A STUDY OF INTERGENERATIONAL CRIME FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

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Research Proposal

The focus of this project will be the patterns and causes of intergenerational crime within the United States. Ultimately, the goal of the project is to explain the phenomenon, as it is becoming a rising problem in the country.

In order to adequately explain the patterns, a look into past studies is imperative. It is not possible, for the purpose of this project, to walk into classrooms and conduct a survey of the children in order to find statistics on whether or not their parents are incarcerated. Because of this, it will become very important to look at statistics and studies that pertain to the topic provided by others. Prison records, statistics on inmates, and information collected on the trauma associated with parental incarceration will be the basis of this project. The examination of research on the effects of incarceration on a family verses that of divorce will be one focus in an attempt to prove that incarceration weighs much heavier on the emotional wellbeing of children. Furthermore, the processes by which children deal with emotions associated with parental arrests will be fully detailed and analyzed. It will also become important to analyze the consequences that are attributed to the display of these emotions. The combination of the above topics will provide enough information to come to a viable conclusion.

By examining the statistics, it will become clear that children with incarcerated parents have a much higher chance of serving time themselves, than do children with parents who are not incarcerated.

Outline

I. Introduction

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- E. Deviant behavior stays within one sector of society

VIII. Conclusion

Annotated Bibliography

Clear, T. R. Imprisoning Communities: How Mass Incarceration Makes
Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse. Oxford, New York. Oxford
University Press, 2007.

Todd Clear discusses the many disadvantages faced when mass incarceration takes place. It becomes very apparent that certain communitiestypically low income- are constantly being drained by the prison system. Clear analyzes the negative effects that are the direct cause of this incarceration. Most importantly he points out that children are more likely to commit a crime if a father or brother has been to prison.

Cusick, G. R., & Courtney, M. E. (Feb 2010). Crime During the Transition to Adulthood: How Youth Fare as They Leave Out-of-Home-Care. *U.S. Department of Justice.* Retrieved April 29, 2011.

This is a striking report that indicates all of the difficulties youth face as they transition from growing up within the child welfare system to adulthood. It will be very useful in comparing the differences between children who grow up with their biological parents versus those who live in foster care or other state funding systems. The outcome is proven by this report to be that individuals who are raised by the system face a much harsher future than those who do not. One of the greatest disadvantages of the foster care system is that the youth are forced to leave abruptly while children who grow up with their families have a slower more conducive transition. Those coming out of foster care are at risk for participation in criminal behavior or involvement in the criminal justice system – a pattern that will be analyzed throughout this report. This is an extremely detailed report that applies to the research in intergenerational crime.

Glaze, L. E., & Maruschak L. M. (August 2008). Parents In Prison and Their Minor Children. *U.S. Department of Justice.* Retrieved April 10,

2011

This is a report full of statistics on both parents in prison and their children. There is information provided by prisoners regarding the care in which their children are placed. There are differences in the children of male inmates and that of the females – the children with fathers in prison are more likely to be raised by other family members, where mothers indicate that their children are more likely to be taken care of by state systems. It will be very telling to look at the success rates of each situation and to apply them to the findings in other research. The report also discusses the frequency of drug and alcohol problems in the prisoners, a pattern that is extremely likely to carry over to their children as exposure to substances increases.

Hansburg, H. G. Adolescent Separation Anxiety; a Method for the Study of Adolescent Separation Problems. Springfield III., C.C. Thomas. 1972.

Hansburg delves into the adolescent psyche as he explains the effects of separation. Children tend to act out much differently than do adults when they are dealing with the trauma of separation. While looking into the ways children handle said anxiety, it will become useful to apply it to the other research. Individuals dealing with the effects of parent – child separation have a higher tendency of lashing out, often times a pattern misconstrued as deviance. By looking at Hansburg's findings it will become apparent that separation anxiety is at the root of many problems for adolescents, problems that manifest within them and cause "criminal" behavior.

Hearing. (Jul 2008). Hearing on racial Disproportionality in Foster Care. *U.S. House of Representatives.* U.S Government Printing Office. Washington 2009.

In 2008 a hearing was held to shed light on the high rate at which African American children are placed into the foster care system. It provides multiple statements indicating that there is a racial discrepancy within the foster care system. While there is no direct relation to criminal behavior within the case, it

will be useful in the report in that it describes the sector of society that is constantly placed into the care of the state. Once these individuals are placed under the supervision of the government (namely foster care), they fall into the category of "at risk" youth. The case will be helpful in that it explains the demographics of the group that is the focus of the further report.

Mason, K., & Williams-Mbengue, N. (Dec 2008). A different kind of jail: when parents are in prison, kids face their own trials. Now states are stepping in. *State Legislatures*, 34, 10. p.30(3). Retrieved April 20, 2011.

This piece discusses the increases of parents in prison since 1991 (79 percent) and its effect on the children involved. Among the problems listed in the article are financial hardships, and social, academic and health problems. The main issue presented in the article is the fact that little resources are provided to the children of incarcerated parents – this lends to the problem of intergenerational crime in that the children turn to criminal behavior without proper role models. The article stresses the importance of aiding the children when their parents are placed under arrest.

Mosely, E. (July 2008). Incarcerated – Children of Parents in Prison

Impacted. Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Retrieved May 1, 2011.

Mosely described the different types of programs that only a few states provide for the children of incarcerated parents. A main point made is the fact that very little information is provided concerning the children themselves. Mosely indicates that there must be a way for the states to reach each of the children and attempt to provide services and role models to them while their parents away. The reason being, of the children who were involved in programs with positive role models, none of them engaged in criminal activities. However, this is not the case for the U.S. population as a whole. He touches on problems associated with parent-child separation, such as ADHD, and explains how these

issues create obstacles in the road to success for these children.

Mumola, C. (Aug 2000). Incarcerated Parents and Their Children. *US Department of Justice.* Retrieved May 1, 2011.

Mumola's report provides countless statistics and details regarding the individuals in prison. A great majority of the parents in prison are serving time for drug or alcohol related offenses, and many are serving time for violent offenses. One third of the mothers in prison reported living alone with their children in the month before their arrests – this will become a very strong point when combined with the traumatic effects of separation, as seen in other studies. Ten percent of mothers and two percent of fathers reported that their children were living in foster care. This will also be important as the project will look into the success rates of individuals who grow up in foster care.

Schirmer, S., & Nellis, A. (Feb 2009). Incarcerated Parents and Their Children. *The Sentencing Project.* Retrieved April 19, 2011.

This is an eleven-page report that analyzes the statistics of the families with individuals behind bars. It discusses the increases in the number of incarcerated parents over a matter of 16 years. It also indicates the stark differences in the demographics of the populations of incarcerated individuals compared to the actual population of the country. In the prison system, the minority races greatly outnumber their Caucasian counterparts, a pattern that is not consistent with the U.S. population as a whole. The report is unique in that it provides statistics on only prisoners who have indicated that they have children. It then analyzes the minor children in these situations. While this report is helpful in providing statistics, the use of other studies that analyze behavior traits as a result of imprisonment will be imperative.

Simmons, S.W. (March 2000). Children of Incarcerated Parents. *California Research Bureau*. Retrieved April 23, 2011.

Dr. Simmons' study will be relied on heavily as it dives into the effects of

incarceration on children. Her main focus is how little representation and recognition the children of incarcerated parents receive. This is part of the problem in allowing intergenerational crime to exist. Without adequate information on the children, the problem is allowed to continue. Simmons describes the ways in which children handle and display the stresses that they are under once their parents are removed from the picture. She points out that, "the children were found to have experienced emotional problems, nightmares, fighting in school and a decline in academic performance as a result of being separated due to their mother's incarceration". She also dissects the different coping mechanisms used by these children – all of which lead to social problems.

A STUDY OF INTERGENERATIONAL CRIME FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

In the United States, the term "criminal" is commonly attributed to the individual. However, crime is not biological; it is socially constructed in many different ways. In American society, the labels one receives as a direct result of his or her behaviors or characteristics define them as an individual. The phrase "commit the crime – do the time" is popularly used in this country, and many citizens are serving time for the crimes that they have committed. What is not discussed, however, is the effect of parental incarceration on children. For many reasons, children with one or both of their parents in prison face a much higher likelihood to engage in criminal behavior and end up in the system themselves. This statement would generally bring about the assumption that crime must be biological. While there are some studies that prove that certain aspects of criminal behavior are, in fact, biological character traits, they are typically attributed to a very small percentage of actual inmates. The focus of this project is to look at intergenerational crime from a sociological standpoint. In doing so, it will become apparent that criminal behavior is passed from generation to generation due to a failing criminal justice system, rather than by the innate characteristics of the individuals themselves. By way of disregarding the children directly related to inmates, labeling certain behaviors, and not providing support and resources to the children, the United States allows the pattern of intergenerational crime to exist and perpetuate.

This report relies heavily on information and statistics gathered on individuals in the United States criminal justice system. Only imprisoned individuals who reported having children are included in the statistics within this report. The statistics on the general population of inmates without children are similar to the findings here, but they are not the focus, as children are not directly affected by their affiliation with the justice system. So it is important to understand that the use of terms like "inmate" and "offender" pertains to and describes only incarcerated parents in this report.

STATISTICS ON INMATES

It is extremely important to note that there is very little information collected on the children of individuals upon arrest. The lack of attention paid to the children who will become directly affected by this process makes it imperative to look at any information provided on the inmates. By looking at statistics and surveys of prison inmates, it becomes a little bit easier to draw conclusions regarding the children involved. In 2007, over half of the inmates in both state and federal prisoners reported having children under the age of 18. In a report printed by the US Department of Justice, Lauren E. Glaze indicated that, "parents held in the nation's

prisons—52% of state inmates and 63% of federal inmates—reported having an estimated 1,706,600 minor children, accounting for 2.3% of the U.S. resident population under age 18" (Glaze). These numbers skyrocketed since an earlier report had indicated that 761,000 children had parents in the prison system in 1991. So, since 1991, there has been an 80 percent increase of children with incarcerated parents. With such a rise in statistics, attention must be paid to the individuals involved.

To better describe the children of focus, further investigation into the statistics on incarcerated parents is needed. The first telling point made apparent by the statistics on inmates pertains to the demographics of those imprisoned. A study conducted by Charlene Wear Simmons provides great information regarding mothers in prison. She found that,

"The average adult female offender is a minority between the ages of 25 and 29 who before arrest was a single parent living with one to three children. She comes from a single parent or broken home. Half of her other family members are incarcerated, including 54 percent of her brothers and sisters. She is a high school drop out, unemployed, likely to have been the victim of sexual abuse, started using alcohol or drugs between the ages of 13 and 14, and has '...committed crimes for the following primary reasons: to pay for drugs, relieve economic pressures, or poor judgment." (Simmons).

There is an incredible amount of important information in these findings. It is made apparent by Simmons' research that single parenting, drug and alcohol abuse, and intergenerational incarceration are common themes in the criminal justice system. All of these findings are equally important, however they need to be addressed separately. For the time being, it is important to focus on the fact that the average female offender is a minority. Under the Department of Justice, Christopher Mumola organized a study on inmate parents. A summary of his findings in regards to the ethnicity of inmates and their children indicates that, "African American children are nine times more likely and Hispanic children are three times more likely than white children to have a parent in prison" (Mumola). By combining the findings of both Simmons and Mumola, it becomes obvious that imprisonment is much higher in the minority sector of the United Furthermore, minority children are more influenced by the States. consequences and negative affects of the criminal justice system. These consequences will be dissected during the remainder of this project.

In a report provided by the U.S Department of Justice, an extremely important fact is highlighted. "24.7% of fathers and 31.1% of mothers" (Glaze) in prison indicated that either of their parents had been incarcerated as well. The inmates themselves are children of imprisoned individuals; proof that the phenomenon of intergenerational incarceration

exists. The combination of this fact and the statistics on inmates is extremely important to make note of as it defines the typical demographic of those incarcerated. The pattern of intergenerational crime is allowed to stay within the lower sector of society. As this report goes on it will become clear that minority children are the group that experiences the greater consequences of this phenomenon.

STATISTICS ON CHILDREN

It would make sense to provide adequate statistics on the children involved in the phenomenon; however, the information is not readily available. At the time of arrest children are not the focus; they are not even considered. The only information provided is estimated numbers and percentages provided by incarcerated parents. These estimates indicate, "44.9% of the minor children with parents in the system are African America, compared to 28.3% who are White, and 21.2% who are Hispanic " (Glaze). It is appropriate for the purpose of this report to combine the statistics on both African American and Hispanic children to create a minority group for statistics. This means that an overwhelming 66.2% of children with incarcerated parents are of minority status. Keep in mind that these statistics are only estimates, as inadequate information pertaining to minor children is collected at the time of arrest. Charlene Simmons touches on this as she describes her attempts to gather information on the

children of incarcerated parents. "A 1992 Assembly Office of Research report, Children of Incarcerated Parents, found 'very little accurate information regarding these children.' The report noted that, 'These children are not recognized as a group by any state agency or department in California.' This is still the case" (Simmons). While this information is frustrating, it is also useful. The disregard of the children and the disruption of their lives in the process of incarcerating their parents is the first step in perpetuating the problem of intergenerational crime. These children need to be ensured care as they face the grueling future without their parent(s). Adequate questioning and care at the time of arrest, or soon after, would prove to be useful in preventing further crimes within the family. After the arrest, it becomes more difficult to collect information on the children themselves. Once the window of opportunity to question family members involved closes, it becomes more difficult to reach the children to provide care, counseling, support, or anything else necessary to aid in the process of dealing with emotions that derive from parental incarceration. This is why statistics on inmates become so important.

What can be gathered is the percentage of children growing up in the foster care system. Later it will be useful to look at the effects of foster care compared to that of growing up with family members. It is important to get an idea of the demographics of children who are frequently found in foster care. In 2008, there was a hearing in the US House of Representative in which the racial discrepancies within the foster care system were studied and discussed. The findings coincided with the information provided on inmates, meaning a greater percentage of youth in foster care are of minority status. "A report released by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in July 2007 found African American children across the nation were more than twice as likely to enter foster care compared to white children" (House of Representatives). It is not made clear in this hearing why each child entered the foster care system, but the discrepancy between the races is prevalent in both the criminal justice system and foster care. Going back to statistics on inmates, some individuals provided information as to who was caring for their children during their sentence.

Statistics on inmates shed light on the issue of providing care to children during incarceration. Of the total population of inmates, a great amount indicated that the other parent was currently caring for the children. Men especially indicated that this was the case for their children. In the report provided by Glaze, it is stated that "88.4% of men" reported that the other parent (mother) was the current caregiver. While this is a positive pattern in that a child should be under the supervision of their biological parents, it can also be detrimental to the children. Single

parenthood comes with a negative connotation in this country, and for decent reasoning. Single parents are forced to work twice as much to provide as those parenting with a spouse. This creates a stressful environment, as well as a great deal of free time for the children involved. The presence of both parents can often provide for a more beneficial upbringing for a child.

It is important to look at the statistics provided by Glaze in order to see the entire picture. The total breakdown of statistics provided by men and women combined is as follows, "other parent 84.2%, grandparent 15.1%, other relatives 6.2%, foster home or agency 2.9% other 2.9%" (Glaze). At this time, it will be important to focus on the 2.9% of children who grow up in the foster care system as a result of parental incarceration. This is because the differences in the success of children in foster care differs from that who grow up with other members of their family. Foster care can be successful, however there are many instances in which the system fails the children. The children who are placed into foster care need a great deal of support, and often times they do not receive it. In a report aimed at critiquing the foster care system, Beth Troutman indicates, "both the child's need for continuity of relationships and his need for sensitive, responsive care should be considered in foster care placement decisions". Because the separation between the inmate and child can be so detrimental, it is imperative that the child can rely on individuals within the foster care system. The foster care system has a reputation of passing children along without serious consideration. This may be due to the fact that there is a high percentage of youth flowing through the system, however reliability must remain an important factor. If sustainability is not practiced, the children are at risk for behavioral and psychological issues.

"Out-of-home placement is typically associated with numerous disruptions in attachment relationships. These losses and lack of permanence undermine a child's attempt to form a secure attachment with a primary caregiver. The more changes in caregivers young children in foster care experience the more likely they are to exhibit oppositional behavior." (Troutman).

Dr. Troutman goes on to discuss the fact that relationships are underappreciated within the foster care system as they are often seen as temporary and unimportant. For children who have been removed from their biological parents and who are undergoing considerable amounts of stress and depression, the last thing they need is unreliability. In this sense, the foster care system is an unsuccessful route for children involved in parental incarceration. While the percentage of children indicated by Glaze is less than 3%, it is important to remember that these statistics are not reported by or on the children directly. These are statistics from inmates, as there is not a system to retrieve statistics on children.

DEVIENCE DEFINED

Now that the demographics of the individuals in focus have been described, it is important to look at the behaviors that will become problematic for them. In the United States, anything that disrupts or threatens the status quo is seen as intolerable. For the purpose of this report, it is necessary to delve into the meaning of deviant behavior in this country. Deviance, as it pertains to society, is any behavior that violates cultural norms. Emile Durkheim provided insight to the necessity of deviance in a society. "Deviants provided the symbolic contrasts and antitheses that disclosed the form and structure of society, capitalists defining communists; radicals defining moderates; the poor defining the rich" (Rock). By marking "bad" behaviors and indicating which actions and characteristics are unacceptable, society is also declaring the types of behaviors that are deemed acceptable. Furthermore, by labeling certain people as "bad", "deviant" or "criminal," it provides a way for society to understand how not to behave. The problem is that once these labels are placed on individuals, they are extremely hard to remove or alter. American society, labels are everything, and the mark of a criminal can be used to judge an individual or their children. Deviance becomes a way to distinguish between those who are good and those who are bad. By way of the prison system, the United States is able to separate people into these categories. But this separation is passed down between generations. In other words, the labels placed, by society, on an individual often determine the success of that individual's children.

It is easy to describe deviant behavior as it applies to society as a whole. But, the word becomes a little bit foggy once it is attributed to Many behaviors of young children are used as means of children. expression. Unfortunately, the wrong behavior can easily get children into trouble and often times, it leads them into the category of deviance. In an article on the problems of labeling, Walter V. Clarke sheds light on the weight Americans place on criminal behavior. "In the area of criminal behavior we are concerned with the fact that anyone who has once had the label 'convict' placed upon him becomes immediately bad, unfriendly, a threat to society, and not worthy of the opportunity of proving himself in the business or social world" (Clarke). In replacing the word "convict" with deviant or problematic and apply it to a child in the classroom it becomes easy to see how children perceive titles. Unfortunately, the United States places a great amount of weight on "deviant behavior". A child who is considered a problem in the classroom faces grave difficulties on the road to success. These children now have to cope with the consequences of being labeled. Americans tend to look down upon those who are struggling; they cast them aside and treat them as lesser humans. This exact thing happens to children in schools. Rather than taking the time in getting to the root of the problem as a child acts out, teachers commonly dismiss them. As a child is constantly perceived as bad or problematic they begin to buy into, and exhibit, these titles. Lynette Johnson described the negative effects of labeling children. "Labeled children often communicate their lack of acceptance and control by acting more labeled when they perceive the reactions of other children and adults". Dismissing and labeling children does nothing but assure them that they are incapable of being a productive member of the classroom or of society. Children succumb to the self-fulfilling prophecy as they inhibit the behaviors that are expected of them. As they begin to do so, greater problems arise.

The reason it is so important to recognize the effects of labeling and acknowledgment of deviance in the classroom will become prevalent when discussing the behaviors associated with coping with parental incarceration. Children tend to handle stressful situations and feelings in a much different and somewhat illogical way in comparison to adults. Often times, children coping with the feelings of having a parent imprisoned lash out in the classroom; and so begins the process of labeling them as "deviant".

PARENT-CHILD SEPARATION

The first issue that needs to be confronted in the process of understanding

the effects of parental incarceration on children is that of depression. In no way is it ideal for a child to grow up in an environment where both biological parents are not present. The removal of even one parent due to divorce or separation can be detrimental to children. If the removal is due to criminal activity and prison or jail time, the outcome is much worse. In an article printed in 2008, psychotherapist, Dr. Janice Beal, discussed the impact of incarceration on children.

"One thing I continuously see is depression among this population. The children (of incarcerated parents) express a lot of anger and a lot of aggressive behavior and some anxiety,' Beal said. 'Children express depression different from adults. They don't verbalize it and say, 'I feel sad right now.' They usually act out their behaviors'" (Mosely).

Beal brings two very important points to attention; depression among children and the ways in which they express this feeling. At this point, the focus is to address only the matter of depression in order to save the resulting behaviors to tackle later. Beal goes on to explain that in many cases, the children are present when their parents are arrested and taken from their homes. The trauma associated with being exposed to such an event is something that can manifest in a child and create long-term problems. Even in cases in which the children are absent when their

parents are taken, returning to their homes to find that their caregiver is missing can be just as detrimental. Children become part of an excruciating waiting game, anticipating the return of their parents and never knowing when or if it will ever come. Such serious emotions and feelings are very difficult for children to articulate. As a result, many of them may internalize the situations. As these feelings manifest within the child, they begin to display behaviors that indicate a problem. These behaviors only result in further problems.

DISPLAY OF EMOTIONS

The consequences of depression in children of incarcerated parents are very intense. As a result of being separated from their parents, children are often anxiety-ridden and depressed, a combination that makes for many problems. As Beal had previously addressed, children express their feelings in a much different way than that of adults. They act out and display characteristics of bad behavior. In the same article, US District Judge, Vanessa Gillmore discussed the effect of incarceration on children. "These are the kids that always seem to be in trouble," said Gilmore, who recently released a book she co-authored with Beal aimed at treating children of incarcerated parents. 'I went to speak at a middle school and the teacher said, 'These are the ones you need to talk to'" (Mosely). Unfortunately, it is very easy to be labeled in schools at a young age. With

overcrowding in classes – a separate yet related social problem – children who may need more attention due to issues they are forced to deal with outside of the classroom are pushed aside for intolerable behavior. These children are dealing with the absence of their parents, and any trauma associated with it, and as a result they act out in schools. " 'They go to school and can't focus on what they're doing, and their grades begin to drop," Beal added. 'School personnel may feel that their behaviors are symptoms associated with ADHD... Depending on when the parent left home and the manner in which they were taken, children face feelings of fear, abandonment, guilt, and they may begin to act younger than their stated age" (Mosely). As discussed previously, children do not handle these feelings in the same way that adults might. They may cause fights in school, refuse to complete assignments, or engage in other behavior that is not conducive to a learning environment. Instead of confronting the issue at hand and counseling the children, they are treated as troubled youth. When coping with such serious feelings it is absolutely imperative to provide care and support for these children rather than labeling and dismissing them. The likelihood of turning to crime increases as these children begin to recognize and believe the deviant labels that they have been given.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CYCLE

As previously discussed, Charlene Wear Simmons shed light on the average female inmate. There are many points addressed in her research and it is important to investigate them separately. Now, it is key to acknowledge that Simmons' findings show that drug abuse began in the early teenage years of life. Unfortunately, this is a very likely pattern with incarcerated parents and their children. Substance abuse can often times be a learned behavior, and as Simmons' research indicates, 42.7% of the women in the California criminal justice system were charged with drug related crimes. If the average female prisoner is a mother, then it becomes safe to assume that a high percentage of these mothers are drug abusers. This is a likely way for children to be exposed to and tempted by drugs and/or alcohol.

In the same study, Simmons discussed the different consequences of childhood trauma including physical abuse, parent-child separation, witness to violence, etc. Each of these situations has negative effects on children. In particular, parent-child separation resulted in "sadness and grief as an emotional response, withdrawal as the reactive behavior, substance abuse as a coping pattern, and drug possession as criminal activity in children of intergenerational behaviors" (Simmons). Drugs play a huge role in the cycle of intergenerational crime. The individuals who are incarcerated are often serving time for drug offenses, their children are

likely to have been exposed to this behavior, and drugs act as a coping mechanism for the children who are struggling to make sense of their parents' absence. There is vicious cycle to be seen in regard to drugs alone. Drug abuse has become an expected behavior in youth who are dealing with the trauma of parental incarceration. It is clear that this is a prevalent problem, and as such, social programs need to be created to provide better coping mechanisms for these children.

Perhaps the most prevalent problem in the pattern of intergenerational crime is the lack of information on and support to the children involved. An analysis of the lack of attention and support systems provided for children with incarcerated parents will be key in understanding the importance of this problem. In each of the studies or articles used for this report, there is a strong urgency towards the necessity of social programs. Each of the pieces stressed that fact that there was little information concerning the children made available, which leads to the idea that the youth are pushed aside and are not seen as an important aspect of the situation. "Although the children of incarcerated parents are at high risk for negative personal and social behaviors, their lack of visibility in the criminal justice and child welfare systems can inhibit positive intervention and may lead to neglect" (Simmons). Simmons goes on to discuss the ways in which the courts address the problem of arresting and sentencing parents - they do not

inquire as to whether the defendants have families. The sentencing process would be an opportune time to devise a plan to ensure the proper care of the affected children. Collecting information from the defendants would provide adequate statistics that could potentially understanding this phenomenon. Unfortunately, none of this has been made a standard procedure and as a result, the children involved are often overlooked. Few states have sufficient programs to provide a mentor system for these children, but it is clear that they help. One program that has been particularly successful is the Amachi Mentoring Program, which originated in Philadelphia. It is a "Big Brothers Big Sisters" type of program that aims to give troubled children positive role models. The director of Amachi Texas, Olivia Eudaly, indicated the great success of the program, "It is truly amazing what we discover a mentor does in terms of the impact it has on these kids' lives,' Eudaly said. 'For those kids – the 1,300 who went through the first 13 months – none of those kids went into the criminal justice system. None of them" (Mosely). Children need a place to go where they can engage in activities and behaviors that are conducive to their success while they cope with the awful side effects of parental incarceration. Amachi Texas is unique in that it works with the prison system and the inmates in order to retrieve information about the children. This is exactly the reason that family background needs to be collected from individuals who are being arrested and detained. With this information and the presence of mentor groups, society would be much better at attacking the problems children face when their parents are in prison.

There are changes that must be made from within the system in order to promote a more successful future for at risk children. Several different patterns have been brought to the foreground in the process of understanding this phenomenon. Perhaps the most important of them has been the absolute lack of attention paid to children at the time of the arrest of a parent. While the focus of the arrest has to be the individual accused of criminal behavior, there must be a way to collect information on the family as well. It is known that social services will step in at times to provide care to children involved, but that system has been failing as well. At this point, the proposal of a new system is in order. It is imperative to get an accurate idea of the exact children who will be affected by the process of parental incarceration. Because the aftermath of a parent's arrest can be hectic, statistics need to be taken at the time of arrest. There are two ways of going about this. The police or other authorities can ask the arrestees a series of questions pertaining to their children: whether they have any, their sex and ages, and the anticipated plan to look after them during incarceration. If this option proves to be unsuccessful, reaching out to family or friends in order to ask the same series of questions is also a way to provide necessary information regarding the children involved. There needs to be a shift of focus from the criminal to the children who will become directly affected by the criminal justice system once their parent(s) is removed. From these statistics it would be much easier to provide adequate support and care to the children before the pattern of intergenerational criminal behavior reaches them. Society must help them before it tears them down.

After gathering the necessary statistics on the children, adequate support must be given. There are already successful programs throughout the country that have started to tackle this problem. Programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and The Amachi system have proven to work for the areas in which they have been enacted. The Amachi program in particular has an amazing track record with at risk youth. The reason they have been so successful in detouring youth from crime lies in the fact that they have access to the children who are deemed "at risk". While Big Brothers Big Sisters has stories of success as well, the Amachi program has the help of the courts in finding targeted youth. This has to be available nation wide. It is wonderful that some states have started to use this program, but it will not suffice for the problem at a national level. Public policy must be invoked in order to create this type of program in multiple areas of every state. By using new procedures to retrieve statistics in combination with programs to provide support and guidance, there will be a much better outcome for these children.

CONCLUSION

There are many factors that play in the perpetuation of intergenerational crime. Unfortunately, the United States places a great deal of value to the labels that its citizens bear. What is worse, is that negative titles often outweigh other attributes and judgments are made based on words like "bad," "deviant," and "criminal". Durkheim did prove his point that deviance plays an important role in a society. Without examples of bad behavior, there would be no sense of characteristics and behaviors to praise and reward. While it is hard to argue that deviance does not play this role, it is undeniable that the consequences associated with it are unbearable.

It has become apparent that there is a distinct sector of society that has heavy representation in the criminal justice system. Minorities make up the highest percentage of the United States prison population. After looking at the patterns of inmate statistics, this means that minority children fall into the category of "at risk" youth.

The main problem for these children is the lack of attention that they receive. It has been proven that the process of parental incarceration weighs very heavily on the psyche of a child. Depression is very common

in children who are dealing with the absence of a parent. Unfortunately for their sake, children do not process and handle these feelings in a mature fashion. They begin to act out in schools and display behaviors that have been deemed deviant. They fall behind and are forced to bear the labels of "bad" children. Without adequate support as they go through the agonizing process of dealing with parental incarceration, these children fall short in society. They have been exposed to alcohol and drug abuse and criminal behavior and as they are pushed to the side and disregarded they begin to mimic the behaviors that their parents are serving time for.

It is important to punish individuals who break the laws of society, this report in no way means to diminish this. However, a closer look into the lives of those who will be directly affected by the criminal justice system must be taken. In researching this phenomenon and providing care, the perpetuation of intergenerational crime will slow. For crime is not a biological entity but a socially constructed manifestation.

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