerated may create parenting expectations and behaviors that carry over after release, characterized by fathers' dependence on their social capital in their family networks. What remains is a summary of each chapter, theoretical contributions, and policy implications.

"Effort in Parenting" illuminates the processes of evaluations fathers used to describe their perceptions of their caregivers. Results show a focus on the effort of parents to be accessible to fathers both in childhood and in adulthood while incarcerated. Extending identity theory, incarceration during early adulthood creates a social space of reverting back to being children, dependent on their caregivers for care and support. When evaluating their caregivers,

even during time when caregivers struggled with incarceration, substance use, marital discord, and multiple housing moves, fathers highlight models of parenting that prioritize accessibility and effort rather than specific strategies or parenting outcomes. This reveals a disconnect in fathers' understanding of how to help children reach the goals parents have for them in their futures. The group who focused on the negative aspects of their caregivers highlights the detrimental consequences when fathers perceived that their caregivers were unwilling to do more for them, such as putting forth effort, like in the group who valued effort despite perceived unsuccessful outcomes for the fathers. Valuing effort in behaviors from caregivers gives context to the notion of "being there," described among these men, and in descriptions of what it means to be a good father from populations outside of correctional facilities, varying in race, residential status, marital status, and income.

The second chapter, "Obstructed Fatherhood" discusses the qualities of good parenting, including the common use of the phrase, "being there" found in the literature of non-incarcerated populations (Forste et al. 2009). Fathers draw on the notion of being there as availability to children and their efforts of being available. The majority of fathers continue to show resilience against the prisonization forces that compromise fatherhood identities. These fathers engage in adaptations of collaborative fathering and fatherhood by proxy to maintain fatherhood identities while in jail, holding on to some roles while incarcerated. Fathers also describe hopes for future fathering behaviors after release, including improvements in availability to children, and underlining their conception of a fluid fatherhood identity. A smaller group of fathers, and perhaps more worrisome, describe who they are as bad fathers. These fathers, when describing availability to children and parenting behaviors over time, do not note an ability to change, nor do they describe hope for improved relationships. The lack of hope for fathers who are in the

younger half of this sample (19-22 years old at the time of the interview) or are older but describe entering the justice system in early adolescence, have developed an identity that is formed predominantly within institutionalization and do not see another way of existing. This has powerful implications for reconceptualizing punitive juvenile policies and the consequences they will carry throughout their lifetime.

The final substantive chapter, "I Can't Do Much Right Now," underscores patterns of father-child relationships during their current jail stay, expectations for their relationships and plans after release, and structural challenges that influence these relationships. Fathers who describe stable, and consistent involvement in their children's lives during incarceration imagine themselves as impacting their child's future development. Fathers who describe inconsistent involvement with their children, both within and before this current jail stay, describe knowing a limited amount about their child, instability and animosity with the mother of the child, and describe their children's future as possible because of the impact of other people, besides himself. Finally, fathers who describe minimal to no involvement with their children and know little about their children and their daily lives, have underdeveloped father-child relationships.

This group is heterogeneous in the circumstances around the minimal contact during incarceration, from the mother of the child making herself unavailable, to the child being born during his current jail stay. Despite this heterogeneity, these fathers describe future hopes for their children as happening in very vague ways, or as the mother of the child making them happen. This reflects how underdeveloped relationships with children become an obstacle for fathers to imagine them in their children's lives, coupled with the powerlessness and uncertainty in jail, can shape father involvement after incarceration ends. Seven of the fathers in this group are also fathers who describe themselves as bad fathers and describe a static identity as such. The

ability for fathers to be embedded in the lives of their children and families during incarceration is important for fathers feeling agentic in the lives of their children's development.

This project sought to understand how parenting is constructed while incarcerated in county jail for young fathers, many of whom both entered correctional institutions and parenting during adolescence. Most respondents evaluated their caregivers from their family of origin in a positive way, affirming the value of availability and putting forth effort to guide respondents away from trouble. This resiliency approach to understanding how one was raised transfers to respondents own ideals of parenting and self-evaluations as a father. Many of the fathers described adaptable fatherhood identities that could be altered from one situation to the next, evading negative evaluations due to their position in jail. These men evaluated themselves based on performance across time, noting positive fathering behaviors before jail, and expectations for improvements after jail. A smaller group, those who spent a large portion of their own developing years institutionalized, had childhoods marked by chaotic environments, trauma, and instability. They discussed a fatherhood identity centered on who they are as bad fathers. Seven of the fathers in this group had underdeveloped or inconsistent relationships with their own children while in jail, further marked by uncertainty and instability. The nihilistic and static fatherhood identities of this group carry over into perceptions of themselves as immaterial in their children's futures (Hitlin and Johnson 2015).

While many fathers have strategies of resilience during incarceration, the consequences for these young men and their children are of much concern. Young fathers with young children represent an important group to intervene and promote agency in incarcerated fathers' lives so they can develop identities that they see as changeable and that they have power over. Juvenile detention facilities begin at young ages to teach young people that something is wrong with who

they are, but that they cannot change (Fader 2013), cementing a static notion of personhood which is then problematic for further development into future roles, such as parent and adult. Taken together, young, incarcerated fathers describe how being in jail negates both parenthood and adulthood.

This dissertation extends the transition to adulthood literature through examining incarceration as context for reversal in adult roles. The transition to adulthood is a time where fathers are expected to be investing in their social capital to promote their ability to be financially independent, among other life tasks (Arnett 2000). However, as young incarcerated parents, fathers must rely on their familial social capital to maintain their fatherhood identity and their involvement with children during incarceration. Coupled with early parenthood experiences and other hardships, such as poverty and histories of trauma, these fathers are already on a path of cumulative disadvantage (Elder 1994) that is being passed to their children right before our eyes. Expected to overcome and thrive through their hardship (Comfort 2012), these fathers adapt to their incarceration to parent children given the circumstances they have in a context of severely reduced agency. The prisonization culture (Comfort 2008) teaches young fathers that they must adapt to incarceration and abandon identities from outside confinement in favor of one as inmate to survive incarceration. Incarceration becomes an impediment to the transition to adulthood through removing young people's agency, and pushing them further behind their peers in meeting current role expectations of adulthood.

Parenting begets parenting. Despite some of these father's modified parenting values to do better than the parenting they received, their deficits from experiencing parental incarceration, poverty, trauma, and abuse ultimately lead to parenting their own children similarly (Capaldi et al. 2003; Caspi and Elder 1988). These mediational processes of intergenerational transmissions

also explain how the fathers who maintain relationships with their children during incarceration are also embedded in their larger family network (Chen and Kaplan 2001). It follows that to break transmissions of destructive parenting practices, supportive parenting practices must be implemented, developing children differently, who will also then parent similarly (Egeland et al. 1984). This clearly points to the crucial changes in incarceration visiting policies at the least, and an overhaul of cultures in prison and jail facilities at most. Family and children visiting polices that facilitate and encourage supportive parenting such as regular, inexpensive communication, safe, clean, and welcoming visitation facilities, opportunities for natural and meaningful interactions with physical contact and sharing in activities are needed. Prison culture, and prisonization policies in their current state work against families and supportive parenting through fueling hypermasculinity among residents while simultaneously infantilizing them through control, breeding mistrust of women (Nurse 2002), and emphasizing resident identities of criminal and inmate over other roles these men occupy.

It could be argued that young, incarcerated fathers spend additional time in limbo, extending emerging adulthood phase from the beginning of parenthood, as this can incite exiting school early and entering the labor force prematurely. Incarceration, then extends this stage on the back end, further into the twenties and even early thirties until reaching ages in the age where criminal behavior drops off. Due to fathers' experiences of incarceration when they are not building social capital, not furthering their education like their peers, and are removed from the labor market—combined with additional employment and economic deficits with a criminal record (Pager 2003)—achieving financial independence and stability take much longer, if they are ever available. Raising children in such an extended period of time marked by ambiguity and instability in development, coupled with incarceration periods and fluctuations in routines and

household structures, parenting is like climbing Mount Everest—when you have no experience hiking, you cannot afford gear, and, even if you made it part way up, what is the point because you would freeze to death at the top.

The most vulnerable of these fathers describe difficult childhoods with their caregivers, have been institutionalized since they were early adolescents, and have a nihilistic perspective on themselves as a father, with unrealistic and futile expectations as a father after release. Throughout their life thus far, they do not see the point in learning how to hike, (read as parent) now. Fathers unanimously describe love for their children, wanting to be in their lives, and wanting to improve themselves for their children, but only some have the foundation of being embedded in a family network that insulates them from some of the collateral consequences and disadvantages that mass incarceration inflicts on families.

These young men end up living as fathers without feeling like an adult, constantly being in a state of identity crisis and ambiguity, and learning how to behave is simultaneously blocked by a lack of opportunity for financial independence as adults, and as fathers. Incomplete education and a criminal record make this stage of development and transition into the next stage, bleak. Incarceration and a criminal record further hurt any legal pathways to financial independence through personal connections by blocking additional resources of housing, welfare, and their time for exploration contained to the walls of correctional facilities instead of campus classrooms. The culture of their institutionalization not only precludes them from opportunities in the future to reach financial independence as adults, but also places the onus of change on them, personalizing their circumstances to be about them overcoming their hardships (Comfort 2012), while removing even more resources from their grasps to do so, such as housing, employment, welfare. While their peers who are enjoying their time for exploration and

the privilege of a lack of responsibility in their roleless space, young incarcerated fathers sit behind bars ever so aware of time passing without them as their inability to act on their responsibilities temper the joys of fatherhood. As they sit in jail, and exit jail, without resources to help but are expected to pull themselves up from the less than nothing incarceration has left them with, they fall further and further away from feeling as though they will be able to parent as an adult.

Quoted in an LA Times article in 2014, three years after realignment began, a county sheriff asserts "The 'lock them up and throw away the key' is gone" (St. John 2014). Incarcerated persons have always been released, it is just sooner now, and the educational resources in state and federal prisons are even more limited. Over eight billion dollars are still being poured into states to build prisons, but the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (VCCLEA) of 1994 eliminated any federal money for higher education for inmates through reception of the Pell Grant. In 2015, the Obama administration supported a program for a limited lifting of the ban for some prisoners, but in the current administration funding continues to flow into building prisons while removing resources for development of the people within them. Incarcerated men and women are very much still forgotten while incarcerated; they are locked up and meant to sit for perhaps years at a time, even before being convicted, or released. The key may be found sooner to open the gate, but they are at a further disadvantage upon leaving. Research continues to find the protective impact of education for non-marital childbearing (Carlson et al. 2013), employment outcomes, crime-involvement and absence in fathering through intergenerational transmissions of disadvantage (Wilkinson et al. 2013).

As punitive policies in America continue to rip young teenagers from school, and early parenthood sends young men in the labor market before they are ready, incarceration is

becoming, or perhaps already is, the leading institution for developing young disadvantaged men of color into both parents and adults, without doing either. Punitive approaches to corrections is not working for families, despite their efforts at resilience, and facility policies on visitation and contact are doing more damage than good if they are interested in keeping fathers involved and families intact. Policy makers need to desist in treating incarceration as a resource for family therapy (Comfort 2008) and instead channel funds for building structures into developing the people they house. It is not enough as a society, to assume that young parents from disadvantaged backgrounds and hardship should be able to excel in the midst of their hardship on their own, and when they do not, they are blamed, while we worry for their children. The hypocrisy in this perspective on development for some portions of society is that in ten years when those suffering children are themselves in adolescence or transitioning to adulthood, it will be expected that they too learn to flourish in their hardships that we allowed the decade prior.

Limitations

With every methodology comes limitations, and I describe ours here. We were not able to record interviews in the jails, preventing us from having a verbatim transcript. This resulted in limited quotations and a lack of explicit interaction between the interviewer and respondent in the transcript. These limitations, however, gave way to several strengths as a result. Without a recorder, rapport was more easily built and allowed a more conversational interaction. With two people at each interview, we were still able to capture word-for-word transcription, and immediate reconstruction following each interview reduced lost information from time between the interview and note-taking. Finally, while there was a learning curve to interviews and transcriptions when new transcribers were introduced to the project, rotating interviewers in

roles, and teams of interviewers, and at different facilities, reduced systematic differences in interviews.

A large proportion of this sample includes men identifying as Latino or Hispanic, perhaps an overrepresentation compared to the national prison or jail population, but similar to the population in southern California. If the goal were a representative sample, this would certainly be a limitation. However, the goal of this paper is to better understand the ways young fathers construct a fatherhood identity while in jail, and how they negotiate the structural barriers presented to them in this context. It is in understanding these processes that we can learn how to revise and improve the conditions and environments of jails, policies, and restrictions that contribute to the ways these men engage with their children. It is no longer as simple as being a good dad or a bad dad; and for fathers in jail, it is complicated by the ways they are restricted in being fathers that have repercussions long after their jail sentence (if they ever were even convicted), that is out of their control.

Future Research

Future research should expand to focus on the complexities of fatherhood and incarceration and unpack the processes and contexts of limited communication and opportunities to connect to understand how incarceration affects family relationships and co-parenting dynamics (for examples, see Arditti 2005; Beckmeyer and Arditti 2014). Qualitative work needs to include caregivers, such as extended family and other aids to explore the changing roles of providing for children that influence the ability to behave in ways that fulfill the fatherhood role. A longitudinal component needs to track the transitions of caregiving roles and who performs them during and after incarceration to understand how fathers are able to reintegrate into roles

that would allow them to fulfill fatherhood expectations and rebuild their fatherhood identity after release. Research also needs to explore how choices are made about maintaining or abandoning romantic relationships for remaining partners in the context of an incarcerated partner and how these decisions influence the availability of a fatherhood identity for men in jail.

Perhaps more presently, research needs to focus on the network that mobilizes for the child during a paternal incarceration, including the mother's new partner, and the consequences for fathers who remain inaccessible to take part in decisions about their children.

If it is important to have any father figure in a child's life for them to learn about the role of a father for when they become a parent (Guzzo et al. 2011), then perhaps the network of people attached to incarcerated fathers are more vital to child well-being and aiding in the father-child relationship during incarceration. This could mean social father-figures who exist outside of incarceration, and other family members who are tasked with maintaining the father-child relationship, are crucial to preventing the intergenerational transmission of concepts such that fathers are insignificant to child development. This will create challenges to delegating roles and responsibilities, and navigating the sharing of fatherhood expectations across multiple people outside of confinement, with the expectation that they will change again after confinement ends.

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APPENDIX

Table A1: Characteristics of a Good Father

	N
"Being there"	28
Spending time/Interacting with child	11
Support	
General	9
Financial	16
Emotional	10
To the mother of his child	6
Affection	11
Guidance	15
Reference to jail	8

Note: reference to jail can be staying out of jail or not being in jail