

Incarceration and Paternal Involvement among Non-resident White, African American and
Latino Fathers

Center for Research on Child Wellbeing

Working Paper #2007-05-FF

Raymond R. Swisher¹

Maureen R. Waller

Cornell University

January 2007

¹Please direct all correspondence to Raymond Swisher, Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, 256 MVR Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853, (rs263@cornell.edu), or Maureen Waller, Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, 257 MVR Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853 (mrw37@cornell.edu). The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study is funded by the NICHD and a consortium of agencies and foundations.

Abstract

This paper examines the consequences of incarceration for non-resident White, Latino, and African American fathers' contact with children and their formal and informal child support agreements three years after the child's birth. Using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, fathers' current incarceration is found to present serious obstacles to maintaining contact with children, as well as to interfere with the establishment of informal but not formal financial support agreements with mothers. The effects of past incarceration, however, vary significantly by race and ethnicity. Fathers' recent and past incarceration is found to be strongly and negatively associated with the frequency of contact among non-Latino White fathers, while having little to no effect on contact for African American and Latino fathers. As African American and Latino families have been disproportionately affected by policies associated with mass incarceration, we speculate that they may attach less stigma to fathers' incarceration than White families, perceive the criminal justice system as unjust, or exhibit greater resilience. Contributing to this interpretation is the additional finding that incarceration does little to undermine mothers' trust of African American and Latino fathers, whereas it strongly erodes trust of White fathers. Implications for incarceration and family policy are discussed.

African American and Latino fathers and their families have been disproportionately affected by concurrent developments in two major areas of federal and state policy. The first, which some have referred to as “mass incarceration,” has led to a striking increase in the prison population (Garland, 2001; Roberts, 2003). Over the past three decades, the per capita rate of imprisonment has increased by more than 400 percent, from 110 per 100,000 in 1973 to 470 per 100,000 in 2000 (Visher & Travis, 2003). Mandatory sentencing, “three-strikes” policies, greater use of plea bargaining, and the more general “War on Drugs” has resulted in rising imprisonments for non-violent offenses (Arditti, Lambert-Shute, & Joest, 2003) and simple parole violations (Davis, 2000).

Of particular concern for policy and research focused on vulnerable families is that more than half of those imprisoned are parents, and that some 1.5 million children have a parent in prison (Mumola, 2002). Research suggests that the jail experience and its aftermath may impose severe “collateral” damages to personal relationships, particularly with spouses and children, and that children who have been separated from their parents as a result of incarceration may experience serious emotional, developmental, and economic consequences (Gabel & Johnston, 1997; Genty, 2002; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Visher & Travis, 2003). About 9 out of 10 incarcerated parents are male, and the likelihood of fathers’ imprisonment differs dramatically by race. In fact, incarceration is so prevalent among men of color at lower educational levels that it has become an almost expected stage in the early life course. Pettit and Western (2004), for example, report that just under 60 percent of African American, male, high school dropouts can expect to spend some time in prison before the age of 30, compared to only 11 percent of comparable White males. Researchers have suggested that growing racial and ethnic disparities in arrests and sentencing are associated with the War on Drugs (Blumstein, 1993; Demuth & Steffensmeier; Ojmarrh, 2005).

In a second important policy development, new federal and state initiatives have been aimed at increasing fathers’ emotional and economic involvement with their children. With one of three births now occurring outside of marriage (Martin, Hamilton, Sutton, Ventura, Menacker, & Munson,

2005), these policies have been targeted primarily toward families headed by unmarried parents, a disproportionate number of whom are African American or Latino and living in poverty. In particular, recent policies and programs to promote marriage and responsible fatherhood such as the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, and significant changes to the child support enforcement system, have occurred in tandem with an escalation of the prison population. Although the consequences of incarceration appear to be at odds with policies encouraging greater father involvement, few nationally representative studies have examined the implications of incarceration for unmarried fathers' contact with and agreements to support their children.

This analysis uses data from the Fragile Families Study, an important new source of information about the experiences of unmarried parents, to examine racial and ethnic differences (White, African American, and Latino) in associations between nonresident fathers' past and recent incarcerations and involvement with their three year old children. It also considers whether these differences are mediated by fathers' relationships with mothers and mothers' trust of fathers as caretakers. It concludes with a discussion of the implications of this research for federal and state law enforcement programs and policies affecting unmarried fathers.

Background

The Age of Mass Incarceration

A variety of federal and state policy changes over the past two decades have come together to make incarceration an increasing presence within the lives of less educated men of color (See Figure 1). From the Nixon administration's "War on Crime," and Reagan's "War on Drugs," to the Bush and Clinton administration's more punitive stances on violent crimes (e.g., Violent Crime Control and Enforcement Act of 1994), the federal government has led efforts to "get tougher" on crime. Some of the policy outcomes of these efforts have included mandatory minimum sentencing for federal drug charges and increased federal funding of prisons (Garland, 2001; Western, 2006).

Though practices of state and local jurisdictions vary greatly, changes in the national political climate are reflected in a variety of increasingly punitive state and local policies. For example, most states have shifted from “indeterminate” to “determinate” sentencing. Judicial discretion in determining the length and conditions of sentencing has been replaced by a variety of “three strikes,” “mandatory minimum,” “truth-in-sentencing” policies, and sentencing boards that apply rigid guidelines. Many states and local governments have transformed the parole process, in some cases abolishing it altogether, and imposed stricter conditions and monitoring of parolees (Garland, 2001; Travis, 2005). Furthermore, some states and localities have placed additional restrictions on individuals once out of prison, including limitations on the receipt of welfare, public housing, and even voting rights. The collective result of these increasingly rigid policies has been longer sentences, fewer opportunities for parole, more difficult re-entry processes, increased recidivism, and burgeoning rates of incarceration (Garland, 2001; Patillo, Weiman, & Western, 2004; Travis, 2005; Western, 2006).

<< FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE >>

Child Support and Father Involvement

Before discussing the implications of incarceration, we begin with a review of research on unmarried father’s legal and informal financial support agreements, and of nonresident fathers’ involvement with their children. Recent figures indicate that more than two out of five single parent families are headed by parents who have never been married, following large increases in nonmarital childbearing in the past few decades (Fields, 2001). Compared to divorced parents, unmarried parents are more likely to be young, to have low levels of education and income, and to receive welfare, but they are also less likely to receive child support (Grall, 2006; O’Connell, 1997; Sorensen & Hill, 2004). As a result, families headed by unmarried parents – often referred to as “fragile families” – have been the focus of recent policy debates about welfare and child support reform

(Fremstad & Primus, 2002; Garfinkel, McLanahan, Tienda, & Brooks-Gunn, 2001; Mincy & Pouncy, 1999).

During the 1980's and 1990's, significant legislation was passed to increase the effectiveness of the child support system for unmarried parents. Legislation such as the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984, The Family Support Act of 1988, the 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 has included provisions for establishing legal paternity for children born outside of marriage, locating fathers, and setting child support awards. These legislative changes and increased state expenditures on child support appear to have worked together to substantially increase the proportion of never-married mothers receiving child support in recent years (Bartfield & Meyer, 2001; Freeman & Waldfogel, 2001; Sorensen & Hill, 2004), though they remain less likely than divorced mothers to have child support awards (Grall, 2006). This disparity between unmarried and divorced mothers is important because income tends to be positively associated with children's well-being in single parent families, and some evidence indicates that income from child support has even greater benefits for children's educational attainment and cognitive outcomes than income from other sources (Argys, Peters, Brooks-Gunn, & Smith, 1998; Graham & Beller, 2002).

The likelihood of receiving child support is related not only to parents' marital status but also to their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. For example, African American and Latino women have been less likely than White women to have legal child support awards, and African American fathers are also less likely to pay child support (Graham & Beller, 2002; Grall, 2006). Fathers with higher income also tend to pay more child support (Graham & Beller, 2002). However, Sorensen and Zibman (2001) estimate that there are about twice as many non-poor fathers who do not pay child support as poor fathers, and more than one third of fathers who do not pay child support are poor themselves. Other research focusing specifically on unmarried fathers shows that African American men are just as likely as White men to have a child support order but are less likely to

make child support payments, whereas mothers born outside of the U.S. are both less likely to have a support order and to receive child support compared to other unmarried mothers (Mincy & Nepomnyaschy, 2005; Nepomnyaschy & Garfinkel, 2006). Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel (2006) also find that unmarried African American fathers are somewhat more likely than White fathers to make contributions informally. This is consistent with previous qualitative studies in low-income African American communities, which find that unmarried fathers who are not making formal child support payments often have informal agreements with their child's mother to provide direct cash or in-kind contributions (Achatz & MacAllum, 1994; author citation; Edin, 1995; Furstenberg, 1995; Sullivan, 1992). Parents' preferences for informal support arrangements stem from concerns that the child support payments are used to reimburse welfare costs and may undermine cooperative relationships between mothers and fathers, and that heightened enforcement harms those fathers who are unable to pay due to incarceration and joblessness (author citation).

As more fathers live apart from their children, policies promoting "responsible fatherhood" have sought not only to encourage fathers to support their children but also to maintain a presence in their lives. Evidence from large-scale surveys suggests that most unmarried, nonresident fathers are in contact with their young children and many fathers who have contact with their children see them frequently, although this contact drops off as their children get older (Argys, Peters, Cook, Garasky, Nepomnyaschy, & Sorensen, 2006). For example, data from the NLSY for children under 5 born to unmarried parents suggests that about 81 percent of nonwhite children and 60 percent of White children had contact with their father in the last year. Among those with contact, nonwhite children saw their father about 165 days per year, compared to 131 days for White children.

Although research on paternal involvement has typically focused on White families (Coltrane, Parke & Adams, 2004), studies of two parent families which include African American and Latino fathers do not tend to show consistent differences by fathers' race or ethnic status (Pleck, 1997). However, some research shows that African American fathers are more involved with their

children than White fathers (McAdoo, 1988), and that African American and Latino fathers are involved in different ways than White fathers (Hofferth, 2003). Even fewer studies have turned their attention to the quality of father involvement in families headed by unmarried parents, due in large part to data limitations (for exceptions and new data collection efforts see Carlson et al., 2005; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Cabrera, Brooks-Gunn, Moore, West, Boller, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2002). Carlson and colleagues (2005) report that unmarried Latino fathers spend more time with their children than do White fathers. Some evidence from other surveys also suggests that unmarried White fathers have less contact with their children than nonwhite fathers (Argys et al., 2006).

The Effects of Incarceration on Paternal Support Agreements and Involvement

There are a variety of ways that imprisonment could affect fathers' economic and emotional relationships with their children. For example, incarceration could influence whether unmarried parents have formal or informal agreements for child support. Previous research suggests that child support orders often exceed fathers' ability to pay (Garfinkel et. al., 1998; Mincy & Sorensen, 1998; Sorensen & Turner, 1997). Because incarceration creates financial hardships during the prison sentence, as well diminished earnings and employment after release (Holzer, Offner, & Sorensen, 2005; Western, Kling, & Weiman, 2001), fathers' past and present incarceration may further decrease their ability to provide financial support. As such, fathers who have been incarcerated may have a greater incentive to evade the formal child support system to avoid a legal award being established in the first place. These fathers may also prefer to establish informal support agreements for support with the mother (author citation).

Participation in the legal child support system may also be perceived as less desirable by fathers who are currently incarcerated or risk returning to prison because of the higher likelihood that they will build up significant child support debts while in prison. Pearson (2004) finds that states have followed three judicial approaches to reducing or suspending child support awards during incarceration which reflect differences in whether courts regard incarceration as voluntary or

involuntary. Whereas the “no justification approach” taken by courts in some states does not consider incarceration as justifiable condition for modifying a child support order, the “complete justification approach” considers incarceration sufficient justification for modifying a child support obligation, and the “one factor approach” considers incarceration one of several factors that could be considered for modifying a child support order. Even in states with these more flexible approaches, modification is not automatic and may be very difficult in practice (May, 2004). Federal law prohibits child support arrearages from being forgiven in most cases, and if a noncustodial father falls into arrears, up to 55 to 65 percent of his income can be withheld from his paycheck (Committee on Ways and Means, 2000). In addition to being a re-entry barrier, nonpayment of support is treated as a parole violation in some states and may lead to re-imprisonment (May, 2004; Pearson, 2004).

Despite these significant disincentives to establishing a formal child support order, previously or currently incarcerated fathers may be more likely to have children with women receiving welfare who are required to cooperate with the child support agency in locating the father. When women provide this information about the father, states also have powerful new tools to identify and track parents for child support enforcement, such as a Federal Case Registry and National Directory of New Hires based on information employers report on all new employees. Some states also have the ability to match corrections and child support data to identify fathers while in prison (Pearson, 2004), and unmarried fathers who have been incarcerated might have a higher likelihood of facing a child support obligation than men who have been “under the radar” of child support enforcement because they cannot be located. If these tendencies cancel each other out, we would not expect the presence of child support orders to be significantly associated with fathers’ incarceration. Indeed, previous researchers have found that unmarried fathers who have been incarcerated are less likely to pay formal child support but are no less likely to have legal support orders (Mincy & Nepomnyaschy, 2005; Nepomnyaschy & Garfinkel, 2006).

The prison experience may also undermine fathers' ability to remain in contact with their children, despite the fact that incarceration might motivate some fathers to feel a stronger commitment to their families (Edin, Nelson, & Paranal, 2004). While in prison, the geographic distance of fathers from their children, problems with visitation scheduling and procedures, and inhospitable visiting rooms often make visitation both difficult and psychologically debilitating for prisoners and their children (Women's Prison Association, 1996). Given these barriers, many incarcerated fathers forego visits altogether out of concern for children's well-being (Genty, 2003; Hairston, 1998). Some qualitative researchers have suggested that fathers' contact with children during prison is largely dependent on mother's willingness to facilitate access, and that the perception mothers or other family members are "gatekeeping" (Nurse, 2004; Roy & Dyson, 2005) leads to feelings of helplessness and loss of paternal identity (Arditti, Smock, & Parkman, 2005).

Difficulties with the re-entry and re-unification experience suggest that damages to familial or parenting relationships are not confined to the period of incarceration (Travis & Waul, 2003). If re-establishing one's role as a father following prison is difficult for married men, it must be even more so for unmarried and non-residential fathers, for whom relationships with mothers and children are often more ambiguous and may not have been firmly established prior to entering prison. In addition, the problems that initially sent fathers to prison may not be resolved. The effect of past incarceration on men's economic resources and the tremendous strain on their romantic relationships during imprisonment may significantly undermine the chances fathers will live with or marry the mother (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan, 2004) and fathers' ties to children often become more tenuous after their relationships with mothers dissolve (Furstenberg, 1995). Mothers' increased independence, and the introduction of new relationships and adult males in the household, may further serve to discourage fathers from being involved after their incarceration (Furstenberg, 1995; for detailed review of re-entry studies see Visser & Travis, 2003). As a result of barriers to contact during and after imprisonment, we expect incarceration to be

negatively related to fathers' contact with their young children. We also expect that associations between incarceration and contact will be partly mediated by relationship between parents.

Differences in the Effects of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity

Once back in the community, the social stigma of incarceration may be a further barrier to re-establishing relationships with children and their mothers (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). However, life course theory and research leads us to suspect that the degree of stigma associated with incarceration may vary by race and ethnicity. According to the life course perspective, lives are composed of sequences of transitions over time (Elder, 1974). For example, the transition to adulthood is typically characterized by moving out of the parental home, entering and completing higher education, marriage, and having children. Incarceration is typically not part of the script. Life course theorists also contend that violations of norms regarding the proper timing and sequencing of transitions may have negative consequences (Rindfuss, Swicegood, & Rosenfeld, 1987). At the same time, more recent work has stressed variations in life course transitions by socioeconomic status, gender, and race and ethnicity (Hogan & Astone, 1986; Marini, 1984; Shanahan, 2000). If norms regarding life course transitions vary across sub-groups, so too should sanctions associated with their violation. Western (2006) has speculated that the near ubiquity of incarceration within disadvantaged minority communities has made incarceration an almost expected stage in the life course, perhaps lessening its stigma. Contrary to expectations, however, Western (2006) observed a larger negative association of incarceration with marriage among unmarried African American fathers, relative to White fathers.

Previous research has also found differences by race and ethnicity in attitudes towards the criminal justice system. Hagan, Shedd, and Payne (2005), for example, found that African American and Latino youth are more likely than White youth to perceive the criminal justice system as unjust. Moreover, differences in cynicism and dissatisfaction with the justice system may be mediated by racial and ethnic differences in contact with police (Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005) and concentrated disadvantage (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Thus, perceptions of injustice are higher in low income

communities with disproportionate exposure to the police. Just as African Americans and Latinos are more likely to endorse “structural” explanations for poverty (Hunt, 1996; Kluegel & Smith, 1986), cynicism and distrust of the criminal justice system may make them more likely to attribute a father’s incarceration to external factors beyond his control. Consistent with research on stigma more broadly (Corrigan, Markowitz, Watson, Rowan, & Kubiak, 2003), external attributions might minimize the stigma of incarceration among African Americans and Latinos. Despite differences in views of the criminal justice system, it is critical note that researchers have generally not found race or ethnic differences in tolerance of crime or violence itself (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998).

Finally, other research on race and ethnic differences in family structure, solidarity, and resilience might lead to similar predictions that African American and Latino mothers would be more willing to trust incarcerated fathers. For example, previous theory on the concept of Latino familism (Zinn, 1982) suggests that Latino mothers may be more likely than White mothers to retain trust of incarcerated fathers. Similarly, ethnographic studies of the adaptive resilience (Jarrett, 1997) and dynamic nature of family structures within disadvantaged African American families (Jarrett & Burton, 1999) would predict a greater adaptability of these families in the face of challenges such as incarceration.

To date, we know of no quantitative studies which have examined racial and ethnic differences in associations between incarceration and paternal support and contact among unmarried men. Although information on this topic is limited, we tentatively hypothesize that incarceration will be less strongly associated with father involvement among nonresident men of color, and particularly African American men. Similarly, we hypothesize that incarceration will less strongly diminish mothers’ trust of these fathers to take care of children.

Method

This analysis uses three waves of survey data from parents in the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, which began in 1998 to follow a new birth cohort of children in 20 U.S. cities. In

the baseline survey, new mothers were interviewed at the hospital at the time of their child's birth. The child's father was interviewed either at the hospital or someplace else as soon as possible after the birth. Mothers and fathers were also surveyed when their child was one and three years old. The response rate at baseline was about 87 percent for unmarried mothers and 75 percent for eligible fathers. Fathers were not eligible to participate in the study if the mother of their child was not interviewed at baseline. By Year 3, 88 percent of baseline mothers and 68 percent of fathers whose partners were in the baseline interview continued to participate. We restrict our analysis to cases with mothers participating at baseline and Year 3. We also limit the analysis to cases in the 16 cities that make up the nationally representative sample of nonmarital births in cities with populations over 200,000 (see Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, & McLanahan, 2001, for more information about the study's methodology). We focus on nonresident fathers, as financial support, daily contact, and mothers' trust of fathers would have very different meanings for resident fathers. Limiting the sample to White, African American, and Latino fathers living apart from their children at year 3, yields a final analysis sample of 1,002. All analyses are weighted using the three-year probability weights, which adjust the sample so as to be nationally representative of non-marital births in large cities, taking into account varying probabilities of sampling at baseline and retention across waves.

All dependent variables were measured at the second follow-up survey, approximately three years after the child's birth. We use mothers' reports because they were more likely to participate at baseline and less likely to drop out of the study over time than fathers. Compared to other fathers, those dropping out by three years (36.0 percent of our analysis sample) were less likely to be in relationships with the mother and more likely to have been recently incarcerated. Retaining these cases through the use of mothers' reports thus provides a more accurate representation of the diversity of relationships with mothers, incarceration status, and fathering.

The establishment of a *legal child support order* is assessed by mothers' responses to the question "do you have a legal agreement or child support order that requires the father to provide

financial support to the child” (27.9 percent have such orders). In the absence of a legal agreement, mothers were asked “do you have an informal agreement, or an understanding, not spelled out in a legal document that the father will provide financial support to you?” (27.8 percent of families). Non-resident fathers’ *contact* with children is assessed by mothers’ reports of the number of days during the past month that the father has seen the child (mean = 6.42 days). To measure mother’s distrust of fathers, we draw upon two questions asked at Year 3: “You can trust the father to take good care of the child” ($1 = \text{always true to } 4 = \text{never true}$) and “If you had to go away for one week and could not take your child with you, how much would you trust the father to take care of the child?” ($1 = \text{very much to } 3 = \text{not at all}$). Items were standardized and averaged to create a scale of *mother’s distrust of the father* (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.84).

We use measures of incarceration status that were created by the Fragile Families project. According to this coding, if either mother or father reports that the father has spent time in jail, he is coded as having been incarcerated. Use of both parents’ reports follows Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan (2004) and may help to offset the underreporting and undersampling of behavior considered to be socially undesirable. In their analysis of mothers’ and fathers’ agreement in the Fragile Families study, Western, Lopoo, & McLanahan (2004) report agreement rates on fathers’ incarceration status (e.g., he had never been to jail) varying between 76.0 for African American parents to 90.9 percent of White parents. We distinguish incarceration by its recency, since associations with support and involvement will likely vary by when it occurs in the life course. *Past incarceration* captures fathers who were in a correctional facility prior to the child’s birth (26.7 percent) but have not been incarcerated since. *Recent incarceration* indicates fathers who were incarcerated at some time since the birth, but not currently (19.5 percent). *Current incarceration* identifies fathers who were incarcerated at the time of the three year survey (7.3 percent). This group would also include fathers who were incarcerated at the time of the 3 year survey and at previous times. Those who have *never been incarcerated* are the reference category.

Fathers' race and ethnicity is based on fathers' and mothers' combined reports of race and Hispanic origin, with fathers' reports taking precedence. We create mutually exclusive categories of *Latino* (34.2 percent), non-Latino *African American* (52.2 percent), and non-Latino *White* (13.7 percent). Due to small numbers of Asian, Native American, and other races (4 percent), we exclude them from analysis. Interactions of race and ethnicity by incarceration status are used in some analyses. This results in 12 categories – 3 race and ethnicities by 4 incarceration statuses. All but one of the categories contains at least 20 respondents. The exception is 6 fathers in the currently incarcerated *White* category. We also control for mothers' *nativity* status (16.3 percent were born outside the United States). Nativity is unknown for a large number of fathers.

We control for several additional socioeconomic and demographic variables found to be associated with fathers' support and involvement in previous research (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2005; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Mincy & Nepomnyaschy, 2005; Nepomnyaschy & Garfinkel, 2006). Although this sample was not selected to be low-income, unmarried parents tend to be a relatively disadvantaged group. About 44.1 percent of mothers report having received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (*TANF*) at any wave of the survey ($1 = \text{if received TANF}; 0 = \text{if not}$). Father's education is based on father's reports, with mother's reports used in cases of missing data. About 39.1 percent of fathers have not received a high school degree (*all indicators coded: 1 = yes; 0 = no*), 35.1 percent have a high school degree or GED, 18.0 percent have some college or technical school or vocational training beyond high school, and another 7.8 percent have a college or more advanced degree at baseline. Mothers reported that about 34.1 percent of fathers were unemployed the week before the child's birth. Most parents in the study were in their twenties, with a mean age for mothers of about 23 years at the time of the birth. Some models include controls for parents' relationship status (in a *romantic relationship but not cohabiting*, and *no relationship*) at birth and at three years.

Results

We begin by examining factors associated with nonresident fathers establishing legal or informal child support agreements with the mother within about three years of their child's birth. Table 1 presents odds ratios from multinomial logistic regressions. Confidence intervals, constructed using probability adjusted robust standard errors, appear in parentheses. In columns 1 and 2 we model the odds of having an informal agreement with the mother to financially support the child versus not having any agreement with the mother. Columns 3 and 4 present the legal support order versus no agreement contrast. Note that all models include controls for socioeconomic and demographic variables.

<< TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE >>

Beginning in column 1, African-American fathers are found to have 3.77 times greater odds of an informal agreement to financially support their child, versus no agreement, than do White fathers. Fathers who were currently incarcerated have 91.1 percent lower odds (i.e., $1 - 0.087$) of an informal agreement, versus no agreement, than do fathers who have never been incarcerated. Past incarceration is not found to be associated with having informal agreements. With respect to formal support orders (see column 3) both African American and Latino fathers are found to have higher odds of a legal support order, versus no agreement, than White fathers. None of the incarceration variables are significantly associated with odds of a legal support order.

Models 2 and 4 include interaction terms of incarceration status with each racial and ethnic group indicator. These interactions capture group differences in strengths of associations between incarceration and informal and legal support agreements. The main effect coefficients for each incarceration variable represent the effects of incarceration for White fathers (i.e., the excluded category). Main effect coefficients for race and ethnicity represent effects for never-incarcerated African American and Latino fathers. Beginning in column 2, current incarceration and incarceration since the birth of the child are strong negative predictors of having an informal agreement with the

mother for White fathers, compared to no agreement, as evidenced by low odds ratios (.044 and .046, respectively). Among African American and Latino fathers, current incarceration maintains a negative association with odds of an informal support agreement, as neither interaction term is statistically significant. Also note that among Latinos, the negative direct effect of incarceration since the birth is offset by a large and statistically significant odds ratio. It is not the case, however, that incarceration promotes informal agreements among Latino fathers. Rather, this extremely large odds ratio (i.e., 36.49) is due to the very low odds of informal agreements among White fathers incarcerated since the birth. In column 4, no differences in the effects of incarceration on legal support orders are observed, as the interaction terms are not statistically significant.

Table 2 presents coefficients from least squares regressions of the number of days fathers had contact with their child in the past month. No statistically significant differences in days of contact are observed by race or ethnicity (column 1). Mothers born outside the U.S., however, reported fathers as having about 4.2 fewer days of contact in the past month, perhaps due to fathers' immigration status, although this is not observed. Not surprising given the severe visitation restrictions associated with incarceration, fathers currently in jail at year 3 are much less likely (7.8 fewer days per month) to have seen their children. Past incarceration is not associated with nonresident fathers' contact with children.

<< TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE >>

When interactions by race and ethnicity are introduced (see column 2), a different pattern of associations emerges. Current incarceration among White fathers is associated with about 13.1 fewer days of contact (compared to non-incarcerated White fathers), controlling for other factors. Moreover, both indicators of past incarceration are negatively associated with days of contact for White fathers (-8.468 and -8.752 fewer days, respectively). Consistent with our hypotheses, each of these negative associations is partly offset for African American fathers by positive and significant interaction terms. Currently incarcerated African American fathers, for example, are reported to have

seen their children 7.2 (i.e., $-13.1 + 5.9$) fewer days in the last month than had never incarcerated African American fathers. Past incarceration presents even less of a barrier to African American fathers' contact with children. For example, African American fathers incarcerated prior to the birth are reported to have seen their child only 1 fewer day ($-8.5 + 7.5$) than never incarcerated African American men. A similar general pattern of results is observed for Latino fathers, though only the interaction of Latino with past incarceration is statistically significant. Thus, Latino fathers incarcerated prior to the birth saw their child only 0.134 fewer days than never incarcerated Latinos.

We proposed two related explanations for why African American and Latino fathers' incarceration may be less consequential for their contact with children. One possibility is that mothers are more likely to preserve relationships with African American and Latino men despite recent or past histories of incarceration. Model 3 considers this hypothesis by introducing a control variable for whether parents were in a romantic relationship at year 3. Being in a romantic relationship is significantly associated with 9.0 additional days of contact, consistent with previous research showing paternal involvement to be related to the quality of unmarried parents' romantic relationships (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2005; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999). The degree to which relationship status mediates race differences observed is indicated by how much interaction terms are attenuated between models 2 and 3. Comparing these coefficients suggests very modest support for this interpretation, as each interaction term is only slightly attenuated in model 3.

Another reason we proposed incarceration may be less detrimental for African American and Latino fathers' contact is that mothers may be more likely to retain a sense of trust of fathers despite incarceration. As mothers were only asked questions about trust when the father had some contact with the child (i.e. more than 1 day in past month), the trust scale can not be introduced as a mediator of days of contact. Instead, we examine mothers' distrust of fathers as a final dependent variable.

<< TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE >>

Table 3 presents coefficients from regressions modeling mothers' reports of whether they distrust the father to care for their child at Year 3. Model 1 shows that all three measures of incarceration are associated with greater distrust of fathers to take care of the child. The magnitudes of coefficients increase slightly with recency of incarceration, with mothers of currently incarcerated fathers most likely to distrust the father ($b = 0.506$). Note also that African American fathers are less likely ($b = -0.541$) to be distrusted by mothers, controlling for other variables.

Model 2 illustrates the importance again of considering differences in the effects of incarceration by race and ethnicity. In this model, the direct effects of incarceration are even stronger, indicating a considerable level of distrust of White fathers who were currently incarcerated or incarcerated prior to the child's birth. Current incarcerated White fathers, for example, score 1.48 standard deviations higher on mother's distrust than do never incarcerated Whites, controlling for other variables. The interaction terms indicate, however, that the effect of incarceration on distrust is considerably weaker for African American and Latino men. Among African American fathers, for example, current incarceration is associated with only 0.46 standard deviations ($1.483 - 1.028$) higher distrust by mothers. There is virtually no effect of current incarceration for Latino fathers ($1.483 - 1.516 = -0.04$). A similar pattern is observed in the case of incarceration prior to the birth of the child for African American fathers. Note finally that there are no racial differences in levels of distrust of never incarcerated fathers, as indicated by the statistically insignificant race and ethnicity indicators. The results of model 2 are consistent with our expectation that the effects of incarceration would be less severe among African American and Latino families.

Discussion

A clear conclusion to be drawn from these analyses is that incarceration presents significant obstacles to nonresident fathers' ability to maintain contact with their children. This finding resonates strongly with other research on the collateral consequences of incarceration for fathers, families, and communities (Gabel & Johnston, 1997; Genty, 2002; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Visher & Travis,

2003). Previous qualitative research suggests that nonresident fathers often support their children through informal agreements with their child's mother (Achatz & MacAllum; author citation; Edin, 1995; Furstenberg, 1995; Sullivan, 1992). For those nonresident fathers at risk of incarceration, however, we find that current incarceration significantly interferes with the establishment of such informal agreements. However, consistent with Mincy and Nepomnyaschy (2005), incarceration is not found to be associated with legal child support orders, although previous research would lead us to suspect that incarceration would make it more difficult for fathers to comply with these orders and may result in large arrearages.

The analyses also reveal significant differences in the effects of incarceration for White, African American, and Latino fathers. For example among White fathers, past incarceration was found to be associated with more than 8 fewer days of contact with the child in the prior month. Among African American and Latino fathers, in contrast, the effects of past incarceration on contact were significantly smaller. We have speculated that this pattern may be explained by racial and ethnic differences in the degree of stigma associated with incarceration, differences in interpretations of the criminal justice system, or differences in family resilience. For lower socioeconomic status African American and Latino families, who are disproportionately affected by incarceration (Blumstein, 1993; Ojmarh, 2005; Pettit & Western, 2004) and are more likely to distrust the criminal justice system (Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998), incarceration may be perceived as simply one of many other externally imposed challenges. Our interpretation was also supported by the analysis of mothers' trust of fathers to care for their children. Whereas current and past incarceration were strongly associated with mothers' distrust of White fathers, African American and Latino mothers were no less likely to trust fathers with a history of incarceration.

Several methodological limitations suggest caution when interpreting the results. For example, the measure of mother's distrust of the father may be a poor proxy for stigma, and clearly does not measure the more general stigma and discrimination faced by previously incarcerated

African American and Latino men in the wider community. A further limitation of this analysis is that the effects of incarceration observed here may be due to unobserved differences in the severity of problems that led to incarceration, as well as other characteristics of fathers. This remains a possibility, though in an exploratory analysis (not shown), adding controls for fathers' past drug and alcohol use and mothers' reports of domestic violence did virtually nothing to the magnitude or statistical significance of the results presented.

Further research into race and ethnic differences in the familial and parental experiences of incarcerated fathers is clearly required. In addition to developing more sensitive measures of stigma, researchers should examine the conditions under which incarceration is associated with mothers trust, paternal involvement, as well as children's outcomes. For example, the benefit to the child of an incarcerated father's involvement likely varies with offense severity and other risk factors (Jaffee, Moffitt, Caspi, & Taylor, 2003). Similarly, one would expect mothers' willingness to trust fathers to be greatly undermined, regardless of race or ethnicity, in cases of domestic violence (author's citation). Implications of our research for policies, programs, and practitioners within the criminal justice and human services systems likely depend on this future research. For the time being, practitioners are encouraged to recognize the barriers to paternal involvement that incarceration imposes. The apparent willingness of African American and Latino mothers to retain trust of these fathers represents a potential resource upon which to draw during the re-entry process.

The detrimental consequences of current incarceration for all men in the study point to a continued need for improving fathers' access to children during incarceration. In addition to the findings presented here, previous researchers have found contact between fathers and children to minimize separation and reunification problems and lower men's rates of recidivism (Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005; Hairston, 1998). Several states and individual prison facilities have developed innovative programs to facilitate contact between prisoners and their children, to enhance fathers' parenting skills, and to help them overcome personal barriers to maintaining family

relationships. Pearson (2004) describes one such innovative re-entry program in Denver, Colorado that takes a comprehensive approach to dealing with the employment, child support, and family integration needs of paroled and previously incarcerated fathers. A six-month evaluation of 350 parents who voluntarily received services from the Work Family Center (WFC) showed the employment and earnings of parents increased, and increases in employment and wage withholding helped parents make higher child support payments. The results of the WTC evaluation also showed that the majority of parents wanted assistance with child support and felt they benefited from this assistance, particularly in receiving more information about their child support situation. For half of parents in the program, this information led to responses from the child support agency that allowed them to better manage their child support obligation. Furthermore, parents expressed a desire for family integration services and to spend more time with their children. After only a few visits, some parents began taking advantage of legal and mental health services provided by WTC to reconnect with their children and negotiate their relationship with the child's other parent. Pearson suggests that a longer intervention would better assist parents in re-establishing bonds with their families.

Given the importance of re-establishing stable commitments after prison for reducing recidivism (Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998), more widespread access to these types of comprehensive re-entry and re-unification programs offers the potential for improving outcomes for previously incarcerated fathers and their families (Travis, 2004). At minimum, policies should not increase barriers to incarcerated fathers' contact with their children or impose greater child support penalties for incarcerated men. Perhaps even more fundamentally, policy makers interested in promoting paternal involvement should also consider supporting programs that help fathers overcome economic and personal challenges that might otherwise lead to incarceration, rather than continuing to pursue a policy of mass incarceration.

References

- Achatz, M., & MacAllum, C.A. (1994). Young unwed fathers: Report from the field. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- Arditti, J. A., Lambert-Shute, J., & Joest, K. (2003). Saturday morning at the jail: Implications of incarceration for families and children. *Family Relations*, 52, 195-204.
- Arditti, J. A., Smock, S. A., & Parkman, T. S. (2005). "It's been hard to be a father": A qualitative exploration of incarcerated fatherhood. *Fathering*, 3 (3), 267-288.
- Argys, L. H., Peters, E., Cook, S., Garasky, S., Nepomnyaschy, L., & Sorensen, E. (2006). Measuring contact between children and nonresident fathers. In S. Hofferth & L. Casper (Eds). *Handbook of Measurement Issues in Family Research*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates.
- Argys, L.H., Peters, H.E., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Smith, J.R. (1998). The impact of child support on cognitive outcomes of young children. *Demography*, 35, 159-173.
- Bartfield, J., & Meyer, D.R. (2001). The changing role of child support among never-married mothers. In L.L. Wu & B. Wolfe (Eds). *Out of Wedlock: Causes and Consequences of Nonmarital Fertility* (pp. 229-255). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Blumstein, A. (1993). Racial disproportionality in the U.S. prison population revisited. *University of Colorado Law Review*, 64, 743-60.
- Cabrera, N., Brooks-Gunn, J., Moore, K., West, J., Boller, K., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. (2002). Bridging research and policy: Including fathers of young children in national studies. In C. Tamis-LeMonda, & N. Cabrera (Eds.). *Handbook of Father Involvement*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Carlson, M., McLanahan, S., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2005). Unmarried but not absent: Fathers' involvement with children after a nonmarital birth. Center for Research on Child Wellbeing Working Paper #05-07-FF.

- Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984. Public Law No. 98-378, 98 Stat. 1305 (1984).
- Coley, R. L., & Chase-Lansdale, P. L. (1999). Stability and change in paternal involvement among urban African American fathers. *Journal of Family Psychology* 3, 416-435.
- Coltrane, S., Parke, R. D., & Adams, M. (2004). Complexity of father involvement in low-income Mexican American families. *Family Relations*, 53, 179-189.
- Corrigan, P., Markowitz, F. E., Watson, A., Rowan, D., & Kubiak, M. A. (2003). An attribution model of public discrimination towards persons with mental illness. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 44, 162-179.
- Davis, J. (2000). Barring fatherhood: Incarcerated fathers and their children. *Connecting Low Income Fathers and Families: A guide to Practical Policies*. Washington, D.C.: National Conference of State Legislatures.
- Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Public Law No. 109-171 (2005).
- Demuth, S., & Steffensmeier, D. (2004). Ethnicity effects on sentence outcomes in large urban courts: Comparisons among white, black, and Hispanic defendants. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85, 994-1011.
- Edin, K. (1995). Single mothers and child support: The possibilities and limits of child support policy. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 17, 203-230.
- Edin, K., Nelson, T. J., & Paranal, R. (2004). Fatherhood and incarceration as potential turning points in the criminal careers of unskilled men. In M. Pattillo, D. F. Weiman, & B. Western (Eds.). *Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration* (46-75). New York: Russell Sage.
- Elder, G. H., Jr. (1974). *Children of the Great Depression: Social Change in Life Experience*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Family Support Act of 1988. Public Law No. 100-485, 102 Stat 2343 (1988).

Fields, J. (2001). *Living Arrangements of Children: Fall 1996* (Current Population Report, P70-74).

Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau. U.S. Government Printing Office.

Freeman, R., & Waldfogel, J. (2001). Dunning delinquent dads: The effects of child support enforcement policy on child support receipt by never married women. *Journal of Human Resources*, 36, 207-225.

Fremstad, S., & Primus, W. (2002). Strengthening families: Ideas for TANF reauthorization.

Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available online at <http://www.cbpp.org/1-22-02tanf.pdf>.

Furstenberg, F. F., Jr. (1995). Fathering in the inner city: Paternal participation and public policy. In

W. Marsiglio (Ed.) *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Gabel, K., & Johnston, D. (1995). *Children of Incarcerated Parents*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Garfinkel, I., McLanahan, S.S., Tienda, M & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2001). Fragile families and welfare reform: An introduction. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 23, 277-301.

Garland, D. (2001). *Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Genty, P. M. (2002). Damage to family relationships as a collateral consequence of parental incarceration. *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 30, 1671-1684.

Graham, J. W., & Beller, A. H. (2002). Nonresident fathers and their children: Child support and visitation from an economic perspective. In C. Tamis-LeMonda & N. Cabrera (Eds.) *Handbook of Father Involvement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (pp. 431-453). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grall, T. (2006). Custodial mothers and fathers and their child support (Current Population Reports, P60-230). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

- Hagan, J., & Dinovitzer, R. (1999). Collateral consequences of imprisonment for children, communities, and prisoners. *Crime and Justice*, 26, 121-62.
- Hairston, C. F. (1998). The forgotten parent: Understanding the forces that influence incarcerated fathers' relationships with their children. *Child Welfare*, 77, 617-39.
- Hagan, J., Shedd, C., & Payne, M. (2005). Race, ethnicity, and youth perceptions of criminal injustice. *American Sociological Review*, 70, 381-407.
- Hofferth, S. L. (2003). Race/ethnic differences in father involvement in two-parent families. *Journal of Family Issues* 24, 185-216.
- Hogan, D. P., & Astone, N. M. (1986). The transition to adulthood. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12, 109-130.
- Holzer, H. J., Offner, P., & Sorensen, E. (2005). Declining employment among young black less-educated men: The role of incarceration and child support. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 24, 329-350.
- Hunt, M. (1996). The individual, society, or both? A comparison of Black, Latino, and White beliefs about the cause of poverty. *Social Forces*, 75, 293-322.
- Jaffee, S. R., Moffitt, T. E., Caspi, A., & Taylor, A. (2003). Life with (or without) father: The benefits of living with two biological parents depend on the father's antisocial behavior. *Child Development*, 74, 109-126.
- Jarrett, R. L. (1997). African American family and parenting strategies in impoverished neighborhoods. *Qualitative Sociology*, 20, 275-288.
- Jarrett, R. L., & Burton, L. M. (1999). Dynamic dimensions of family structure in low-income African American families: Emergent themes in qualitative research. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 30, 177-187.
- Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (1986). *Beliefs About Inequality*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

- Laub, J. H., Nagin, D. S., & Sampson, R. J. (1998). Trajectories of change in criminal offending: Good marriages and the desistance process. *American Sociological Review*, 63, 225-38.
- Marini, M. M. (1984). Age and sequencing norms in the transition to adulthood. *Social Forces*, 63, 229-244.
- Martin J.A., Hamilton B.E., Sutton P.D., Ventura, S.J., Menacker,F., & Munson,M.L. (2005). Births: Final data for 2003. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 54(2). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.
- May, R. (2004). *The Effect of Child Support and Criminal Justice Systems on Low-income Noncustodial Parents*. Center for Family Policy and Practice.
- McAdoo, H. P. (1988). The roles of Black fathers in the socialization of Black children. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.) *Black Families* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Mincy, R., & Nepomnyaschy, L. (2005). Child support and minority fathers in Fragile Families (Working Paper # 20055-23-FF). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, Center for Research on Child Wellbeing.
- Mincy, R. B., & Pouncy, H. (1999). There must be 50 ways to start a family. In W. F. Horn, D. Blankenhorn, & M. B. Pearlstein (Eds.) *The Fatherhood Movement: A Call to Action* (83-104). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Mumola, C. J., (2002). Incarcerated parents and their children. *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*. U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.
- Nepomnyaschy, L., & Garfinkel, I. (2006). Child support enforcement and fathers contributions to their nonmarital children (Working Paper No. 2005-09-FF). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, Center for Research on Child Wellbeing.
- Nurse, A. M. (2004). Returning to strangers: Newly paroled young fathers and their children. In M. Pattillo, D.F. Weiman, & B. Western (Eds.) *Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration* (pp. 76-97). New York: Russell Sage.

- O'Connell, Martin T. (1997). Children with single parents—how they fare (Census Brief, CENBR/97-1), Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Ojmarrh, M. (2005). A meta-analysis of race and sentencing research: Explaining the inconsistencies. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 21, 439-466.
- Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. Public Law No. 103-66, 107 Stat 312 (1993).
- Patillo, M., Weiman, D., & Western, B. (2004). *Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Pearson, J. (2004). Building debt while doing time: Child support and incarceration. *Judge's Journal*, 1(43), 5-12.
- Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act of 1995. Public Law No. 104-193, 110 Stat. 2105 (1996).
- Pettit, B., & Western, B. (2004). Mass imprisonment and the life course: Race and class inequality in U.S. incarceration. *American Sociological Review*, 69, 151-69.
- Pleck, J. H. (1997). Paternal involvement: Levels, sources, and consequences. In M. Lamb (Ed). *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, 3rd ed. (pp. 66-103). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Reichman, N., Teitler, J., Garfinkel, I., & McLanahan, S. S. (2001). The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study: Sample and design. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 23, 303-326.
- Rindfuss, R. R., Swicegood, C. G., & Rosenfeld, R. A. (1987). Disorder in the life course: How common and does it matter? *American Sociological Review*, 52, 785-801.
- Roberts, D. E. (2003). The social and moral cost of mass incarceration in African American communities. *Stanford Law Review*, 56, 1271-1306.
- Roy, K. R., & Dyson, O. L. (2005). Gatekeeping in context: Babymama drama and the involvement of incarcerated fathers. *Fathering*, 3, 289-310.

- Sampson, R. J., & Bartusch, D. J. (1998). Legal cynicism and (subcultural?) tolerance of deviance: The neighborhood context of racial differences. *Law & Society Review*, 32, 777-804.
- Shanahan, M. J. (2000). Pathways to adulthood in changing societies: Variability and mechanisms in life course perspective. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 667-692.
- Sorensen E., & Hill, A. (2004). Single mothers and their child support receipt: How well is child support enforcement doing? *The Journal of Human Resources*, 39, 135-154.
- Sorensen, E., & Zibman, C. (2001). Poor dads who don't pay child support: Deadbeats or disadvantaged? Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Sullivan, M.L. (1992). Noncustodial fathers' attitudes and behaviors. In Furstenberg, Sherwood & Sullivan (Eds.) *Caring and Paying: What Mothers and Fathers Say About Child Support*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.
- Travis, J. (2005). *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.
- Travis, J., & Waul, M. (2003). *Prisoners Once Removed: The Impact of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families, and Communities*. Washington: Urban Institute Press.
- Violent Crime Control and Enforcement Act of 1994. Public Law No. 103-322 (1993).
- Visher, C. A., & Travis, J. (2003). Transitions from prison to community: Understanding individual pathways. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 89-113.
- Western, B. (2006). *Punishment and Inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Western, B., Kling, J. R., & Weiman, D. F. (2001). The labor market consequences of incarceration. *Crime and Delinquency*, 47, 410-27.
- Western, B., Lopoo, L., & McLanahan, S. S. (2004). Incarceration and the bonds between parents in fragile families. In M. Pattillo, D.F. Weiman, & B. Western (Eds.) *Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration* (pp. 21-45). New York: Russell Sage.

Women's Prison Association. (1996). *When a Mother is Arrested: How the Criminal Justice and Child Welfare Systems Can Work Together More Effectively*. A needs assessment initiated by the Maryland Department of Human Resources.

Zinn, M. B. (1982). Familism among Chicanos: A theoretical review. *Humbolt Journal of Social Relations*, 10, 224-238.

Figure 1. Selected Policies and Programs Affecting Low-Income, Nonresident, Incarcerated Fathers by Policy Domain
<p><i>Sentencing and Parole Process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Three strikes” laws Federal “War on Drugs” legislation Advisory sentencing commissions Mandatory minimum sentencing “truth” in sentencing Parole board restrictions/abolishment
<p><i>Correctional Facility Programs and Policies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictions on visitation and telephone contact Parenting or fatherhood classes Literacy, vocational, and other educational training Decline of work release programs Employment in prison Problem-specific treatment (substance use, mental health, domestic violence) “Good time” credit systems Disenfranchisement
<p><i>Community Re-entry Process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parole supervision and revocations Employment Domestic violence prevention Substance use treatment Limitations on citizenship and voting rights Immigrant deportation Limitations on welfare and housing programs Limitations on vocational training, educational loans Sex offender registration and community notification Drivers license revocations
<p><i>Child Support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support orders Modifications Arrearages Parental, foster, and adoption rights

Table 1. Informal and Legal Child Support Orders Regressed on Race/Ethnicity, Incarceration and Demographic Controls

Variables ¹	Odds Ratios from Multinomial Contrasts			
	Informal versus No Agreement		Legal versus No Agreement	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Race/Ethnicity²</i>				
African American (non-Latino)	3.768 *	1.529	2.239 *	1.164
	(1.319, 10.755)	(0.316, 7.401)	(1.027, 4.881)	(0.334, 4.060)
Latino	2.162	0.651	2.379 *	1.130
	(0.719, 6.502)	(0.125, 3.389)	(1.031, 5.489)	(0.299, 4.280)
<i>Nativity/TANF receipt</i>				
Mother Born outside U.S.	0.477	0.454	0.207 **	0.210 **
	(0.159, 1.424)	(0.156, 1.320)	(0.064, 0.673)	(0.066, 0.670)
Mother Received TANF Since or at Birth	0.914	0.869	1.758 *	1.716
	(0.484, 1.724)	(0.471, 1.603)	(1.008, 3.068)	(0.992, 2.968)
<i>Incarceration History³</i>				
Currently Incarcerated	0.087 ***	0.044 *	0.522	0.164
	(0.033, 0.227)	(0.002, 0.972)	(0.185, 1.467)	(0.020, 1.344)
Incarcerated Since or at Birth of Child	0.478	0.046 **	0.785	0.334
	(0.214, 1.067)	(0.005, 0.429)	(0.361, 1.707)	(0.054, 2.065)
Incarcerated Prior to Birth of Child	1.068	0.330	1.314	0.673
	(0.471, 2.422)	(0.039, 2.793)	(0.660, 2.614)	(0.148, 3.060)
<i>Relationship Status at Child's Birth</i>				
Cohabiting	3.307 *	3.555 *	1.983	1.972
	(1.178, 9.278)	(1.309, 9.649)	(0.879, 4.470)	(0.883, 4.406)
Non-Cohabiting Romantic Relationship	1.234	1.190	1.245	1.215
	(0.465, 3.267)	(0.467, 3.034)	(0.604, 2.566)	(0.589, 2.504)
<i>Incarceration X Race Interactions</i>				
African American X Currently Incarcerated		1.925		3.917
		(0.067, 55.280)		(0.329, 46.680)
Latino X Currently Incarcerated		1.849		2.709
		(0.051, 66.864)		(0.230, 31.858)
African American X Incarcerated Since or at Birth		6.163		2.469
		(0.539, 70.472)		(0.318, 19.188)
Latino X Incarcerated Since or at Birth		36.487 **		2.745
		(2.893, 460.153)		(0.261, 28.920)
African American X Incarcerated Prior to Birth		3.935		1.762
		(0.356, 43.466)		(0.314, 9.862)
Latino X Incarcerated Prior to Birth		2.827		2.426
		(0.203, 39.427)		(0.351, 16.773)
Pseudo Log-Likelihood	-930.470	-915.507	-930.470	-915.507
Pseudo R-squared	0.139	0.153	0.139	0.153

*Notes:** $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

N is 1002 in both models. Confidence intervals (95 %) in parentheses.

¹ Models control for mothers' age, fathers' education, fathers' employment, and relationship status at baseline.² White fathers are the excluded category.³ Never incarcerated fathers are the excluded category.

Table 2. Days of Contact in Past Month Regressed on Race/Ethnicity, Incarceration and Demographic Controls

Variables ¹	Regression Models		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Constant	9.089 ** (2.416, 15.763)	14.054 *** (6.895, 21.212)	12.405 *** (5.687, 19.123)
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i> ²			
African American (Non-Latino)	2.335 (-0.366, 5.036)	-3.089 (-8.382, 2.202)	-2.548 (-6.939, 1.842)
Latino	1.871 (-1.187, 4.930)	-3.769 (-9.914, 2.376)	-3.138 (-8.052, 1.776)
<i>Nativity</i>			
Mother Born outside U.S.	-4.201 * (-7.636, -0.767)	-3.905 * (-7.496, -0.313)	-3.88 * (-7.531, -0.230)
<i>Incarceration History</i> ³			
Currently Incarcerated	-7.814 *** (-10.234, -5.395)	-13.089 *** (-18.524, -7.655)	-12.201 *** (-16.369, -8.033)
Incarcerated Since or at Birth of Child	-2.357 (-5.617, 0.902)	-8.468 ** (-14.053, -3.419)	-7.209 ** (-11.889, -2.530)
Incarcerated Prior to Birth of Child	-1.583 (-4.339, 1.173)	-8.752 ** (-14.087, -3.419)	-7.585 ** (-12.030, -3.141)
<i>Incarceration X Race Interactions</i>			
African American X Currently Incarcerated		5.901 + (-0.152, 11.956)	4.199 (-1.114, 9.513)
Latino X Currently Incarcerated		5.114 (-1.627, 11.855)	4.085 (-1.378, 9.549)
African American X Incarcerated Since or at Birth		6.737 + (-0.571, 14.046)	5.971 + (-0.729, 12.672)
Latino X Incarcerated Since or at Birth		6.611 (-1.374, 14.598)	5.804 (-1.213, 12.820)
African American X Incarcerated Prior to Birth		7.538 * (1.363, 13.714)	6.831 * (1.392, 12.270)
Latino X Incarcerated Prior to Birth		8.712 * (1.380, 16.046)	7.451 * (0.765, 14.136)
<i>Relationship Status with Mother</i>			
Romantic Relationship at Year 3			8.977 ** (3.072, 14.882)
R-squared	.154	.165	0.209

Notes:

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

N is 993 in all models. Confidence intervals (95%) in parentheses.

¹ All models control for mothers' age, fathers' education, fathers' employment, and relationship status at baseline.

² White fathers are the excluded category.

³ Never incarcerated fathers are the excluded category.

Table 3. Mother's Distrust of Fathers Regressed on Race/Ethnicity, Incarceration and Demographic Controls

Variables ¹	Regression Models	
	(1)	(2)
Constant	0.889 (-0.053, 1.832)	0.485 (-0.456, 1.426)
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i> ²		
African American (Non-Latino)	-0.541 * (-0.953, -0.128)	-0.054 (-0.466, 0.358)
Latino	-0.358 (-0.797, 0.081)	0.134 (-0.328, 0.596)
<i>Nativity</i>		
Mother Born outside U.S.	-0.087 (-0.576, 0.402)	-0.112 (-0.590, 0.366)
<i>Incarceration History</i> ³		
Currently Incarcerated	0.506 * (0.095, 0.917)	1.483 *** (0.613, 2.352)
Incarcerated Since or at Birth of Child	0.470 * (0.113, 0.826)	0.657 (-0.188, 1.501)
Incarcerated Prior to Birth of Child	0.420 * (0.098, 0.742)	1.129 ** (0.370, 1.888)
<i>Incarceration X Race Interactions</i>		
African American X Currently Incarcerated		-1.028 * (-2.000, -0.056)
Latino X Currently Incarcerated		-1.516 ** (-2.634, -0.398)
African American X Incarcerated Since or at Birth		-0.098 (-1.061, 0.864)
Latino X Incarcerated Since or at Birth		-0.323 (-1.345, 0.700)
African American X Incarcerated Prior to Birth		-0.936 * (-1.779, -0.093)
Latino X Incarcerated Prior to Birth		-0.615 (-1.594, 0.364)
R-squared	0.247	0.270

Notes:

+ $p < .10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

N is 785 in all models. Standard errors in parentheses.

¹ All models control for mothers' age, fathers' education, fathers' employment, and relationship status at baseline.

² White fathers are the excluded category.

³ Never incarcerated fathers are the excluded category.