

**AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF THE  
EXPERIENCES OF PARTNERS AND ADOLESCENT CHILDREN  
WHEN THE BIOLOGICAL FATHERS INCARCERATED**

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## ABSTRACT

Fatherhood is a role that is understood and exercised differently, but to most it infers a responsibility to provide and protect. Fatherhood is associated with manhood, in the sense that a man is expected to take on the role of fatherhood. The relationship between manhood and fatherhood is: the physical act of begetting a child (manhood) and the processes of accepting, as well as, performing, the role of a father (fatherhood). A paternal identity, or a man's identity as a father, comprises of all the internalized expectations of behaviour that he has associated with being a father (e.g. being a breadwinner, being a caregiver). In the Western world, it is widely accepted that a man becomes a father when he impregnates a woman; however, masculinity is neither biologically determined nor automatic. There are many different, culturally sanctioned ways, of being a man; not only one universal masculinity. It can therefore be presumed that masculinity/fatherhood/manhood is acted or performed.

This study focuses on biological fathers, instead of the broader concept of father figures. Any male can fulfil the role of a father figure to a child and take responsibility for rearing a child, but biological fathers indicate a blood relationship and a biological connection. A paternal father also retains his status as a biological parent of a child, regardless of the level of subsequent contact or involvement in the child's life.

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of the partners and adolescent children, when biological fathers are incarcerated. In order to do this, an assessment of the biological father's experiences, in prison, is first implemented. Paternal incarceration places a strain on families, especially children, who experience parent-child separation. The unexpected separation of a child from the parent can be linked to various emotional consequences.

Incarceration limits fathers 'familial involvement and parenting capacity', thereby compromising family relationships. Incarcerated fathers are separated from their partners and children, which limits family contact in many ways, weakening familial bonds, not only while time is being served, but also after release. The incarcerated man also experiences a sense of insignificance, being devalued as a person and powerless.

A qualitative research approach was used to explore the objectives of the study. Purposive sampling was used to select twenty incarcerated participants for this research. Due to the strict selection criteria, only fourteen (14) were eventually chosen to participate in the study. Their fourteen (14) spouses/partners and biological adolescents were also expected to participate, however, only four (4) partners, one (1) significant carer and 5 adolescents formed part of the sample for this study, due to some partners not wanting to expose their adolescents, nor their personal details, to scrutiny and others simply not being interested to participate. Data was collected by using semi-structured interviews with face-to-face interaction, open-ended questions (with fathers) and focus discussion groups (with the partners, significant carer and adolescents).

Although the theoretical framework focuses on Attachment Theory, the study also considers other principles of criminological theories, regarding the identified increase in child disruptive and criminal behaviour, caused by parental incarceration. A thematic data analysis approach was used to extract themes.

The main findings of this study show that the fathers experienced difficulties with maintaining their role as a father prior to, and after, incarceration. They were concerned about the financial adversity their families had to endure when they were imprisoned and the mothers/partners being forced into single parenthood. They also felt excluded from all decision-making processes and isolated from the development of their children. The partners experienced financial difficulties, loneliness and humiliation, as a result of the biological father's incarceration. The significant carer, who was involved as a result of the biological mother not being able to fulfill the caring role, identified the problems experienced as financial difficulties, lack of child-care support and, in some cases, the substance abuse of the biological mother. The separation affected the adolescent children psychologically, when they were exposed to the stigma attached to having a father, who was incarcerated. They also identified feelings of abandonment because of the lack of a father-child relationship and being deprived of opportunities to share important events and personal achievements with their biological father.

## KEYWORDS

Masculinity

Fatherhood

Fathering

Absent fathers

Present fathers

Father absence

Incarceration

Paternal incarceration

Parenting capacity

Father involvement

Prison constraints

Stigma

Biological father

Crime

Family



## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- DCS – Department of Correctional Services
- UWC – University of the Western Cape
- USA – United States of America
- SA – South Africa
- WC – Western Cape
- SAD – Separation Anxiety Disorder



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## DECLARATION

I declare that the study, *An Explorative Study of the Experiences of Partners and Adolescent children when the biological Father is incarcerated*, is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other University and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Name: Martine Sue Kock

Date: June 2015

Signed.....



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This work is dedicated to the Almighty God, for granting me the strength throughout my research and for the guidance and wisdom provided to complete, as well as, my husband and mother for their patience, love and support throughout.



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## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1. Introduction

This study focused on biological fathers, instead of the broader concept of father figures, as biological fathers indicate a blood relationship and a biological connection. Any male can fulfil the role of a father figure to a child, and take responsibility for rearing the child, but a biological father has a blood relation that is stronger.

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of the partners and adolescent children, when the biological father is incarcerated or imprisoned. However, in order to comprehend their experiences, a closer investigation into the contextual experiences of the biological father, in prison, was necessary. Clemmer (1940, cited in Dhami, Ayton & Loewenstein, 2007: 1086) asserts that the concept of prisonization is defined as the assimilation process in prison, where offenders take on 'in greater or lesser degrees ... the folkways, mores, customs and general culture of the penitentiary'. According to Mendez (2001: 8), the intent of prison is to punish inmates for violating the law, while in the course of this punishment; an effort is made to alter the behaviour of inmates.

Assumptions are held that time alone would alter the behaviour of those who are imprisoned. Mendez (2001: 8) explains that this line of thinking, and the length of time served, could also affect the inmate's attitude towards raising children. The act of committing a crime makes a person less concerned or loving in the family construct (Mendez, 2001:2-7). Therefore, it would seem that fathers would be neglecting their familial responsibilities, when they are incarcerated due to societal influences such as: substance abuse; gangsterism; and crime; these being the leading causes of imprisonment.

According to Muntingh (2009: 202), prisons house both sentenced prisoners and those awaiting trial. For sentenced offenders, prison is the last step in the process of a criminal case. For awaiting trial detainees (those who are held in prison when refused bail or are unable to pay the bail set by a court), this may be the start of a long wait, while their criminal matter runs its course. Muntingh (2009: 201) states that the capacity to effect positive change

in incarcerated subjects, and in the communities from which they come, is contradicted by the tendency of prisons to produce more criminality than they inhibit, earning them the nickname, 'universities of crime'. While for some, prisons act as a deterrent to crime, for others, particularly in communities that produce a large number of prisoners, crime has become an aspiration and imprisonment, an expected feature of life (Muntingh, 2009: 201).

The inmate population in South Africa has also characteristically been one of the highest per capita in the world, as published in numerous publications, including the Inspectorate's Annual Reports (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 35). According to Houghton and Navarro (2014: 2), it is important to bear in mind the historical increase in imprisonment rates, in order to understand the many problems that accompany incarceration. Mass imprisonment reduces the well-being of fragile families and lays the groundwork for a vicious cycle, in which the criminal justice system does not diminish, and may even increase, addiction, abuse and crime (Wildeman & Western, 2010: 158).

Muntingh (2009: 203) explains that the profile of the prison population has changed significantly in the past 15 years. Changes in the size of the prison population, the awaiting trial detainee population, length of sentences and the duration of awaiting trial detention, have all had a significant impact on the conditions of detention and adherence to human rights standards. According to Muntingh (2009: 203-204), the following figures highlight changes in the profile of the prison population. In 1995, South Africa had a prison population of just below 120 000; by 2005, it had increased to over 180 000, an increase of 50 per cent. In 1995, the awaiting trial detainee population numbered at 23 783; by the year 2000, the number had increased to 57 811. In 2005, it was reduced to 47 305, but by the end of 2008, it was up to 50 284 (Muntingh, 2009: 203-204).

This problem seems to be universal as, according to Western and Pettit (2002: 37), in the United States of America (USA), about 1.3-million people were held in state and federal prisons by June 2000, and 620,000 inmates in local jails. This translates into a total incarceration rate of seven-tenths-of-one-per-cent of the USA population. Wilson, Cheryachukin, Davis, Dauphinee, Hope and Gehi (2005: 1) state that, by the end of 2002, more than two (2) million people in the USA were incarcerated. The number of ex-offenders, who were re-arrested and re-incarcerated, showed the need for more effective re-entry practices; the same applies in South Africa.

In addition, the minimum sentencing legislative framework will continue to result in offenders serving lengthy periods of incarceration, requiring the Department to create and maintain the infrastructure to serve the needs of the offenders (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 39). The cell occupation rates vary greatly: communal cells are 70 square metres in size, with a policy hosting of 20/25 inmates: with overcrowding, those same cells could host up to 53 (fifty-three) inmates. The impact of overcrowding finds some offenders sleeping under beds and in the passages of the room. There is a lack of mattresses, hence, offenders are provided with blankets to sleep on. The Correctional Centre admits about 150 offenders per week and the only way to manage overcrowding, is through releases and transfers to other Correctional Centers. The Correctional Centers have to regularly release and transfer, in order to control overcrowding.

It also appears to be a general trend that cells for remand detainee inmates are occupied at higher rates than those of sentenced offenders (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 92). At a few centres, it was revealed that the beds had been removed, due to overcrowding; mattresses and blankets had been made available, but the availability of sheets was a general problem (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 92).

It is accepted that the over-population of inmates per available infrastructure is a problem in certain centres, where, in communal cells (70m<sup>2</sup> to host 20/25 inmates) and, in some instances, single cells (5.55m<sup>2</sup> to host 1 inmate), inmates are doubled up or even tripled up. These conditions are unacceptable and have been found to be so during the inspections around the country (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 35). Muntingh (2009: 14) states that the nature of overcrowding has as much to do with the physical design and construction of prison buildings, as it does with societal culture.

When the question of overcrowding is raised, the unacceptable and deleterious effects thereof must be properly weighed up against the specific circumstances (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 36). Overcrowding has an important qualitative character determined by broader spatial issues. Different approaches to space utilisation will impact differently on a prisoner's lived experience of overcrowding. Therefore, communal spaces outside the cells, in the few newer prisons (built after 1996), alleviate some of the worst effects of overcrowding in cells, during the hours of lock-up. Unfortunately, the vast majority

of South African prisons were built during the Apartheid years, and designed only for the purpose of housing prisoners, with many of them consisting of nothing more than cells and corridors (Muntingh, 2009: 16).

To date, the Department's response to overcrowding has been to release large groups of prisoners, to relieve the pressure on available capacity. In 2005, 30 000 prisoners' sentences were remitted (which means that sentenced offenders are rewarded with a reduction in their sentence) and were forthwith released (Muntingh, 2009: 204). The reduction varies with each crime category, meaning that every crime category receives a different remission of sentence (Muntingh, 2009: 204). The last special remission of offenders took place between 14 May 2012 and 6 July 2012, when 4 751 sentenced offenders were released in the Western Cape Province (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 35).

Studying the phenomenon of overcrowding has not been narrowed down to analyse whether the Departments' management is continuously innovative (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, 2013/2014: 37). The Criminal Justice Handbook (2013: 40) indicates that, in order to reduce over-crowding in a sustainable manner, comprehensive criminal justice reform policies and programmes need to be adopted, which would respond to the causes and needs in a coherent and holistic way. The components of sentencing reforms aim to reduce the prison population, while still ensuring fairness in the sentencing and rehabilitation of offenders (Criminal Justice Handbook, 2013: 45). One of the fundamental principles in sentencing is that punishments should be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence, therefore, reviewing and re-categorizing offences would assist with overcrowding (Criminal Justice Handbook, 2013: 47). These conditions in the prison affect the incarcerated individual (how he experiences his role as father) and by implication, his spouse/partner, as well as, his children.

## **1.2. Rationale of the Study**

According to Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morrell and Swartz (2012: 5), South Africa has the largest rate of absent fathers in the world. Father absence is associated with adverse consequences for children, women, families and men. International research and some studies from South Africa show that children, whose fathers are present, achieve better at school, have higher self-esteem and are more secure in their



relationships with partners of the opposite sex (Richter et al., 2012: 2). According to Wildeman and Western (2010: 158), many of the men who come into contact with the criminal justice system, struggle with chronic unemployment, untreated addiction, poor health and mental illness. Mumola (2000, cited in Parke & Stewart, 2001: 1) claims that nearly 3.6-million parents in the USA are under some form of correctional supervision, including parole. He further asserts that almost 1.1-million of these parents are incarcerated in federal, state or local jails, and have an estimated 2.3-million children. Alarming, the rate of parental incarceration has gone up sharply in the last decade. According to Hobson (2002: 6), a rapidly growing number of men lack the following: resources to be breadwinners to their families; the rights, duties, responsibilities and statuses that are attached to fathers; and, the discursive terrain around good and bad fathers.

According to Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth and Lamb (2000: 128), the increase in father absence is particularly troubling because it is consistently associated with poor school achievement, diminished involvement in the labour force, early child-bearing and heightened levels of risk-taking behaviour. The authors highlight five key points of influence that paternal absence has on children:

- (1) Without a father there is no co-parent;
- (2) Economic loss frequently accompanies single motherhood, and economic disadvantage is a reliable correlate of poorer educational and psychosocial performance;
- (3) Social isolation and continuing (though diminished) social disapproval of single or divorced mothers and their children may lead to emotional distress and less adaptive functioning;
- (4) The perceived, and often actual, abandonment by a parent may cause psychological distress in children; and
- (5) Conflict between parents can have deleterious effects on children's socio-emotional well-being and behaviour.

A father's role has traditionally been defined as provider or breadwinner, as well as, the person responsible for the moral oversight of children and gender role-modeling (Lamb, 2000, cited in Richter et al., 2012: 5). In traditional African and other families, the father still constitutes the authority figure, and consequently shoulders the major responsibilities for the

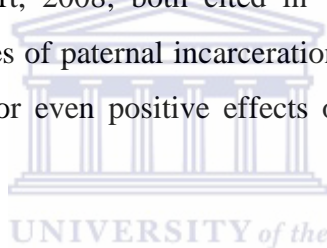
family (Nosseir, 2003; Nsamenang, 1987; both cited in Richter et al., 2012: 5). Absent fathers are on the increase in many households, leaving mothers to maintain and head up their homes (Hobson, 2002: 6). This, in turn, results in female headed homes/single-motherhood being on the increase (Hobson, 2002: 6), placing demanding and challenging pressure on a mother to take on the role of both father and mother. According to Krohn and Bogan (2001, cited in Kimani & Kombo, 2010: 12), one-quarter to one-third of all families are headed by single-mothers, challenging the normativeness of couple-headed families.

Mendez (2001: 2) argues that it is often difficult for incarcerated men to maintain a relationship with their families, once they had been sentenced and removed from their homes. Incarcerated fathers face severe challenges, both during and after their time in prison, which has the potential to dramatically disrupt family life (Geller, 2013: 3). The challenges to active fathering during incarceration are substantial; the daily life and policies in correctional facilities create high levels of stress for fathers and their families, pushing tenuous relationships between partners and parents to breaking point (Boss, 1999, cited in Roy & Dyson, 2005: 292). According to Boss (1999, cited in Roy & Dyson, 2005: 292), the role expectations for fathers become confused, even if mothers welcome their communication, fathers cannot see or talk to their children on a regular basis. Looney (2001, cited in McGrath, 2007: 42) states that activities such as, providing discipline, financial support, physical affection and sharing special occasions in the life of the child, are all seen as important paternal roles, which are generally constrained by the prison environment. According to Looney (2001, cited in McGrath, 2007: 42, ), prisoners felt that they were restricted to roles involving verbal communication, such as, providing advice during visits, and cognitive activities, such as, spending time worrying or thinking about their children. A strong theme in the study of Looney (2002, in McGrath, 2007: 42) was the prevailing feelings of emotional distress, such as, helplessness, frustration and guilt, at the restrictions on prisoners' relationships as fathers. Roy and Dyson (2005: 292) note that the theory of ambiguous loss emphasizes how family boundaries become indistinct and how, in an effort to regain some control over family relationships, mothers still struggle to carefully define and monitor men's involvement through maternal gate-keeping.

Young and Smith (2000, cited in Parke & Stewart, 2001: 8) state that children's adjustment to their parent being in prison, is regular contact with the incarcerated parent, although,

institutional, attitudinal and practical barriers make this very difficult. Christian (2009: 2) avers that parental incarceration can affect many aspects of a child's life, e.g. emotional and behavioural well-being, family stability and financial circumstances.

According to Wildeman and Western (2010: 158), incarceration elevates the risk of divorce and separation, diminishes the financial resources and the well-being of wives or girlfriends left behind, and is linked to increases in children's aggression, behavioural problems and social marginalization. Incarceration has spill-over effects on romantic partners, and it is possible that these effects extend to maternal parenting (Wildeman, Schnittker & Turney, 2012; Comfort, 2008; both cited in Turney & Wildeman, 2013: 10). Mothers experience a multitude of hardships during and after the incarceration of a romantic partner. Paternal incarceration is linked to depression and life dissatisfaction among mothers, even if a loved one's incarceration provides respite for women, whose partners are troubled or violent (Wildeman et al., 2012; Comfort, 2008; both cited in Turney & Wildeman, 2013: 10). Despite the negative consequences of paternal incarceration for women left behind, there are multiple reasons to expect null or even positive effects on maternal parenting (Turney & Wildeman, 2013: 10).



Before children reach adulthood, nearly four out of ten will experience the divorce of their parents, and roughly one million children experience their parents' divorce every year (Parke, 2003: 3). The children of divorced parents, compared with children of married-parent families, are disadvantaged in the area of educational achievement (Parke, 2003: 3). Children of divorce are more likely to have serious social, emotional or psychological problems than children of unbroken families (Parke, 2003: 4). Most divorced families with children experience an enormous drop in income, which is alleviated somewhat over time, but remain significant for years, unless there is a subsequent parental cohabitation or remarriage (Parke, 2003: 4).

Murray and Farrington (2008: 3) make reference to four key criminological theories which suggest that paternal imprisonment might cause an increase in child antisocial and criminal behaviour:

- *Social bonding theory* suggests that parental imprisonment might harm children because parent-child separation disrupts children's attachment relations.

- *Strain theory* looks at the loss of family income and other negative life events after parental imprisonment that might cause offending behaviour.
- *Social control theory* suggests that parental imprisonment might cause delinquency via reduced quality of care and supervision.
- *Labelling theory* refers to social stigma and official bias following parental imprisonment that may cause an increased probability of being charged and convicted for criminal behaviour (Murray & Farrington, 2008: 3).

These processes of attachment disruption, strain, poor quality child care and stigma are also associated with adverse mental health outcomes for children (Murray & Farrington, 2008: 3). Rutter, Giller and Hagell (1998, cited in Murray, Farrington, Sekol & Olsen, 2009: 10) state that antisocial behaviour refers to a wide variety of behaviours, which violate societal norms or laws. It does not necessarily involve criminal activities, but more the internalising of problems that refer to anxiety and depression.

Hagan and Dinovitzer (1999, cited in Western & McLanahan, 2000: 5) assert that the stigma of incarceration can produce strong feelings of shame and anger, both for inmates and their families. Incarceration is likely to be a significant shock to family relationships, contributing to marital strain among inmates. Often, family members do not even tell children that their father had been incarcerated, for fear of the shame or stigma that children might experience (Braman, 2002: 117-135). Though lying to children about their father's incarceration is viewed as a protective measure, it could create further trauma for children as they grow older. Braman (2002: 117-135) argues that having a father in prison could affect the way children are treated by societal institutions, such as schools and law enforcement agencies. According to Braman (2002: 133), a stigma can manifest itself in different ways: through interpersonal relationships, community interactions and in societal institutions.

Family situations often change, which makes understanding the effects of family structure on children complicated. Many children live in more than one type of family during the course of their childhood and the majority of children in step-families have also lived in a single-parent family at some point (Parke, 2003: 2). According to McLanahan and Sandefur (1994, cited in Williams, 2001: 1), children, who grow up in a single parent household, do not enjoy the same benefits as children, who grow up with both their biological parents. Women, who are supported in stable relationships with men, experience lower levels of family stress, are

less likely to suffer mental health problems and derive greater satisfaction from their roles as mothers (Richter et al., 2012: 2).

Marginalized women, who are left behind, must typically rely on friends and family members to provide money, child care and companionship in their partner's absence (Carlson & Cervera, 1992; Clear, 2007; both cited in Turanovic, Rodriguez & Pratt, 2012: 917). By straining their close ties, women's support systems may become exhausted, resulting in women and children often becoming even more socially excluded, than they were before the spouse's imprisonment (Richie, 2002; Schwartz-Soicher, Geller & Garfinkel, 2011; both cited in Turanovic et al., 2012: 917; Western et al., 2000). The incarceration of a parent can also initiate a series of unanticipated difficulties, as caregivers with children may be forced to change residences because of financial constraints (Kampfner, 1995; Phillips, Erklani, Keeler, Costello & Angold, 2006; Tasca, Rodriguez & Zatz, 2011; all 3 references cited in Turanovic et al., 2012: 917).

### **1.3. Problem Formulation**

The Western Cape Province statistics illustrate that men are the most dominant gender incarcerated and shows a rise of male populations in Correctional Centres every year (Department of Correctional services, 2015, May 11). According to Richter et al. (2012: 2), South Africa has the highest rate of father absence in the world, which is directly associated with adverse consequences for children, women and families. Absent fathers leave mothers to maintain and head up homes (Hobson, 2002: 6), even though single-parent families are much more common today, than they were 40 years ago (Parke, 2003: 2). Christian (2009: 3) states that, as more men than women are imprisoned; the number of single-parent households is almost five times higher for single-parent-female households.

According to Hobson (2002: 6), incarceration is likely to deter family formation, both directly, by making it more difficult for fathers to live with their children, and indirectly, reducing their employment prospects and earning capacity. Hobson (2002: 6) says that imprisonment also leads to a loss of relationships, disconnecting strong family ties and breaking bonds that take years of restoration or are permanently lost. Both outcomes discourage marriage and family formation. Parental incarceration can affect many aspects of a child's life, including emotional and behavioural well-being, family stability and financial

circumstances (Christian, 2009: 2). Many fathers are concerned about their children and want to be good parents, even from prison, rather than try to account for the actual parenting behaviour, which is somewhat limited by prison constraints (Belsky, 1984, cited in Secret, 2012: 163).

This study's aim was to describe the experiences of the partners and adolescent children, when the biological father is imprisoned, by highlighting the effects of incarceration on the biological father. The researcher will further explore the roles of a father and how it contradicts his own masculine character. It is evident that father absence shows a resistance for men to understand the roles and responsibilities that come with being a proficient father, which leaves their ability in question. The influx of males into Correctional Centres needs to be addressed through firm strategic planning by government. The Strategic Plan for the Department of Correctional services (2012/13-2016/17: 12) show that the strategy to down manage overcrowding involves various approaches; referring to the reduction in the length of detention for remand detainees, the improved management of converting custodial sentences to community correctional supervision, the introduction of electronic monitoring and the effective functioning of the parole system (Strategic plan for the Department of Correctional services, 2012/13-2016/17: 12). The piloting of Halfway Houses for parolees without monitorable addresses, the creation of additional bed space through centre upgrades and building of new facilities, are other ways of addressing overcrowding (Strategic plan for the Department of Correctional services, 2012/13-2016/17: 12).

When fathers are incarcerated, the mother is generally the caregiver, who continues to be responsible for child care (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Mumola, 2000; both cited in Parke & Stewart, 2001: 8). The imprisonment of a spouse worsens their circumstances, since these mothers have to assume additional roles and responsibilities in the prisoner's absence (Gleeson, Wesley, Ellis, Seryak, Talley & Robinson, 2009; Nurse, 2004; both cited in Turanovic et al., 2012: 917). The added strain can negatively affect familial processes and are often compounded, when children are involved. The most important predictor of how well the child will adjust to the sudden separation from a parent is the quality of the parent-child relationship (Myers, Smarsh, Amlund-Hagen & Kennon, 1999; Thompson, 1998; both cited in Parke & Stewart, 2001: 7). Furthermore, a high quality parent-child relationship should serve as a protective or buffering factor that helps the child cope with the temporary loss of a parent (Myers et al., 1999; Thompson, 1998; both cited in Parke & Stewart, 2001: 7).

In order to explore the experiences of the partners and adolescent children of biological fathers, who were incarcerated, the researcher used a qualitative approach to gather information that would describe the effects of paternal incarceration. The study population was sentenced male offenders (biological fathers), incarcerated and selected from the Department of Correctional services database, together with their partners and adolescent children. This study, therefore, focused on twenty (20) biological fathers, who had children between the ages of 13-to-17 years, and their partners, but due to strict selection criteria, only fourteen (14) biological fathers participated.

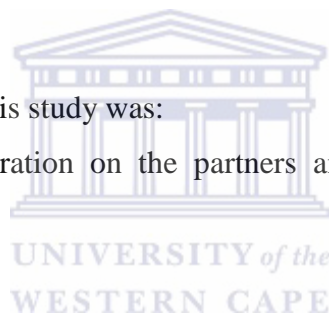
#### **1.4. Aim of the Study**

The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of the partners and adolescent children, when the biological fathers were incarcerated.

#### **1.5. Research Question**

The main research question for this study was:

What are the effects of incarceration on the partners and adolescent children when the biological father is incarcerated?



#### **1.6. Research Objectives**

The main objectives for this study were to:

1. To explore the experiences of incarcerated biological fathers who were separated from their families;
2. To explore how the incarceration of the father affected the partner and their (adolescent) children;
3. To explore whether fathers in prison viewed their roles differently, as a result of the incarceration.

#### **1.7. Summary of the Research Methodology**

The data was collected by using semi-structured interviews with face-to-face interaction, open-ended questions and focus group discussions. The semi-structured interviews were used with the incarcerated fathers, while focus group discussions were used to interview their partners and adolescent children. A voice recorder and field notes were used to collect

the data, which was transcribed and analysed to make sense of the complex story, told by the participants. A thematic data analysis was used to analyse the findings of the study.

### 1.8. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study could help the Department of Correctional Services to understand what family members experience, when the biological father is incarcerated. The results of this research study would allow the Department of Correctional services to explore appropriate programmes for, both, the incarcerated biological fathers and their families. The study is also significant as it can apply to ordinary fathers, challenged in their fathering role. Not all fathers are active in the lives of their children and a rapidly growing number of fathers do not live with their children. The findings not only affect incarcerated fathers directly, but also aims to provide insight to men, who are absent within their homes as resident fathers, or non-resident fathers, who do not reside with their families. Fathers may be unwilling to acknowledge their absence as fathers, yet be challenged to start a relationship.

### 1.9. Definitions of Key Concepts

**Fatherhood:** The relationship between fatherhood and manhood is defined as follows: the physical act of begetting a child and the processes of accepting, as well as performing, a fatherhood role (Richter & Morrell, 2006: 16).

**Masculinity:** Masculinity is neither biologically determined nor automatic, it is socially constructed, can take many different forms and can change over time (Connell, 1995, cited in Richter & Morrell, 2006: 14).

**Prison:** A prison is an institution in which people, who are found guilty by a Court of Law, are kept and locked up until they have served their sentences (Hornby, Cowei & Gimson, 1974: 664).

**Incarceration:** The concept of prisonization is defined as the assimilation process in prison (Correctional Centre's) where inmates take on 'in greater or lesser degree ... the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary' / prison / Correctional Centre (Clemmer, 1940, cited in Dharni, Ayton & Loewenstein, 2007: 1086).

**Paternal incarceration:** Paternal incarceration refers to any kind of custodial confinement of a male parent by the criminal justice system, except being held overnight in a police cell. Incarceration can be confinement in jails or prisons (Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012: 176).



**Biological father:** The paternal view of the concept of a ‘father’ focuses on the biological relationship between a father and a child, where paternity maybe reflected in physical resemblance and genetic inheritance. (McGrath, 2007: 14).

**Absent father:** Absent fathers are defined as those, who do not interact with nuclear family members on a regular basis and consequently do not play a significant role in family affairs and survival (Kimani & Kombo, 2010: 1).

**Father absence:** Father Absence is merely a proxy for economic disadvantage and emphasises the lack of social capital and resources in areas short of family-centred men (Schwartz, 2003: 6).

**Family:** A family is a household of people related by blood or marriage. ‘Family is defined as a social system, in which each of its constituent parts and sub-systems interact with one another in a predictable, organized fashion’ (Hepworth & Rooney, 2006: 240-241).

**Crime:** A crime is an act committed or omitted, in violation of a public law, either forbidding or commanding it; a breach or violation of some public right or duty due to a whole community, considered as a community (Black, 1901).

**Stigma:** Stigma is, in many respects, “*sticky*” associated not only with those who offend a social norm, but also with those associated with them. Stigma travels through relationships, tainting those associated ‘with’ the stigmatized. It is experienced in relation to the judgment or perceived judgment of a social group (Braman, 2002: 191)

## 1.10. Chapter Outline

**Chapter 1:** Presents an introduction and background to the study, the aim of the study, research question, purpose and significance of the study, data collection and analysis, key concepts and the overview of the chapters.

**Chapter 2:** Provides the Theoretical Framework of the study.

**Chapter 3:** Focuses on Literature Review of the study.

**Chapter 4:** Focuses on the Research Methodology. Specific consideration was given to how the study was conducted, based on the aims and objectives of the study: the sample of participants; questionnaires utilized; the data collection and analysis procedures; as well as the ethical considerations.

**Chapter 5:** Presents the main findings and the results relevant to the focus of this study. These findings are presented in a thematic analysis.

**Chapter 6:** The discussion of the main findings is presented in this chapter. A synthesis of the findings, main threads in literature and studies is provided. The limitations of the study are presented, as well as the recommendations for future research and practice.



## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

#### 2.1. Introduction

The main theoretical framework chosen for this study was Attachment Theory. According to Ainsworth (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 331), co-founder of the Attachment Theory, the concept of an attachment figure is defined as, a secure base from which an infant can explore the world. Bowlby (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 332) highlights one of the major tenets of Attachment Theory as, the child's need to develop a secure dependence on parents, before launching out into unfamiliar territory. Attachment Theory, customarily, examines the attachment between a parent and a young child; and therefore, the impact of the relationship between an incarcerated father and child. This current research study explored the challenges experienced by both the father and the child, when separated by imprisonment. The challenge of using one theory is that there are other parallel theories, with guiding principles, that could influence our understanding of this complex issue. Murray and Farrington (2008) provide four criminological theories as an additional lens for the complex factors of, and the interplay between, the incarceration of parents and their families, who remain in the community. The main theory, therefore, applies in this research study, but the value of these four criminological theories cannot be ignored.

#### 2.2. Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory states that a child develops into a healthy, functioning adult within the context of a continuous relationship with, and an emotional attachment to, a parent figure (Petras, Derezotes & Wills, 1999, cited in Hairston, 2007: 18). Achieving and maintaining proximity to that parent figure provides the child with a feeling of safety; and separation from a nurturing parent has adverse consequences (Petras, Derezotes & Wills, 1999, cited in Hairston, 2007: 18). A child's response to separation from his or her parent depends on several factors, for example, the child's age and the nature of the relationship between the child and parent (Petras, Derezotes & Wills, 1999, cited in Hairston, 2007: 18). According to Grossman and Grossman (2007: 1), attachment serves to ensure protection and care; and secure attachment relieves distress, restores physiological homeostasis and encourages

exploration. Feeling secure is the base for becoming emotionally, socially and cognitively acculturated. Grossman and Grossman (2007:2) claim that Attachment Theory posits a causal relationship between an individual's experience with parents, or attachment figures, and the capacity to form close bonds later on.

### **2.3. Attachment Theory History**

Attachment theory is the joint work of both John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 331). By drawing on concepts of ethology, cybernetics, information processing, developmental psychology and psychoanalysts, John Bowlby formulated the basic tenets of the theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 332). Bowlby, therefore revolutionized our thinking about a child's bond with the mother and its disruption through separation, deprivation, and bereavement (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 338). Ainsworth's innovative methodology, not only, made it possible to test some of Bowlby's ideas empirically, but also, helped to expand the theory itself, and is responsible for some of the new directions it is now taking (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 338). Ainsworth concurred with Bowlby on the concept of the attachment figure, as a secure base, from which an infant can explore the world (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 340).

The ideas guiding Attachment Theory have a long developmental history and, although Bowlby and Ainsworth worked independently of each other during their early careers, both were influenced by Freud and other psychoanalytic thinkers; more directly for Bowlby than for Ainsworth. The origins of these ideas later became central to Attachment Theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 340). Bowlby emphasized that, in order to thrive emotionally, children needed a close and continuous care-giving relationship with their parents (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). The major conclusion, grounded in the available empirical evidence, was; in order to grow up healthy mentally, "the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment" (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991: 340).

Attachment behaviour dictates that an individual seeks proximity to someone, usually the attachment figure, who is perceived to be more able to cope with the situation (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970: 50). The behavioural hallmark of attachment is seeking to gain and maintain a certain degree of proximity to the object of attachment, which ranges from close physical

contact under certain circumstances, to interaction or communication across some distance under other circumstances (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970: 50). According to Ainsworth and Bell (1970: 50), there are active proximity and contact seeking behaviours in the human infant, such as, approaching, following, clinging; and signalling behaviours, such as, crying, smiling and calling. A young infant displays attachment through proximity promoting behaviours, such as, crying, sucking, rooting and smiling; despite the fact that they are insufficiently discriminating to direct them, differentially, to a specific person (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970: 50). Proximity seeking refers to the endeavour to remain within a protective range, which range is reduced in threatening situations (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 11).

## 2.4. Attachment Styles

### 2.4.1. Secure base

Children are viewed as *secure* when they show distress, or protest, on separation; actively seek the parent on reunion; are successfully soothed quickly if distressed; and return to exploratory play (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 4). They communicate their negative emotion blatantly, and “balance their orientation between caregiver and environment” (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 4). There are two categories of *insecure attachment* at opposite ends on a scale: *avoidant* and *resistant*. Secure attachment falls midway between these two extremes (Slade, 1999, cited in Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 4). Children, whose parents had insecure attachments to their own parents, are most likely to experience insecure attachment or bonding. Parents’ perceptions of their own childhood attachments, predict their children’s classification in 75 per cent of cases. When parents face insecurity, whether economic or emotional, they can find it harder to provide the parenting, needed for secure attachment (Moullin, Waldfogel & Washbrook, 2014: 17).

### 2.4.2. Insecure-avoidant

*Insecure-avoidant* attachment refer to children, who do not protest much on separation; treat strangers similarly to their parents; and do not show much or any attachment behaviour when reunited with the parent, meaning that they ignore the parent, turning away as s/he re-enters the room and/or tries to engage them in social interaction (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5). Alternatively, they may hover nervously close by (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5). The child’s exploration is also suppressed and does

not return to the same levels as before the separation. They minimize obvious displays of negative emotion and orientate themselves towards the environment, rather than the care-giver (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5). The insecure-avoidant infant seldom cries when separated from the primary care-giver and does not desire any contact upon his/her return (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1999, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 87). The insecure-avoidant infant does not protest in an unfamiliar setting, when the mother departs, instead, the infant usually diverts attention from her departure and actively explores, while she is out of the room. This pseudo independent behaviour often appears to be positive to an onlooker (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1999, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 87). An insecure-avoidant infant also does not acknowledge the caregiver's return to the room, immediately, but rather averts his/her gaze and, at first, moves away when s/he approaches (Lyons-Ruth & Zeanah, 1993, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 87).

#### 2.4.3. Anxious-avoidant

*Anxious/avoidant* attached children are believed to have had experiences with emotional arousal that was not re-stabilized by the caregiver, or subjected to over-arousal through intrusive parenting. They, therefore, over-regulate their influence and avoid possible distressing situations (Sroufe, 1996, cited in Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5). Pei (2011: 4) claims that anxious-avoidant attachment is reflected in the infant's avoidance of the care-giver and the inclination to remain occupied with his/her toys. A history, or presence, of anxious-avoidant attachment style, accounts for aggressive behaviours in toddlerhood, childhood and adolescence (Pei, 2011: 5).

#### 2.4.4. Insecure-resistant

*Insecure-resistant (angry-ambivalent or ambivalent-resistant)* children display separation distress and proximity-seeking on reunion, but instead of being soothed while being held, they squirm and sometimes kick, cling anxiously to the parent or furiously bury themselves in his/her lap. They orientate toward the care-giver, rather than the environment, even though they are not comforted (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5). Insecure/resistant attached children display hyper activated emotional arousal, meaning that they under-regulate their affect impetuously, heightening their demonstration of distress, possibly in an effort to obtain the desired response of the care-giver (Sroufe, 1996, cited in Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5). According to

Brotherson (2005: 2), children, who become anxious and seek their parents, but then strive to get away, are unwilling to explore the environment, become upset effortlessly and display frustration with their parents' responses to them. Zimberoff and Hartman (2002: 5) argue that there is a low threshold for threat, as the child becomes preoccupied with receiving contact from the care-giver, but becomes frustrated even when it is offered.

Both the avoidant and the resistant patterns of insecure infants curb exploratory play; their behaviour represents an inconsistently unfortunate compromise, as the exploration, essential for development, is forfeited in exchange for security (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5). Both display distress at separation, however, upon reunion, some infants do not seem to have a consistent pattern, exercising both avoidant and resistant behaviours, or vacillating between avoidance and resistance. At times, they can also display extreme ambivalence, especially when reuniting with the parent (Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 5).

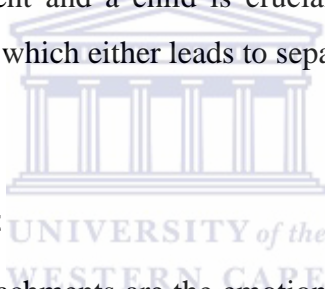
#### 2.4.5. Disorganized attachments

According to Malekpour (2007: 88), *disorganized attachment* occurs when the parents, either have so many unresolved emotional issues from their own past that they have no mental space left for their child, or, when they are perceived by the infant as a more serious threat. The child is biologically driven to seek safety through closeness to the care-giver. When the parent is seen as the source of fear, which may be the result of neglect, the contradiction cannot be resolved, and the child's faith in the world of relationships is destroyed by the 'care-giver' as s/he is left with no logical means of relating to other people.

Main and Hesse (1990, cited in Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 6) suggest that central to the *disorganized attachment* pattern is an infant's commencement of an attachment behaviour sequence that is then repressed by fear, which could be a response to frightened and/or frightening parental behaviour, or confusion due to inconsistent indicators from the caregiver (Main & Hesse, 1990, cited in Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 6). Disorganization is not a classification *per se*, but a dimension that may accompany any of the other classifications, and is considered a potentially pathological form of attachment (Main & Hesse, 1990, cited in Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 6). In

their analysis, Main and Hesse (1990, cited in Zimberoff & Hartman, 2002: 6) furthermore emphasize that for the disorganized infant, the parent, not the situation, is the source of distress.

The researcher, therefore, suggests that, by applying the research knowledge of the different attachment styles, it is possible to reveal a child's security with a parent. Any form of insecure attachment whether avoidant, resistant, ambivalent, anxiousness or disorganization has been proven to stem from the parental childhood and upbringing. Research and literature has further established that, when bonding challenges occurred in the parents' childhood, they would struggle to connect and form attachments with their own children. When it becomes evident that the parents are the root of distress, mental consequences result for both the attachment figure and the child searching for proximity. For the rationale of this study, it can be observed that a securely attached relationship between a parent and a child is crucial, to deal with the effects of any traumatic event that occurs, which either leads to separation or severe challenges for the child in the long-term.



## **2.5. Infant-parent attachment**

According to Oates (2007: 2), attachments are the emotional bonds that infants develop with their parents and parent figures. When studying the environment in which the human species evolved, the survival of infants would have depended on their ability to maintain closeness to adults, who, in turn, were motivated to protect, feed, care and comfort them (Bowlby, 1988, cited in Oates, 2007: 2). Infants come to focus their proximity-promoting signals on those who responded favourably, most regularly, and with whom they are most familiar, which is why the parents, typically, become the attachment figures (Bowlby, 1988, cited in Oates, 2007: 2).

## **2.6. Adolescent-parent relationship**

Under conditions of stress, such as, illness, unfamiliar environments and being left alone, infants direct certain behaviour toward their care-givers to gain protection and safety (Moretti, 2004: 552). According to Moretti (2004: 552), in the absence of stress, proximity-seeking behaviorism is reduced, and the attachment system enables children to engage in other adaptive behaviour that promote exploration and mastery of the environment.



Regarding adolescent children, the attachment system allows them to relate to their parents, both as a 'secure base' from which to explore, and as a 'safe haven' for obtaining support and protection in times of perceived threat (Moretti, 2004: 552). Parental unavailability and harsh rejection is associated with insecure anxious-avoidant attachment. These children view themselves as unlovable and unable to attract care from their parents; and they view others as punitive and disinterested in them (Moretti, 2004: 552).

The impact of parental attachment on early to middle childhood development is indisputable and immense. Attachment has been proven to influence almost every aspect of early childhood development; from neuro-cognitive development to social-behavioural competence (Moretti, 2004: 552). However, the quality of attachment varies according to the nature of parent-child interactions, ruling out the notion that it is determined entirely by dispositional qualities of the infant and/ or young child (Moretti, 2004: 552).

According to Moretti (2004: 553), successful transition of adolescence is not achieved through detachment from parents: healthy transition to independence and adulthood is facilitated by secure attachment and emotional connectedness with parents. Attachment security in adolescence exerts precisely the same effect on development as it does in early childhood: a secure base fosters exploration and the development of cognitive, social and emotional competence (Moretti, 2004: 553). Securely attached adolescents are less likely to engage in excessive drinking, drug use and risky sexual behaviour. Among females, attachment security is related to lower rates of teenage pregnancy, and securely attached adolescents also suffer fewer mental health problems, conduct disorders, delinquency and aggression (Moretti, 2004: 553). While young children require close proximity and physical availability of parents to provide comfort when they are distressed, adolescents do not need the same degree of proximity and can derive comfort from knowing that their parents are supportive, even when they are not present (Moretti, 2004: 553).

This current study will, however, show that adolescents also experience detachment difficulty as a consequence of incarceration. Furthermore, this study will highlight that the secure attachment between the parent and adolescent children, and the sudden absence of a parental figure, could have serious long-term implications for those children. Literature emphasizes that in childhood development, attachment and detachment consequences vary according to

the age category, as well as, the level of interaction between the parent and child. It is also evident that, with infants, an immediate reaction is shown to distress and other needs, which highlight the importance of attachment (Moretti, 2004: 553). Adolescents search for independence, yet still need attention and a close parental relationship to assist with positive maturity processes in their lives (Fishman, 1983; Shaw, 1993; both cited in Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012: 175).

## **2.7. Paternal incarceration and the influences on parent and child attachment**

Attachment Theory was selected as a lens for this study because it sustained the fact that all children experience loss when a strong parent-child attachment is disturbed by paternal incarceration. Even before incarceration takes place, the arrest of a parent could cause children to experience shock, bewilderment and fear (Fishman, 1983; Nijnatten, 1998; Richards, McWilliams, Allcock, Enterkin, Owens & Woodrow, 1994; all three cited in Murray et al., 2012: 178). Arrests often occur at night or in the early morning, when people are most likely to be home with their families (Braman, 2004, cited in Murray et al., 2012: 178). Attachment disruption only occurs when the child has already formed secure attachment relations with the parent, before incarceration, which may not be the case if parents were minimally involved in their children's lives (Murray et al., 2012: 179). When parents are incarcerated, families can experience multiple problems that might, in turn, lead to long-lasting maladjustment for children (Braman, 2004; Condry, 2007; both cited in Murray et al., 2012: 178). Parke and Stewart (2001:5) state that, even if a child-parent attachment bond has already developed, as in the case of infants, who have been in their mother's or father's care for the first 9 to 12 months of their lives, the disruption associated with parental incarceration will most likely adversely affect the quality of the child's attachment to the parent.

According to Fairchild (2009, cited in Houghton & Navarro, 2014: 43), there is a correlation between the incarceration of fathers, their personal experiences of loss and trauma and a limited ability to connect with their children. By being incarcerated, the fathers have also created a loss for their children, repeating this detrimental cycle. Some children have difficulty attaching to their parents, especially if contact was infrequent or strained before the incarceration (Fairchild, 2009, cited in Houghton & Navarro, 2014: 43). Although Attachment Theory is usually used to describe the loss of the bond with a significant carer or

parent at an early age; for the purposes of this current study, the implications of the disruptions of attachment in later emotional adjustments, behaviour and self-regulation is significant (Murray & Farrington, 2008), since it is suspected that children of incarcerated fathers tend to develop more insecure and disorganized attachment styles. As early as 1983, children of prisoners were already called the '*forgotten victims*' of crime, the '*orphans of justice*' or the '*cinderella of penology*' (Matthews, 1983; Shaw, 1992; Petersilia, 2005; all cited in Murray et al., 2012: 175).

Separation, as a result of parental incarceration, may be even more detrimental than divorce and other forms of parent-child separation (Bowlby, 1973; Solomon & Zweig, 2006; Sroufe, 1988; all cited in Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel & Mincy, 2010: 4). According to Phares (1997, cited in Oates, 2007: 24), parental incarceration results in family disruption, and the separation of parents from their children produce negative short and long-term outcomes for children. In contrast, the removal of a parent from the home could be beneficial to children when the family situation poses a danger to them, but, this current study is specifically linked to the negative consequences of parental incarceration (Phares, 1997, cited in Oates, 2007: 24). The sentencing and confinement of a parent, similar to other sudden and unexpected events, over which families and children have no control, amount to a family crisis (Phares, 1997, cited in Oates, 2007: 24). Children dealing with parental incarceration may share some of the same symptoms as children experiencing other traumatic events, and may undergo similar phases in coping with those separations and events.

Parental incarceration also affects certain age categories differently. Older children react differently than their younger counterparts; younger children experience disorganized feelings and behaviour, while older children display more antisocial behaviour, conduct disorders and signs of depression (Johnston, 1992; Wright & Seymour, 2000; both cited in La Vigne, Davies & Brazzell, 2008: 8). Boys, as opposed to girls, may also react differently to a parent's incarceration. Traditionally, males are believed to suffer more from parental separation than females, as they are more likely to lose their same-sex parent, face social expectations of 'toughness' and display psychological vulnerability (Amato, 1994, cited in La Vigne et al., 2008:9).

## **2.8. Attachment vs. broken bonds - The effects on latter years**

Young children, who do not have a relationship with at least one emotionally invested and available care-giver, even in the presence of adequate physical care and cognitive stimulation, display and endure an array of developmental deficits over time (Greenough, 2001, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 86). Some children develop intense emotional ties to parents and other care-givers, who are unresponsive, rejecting, highly erratic or frankly abusive; yet these relationships can also be a source of serious childhood impairment (Greenough, 2001, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 86). Failure to accomplish the goals of parent-child relationships will result in inadequate attachment relationships that will place children on a pathway to relationship difficulties throughout their lives. The absence of a basic sense of trust may prevent a child from leaving the care-giver's side to explore the surrounding environment, thereby, preventing opportunities for them to develop competence or learn about his/her world (Gearity, 2005, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 86). This pattern can be carried into adulthood and reveal itself in relationship difficulties: either a withdrawal from others or a compulsion to be dependent (Gearity, 2005, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 86). The parent-child relationship serves as a prototype for future relationships. It is this first relationship that the child uses as a template to apply to future relationship experiences (Gearity, 2005, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 82). The quality of early relationships, predict later relationships, and success in later relationships takes root in the context of the parent-child relationship (Gearity, 2005, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 82).

According to La Vigne, Davies and Brazzell (2008: 3), an increasing number of children will lose their primary care-givers to incarceration. Fathers still represent the vast majority of incarcerated parents, more than mothers. The incarceration of a parent leads to great change and uncertainty in nearly every aspect of a child's life (La Vigne, Davies & Brazzell, 2008: 6). It is extremely difficult for the parent-child relationship to grow and develop while the parent is incarcerated (Barrett & Ruhland, 2006: 6). Being separated from the family, limits a father's ability to remain connected and maintain a parental role. It is especially unfortunate, as the father-child relationship is immensely important for the child's development (Hairston, 1998 & 2002, cited in Barrett et al., 2006: 7). A strong father-child relationship is not only a preventative factor for the father's recidivism, but may also protect the child from future involvement in criminal activities (Bilchik, Seymour & Kreisher, 2001, cited in Barrett et al., 2006: 7). Furthermore, the child, who is experiencing a satisfactory attachment relationship

with his/her care-giver, may more likely proceed to explore the surrounding environment, guided by a sense of trust that the care-giver will be there, as a secure base. Through this exploration of the environment, the child gains greater competence and acquires greater independence in future experiences (Gearity, 2005, cited in Malekpour, 2007: 82).

## **2.9. Separation anxiety**

According to Bowlby (1988: 24), separation anxiety is the fear of losing, or becoming separated from, someone who is loved. Separation anxiety disorder (SAD) is characterized by “developmentally inappropriate and excessive anxiety concerning separation from home or from those to whom the individual is attached” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, cited in Choate, Pincus, Eyberg & Barlow, 2005: 126). According to Blatt (2004), Bowlby (1988) and Mahler (2000), (all cited in Stone, Otten, Soenens, Engels & Janssens, 2015: 1), separation anxiety is a developmentally appropriate reaction of distress to separation from the care-giver, during infancy, and is central to the child’s psychological development. Children, who experience separation anxiety disorder, are significantly distressed by separation from an attachment figure, usually a parent, and seek to avoid separation at all costs (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, cited in Choate, Pincus, Eyberg & Barlow, 2005: 126). Separation anxiety disorder (SAD) also affects family life and parental stress because the child’s anxiety may limit the activities of the siblings and parents (Fischer, Himle & Thyer, 1999, cited in Choate, Pincus, Eyberg & Barlow, 2005: 126).

Although separation anxiety disorder is relatively common, it can have serious repercussions throughout the child’s life (Fischer, Himle & Thyer, 1999, cited in Choate, Pincus, Eyberg & Barlow, 2005: 126). For example, the child may refuse to participate in play activities, or even to attend school, out of fear that negative consequences will occur upon separation from the parent (Fischer, Himle & Thyer, 1999, cited in Choate, Pincus, Eyberg & Barlow, 2005: 126). According to Jurbergs and Ledley (2005, cited in Stone, Otten, Soenens, Engels & Janssens, 2015: 1), although most children adequately learn to regulate their distress reaction to separation, some children continue to experience anxiety following separation. When symptoms of separation anxiety persist, these behaviours can become highly problematic and debilitating (Jurbergs & Ledley, 2005, cited in Stone, Otten, Soenens, Engels & Janssens, 2015: 1). In the case of normative fears and worries concerning separation from the care-giver, it becomes non age-appropriate and are associated with school refusal and

excessive truancy (Egger, Costello & Angold, 2003; Kearney & Albano, 2004; both cited in Stone, Otten, Soenens, Engels & Janssens, 2015: 1).

Regarding paternal incarceration, and the effect of parent and child separation, the researcher will illustrate the strain that is exerted on the child, when s/he is separated from an attachment figure; in this study, the father. Drawing from Attachment Theory, Bowlby (1973, cited in Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel & Mincy, 2010: 4) suggests that forced separation can disrupt parent-child bonds; harming children's social and emotional well-being. While every child responds differently and uniquely, parent-child separation is one of the most serious and potential experiences a child can endure (Ryan & Claessens, 2013:13). For many children, the experience of a sudden separation from a parent, due to arrest, can be emotionally devastating, while for others it may be less destabilizing (Ryan & Claessens, 2013:13). 'Separation anxiety', therefore, refers to a developmental stage, during which a child experiences anxiety/fear, when separated from the primary care-giver, and is a common response for a child, whose parent is incarcerated (Osborne Association, 2013:13).

## **2.10. Four key criminological theories**

In this study, Attachment Theory was the main theory; however, the impact of the following theories highlights an increase in child disruptive and criminal behaviour caused by parental incarceration. These four key criminological theories of Murray and Farrington (2008: 3) concur that parental incarceration contributes to rebellious patterns in children. All four theories had matching focus areas and are linked to juvenile delinquency.

### **2.10.1. Social bonding theory**

According to Hirschi (1969, cited in Ozbay & Ozcan, 2006: 713), *Social bonding theory* is composed of four elements: attachment to significant others; commitment to traditional types of action; involvement in traditional activities; and beliefs in the moral values of society. Hirschi (1969, cited in Ozbay & Ozcan, 2006: 713) claims that when social bonds to conventional society are strong, individuals will be prevented from becoming delinquent, deviant or criminal. In line with this theory, the elements of social bonding inversely relate to juvenile delinquency (Hirschi, 1969, cited in Ozbay & Ozcan, 2006: 713).

- In relation to this current research study, *Social bonding theory* suggests that parental imprisonment might harm children because parent-child separation disrupts children's attachment connections (Murray & Farrington, 2008: 3). Children of incarcerated parents are worse off than similarly associated peers (Porter & King, 2012: 2).

### 2.10.2. Strain theory

*Strain theory* hypothesizes that delinquency is an outcome of unfulfilled desires or aspirations (Elliott, Huizinga & Ageton, 1985, cited in Ozbay, 2008: 1). On the basis of this argument, it is expected that strain will be positively associated with delinquent behaviour. Strain theory deals with motivational factors that tend to lead to delinquency, as opposed to social bonding theory that deals with non-motivational factors, deterring juveniles from committing delinquent acts (Agnew, 2004; Elliot, Huizinga & Ageton, 1985; both cited in Ozbay, 2008: 3).

- In support of this current research study, *Strain theory* looks at the loss of family income, plus other negative life events, and demonstrates that parental imprisonment might be a causal factor for offending behaviour (Murray & Farrington, 2008: 3). Children who have lost a parent to incarceration would, more likely, experience greater financial hardship, compared to children whose parents had no history of criminal justice system involvement. (Murray & Farrington, 2008: 3).

### 2.10.3. Social control theory

According to Hirschi (1969: 1), the first element of the social bond is attachment; a person's relative level of attachment to others determines his/her commitment to commonly held norms and values. *Social control theory* assumes that people with a low level of commitment to conformity will be more likely to commit crime because, when they rationally weigh the costs and benefits of crime, they have '*less to lose*'.

- In contrast to this current research study, *Social control theory* proposes that parental imprisonment might cause delinquency and reduced quality of care and supervision (Murray & Farrington, 2008: 3). It exhibits significant relationships between: family socio-economic disadvantage, parenting behaviour, parental criminality; and children's delinquency; even leading to

eventual offending as adults (Thornberry & Krohn, 2002, cited in Geller, 2010:1). Children at all stages have appeared to display increased behavioural problems, following their parents' incarceration, and several careful analyses suggest that these problems represent a causal effect of the parental incarceration experience (Geller et al., 2010; Wakefield, 2009, cited in Geller 2010:1; Wildeman, 2010, cited in Geller 2010:1).

#### 2.10.4. Labelling theory

Labelling theory argues that formal societal reaction to crime can be a stepping stone in the development of a criminal career (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967; Tannenbaum, 1938; all cited in Bernburg, Krohn & Rivera, 2006: 68). However, theorists have suggested several different processes through which public labeling may influence subsequent involvement in crime and deviance (Liska & Messner, 1999, cited in Bernburg, Krohn & Rivera, in 2006: 68).

- In comparison to this current research study, *labelling theory* refers to the social stigma and official bias following parental imprisonment that may cause an increased probability of being charged and convicted for criminal behaviour (Murray and Farrington, 2008: 3). Barrett et al. (2006: 7) argue the stigma appears not to be limited to the incarcerated individual, but rather affects the entire family and may negatively impact their social status (Hairston, 2002; Clear, Rose & Ryder, 2001, cited in Barrett et al., 2006: 7).

Each of these theories present a different focus area, yet articulates the same problem. It is apparent that each theory describes how children are affected by parental imprisonment, in various ways, and how it contributes to early criminal involvement. These theories also imply that a weak attachment to a parent can lead to juvenile delinquency, while social bonds, and being connected to a conservative society, means responsible decision-making that adds up to a crime-free lifestyle. It is evident that the level of attachment to parents, their influences and views, determines the individual's level of adulthood and his need to deviate or not. Social stigma, associated with societal reactions to crime and labeling, therefore, affects the entire family. Disturbing a child's immediate surroundings, when a parent is imprisoned, is a primary factor to unruly behaviour (Thornberry & Krohn, 2002, cited in Geller, 2010), leading to eventual criminal offending as adults.



## 2.11. Conclusion

The main theoretical framework used in this research study was Attachment Theory, which focussed on the research of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, the co-founders of Attachment Theory. Bowlby reformed the thinking processes regarding a child's bond with an attachment figure and how withdrawal, loss or any form of disruption that created separation, could disturb that relationship. Ainsworth, who later joined Bowlby by testing her own innovative methodology to Bowlby's ideas, expanded the theory and is responsible for some of the new directions it is currently taking. The attachment styles examined by the different authors, directed the study to secure and insecure attachment, shown between a parent and a child. Research has proven that any form of attachment style was formed at the very beginning of a child's life. It also argued that once that style had been instilled, it remained and determined the quality of parenthood and long-term intimate relationships.

The four criminological theories of Murray and Farrington directly linked to the Attachment Theory, as it explored the effects and impact of paternal incarceration on children. Evidence of disruptive behaviour and other emotional consequences experienced by a child, when detachment occurs, was provided. Various studies highlighted that a securely attached child, uses an attachment figure, as a secure base from which to explore and experiment. Furthermore, it was evident that an attachment between a parent and a child is an emotional bond and relationship that is fundamental to the child's growth and development.

Moretti found that the conversion of adolescents to adulthood cannot only be established by detachment from their parents, but ultimately by transforming into independence and adulthood, facilitated by secure attachment and emotional connectedness to their parents. A healthy attachment to parents in adolescence fosters a secure base and strong development of cognitive, social and emotional competence. All these theories contended that children are badly affected by parental incarceration and detachment, which could overflow into later years, leading to serious complications in adulthood.

Bowlby established that separation anxiety dealt with the fear of losing, or becoming separated from a loved one. The American Psychiatric Association asserted that children affected by Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD), suffered a separation from an attachment figure; usually a parent. The literature also highlighted that the sudden separation of a child

from a parental figure, due to incarceration, could be a terrifying experience, which caused emotional strain and affected the whole family. The following chapter will compare and contrast the main threads in literature pertaining to this topic area.



## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the main literature underpinning this study. This study intends to explore the role of a parent; manhood; fatherhood, compared with fathering, and aspects around present and absentee fathers; as well as, how absent, incarcerated fathers contributed to unstable family functioning. The study also aims to explore the effects of these on child development and adolescence. A contextual analysis is presented to describe the challenges of incarceration in a South African correctional centre. The study, ultimately, plans to examine the effects of incarceration on the family unit, as well as, the consequences for the incarcerated father.

#### 3.2. The role of a parent

Parenting can simply be defined as “the process or the state of being a parent”. Once you have a child, you are involved in the process of parenting (Chan, 2004: 182). Parenting is “the process of developing and utilising the knowledge and skills appropriate to planning for, creating, giving birth to, rearing and/or providing care for offspring” (Chan, 2004: 182). This implies that parenting starts when there is a plan for it, and involves, not just bringing up the children, but also providing care for them (Chan, 2004: 182).

##### 3.2.1. The effects of parenting on child development

A child’s development around cognitive and social skills needed for later success in school may be best supported by a parenting style known as responsive parenting (Landry, 2008: 1). Responsiveness is an aspect of supportive parenting, described across different theories and research frameworks (for example, attachment, socio-cultural), that plays an important role in providing a strong foundation for children to develop optimally (Landry, 2008: 1). With repeated positive experiences, a trust and bond develops between the child and the parent that promotes the child’s continued engagement in learning activities with his/her parent (Landry, 2008: 1). These affective-emotional behaviours communicate the parent’s interest and acceptance,

fostering self-regulation and cooperation, which are critically important behaviours for effective learning to occur (Landry, 2008: 1). Responsive behaviours in this framework promote joint engagement and reciprocity in the parent-child interaction, and help the child learn to assume a more active and ultimately independent role in the learning process (Landry, 2008: 1). Responsive parenting is one of the aspects of parenting most frequently described when we try to understand the role the environment plays in children's development (Landry, 2008: 1).

### 3.2.2. The effects of parenting on adolescence

Family environments constitute the basic ecology where children's behaviour is manifested, learned, encouraged and suppressed (Hoskins, 2014: 506). Parents' roles in the family environment have primarily been to prepare children for adulthood, through rules and discipline (Hoskins, 2014: 506). During adolescence, however, the influence of peers also serves as an important socialization agent (Hoskins, 2014: 506). The period of adolescence can be difficult for both parents and offspring; therefore, understanding the importance of maintaining high quality parenting is particularly essential (Hoskins, 2014: 506). The influence of parenting, during adolescence, continues to affect behaviours into adulthood (Hoskins, 2014: 507).

Parents shape the lives of their children from birth through to adulthood. In adolescence, the influence of friends and peers take on greater importance, which clearly demonstrates the continued significance of parents, in shaping the behaviours and choices of teens, as they face the challenges of growing up (Aufseeser, Jekielek & Brown, 2006: 1). Close parent/adolescent relationships, good parenting skills, shared family activities and positive parent role modelling, all have well-documented effects on adolescent health and development (Aufseeser, Jekielek & Brown, 2006: 1).

Close relationships, healthy open communication and perceived parental support are especially important during adolescence, as children experience many physical and emotional changes (Aufseeser, Jekielek & Brown, 2006: 2). For example, literature has shown that teens, who have positive relationships with their parents, are less likely to engage in various risk behaviours, including, smoking, fighting and drinking (Aufseeser, Jekielek & Brown, 2006: 2). They are also less likely to report symptoms of depression and more likely to report high levels of perceived well-being (Aufseeser,

Jekielek & Brown, 2006: 2). Adolescents, who report a difficulty with talking to their parents, are more likely to drink alcohol frequently, have problems with binge drinking, smoking, and feeling unhappy (Aufseeser, Jekielek & Brown, 2006: 2).

### **3.3. Fatherhood, Manhood and Fathering**

According to McGrath (2007: 14), the concept of a ‘father’ focuses on the biological relationship between a father and child, where paternity may be reflected in physical resemblance and genetic inheritance. A father retains his status as a biological parent of a child, regardless of the level of subsequent contact or involvement in the child’s life.

#### **3.3.1. Defining Fatherhood**

According to Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006: 11), “...fathers are far more than just ‘second adults’ in the homes.” They further state “...involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is likely to bring.” Fathers have a direct impact on the well-being of their children (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006: 11).

#### **3.3.2. Defining Manhood**

Richter and Morrell (2006: 16) examine the relationship between manhood and fatherhood as follows: the physical act of begetting a child, and the processes of accepting and performing a fathering role. They further claim that, in the Western world, it is widely understood that a man becomes a father when he impregnates a woman. Connell (2005, cited in Richter & Morrell, 2006: 14) argues that manhood (masculinity) is neither biologically determined nor automatic; it is socially constructed, can take many different forms and can change over time. He further states that there are many different, culturally sanctioned ways of being a man: not only a single universal manhood (masculinity). It can, therefore, be argued that manhood (masculinity) is acted or performed.

Masculinity (manhood) was created because of the emphasis that social institutions place on breadwinning and marriage (Connell, 2005, cited in Krivickas, 2010: 1). Although masculinity is demanded of all men, the majority of men are unable, and some unwilling, to achieve the idealized societal version of masculinity (Connell, 2005, cited in Krivickas, 2010: 1). Nock (1998, in Krivickas, 2010: 1) also argues that some

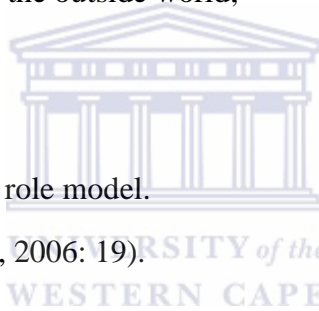
people believe that entering the institution of marriage is the way men achieve their masculinity. However, Townsend (2002 in Krivickas, 2010: 2) further claims that, in order to achieve successful masculinity, men must obtain the ‘package deal’ of marriage, children, home and work.

### 3.3.3. Defining Fathering

Effective fathering consists of seven dimensions that foster a positive relationship between a father and a child (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006: 19). Fathering suggests that a father should maintain a good relationship with the children’s mother and:

- spend time with the children;
- nurture the children;
- discipline the children appropriately;
- serve as a guide to the outside world;
- protect;
- provide; and
- serve as a positive role model.

(Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006: 19).



Fathers may not excel in all seven of these dimensions, but fathers, who do well in most of them, will serve their children and families well (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006: 19). Some of the dimensions are generic indicators of good parenting; others apply specifically to men in their role as a father (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006: 19).

### 3.3.4. The effects of fatherhood and fathering on child development

According to Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklai and Bremberg (2007: 153), the involvement of fathers is important for the development and welfare of their children. Fatherhood appears to influence men’s thinking about their roles as fathers; wanting to ‘be there’ for their children and considering it a major concern (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklai & Bremberg, 2007: 153). Fathers currently play a more active role in childcare and domestic life, in general (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklai & Bremberg, 2007: 153). While fathers still do less of the parenting than mothers, their involvement has grown and continues to grow (O’Brien, 2005, cited in Clapton, 2014: 2). Fathers

now do a third of parental childcare, which is an eightfold increase in a generation for fathers of pre-school children (O'Brien, 2005, cited in Clapton, 2014: 2).

### 3.3.5. The effects of fatherhood and fathering on adolescence

An adolescent's view of the world expands daily and a new orientation to their future as productive, independent adults emerges (De Vore & Ginsberg, 2005: 460). As they navigate the critical tasks of self-identity development and graduated autonomy, adolescents are at risk for the development of harmful behaviours (De Vore & Ginsberg, 2005: 460).

Contrary to popular belief, youth *do* want close relationships with their parents. Positive parenting practices delay risk behaviour in youth, which promotes optimal youth development and confirms the strong and enduring influence of parenting traditions on adolescents (De Vore & Ginsberg, 2005: 460).

Harris, Furstenberg and Marmer (1998, in Clapton, 2014: 7) avers that, both, low father involvement and decreasing closeness in adolescence predicted delinquency in adult life, whereas, Blanden (2006, in Clapton, 2014: 7) claims that low father involvement reduces the child's chances of escaping poverty. Adolescent behavioural problems are, therefore, affected by varying levels of father involvement (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004, cited in Gony & Dulmen, 2010: 93).

Involved fathers have children, who engage in less antisocial behaviour (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002, cited in Gony & Van Dulmen, 2010: 93) and secure parent-adolescent relationships stand as protective factors against the development of delinquent behaviour. An adolescent's inability to relate or securely attach to his/her father is also a leading risk factor for substance abuse (Jones & Benda, 2004, cited in Gony & Van Dulmen, 2010: 94). Parental (especially fathers) over-involvement and control operate as risk factors for excessive alcohol use (Dishion & Loeber, 1985; Jessor, 1987; both in Gony & Van Dulmen, 2010: 94), whereas, involved, supportive parenting could relate to lower alcohol use.

In summary, these findings indicate that parents (especially fathers) play a key role in the development of adolescents and co-occurring risky behaviours (Barnes, Reifman,

Farrell & Dintcheff, 2000; Wills, Vaccaro & McNamara, 1992; both cited in Gony & Van Dulmen, 2010: 94).

### 3.4. Absent and Present fathers

#### 3.4.1 Defining an absent father

Absent fathers are defined as those who do not interact with nuclear family members on a regular basis and consequently do not play a significant role in family affairs (Kimani & Kombo, 2010: 1).

#### 3.4.2. Defining a present father

Fathers' involvement in their children's lives has been shown to have a positive effect on children and their well-being in many areas of development (Jones & Mosher, 2013: 1). Fathers, who live with their children, have become more involved in their children's lives (Jones & Mosher, 2013: 1). An involved father or present father can be classified in four ways as:

- being engaged and having direct interaction with their children;
  - being accessible and available;
  - being responsible for the children's care; and,
  - being supportive economically or breadwinning
- (Jones & Mosher, 2013: 2).

#### 3.4.3. The effects of absent/present fathers on child development and adolescence.

As highlighted in previous discussions by various authors (Chan, 2004; Landry, 2008; Hoskins, 2014; Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006), the benefits of an involved father has positive long-term growth. Fathers bring unique strengths to their relationships with their children and have a great influence on their immediate environment. The researcher is of the opinion that the literature has, therefore, been adequately and broadly argued by several authors that a present father contributes far greater to the development of a child, compared to an absent father.

According to Richter et al. (2012: 2), South Africa has the largest rates of father absence in the world. They assert that father absence is associated with adverse



consequences for children, women, families and men. Fatherlessness has emerged as one of our greatest social problems and children, who grow up with absent fathers can suffer lasting damage. Fatherlessness is not the only cause of these things, but our nation must recognize it is an important factor (Horn, 2002, cited in Eastin, 2003: 1).

Paternal deprivation has been linked to a number of psychological difficulties in, both, sons and daughters (Biller, 1971, 1974, 1982, cited in Eastin, 2003: 1). Fathers are important to society and impact the lives of their children (Popenoe, 1996, in Eastin, 2003: 2). Their absence is the main reason behind many of the attention grabbing issues that dominate the media and a leading factor to delinquency, premature sexuality, out-of-wedlock teen births, deteriorating educational achievement, depression, substance abuse, and alienation among teenagers (Popenoe, 1996, in Eastin, 2003: 2). All of these issues have an impact on the well being of children (Popenoe, 1996, in Eastin, 2003: 2).

Fathers make unique and irreplaceable contributions to the lives of their children, which means that they provide something different than mothers, and are not just ‘mommy substitutes’ (Horn, 2002, cited in Eastin, 2003: 11). When fathers are absent, children suffer, therefore, their contributions to their children’s well-being cannot be fully replaced by better programming, ensuring child support programmes, or even, by well-intentioned mentoring programmes (Horn 2002, cited in Eastin, 2003:11). The loss of fathers is detrimental to the maturational process of individual children and deleterious for the maturation of the country itself (Ancona, 1998, cited in Eastin 2003: 12).

### **3.5. Incarceration**

#### **3.5.1. Definition of a prison (Correctional Centre)**

The concept of prisonization is defined as the assimilation process in prison where inmates take on ‘in greater or lesser degree ... the folkways, mores, customs, and general cultures of the penitentiary’ (Clemmer, 1940, cited in Dobbs & Waid, 2012: 1). The intent of the prison is, however, to punish inmates for violating the law and, in the course of this punishment, an effort is made to alter the behaviour of inmates (Mendez, 2001: 8). However, Gaes, Flanagan, Motiuk and Stewart (1999: 361) aver that prisons serve as entry points for careers in crime.

In 2010, 2.7 million children, or 1 in every 28, had an incarcerated parent (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010, cited in Geller, 2013: 3). According to Geller (2013: 3), millions more will have a parent, who was incarcerated in the past, or will be incarcerated in the future.

### 3.5.2. Overcrowding in Correctional Centres

Overcrowding, as defined by the 'Prison Service', occurs when a prison contains more prisoners than the establishment's certified, normal accommodation. Overcrowding is, therefore, inextricably linked with the overuse of a prison (Criminal Justice Alliance, 2012:4). Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala (Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services, Annual Report, 2013/2014: 35) states that the inmate population in South Africa has, characteristically, been one of the highest per capita in the world, as published in numerous publications.

It is accepted that the over-population of inmates per available infrastructure is a problem in certain centers where, largely in the communal cells and, in some instances, single cells; inmates are doubled up or even tripled up (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services, Annual Report, 2013/2014: 35). The report further highlighted that the conditions had been found to be unacceptable during the inspections around the country. Muntingh (2009: 14) confirms that the nature of overcrowding has as much to do with the physical design and construction of prison buildings, as it does with societal culture.

Studying the phenomenon of overcrowding, the prism has not yet narrowed to view whether the Departments management is continuously innovative. It is accepted that the building of more prisons is too costly and that the reduction of the inmate population to acceptable levels is a medium and long term goal (Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services, Annual Report, 2013/2014: 37). The Criminal Justice handbook (2013: 40) states that the reducing of prison overcrowding in a sustainable manner needs comprehensive criminal justice reform policies and programmes that respond to the causes and needs in a coherent and holistic manner. The components of sentencing reforms aim to reduce the prison population, while still ensuring fairness in sentencing and the rehabilitation of offenders (Criminal Justice handbook, 2013: 45). It further highlights the re-categorizing of sentences, release on

compassionate grounds and amnesty, as some of the approaches of management to address overcrowding.

### 3.5.3. A rise in the offender population

According to Muntingh (2009: 201), the capacity to effect positive change in incarcerated subjects, and in the communities from which they come, is contradicted by the prison's tendency to produce more criminality than they inhibit, earning them the nickname 'universities of crime'. Muntingh (2009: 201) claims that for some, prisons are a deterrent to crime, for others, particularly in communities that produce a large number of prisoners; crime has become an aspiration and imprisonment an expected feature of life. He continues that changes in the size of the sentenced prison population and the awaiting trial detainee population, together with lengths of sentences and the duration of awaiting trial detention, have all had a significant impact on conditions of detention and adherence to human rights standards (Muntingh, 2009: 203).

In the USA, according to Western and Pettit (2002: 37), about 1.3 million people were held in state and federal prisons, and 620,000 inmates were in local jails by June 2000. This translates into a total incarceration rate of seven-tenths-of-one-per-cent of the USA population. Muntingh (2009: 203) reveals figures that highlight changes in the profile of the prison population in South Africa. In 1995, the prison population was just below 120 000; by 2005 it had grown to over 180 000, an increase of 50 per cent.

Wilson et al. (2005: 1) also assert that by the end of 2002, more than two (2) million people in the United States were incarcerated. Wilson et al. (2005: 1) caution that the number of ex-offenders, who were re-arrested and re-incarcerated, showed the need for more effective re-entry practices. According to Wildeman and Western (2010: 158), mass imprisonment reduces the well-being of fragile families and lays the groundwork for a vicious cycle, in which the criminal justice system does not diminish, and may even increase, addiction, abuse and crime.

## 3.6. Men, fathers, crime and incarceration

Wildeman and Western (2010: 158) state that many men, who come into contact with the criminal justice system, struggle with chronic unemployment, untreated addiction, poor

health and mental illness. Mumola (2000, cited in Parke & Stewart, 2001: 1) claims that, in the USA, nearly 3.6 million parents are under some form of correctional supervision, including parole. Mumola (2000, in Parke and Stewart, 2001:1) further argues that almost 1.1 million of these parents are incarcerated in federal, state, or local jails and have an estimated 2.3 million children. Alarming, the rate of parental incarceration has gone up sharply in the last decade. Hobson (2002: 6) believes that absent fathers are on the increase in many households, leaving mothers to maintain and head up the homes. He claims that the stress placed on mothers, to accept the role of fathers, as well, has become demanding and challenging, particularly with female headed homes/single motherhood being on the increase (Hobson, 2002: 6).

According to Mendez (2001: 2), it is difficult for incarcerated men to maintain a relationship with their family once they are sentenced and removed from their homes. Western and Pettit (2010: 3) confirm that incarcerated fathers face severe challenges, both, during and after their time in prison, which has the potential to dramatically disrupt family life. The challenges to active fathering, during incarceration, are substantial; the daily life and policies in correctional facilities create high levels of stress for fathers and their families, pushing tenuous relationships between partners and children to the breaking point (Boss, 1999, cited in Roy & Dyson, 2005: 292). Looney (2001, cited in McGrath, 2007: 42) points out that, due to limitations inherent with imprisonment; prisoners are restricted from performing the fatherly role. Activities such as providing discipline, financial support, physical affection and sharing special occasions in the life of the child, are all important paternal roles, which are generally constrained by the prison environment (Looney, 2001, cited in McGrath, 2007: 42). He further states, prisoners felt that they were restricted to verbal communication roles such as, providing advice during visits, and cognitive activities such as, spending time worrying or thinking about their children. Belsky (1984, cited in Secret, 2012: 163) claims that many fathers are concerned about their children and want to be good parents, even from prison, rather than try to account for the actual parenting behaviour, which is somewhat limited by prison constraints. Roy and Dyson (2005: 292) state that the theory of ambiguous loss emphasizes how family boundaries become indistinct and how, in an effort to regain some control over family relationships, mothers still struggle to carefully define and monitor men's involvement, through maternal gate keeping.

### 3.7. The impact of paternal incarceration on partners and adolescent children

According to Hobson (2002: 6), incarceration is likely to deter family formation both directly, by making it more difficult for fathers to live with their children after release, and indirectly, by reducing fathers' employment prospects and earnings capacity. Hobson (2002: 6) avers that imprisonment also leads to a loss of relationships, disconnecting strong family ties and breaking bonds that could take years to restore, or are permanently lost. Christian (2009: 2) shows that parental incarceration can affect many aspects of a child's life, including emotional and behavioural well-being, family stability and financial circumstances. Incarceration has spill-over effects on romantic partners, and it is possible that these effects extend to maternal parenting (Wildeman, Schnittker & Turney, 2012; Comfort, 2008; both cited in Turney & Wildeman, 2013: 10). Mothers experience a multitude of hardships during and after the incarceration of a romantic partner (Carlson & Cervera, 1992; Clear, 2007; both cited in Turanovic, Rodriguez & Pratt, 2012: 917). The added strains can negatively affect familial processes and are often compounded, when children are involved. Marginalized women, who are left behind, must typically rely on friends and family members to provide money, child care and companionship in their partner's absence (Carlson & Cervera, 1992; Clear, 2007; both cited in Turanovic, Rodriguez & Pratt, 2012: 917).

According to Parke (2003: 3), before reaching adulthood, nearly four out of ten children will experience the divorce of their parents: roughly one million children experience their parents' divorce every year. Furthermore, Parke (2003: 3) shows that children of divorced parents are disadvantaged in the area of educational achievement, compared to children of married-parent families. He also claims that children of divorce are more likely to have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems, than children of unbroken families (Parke, 2003: 4). According to Cabrera et al. (2000: 128), the increase in father absence is particularly troubling because it is consistently associated with poor school achievement, diminished involvement in the labour force, early childbearing and heightened levels of risk-taking behaviour.

Cabrera et al. (2000: 128) highlights five key points on how paternal absence may influence children:

- Without a father there is no co-parent;

- Economic loss frequently accompanies single motherhood, and economic disadvantage is a reliable correlate of poorer educational and psychosocial performance;
- Social isolation and continuing (though diminished) social disapproval of single or divorced mothers and children may lead to emotional distress and less adaptive functioning;
- The perceived, and often actual, abandonment by a parent may cause psychological distress in children; and
- Conflict between parents can have deleterious effects on children's socio-emotional well-being and behaviour.

According to Cabrera et al. (2000: 129), the ecology of family life is continually changing and many children in the next century will probably grow up, either without their biological fathers, or with step-fathers. It is estimated that one-third of all children will spend some time in a non-marital or step-family before they reach the age of 18. Cabrera et al. (2000: 128) further stress the importance of a father and illustrate the need for co-parenting in a child's life. The researcher agrees with the author: when studying the above five key points, it is clear that paternal absence remains a contributing factor to financial adversity, which causes materialistic, physical and academic difficulty for children and their families.

Cabrera et al. (2000: 128) refer to the stigma attached to being a single mother and submits that it creates social separation and criticism. Hagan and Dinovitzer (1999, in Western & McLanahan, 2000: 5) state that the stigma of incarceration can produce strong feelings of shame and anger, both for the inmates, their partners and children. Braman (2002: 117) state that sometimes family members do not tell children that their father had been incarcerated, for fear of the shame or stigma that the child might experience. Although not telling children about their father's incarceration could be viewed as a protective measure, it could also create further trauma for children as they get older. Braman (2002:1 17) claims that having a father in prison can affect how children are treated by societal institutions, such as schools and law enforcement agencies.

### 3.8. Single parenthood as a result of paternal absence

The single parent is defined as an individual, who cares for children without the assistance of another adult in the home (National Alliance for care-giving, U.S. Department of Health and Human services 2009:5). During a parent's incarceration, care-givers assume fundamental roles that could impact on domestic processes in various ways, and may profoundly shape, not only children's experiences with parental imprisonment, but also children's relationships with their parents (Hairston, 1999; Johnson & Waldfogel, 2004; Travis & Waul, 2003; all cited in Turanovic, Rodriquez & Pratt, 2012: 915). According to Parke (2003: 2), single-parent families are much more common today than they were 40 years ago. Christian (2009: 1), found that, in 2007, slightly more than 1.7 million children under the age 18 had a parent in state or federal prison, representing 2.3 per cent of the total USA child population. Most prisoners had at least one child under age 18 (52 per cent of state inmates and 63 per cent of federal inmates). Christian (2009: 2) quotes the 2008 Bureau of Justice Statistics report as stating that approximately one-half of state prisoners (64 per cent of mothers and 47 per cent of fathers) lived with, at least, one of their children, either in the month before, or just prior to imprisonment. He shows that seventeen per cent (17%) of fathers lived in a single-parent household and 18 per cent lived in a two-parent household (Christian, 2009: 3).

More women are faced with single motherhood and forced into female headed homes. Mothers are exposed to two parent roles, placing extensive pressure on a single mother to survive with only one source of income. The impact of paternal incarceration on families is clear, as it has been discussed and explored from a wide lens. The absence of a father, not only disturbs strong and secure bonds, but interrupts family structures, promotes negative behavioural patterns in children, leads to delinquent conduct and relationship challenges.

Christian (2009: 3) indicates that because many more men than women are imprisoned, the number of single-parent female households is almost five times higher than that of single parent male households. Family situations often change, which makes understanding the effects of family structure on children complicated (Christian, 2009: 3). Incarceration of large numbers of parents and spouses increases family disruptions: strong associations exist between imprisonment, divorce and separation (Huebner, 2005; Western, Lopoo & McLanahan, 2004; but see Lopoo & Western, 2005; all cited in Turanovic, Rodriquez & Pratt, 2012: 916) and the likelihood of marital success is diminished when monetary and

emotional strains are placed on the remaining partners (Geller, Garfinkel & Western, 2011; Huebner, 2007; both cited in Turanovic, Rodriquez & Pratt, 2012: 917).

McLanahan & Sandefur (1994, cited in Williams, 2001: 1) argue that children, who grow up in a household with a single parent, are not as developed as children, who grow up with both their biological parents. Hernandez (1993, cited in Cabrera et al., 2000: 128), however, submits that the proportion of two-parent families, in which fathers serve as the sole breadwinner, has declined and only about one-quarter of children live in such families today. Brown (2010, cited in Berger & McLanahan, 2012: 1) indicates that 'both marital status and biological parentage are integral to children's well-being'. He further states, specifically, that children, who live in social-father, co-habiting parent families, exhibit poorer developmental outcomes, on average, than those, who live with married biological parents (Artis, 2007; Brown, 2004, 2006; Hofferth, 2006; Manning & Lamb, 2003; all cited in Berger & McLanahan, 2012: 1). According to Schmeekle, Giarrusso, Feng and Bengtson (2006, cited in Berger & McLanahan, 2012: 3), social fathers, who enter a family earlier in a child's life, are more likely to be perceived by children as 'family', than those who enter later; thus we might expect the benefits of social father investments that begin earlier in life to be greater than the benefits of investments that begin later in childhood.

### **3.9. Conclusion**

The main focus of this chapter was to compare and contrast the main threads in the literature, relevant to fatherhood, absent fathers and the effects on their families. These were used as a lens to show the concepts of parenthood, fatherhood, fathering, present and absent fathers, as well as, the linkage to incarceration and how it impacts families. Men and their masculine identities reveal the struggle fathers have to fulfill their role. Connell showed that, although masculinity is demanded of all men, the majority of men are unable, and some unwilling, to achieve the idealized societal version of masculinity.

This chapter also provided statistics and information on overcrowding in Correctional Centers. Muntingh stated that prisons should be a deterrent to crime; however, within communities, where the crime rate is high, imprisonment has become an expected way of life. Judge Vuka Eliakim Maswazi Tshabalala, of the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services, after monthly gathering of statistics within Correctional facilities, established that



the inmate population in South Africa has been exposed as one of the highest in the world. USA studies also revealed that prisons were on the increase and there was a rise in the male population, as well as, more frequent re-entry of offenders back into Correctional facilities. Increased male incarceration, therefore, increases father absenteeism and negatively impacts family units, which leads to more single female households.

The experiences of partners and adolescent children were also explored and how the incarceration of fathers placed limitations on all households. Geller predicts that more children will progressively be without a parent, as incarceration rises in the future, being relatively more detrimental to family life.

Responsive parenting was considered an important style of parenting, when exploring the role of a parent, as a responsive parent automatically advances positive child development. The parent's main role is to prepare a child for adulthood through rules and discipline, as well as, shape their behaviours and choices, throughout adolescence, as they face the challenges of growing up.

The literature highlighted that the involvement of a father was important for the development and welfare of a child. It also showed that low father involvement and a decrease in closeness during adolescence led to delinquency in adult life. It was further evident, according to the literature, that a father's involvement in children's lives had a positive effect on them and promoted their well-being in many areas of development. On the contrary, an absent father triggered adverse consequences and lifelong damage. The following chapter will focus on the research methodology and the research process that aligns to the main outcome.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology used to determine the experiences of the families of incarcerated biological fathers. A qualitative research design approach was used for the study, as the aim was to explore and describe. The research setting, population sample, data collection tool, data collection process will be discussed in detail. The research presents a synopsis of the methodology that was applied and the findings that unfolded in the process of completing this research study. The significance of the study will also be discussed, exploring the experiences on completion of the research process.

#### 4.2. Methodological Approach

The qualitative approach was used to explore the experiences of partners and adolescent children, when the biological father was incarcerated. The research method used for this study was a qualitative research method, using an explorative design. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 188) qualitative research can be described as an approach, rather than a particular design or set of techniques. Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 135) assert that the qualitative researchers' ability to interpret and make sense of what s/he sees, is critical to the understanding of any social phenomenon. The researcher is an instrument, in much the same way as an oscilloscope, sociogram or rating scale (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 135). Furthermore, some qualitative researchers believe that there is not necessarily a single, ultimate truth to be discovered; instead, there may be multiple perspectives held by different individuals, each having equal validity or truth (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; all cited in Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 135).

The qualitative approach was selected for this research study, as its expressive form of research, makes it appropriate to explore and describe the experiences of the partners and adolescent children of incarcerated biological fathers, in order to understand the underlying feelings, values and perceptions, as well as, the data in context.

#### 4.2.1. Research Setting

The research study was conducted at a correctional facility under the auspices of the Department of Correctional Services, which is a National Department under the Criminal Justice System of South Africa. The researcher had to gain approval from the Senate at the University of the Western Cape and the National Commissioner of Correctional Services before gaining access to the correctional facility, in order to conduct the research study. A Correctional facility exists to punish inmates for violating the law and, in the course of this punishment; an effort is made to alter the behaviour of the inmates (Mendez, 2001: 8). The Department of Correctional Services also endeavours to reintegrate the offender through rehabilitation and educational programmes. Research shows that the term 'prison' refers to all authorized places of detention in a criminal justice system where all prisoners are detained; including those held during the investigation of a crime, while awaiting trial, after conviction, and before or after sentencing. The term does not cover detention centres holding detainees, due to their irregular migration status (Criminal Justice handbook, 2013: 7).

#### 4.2.2. Socio-economic characteristics of the participants

When the population criteria were selected; the gender, race, crime category and religion of participants were not considered, and therefore, excluded, as the traditions and practices of the participants did not appear significant to the purpose of this study. However, considering the research setting, a short description will be provided of the socio-demographics. The socioeconomic characteristics of the population consisted of fourteen (14) male, incarcerated fathers between the ages of 30 to 50 years. Seven (7) out of the fourteen (14) were married and the remaining seven were in co-habiting relationships with their partners. The crime category of the male incarcerated participants was insignificant to the aim of this study, and will, therefore, not be mentioned. The four (4) female partners were between the ages of 35 to 45 years and the one significant carer was over the age of 60 years.

There was one (1) male adolescent child aged 15 years, and four (4) female adolescent children between the ages of 13-17 years. All the partners were working women, with different occupations, single mothers with independent financial incomes. The significant carer was a pensioner, who was married for several years. Two (2) of the

partners had been in long-term relationships with the respective incarcerated fathers for over fourteen (14) years, and two (2) other partners were married to the respective incarcerated participants. One (1) partner was a female, whose religious practice was the Muslim faith, and the other four (4) females (three (3) partners and the significant carer) subscribed to the Christian faith. Two (2) of the partners had lost their homes, when the biological father was incarcerated, and currently, either resided with their own family or with their in-laws.

#### 4.2.3. Population

Arkava and Lane (1983, cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005: 27) draws a distinction between the terms, universe and population. They explain that the term 'universe' refers to all potential subjects, who possess the attributes, of interest to the researcher; while the term 'population' sets boundaries on the study units. According to McBurney (2001, cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005: 194), the population is the totality of persons, events, organization, units/case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned.

The population chosen for this research study was twenty (20) biological fathers, which number was narrowed down to only fourteen (14) incarcerated biological fathers, due to the strict selection criteria. The participants were selected from the administrative database of the Correctional facility, guided by staff at the reception. These particular participants were selected as they shared certain similarities and experiences that were relative to the research study. In addition to the fourteen (14) biological fathers, only (4) partners, one (1) significant carer and five (5) adolescent children, participated in the study, due to some of the partners being reluctant to participate, and others, who could not be included. The significant carer was the legal guardian of one of the biological father's daughter.

#### 4.2.4. Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of twenty (20) participants to form part of this study. These participants were subjected to strict criteria that called for them to have children between the ages of 13 and 17 years. Silverman (2000, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 104) notes that, in purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest to a particular study.

The researcher selected purposive sampling mainly to identify a group of individuals who had experienced the same problem; it was specific and one-sided. The researcher had determined specific criteria for the research study and the sample (person/persons) was chosen to answer the specific research question. The sample was not random, but specifically selected for the purpose of the study. The population criteria were strict and to the point, in order to gather a general overview on the topic of interest, as well as, to derive a specific synopsis. Descriptions of the population were examined through detailed questionnaires in order to gather the data, make comparisons and create themes to address the core literature studied.

The researcher selected only fourteen (14) participants, who met the criteria, from the sample of twenty (20), however, only four of their partners, one significant carer and five adolescent children were ultimately involved in the study, as some partners were reluctant to disclose their personal information and subject their adolescents to scrutiny, while others were simply not interested. The participants were selected from the Correctional facility's administrative database, to ensure proper selection. The purpose of the study was explained and consent forms provided to all participants. Parental consent was required for all the adolescent children, who also completed assent forms, agreeing to be part of the study. All participants were advised that participation was voluntary and that they were allowed to withdraw at any time, without prejudice. The researcher also ensured that all participants legally and psychologically competent to give consent. A complete schedule was compiled, including fixed dates and times that the researcher would meet with all the participants, for interviews or focus groups, to allow for a structured flow.

#### 4.2.5. Selection Criteria

The participants were selected on the basis of the following criteria: the participants needed to be the biological father within the specific family structure and had to have a relationship with the other participants i.e. partners and adolescent children. Three categories were selected and formed part of the research study.

- The first category was incarcerated fathers, who were older than 21 and the biological father of the child.

- The second category was the partners, who had to be the biological mother of the child and in a relationship with the incarcerated father. They had to be accessible and prepared to participate in the research study.
- The third category was the adolescent children, who had to be between the ages of 13 and 17 years and the biological children of both the incarcerated father and the partner. Informed consent was required from the biological mother and the adolescent children to participate in the study. The adolescent children had to willingly be available to participate in the research study.

The following inclusion criteria informed the purposive sample:

**Table No. 1: Population inclusion criteria**

<b>Incarcerated Participants</b>
1. Participants had to be incarcerated fathers.
2. Participants had to be biological fathers, who were separated from their partners and adolescent children.
3. Participants had to be older than 21 years.
<b>Partner Participants</b>
1. Partners had to be available and willing to participate in the study.
2. Partners had to be in a committed relationship with the incarcerated father.
3. Partners had to have common biological children.
<b>Adolescent Participants</b>
1. Adolescent children had to be available, willing and capable of participating in the study.
2. Adolescent children had to be between the ages of 13 and 17 years.
3. Adolescent children had to be able to give informed consent.

The following exclusion criteria informed the purposive sample:

- The gender, race, crime category and religion of participants were not considered, and excluded as selection criteria, since the customs of the participants did not appear significant to this study.

#### 4.2.6. Data Collection Method

The researcher collected data by using in-depth, face to face interviews. A semi-structured interviewing method was conducted with the fourteen (14) incarcerated fathers. Smith, Harre and Van Langenhoven (1995, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 296) state that semi-structured interviews are especially suitable, when there is a particular interest in complexity or process, or where an issue is controversial or personal. For the semi-structured interviews with the participants, the researcher had an interview schedule containing predetermined questions, being guided by the schedule, rather than being dictated by it.

From the semi-structured interviews, the researcher extracted open-ended questions, which were adapted for the focus group discussions with the four (4) partners, one (1) significant carer and five (5) adolescent children. In the focus groups, the researcher also used an interview guide with preset open-ended questions that were relevant to the research. Krueger and Casey (2000, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 300) aver that focus groups are group interviews used as a means to better understand how people feel or think about an issue, product or service. Kitzinger (1994, cited in Whittaker, 2009: 47) states that a focus group is a group of individuals, selected to provide their opinions on a defined subject, facilitated by a moderator, who aims to create an open and relaxed environment and promotes interaction between the participants. Focus groups create a process of sharing and comparing among participants (Morgan & Krueger, 1998, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 301).

Only questions that were relevant to this study were included in the semi-structured interview guide for, both, the incarcerated fathers and focus groups. The researcher compiled an interview schedule that consisted of eleven (11) questions for all incarcerated biological fathers, nine (9) questions for the partners and eight (8) questions for the adolescent children. The information gathered was transcribed by the researcher, which aided the comprehension of the data. An audio recorder was used to record the interviews, in order to gather the correct information provided by the participants. The researcher paid close attention and endeavoured to accurately collect and record the information shared. The interview guide is attached as Appendix H.

#### 4.2.7. Data Collection Process

The study was conducted at a Correctional Centre on the West Coast in the Western Cape. The administrative database was utilized to access the appropriate participants. All the necessary arrangements were made with the Regional office before conducting interviews at the Malmesbury Management Area. A complete schedule was compiled, including fixed dates and times that the researcher would meet with all the participants, to allow for a structured flow. The logistics included a secure venue with sufficient security at hand, as well as, the necessary privacy to conduct the interviews. The interviews were conducted over a period of one week, with social work staff making everyday access for participants effortless. The researcher ensured that the security officials, who were on guard, had no access to the content of the interviews.

An information sheet was provided to all participants that explained the importance of, and their role in, the study (Appendix C). The aims and objectives of the study were explained to the participants, who were required to sign a consent form (Appendix D), which guaranteed the confidentiality of shared information, and informed that all the interviews would be recorded. The participants were also informed that the study was voluntary and that they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice. The interviews were conducted in a comfortable and relaxed environment, allowing participants to disclose information freely. All the interviews were scheduled for an hour. Participants felt at ease and were never coerced to divulge, even under sensitive circumstances. When the participants were overcome with emotion because of the sensitive information disclosed, the researcher would halt the interview briefly, before continuing a while later.

The researcher applied the interviewing techniques of Seidman (2006:1). The researcher ensured that the participants did 90% of the conversing by avoiding the dialogue approach. The researcher used observation and listened attentively to the participants' answers. Single questions were asked; one question at a time, with participants being encouraged to answer with more than just a 'yes' or a 'no'. The researcher allowed freedom of expression and open rein, but with a measure of control. The participants were never rushed into answering; the researcher waited for the answer before proceeding to the next question. They were encouraged, after every session, to



add anything else or disclose information, which they might have forgotten, that could be relevant to the study. The researcher did a follow up on what the participants had disclosed and monitored the effect of the interview.

With the permission of the participants, the interviews were recorded, allowing the researcher to focus on the interview. Smith et al. (1995, in De Vos, 2005: 298) mention that a tape recorder allows a much fuller record than notes taken during the interview. The researcher observed the overall stance, feelings, mindset, body position, eye contact and gestures of the participants. At the end of every interview, the researcher ensured that no important information was overlooked. The data gathered through the interviews was valuable, constructive and useful. The researcher also evaluated and clarified with each participant, any need for further intervention or debriefing, due to the sensitivity of the information shared. Some of the participants valued the opportunity to express their feelings. During the focus groups, the partners of the incarcerated participants expressed relief and appreciation and disclosed the need to establish support groups for families to ventilate in this manner. The researcher thanked all the participants for their willingness to participate in the study, as well as, their boldness shown, and assured them of the confidentiality of all the information shared.

#### 4.2.8. Data Analysis

According to Whittaker (2009: 88), data analysis is the process of interpreting the information collected and searching for what lies beneath the surface content. Marshall and Rossman (1999, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 333), informs that data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data collected. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data, as it builds grounded theory (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 333).

The researcher used two types of interviewing methods to collect data; first was semi-structured interviews with the incarcerated fathers and second was focus group discussions with the partners and adolescent children, using a structured interview schedule. Marshall and Rossman (1999, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 335) state that data collection and analysis typically go hand-in-hand, in order to build a coherent interpretation of the data. The researcher established initial concepts and developed an

understanding of the data collected, but shifted or modified them as the data is analyzed (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 335). The researcher also planned the recording of data in a systematic manner that was appropriate to the setting, participants, or both, and would facilitate analysis before data collection commenced. Marshall and Rossman (1999, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 334) state that this integration is presented in linear form, which is best known to researchers, however, these steps also move in circles. The following steps informed and guided the researcher in analyzing the data collected:

**1. Familiarization and immersion (getting to know the data and engaging in it).**

The researcher carefully gathered the data by listening to the tapes and transcribing the data of the interviews to paper. The researcher then had a clear understanding of what was said, similar experiences shared and the findings.

**2. Inducing themes (themes that stood out from the data collected) with themes arising from data relating to the research question.**

The researcher determined possible themes and sub-themes, especially when there was frequent use of words, patterns of communication, ideas and occurrences that were similar.

**3. Entails coding (breaking up the data in ways that is easy to understand).**

The researcher identified, categorized and established the themes by examining the data gathered through interviews.

**4. Elaboration (explore themes more closely)**

The researcher explored the data more intently to ensure that the data was appropriately linked to the themes and sub-themes and that the theme had meaning and purpose.

**5. Interpretation and checking the data (to provide understanding and inspection of the data)**

The researcher ensured comprehension of the data in order to summarize the findings and themes.

**6. Make sense of the data.**

The researcher ensured that the data was clear, themes and sub-themes were well structured and that the data was linked to all the themes. (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; both cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 334).

#### 4.2.9. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the validity and reliability of a qualitative research design. In order to maintain trustworthiness, the researcher had to ensure that the study was credible, transferable, dependable and conformable (Shenton, 2004: 63). Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 346) concur and propose the following to accurately reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigms: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Conformability

##### *4.2.9.1. Credibility*

Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Macnee & McCabe, 2008; both cited in Anney, 2014: 276). Credibility establishes whether or not the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; both cited in Anney 2014: 276). The researcher assured a true reflection of the data collected and only used information provided by the participants. The credibility criteria involved establishing whether the results of the qualitative research were credible and believable, from the perspective of the participants in the research. Credibility is ensured when data saturation is achieved and member checks are done after the completion of the interviews. This process also enabled the researcher to achieve triangulation by using observations, as well as, the interviews. The researcher applied these steps to ensure that the results of this study was as truthful as possible (Shenton, 2004: 65; Morrow, 2005: 255)

##### *4.2.9.2. Transferability*

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts, with other respondents: it is the interpretive equivalent of generalizability (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004: both cited in Anney 2014: 277). According to Bitsch (2005, cited in Anney, 2014: 277), the "researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through 'thick description' and purposeful sampling".

The researcher attempted to establish whether the findings and results could be generalized to other settings, however, the sample size was very small, which limits the generalizability to the entire population of incarcerated fathers. The researcher also attempted to determine to what degree the results or findings could be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings.

#### 4.2.9.3. Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1981, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 346) state that dependability is the alternative to reliability, in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study, as well as, changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting. The researcher illustrated that the findings were consistent and that the set interview schedule guided the researcher, when conducting the semi-structured interviews. The researcher was responsible for describing the changes that occurred in the setting and how they affected the researcher's approach to the study.

#### 4.2.9.4. Conformability

Lincoln and Guba (1981, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 347) show that conformability, as the final construct, captures the traditional concept of objectivity (i.e. the potential for congruence between two or more independent people about the data accuracy, relevance or meaning). The criteria were concerned with establishing that the data represented the information that participants provided and that the interpretations of that data were not figments of the researcher's imagination (Lincoln & Guba, 1981, cited in De Vos et al., 2005: 539). The researcher was unbiased and all the information gathered was recorded and stored. The researcher ensured that there was consistency with the data provided by the participants. The researcher conducted a *data audit* that examined the data collection and analysis procedures, without making judgments about the potential for bias or distortion.

#### 4.2.10. Reflexivity

Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 294) note that qualitative researchers also engage in reflexivity as their data collection has inevitably been influenced by their own

assumptions and values. They should acknowledge their biases and speculate on how these may have affected what they did, what data they collected and how they interpreted their results. The nature of the data/information is influenced by the researcher and needs to be recognized. Reflexivity, therefore, focuses on the importance of self-awareness, political and cultural awareness; and researchers should demonstrate a self-knowledge of their own voice and perspective (Patton, 2005: 1).

The nature of the information shared by the participants was very sensitive, but it was important for participants to understand that the researcher was guided by a Code of Ethics and the researcher's credibility would ensure confidentiality and anonymity at all times. The researcher ensured that debriefing was available to all participants because of the sensitive information divulged. When professional guidance was needed, appropriate professionals were consulted to maintain objectivity in the field of research.

All participants felt comfortable and at ease to disclose information, especially the male participants. The male participants wanted clarity on whether it would benefit their parole, but the researcher made it quite clear that the study was only for research purposes and to gather communal experiences. The researcher then also informed the partners and adolescent children of the same.

The study gave an insight into the families' incidents and challenges, as well as, an understanding of the effects of the incarceration. At times, it was difficult to witness the display of emotions released by the partners and adolescent children, but the researcher remained focused and the participants were very strong. Gathering the information and conducting the interviews and focus groups, exposed the researcher to difficulties that families endured when the biological father was incarcerated. In the process, the researcher's respect for the partners and children escalated a great deal. However, the researcher maintained professional competence, in order to avoid any personal bias during the research study.

### **4.3. Ethical Considerations**

Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 101) state that whenever human beings, or other creatures with the potential to think, feel and experience physical or psychological distress, and are the focus of

an investigation, close attention has to be paid to the ethical implications of the proposed exercise. Ethical consideration is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. The principles underlying research ethics are universal and concerns issues such as, honesty and respect for the rights of individuals (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005: 180). The researcher explained the responsibility to adhere to the ethical obligations of the research study. Ethical conduct of the researcher means a non-judgmental attitude and the proper treatment of participants.

#### 4.3.1. Voluntary participation

The researcher explicitly informed all the participants that their participation was fully voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. The researcher also clarified that no benefits, rewards or reduction in sentences would be forthcoming for the participation of the incarcerated participants. The researcher ensured that no individual was forced to participate in the research study. This was of particular importance given the daily environment of the incarcerated participants. Non-participation was only evident with the partners, as nine of them were not prepared to disclose their personal life information or expose their adolescent children to the scrutiny of the research study. Some partners also revealed that they were not interested participating in the study as they have grown apart from the incarcerated participants. The researcher respected the wishes of the partners and no one was forced to participate in the research study.

#### 4.3.2. Informed consent

The scope and purpose of the study was explained to all the participants. The participants were provided with a consent form before any interviews were conducted. Parental consent was required for all the adolescent children to participate in the research study. The adolescent children aged 13-17 years; each completed an assent form as well, agreeing to be part of the study. All the partners and adolescent children also completed a focus group confidentiality form. All participants were legally and psychologically competent to give consent.

The consent form attached as Appendix D, gave the participants an outline of how the study would be conducted and the professionalism attached thereto. The participants were ensured that their humanity will not be neglected and that they could withdraw

from the study at any time, without prejudice. The participants were also assured of complete privacy and confidentiality regarding all recordings and information shared, which would be kept in a secure location, free from exposure. The participants were finally informed that, should any challenges occur, they had the right to question anything regarding the study.

The assent form attached as Appendix E, is a form specifically created for the adolescent participants, which gave them a straightforward, basic, age appropriate and easy to understand summary of what the research study was all about. The adolescents were encouraged to read the outline of the form with the assistance and support of a parent. They were also assured that participation was voluntary, without any obligation. They were advised that by forming part of this study, they would assist with the comprehending of the children's experiences of having an incarcerated, biological father. They were also guaranteed that this study did not form part of any school project or test, and that they would not be harmed in the process. Finally, they were given full control over the signing of the form and the decision to participate or not.

#### 4.3.3. Human participants' protection

The partners and adolescent children, who participated in this research study, were protected by ensuring that the process was not coerced or manipulated and that all the study guidelines were followed. The participants were informed of the procedures and provided with the information, within a reasonable time period, prior to interviews. The researcher's primary responsibility was to protect the participants from physical and mental harm, during the focus groups. Support was available to all the participants, in the event of emotional harm.

#### 4.3.4. Anonymity and Confidentiality

The researcher assured the protection of all participants by adhering to the anonymity agreement, in order to protect the identity of the research participants and preserve the confidentiality of the information obtained. Anonymity meant that no names, addresses were taken during the interviews, and none of the data gathered, could be linked to a specific participant. Contact numbers were only provided by the incarcerated participants (fathers) so that the researcher could contact the partners and adolescent children for participation in the study.

Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2006: 4) state that the confidentiality of data can be seen to include the following:

- maintaining confidentiality of data/records;
- ensuring the separation of data from identifiable individuals;
- securely storing the code linking data to individuals;
- ensuring that those who have access to the data maintain confidentiality (e.g. the research team, the person who transcribes the data);
- not discussing the issues arising from an individual interview with others in ways that might identify an individual;
- not disclosing what an individual has said in an interview;
- Anonymising individuals and/or places in the dissemination of the study to protect their identity.

The researcher ensured the confidentiality of all sensitive information shared by the participants and ensured that no one else had access to the information. The data collected was handled confidentially and all participants remained anonymous. The field notes and tape recordings were handled in confidence and destroyed upon completion of the research study. The researcher guaranteed that no participant would be harmed by the study and confirmed that every participant was competent and emotionally fit to participate. It was important for the researcher to reaffirm that counselling services would be available to participants, if required. All incarcerated participants understood that participating in the research study would not secure any favour for parole purposes or have any positive outcome on their sentence; hence no false hope was created by the researcher. The researcher provided the participants with feedback on the research study upon completion.

#### **4.4. Significance of the study**

This study could contribute to the participants' insight and understanding of the roles of a father, partner, husband, as well as, ways to sustain improved relationships with their families. The findings of the study could assist the Department of Correctional Services to better understand the impact of incarceration on families, as well as, the need for external support groups. It could also assist the biological fathers to comprehend the families' emotional challenges of father absence and their difficulty to adapt to the incarceration. The



results of the study could also guide and assist professional staff (social workers) to develop training programmes that could assist incarcerated fathers to understand the importance of family systems and how to sustain better lives on parole.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the research methodology used for this research study. A qualitative approach was used to illustrate the experiences of partners and adolescent children, when the biological father was incarcerated. Purposive sampling was applied for this study, as the researcher searched for specific individuals with similar experiences. The research processes, data collection, data analysis and ethical obligations were presented. The data was gathered through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the incarcerated fathers and through focus discussion groups with the partners and adolescent children. Interviews were tape recorded, after approval was obtained from the participants, in order to accurately gather all the necessary information. The data was analyzed and transcribed, which effectively helped to gain a better understanding of the results of the study. The socio-economic characteristics of the population were sketched, in order to give a perspective on the demographic background and the distinctiveness of all the participants. The next chapter will address the data analysis of this study.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter will present the analysis of the data gathered and the findings of the research conducted. A qualitative approach was used to identify the factors that contributed to the experiences of partners and adolescent children, when the biological father was incarcerated. In order to perform this task, the experiences of the father, in prison, had to be explored. Semi-structured interviews, with face-to-face interaction, including open-ended questions with stringent criteria, were utilized to gather data from the incarcerated biological fathers. Focus groups, with open-ended questions, and an interview guide, with pre-set questions that were relevant to the research, were utilized to collect data from the partners and adolescent children between the ages of 13 and 17 years. The researcher analysed the data by applying themes and sub-themes, creating a thematic data analysis to better understand the findings.

This study explored the experiences of the incarcerated biological fathers through the following identified themes:

- Lack of a father during childhood in the family of origin;
- Implications on the family when the father is absent;
- Expected role of a father;
- Impact of incarceration on the behaviour of adolescent children;
- Re-offending behaviour;
- Gang association within the Correctional Centre;
- Effects of substance abuse;
- Loss of relationships due to incarceration;
- Aggression vs. behaviour modification; and
- Men and masculinity/manhood.

The above themes emerged out of the semi-structured interviews, with the main themes and sub-themes originating from the analysed data.

## 5.2. Data Analysis: Participant Fathers

All these participants regarded their families as the primary area of concern. Sharing experiences about their families was done with regret and remorse. They expressed feelings of loss, firstly, by their incarceration, and secondly, by not being able to fulfil their role as fathers. The families were supportive, but traumatized by the experience of imprisonment. It can be argued that qualitative studies favour the narrative discourse to show the findings and main threads, however, this convention was deviated from, in order to provide the reader with a quick glimpse of the main themes, narratives and the participants' words.

**Table No. 2: Thematic Analysis**

Themes	Narrative	Participants' Quotations
<p><b>Lack of a father during childhood in the family of origin.</b></p>	<p>Two of the participants mentioned that they had grown up without a father, which was the reason they struggled to be effective fathers to their own children.</p> <p>Losing their biological fathers at an early age, never knowing their fathers when growing up or being an orphan, hugely challenged them in their role as a father.</p> <p>Their own rejection during childhood resulted in inactive parenting and them not being able to create secure bonds with the children. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 2:</b> <i>"I was an orphan when growing up and all my siblings were separated to different homes".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 7:</b> <i>"I was rejected as a child and moved around a lot. My mother did not raise me, but there is no hate toward her and my father is unknown to me".</i></p>
<p><b>Implications on the family when the father is absent.</b></p> <p><i>Financial strain experienced.</i></p>	<p>The participants admitted that their families were experiencing financial strain because of their incarceration, leaving only one source of income. The partners were left to head up homes on their own and fend for their adolescent children. The participants admitted to being more sensitive about the financial requirements of their partners and adolescent children, knowing that they were at fault. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 3:</b> <i>"I left them stranded, they suffer, and I blame myself for all the hardships they went through due to my absence. I feel distanced from them and the fact that I lost so many years with my children and wife. I pity myself, I feel like a "flop" for allowing them to endure what they are enduring now. I can never make up for that time lost, it is impossible, it is time lost". "Not able to contribute as I want to, as compared to in the past when a free man. I am limited in every way, in all areas of my children's lives and home".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 2:</b> <i>"My daughter had fear losing me to prison again. I am limited to see the growth of my child and not present with development. I can't see to daily needs, lack of attention and limits my contact as a father. My daughter needs me as a father, to witness extra mural activities, music, sports, art classes, parent meetings and not being able to physically enjoy that with her".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 7:</b> <i>"I can't contribute to the house hold financially strained by finances knowing that my family still put money on my property".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 8:</b> <i>"I was the father and breadwinner of the family". "Financially my absence affected the home, my wife did not work and I was the only breadwinner. My wife was forced to go work, as she never worked as I was the only breadwinner"</i></p>

<p><i>Non-participative roles as a father</i></p>	<p>Most of the participants revealed that it was difficult to sustain their role as fathers because of the incarceration. They disclosed that their current non-participative role in the lives of their children meant losing valuable relationships, instilling the fear that their children would grow distant or break off contact all together. The participants admitted that, as fathers, they were uninvolved in the growth and development of their children, especially when raising concerns, offering personal guidance or just giving input was difficult. The participants also disclosed, seeing their children suffering academically, brought great remorse and regret. Mothers were forced into making judgments and imposing discipline in the household, causing the fathers to feel redundant and unwanted. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 1:</b> <i>"The mother did not want my daughter to be exposed to the prison environment. I am unable to be a father, due to incarceration and if a free man would make a huge difference. I am not with kids to see the activities".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 5:</b> <i>"I was often in a party mood, friends, and good times and never present". "My boy needs his father, as he is constantly asking questions of where I am. He is sad and wants his father with him; the separation affected him, as he is not present".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"I neglected my responsibilities as a father and a father figure and was not there as a father. The responsibility never fulfilled, I gave 40 out of 100 as a father, 60% for himself. My responsibilities were limited, not having my own place and limited space to be a father".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 7:</b> <i>"My daughter feels the emptiness of her father not being at home and has a desire to have me at home to see her achievements and be a spectator to her achievements". "I miss out on many things and it bothers me, I miss out on her growth and development and it is lost time. Personal guidance cannot be given, and not there to fulfil his role as a father, to show love, attention, care and for a child to hear and see it".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 8:</b> <i>"Poor school performance of children, I used to assist with school projects and therefore the quality not the same anymore and my children miss me. I feel like an animal in a cage. My daughter is exposed to males, boys try to have relationships with her and want to draw her in, and especially knowing that the father is not at home and therefore the men want to take advantage of her". "As a father I am not there to supervise or keep my hand on her". "My wife is forced to pull ways, my love, and attention not constant, my role is limited and I am not able to be what I want to be as a father. I can't give regular advice and guidance".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 10:</b> <i>"I went to prison and left the mother of child alone with daughter. My daughter grew up without me, when I went to prison, I saw her 8 years ago and there is no contact or telephonic contact. My daughter asks about me, but in 10 years I only saw her once. My daughter shows interest, she was 3/4 years old when I went to prison. I lost so much when I went to prison and it hurts, I did not want to listen and continued as I did".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 12:</b> <i>"I am away as a father and absent in all my roles to son and wife. I am never there and he needs me. It is limited in all ways because I can't play a fulfilled role or be involved in activities with my son".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 13:</b> <i>"It is stressful as I hear things that happen to my children, but my hands are tied and it affects him as a father, he is far from them and unable to do anything. My daughters now suffer because I am in prison. Now he must realize what he must do as a father. I am not able to guide them and show them the correct way. It has challenged me, as I can't be a father to them; they alone and I can't guide them".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 14:</b> <i>"I am challenged in my relationship as a father; the bond was broken as a father and can't fulfill my role. Lack of communication at times, I have no say into their lives and cut off from all family and children. I feel isolated from all, can't force the relationship and have to understand if children can't visit. I feel weak as a father and feel like nothing at all".</i></p>
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<p><b>Expected role of a father</b></p> <p><i>Lack of character, roles, qualities and abilities to be responsible</i></p>	<p>The participants thought that being present as a father and supporting their families financially were all families needed; forgetting the father-child relationship. Two of the participants admitted that they were very self-absorbed and their lifestyles revolved around their own immediate needs. Refer to quotations</p> <p>Most of the participants found it difficult to execute their role as a father as they lacked the natural ability of being a competent father. Some of the participants did not understand the characteristics, roles, qualities and abilities of being a responsible father. One participant felt incompetent as a father. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 3:</b> <i>"Money was the point of pleasing and I thought that was what they needed".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 9:</b> <i>"I came to see how a father should be, I struggled sometimes. I was never there for my daughter, I was one track minded and I lived for myself. It was all about me and could not fulfil my role as a father".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 10:</b> <i>"I can't fulfil my role as a father".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 12:</b> <i>"My wife sees me as a useless man that is never at home or cannot stay at home. I can't raise my children and therefore it can affect my relationship with my son"</i></p>
<p><b>Impact of incarceration on the behaviour of adolescent children</b></p>	<p>Five of the participants identified and acknowledged that their absence effected the growth and development of their children. As fathers they felt that the father and child relationship stagnated and became dormant. The main concern and challenge faced by many of them was fear; fear of what their children would become and the consequences of their absenteeism. All of them felt inferior to the fact that they could not give input and interact with their partners regarding the decision-making processes of their children.</p> <p>A lack of guidance and supervision was visible, as well as, a firm hand to guide, which formed was part of their paternal responsibilities. School dropouts, low academic performance, lack of parental control, rebellion, wrong influences, peer pressure are just some of the social problems highlighted as concerns by the participants. The emotional consequences attached to paternal incarceration was severely felt by five of the children. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 4:</b> <i>"It was not easy on my children and not a father being present. Daughter dropped out of school, low focus at school, no one cares and every child doing their own thing". "The children are out of order, their mother cannot control them, my son is a bright child, but he failed twice and poor in school, he is improving now. The absence makes it difficult to give input into their lives, periods of development lost and time lost".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"My son is rebellious, vulnerable, has the wrong friends, wrong influences and became part of peer pressure. There is a lack of complete guidance as a father and limited to do what he was supposed to do as a father".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 8:</b> <i>"Poor school performance of children, they are not honest about everything at home and do not reveal everything. I am away from them and it has brought separation and a gap, where my absence is visible at home".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 11:</b> <i>"My daughter's school performance dropped; as it affected her when I went to prison...emotionally she couldn't cope".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 13:</b> <i>"My daughters does what they want, there is no supervision, no one to guide them. I just hear that they struggle and hear of the lack/negative performance and unable to do anything".</i></p>
<p><b>Re-offending behaviour</b></p>	<p>Two of the participants indicated continuous re-offending and crime involvement that caused them to neglect their roles and responsibilities as fathers. The re-offending led to a cycle and constant incarceration. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 3:</b> <i>"I was involved in hectic crime involvement".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"I was mixed up in continuous re-offending and crime involvement".</i></p>

<p><b>Gang association within the Correctional Centre</b></p>	<p>Five of the participants admitted to gang involvement, due to survival, and although they acknowledged no attachment to gangsterism, they remained part of the gang.</p> <p>The participants openly admitted that they formed part of gangsterism in the Correctional Centre. When confronted about their role in the gang, they claimed not to be active in gangsterism.</p> <p>The participants showed no inclination to actually leave the prison gang, as it had become a way of life.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 1:</b> <i>"I am part of the 26 gang, not active anymore"</i></p> <p><b>Participant 5:</b> <i>"With gangsterism in prison, you must survive to all those things, the different behaviours, cultures and different types of people. The survival in prison and benefit, I am part of the 26 gang, but not active and even though not satisfied, you have to cope and make the best of it".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"I had the wrong friends and became involved in gangsterism"</i></p> <p><b>Participant 10:</b> <i>"I am part of the 28 gang"</i></p> <p><b>Participant 14:</b> <i>"Prison is a strange place, a place for survival and gangsterism is the only survival. It is not good to be part of a gang and it can affect your sentence".</i></p>
<p><b>Effects of Substance abuse</b></p>	<p>Six of the participants admitted to using substances (alcohol, drugs or both) and to the effects that their substance abuse had on family life. The participants mentioned that the wrong friendship circles and negative influences led to a lack of sober decision-making.</p> <p>Some of the participants gave an account of early experimentation with drugs and how drug smuggling was a chaotic lifestyle, which meant no time for family.</p> <p>One of the participants said that substance abuse challenged his household financially. He mentioned numerous failed attempts to go for rehabilitation, due to his own denial. The participants also lost much when their drug addictions became the core of their existence.</p> <p>Substance abuse is one of the leading causes of broken families, and the destruction or loss of relationships: it destroys families and causes men to neglect their households. It often leads to financial constraints, marital or relationship problems and eventually divorce. Fathers become inadequate in their role as fathers and are faced with a harsh reality when incarcerated.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 2:</b> <i>"I was addicted to tik, cocaine, dagga and mandrax for 10 years". "My daughter asked a lot of questions, due my absence, my drug abuse and always being away from home, always sleeping and I use to stay away from home for months. I was unfaithful to my wife once and a child was born from the relationship, child is now 5 years old. The drugs was still present before I came to prison, prison guided and motivated me toward drug-free habits". "I became drug-free being a facilitator in programmes in prison. The drugs affected my household, challenged us financially and my wife had to work alone and could not cope. I constantly went to rehab, but never serious about becoming drug-free. I was careless as long as my family had enough and I could then go on my drug-spreed".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> <i>"I started using alcohol early in my life and experimented with drug until I stopped in 1984".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"I used alcohol, tik and mandrax"</i></p> <p><b>Participant 9:</b> <i>"I used drugs together with the mother of my child". "We had a bad lifestyle, surrounded by lies. I went on drugs due to suicidal thoughts and attempts. I lost control over myself when I went into drugs and did something that I am now paying for. I went to prison and due to drugs I lost everything and used the money of my business to buy drugs and eventually exhausted all the funds, committed crime and went to prison". "I lost my business due to drugs and went to prison for murder and isolated from my family".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 10:</b> <i>"I was a drug smuggler, used alcohol heavily and my life was fast and hectic".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 13:</b> <i>"I was always drinking with friends, my friends was always there and visible and they influenced and changed me"</i></p>

<p><b>Loss of relationships due to incarceration</b></p> <p><i>Relational Incompetence</i></p>	<p>Seven out of the fourteen participants experienced loss of relationships when incarcerated. The participants referred to the loss of relationships as either separation with no contact, separation but remained civil for the sake of the children, or divorce and no contact. The participants admitted that some of their partners decided to go on with their lives, when the participant was imprisoned.</p> <p>The participants mentioned that losing their partners meant little or no contact with their children. All the participants shared the difficulty of losing their relationships and expressed unhappiness. One of the participants also revealed how difficult it was for him, when he lost his parents, while incarcerated. The participants understood, though, that it was because of their incarceration that they had lost their relationships. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 5:</b> <i>"When I was incarcerated for the second time, things changed in our relationship and there was a lack of attention and understanding. There were no visits anymore, no phone calls and the conversations were cold. The relationship was affected; things were unstable between me, my girlfriend and child. I am unaware how things would be when released on parole. My girlfriend is free and maybe she has gone on with her life. I have no contact with my boy".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"I lost the mother of my child when I was incarcerated; she became distanced and eventually went into another relationship and they broke up. I lost my relationship with the mother of my children, when incarcerated for 15 years and we separated permanently. The unity was broken, family ties distanced and limited support and contact".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 9:</b> <i>"Prison affected my relationship with the mother of the child and my daughter". "The mother of my child was broken when I was sentenced and it pushed her further into drugs and she became worse than when I went to prison".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 10:</b> <i>"The mother of my child went on with her life, took someone else and went into a relationship. Incarceration has challenged and hampered our relationship and there is no relationship at all".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 12:</b> <i>"The mother of my child visited me in the past when she could, but there is no contact between us now. The relationship can't be okay with my son, he blames me for committing crime and being absent from home, he does not see me".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 13:</b> <i>"The relationship became worse and there is no contact between them, just before incarceration, now they are civil for the sake of their son".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 14:</b> <i>"Being separated from my family was hard and felt like losing someone to death and I lost both my parents while incarcerated. It was diff but I understand that I committed a crime and was punished for it. I am isolated from society due to crime and it was difficult to understand and difficult to have lost so much. The ex-wife decided that they should separate and go their separate ways. My son is in school, athlete and he went on with his life. My ex-wife met someone else and moved to Eastern Cape with him. She is currently in Eastern Cape with her boyfriend and children".</i></p>
<p><b>Aggression vs. behaviour modification</b></p>	<p>Four of the participants showed signs of aggression that was triggered by either a lack of behaviour control, drug addiction, negative lifestyles, drug smuggling, criminal involvement, wrong friendships, or gangsterism. One of the participants claimed that he was able to control his anger and that it was only triggered at times.</p> <p>The participants admitted that aggression triggered aggression. Hence, they understood that any form of aggression could have a ripple effect.</p> <p>The participants must try to control their behaviour through behaviour modification, as well as positive reinforcement. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 2:</b> <i>"Had aggressive ways, due to drug abuse, but calmed down. Prison has changed me, realized what drugs did and the importance of family".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> <i>"I was aggressive, a drug smuggler, and loved money. I was also involved in serious crime involvement".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"I was aggressive due to alcohol abuse, tik and mandrax and I had the wrong friends, but decided to leave them. I was also involved in gangsterism"</i></p> <p><b>Participant 10:</b> <i>"I am not aggressive, but when triggered I can become angry and abrupt"</i></p>

<p><b>Men &amp; masculinity/manhood</b></p>	<p>The participants mentioned that men were accustomed to being the providers and breadwinners of a family. Most of the participants could maintain their homes and see to their family financially. A small percentage of them also reflected carelessness with criminal activity. Some of the participants tried to fulfil their role as fathers while others engaged in deviant activities in the Correctional Centre. The participants need to connect with their masculine identities in spite of their incarceration. Masculinity confers particular obligations regarding identity and behaviour. (Morrell, 2001:16). Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Participant 1:</b> <i>"I feel as a man I had to uphold my responsibilities toward my family and attend to their needs. As a father I could not financially support my family, I accept my role, contact them regularly, about once a week or once every two weeks, so that they don't feel he does not care".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 2:</b> <i>"I want to be a support to them and understand them as children". "Wife has to do everything on her own and see to daughter. Have had a stable and permanent home and could have been far financially, my incarceration was a setback".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 3:</b> <i>"Financially I provided to my family. I feel that I have disappointed them, not there to care for them financially. I am not able to contribute as I want to, as compared to in the past when a free man".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> <i>"It was challenging in a sense, I had no control in my household and it was a huge impact not having me there. My children dropped out of school and as the breadwinner I was taken away. My wife and kids stay in a shack at the back of a home on a property, while the house is being rented out. My ex-wife was forced to make the changes because I was the only one that worked. I can't do anything for my family now, only provide with the word from my mouth". "The support is limited to my family and I want to provide to them".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 5:</b> <i>"It hurts being separated from his family, because you do not know their day to day happenings. As a breadwinner being absent affected the household, the safety of my family was a concern and they had to go back to my girlfriend's family. There was only one salary and it was not easy, as she did not have my salary to help her, coping was difficult".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 6:</b> <i>"I feel hurt, sad, and painful and can't help them due to my incarceration". "I created a whole as an absent father, that my son is not getting what is age appropriate.</i></p> <p><b>Participant 9:</b> <i>"I used to buy groceries for my mother, saw to her needs and that fell away when I went to prison. The negative impact when I was incarcerated played a huge role and created a gap in their lives".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 10:</b> <i>"I was absent as a father to my daughter, there was no contact, contact was made once in 10 years. I lost so much when I was incarcerated and it hurts".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 11:</b> <i>"I was the breadwinner at home. I cannot contribute as a father should, know that I am in prison and it is as good as nothing, I feel ineffective in my role as a father".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 12:</b> <i>"I was the only breadwinner and financially contributing to the home, so that income was gone".</i></p> <p><b>Participant 13:</b> <i>"It feels very difficult, I can't protect them, I am far from them, they are alone and as a father I am not there. I was the male figure that looked after my family and the breadwinner. In prison I am unable to fulfill that role as it was an income less and lost"</i></p>
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The data contained in the above table show the linkages with the main themes, the narratives and are supported by the participants' quotations.



### 5.3. Data Analysis: Partners

Braman (2002: 1) shows that the effects of incarceration on families include practical hardships, such as, loss of income and childcare. It therefore forcibly restructures household compositions, reshaping family life with far-reaching effects. Families experience a wide variety of change that they are not emotionally prepared for. Change, therefore, causes stress, whether good or bad. According to Barrett and Ruhland (2006: 6), incarceration can have both positive and negative effects on a family. However, the negative impact of incarceration on families has also been well documented; for example, it is extremely difficult for the parent-child relationships to grow and develop, while the parent is incarcerated (Howard, 2000, cited in Barrett et al., 2006: 6).

This study explored the experiences of the incarcerated biological fathers' partners through the following identified themes:

- Female-headed homes
- Unable to fulfil the position of the head of his family
- Economic hardship
- Life changing events
- Lack of support



The above themes emerged from focus group discussions with the partners of incarcerated fathers and the main themes originated from the analysed data.

**Table No. 3: Thematic Analysis**

Themes	Narrative	Partners' Quotations
<b>Female-headed homes</b>	<p>Four of the partners disclosed that their new role of single mother, as well as, head of the home, has strengthened their coping ability. The partners shared their daily setbacks as single mothers and how, in the process, they had to adapt. They also highlighted the emptiness and loneliness of single motherhood.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Partner 1:</b> <i>"I have been married for 4/5 years; we have had our ups and downs". When they realize that they have made a mistake, the realization hits them, what they lost, where they are and what they need to do to change. You do not sometimes know how you get through it, but you do. For a woman to be left on her own to deal with life as it comes and with children it affects you emotionally. You had a partner and then he is not there anymore".</i></p> <p><i>"There is a creation order and a man is supposed to be responsible for certain things".</i></p> <p><i>"It is very hard if you need to cope, work and see to the household, so much time with your children is neglected".</i></p>

		<p><b>Partner 2:</b> <i>"I tell my daughter that it is difficult for me to make decisions, we alone in our home and he is not there to make decisions with me, especially concerning our daughter, his absence is so visible. My daughter is very active at school and I cannot be in two places at the same time, then I think what if he was here, he could have helped me. At times I must leave work, where he could have done that extra. The other challenge is finances, being the only bread-winner and would have been better if he was there to assist me".</i></p> <p><i>"I have to support all three of us, there is no other income and my daughter has to go on and do without many things, but she knows the necessary things is not important now".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 3:</b> <i>"I totally cracked, my mind could not comprehend it, and being the first time he is there. I asked myself what I am going to do with these two children alone".</i></p> <p><i>"It is not a nice feeling for a mother that needs to see to her children alone, no matter the circumstances at home. A mother must never show her pain".</i></p>
<p><b>Unable to fulfil the position of the head of his family</b></p>	<p>Four of the partners disclosed the challenges with the absence of co-parenting. The partners identified the extensive financial strain since the father's incarceration. They also emphasized the impact on the children, as well as, the manner in which their emotional and physical needs have been confronted.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Partner 1:</b> <i>"It is exactly what it is and I always say that nobody will know or identify with the sense of loss and that, that person is just gone; there is an emptiness and huge holes". "He was responsible for the bulk in the house, now he is just gone, you do not sometimes know how you get through it, but you do".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 2:</b> <i>"When I was seven (7) months pregnant with my daughter he was pulled out of my life and when she grew up he was there. I remember she was three (3) months old when I started taking her to her father. I did not know whether it was the right thing to do at that time, all I wanted was for my daughter to know her father. You do not have the time that you need to do what you suppose to do, the emptiness is visible. I have a grown son and it helps a lot, but for my daughter it is a huge emptiness. A women or mother cannot deal with the emotional or mental needs of the child when it comes to her father. I cannot fill his shoes and when it comes to the teenage years the mother becomes the enemy".</i></p> <p><i>"Teenage girls need their father and not having her dad around she suffered, there is no male substitute for that. To not have a daddy around they do not know how men are supposed to treat them, it is impossible for a woman to fill the shoes of a man. The absence of him as a father is visible and I experience it more and more when my daughter comes to me ask me a spontaneous question. She is also the one that does the small maintenance jobs at home and normally things that he does. A teenager needs a father especially when it comes to boys, I was raised with a father and I sometimes look at how she balances everything without a father".</i></p> <p><i>"I feel totally lost without her father; I must do it my way, because he is not here".</i></p> <p><i>"I miss him now more, especially in my daughters' life. There was a time when my daughter wanted all her father's attention when we visit him. I would send her in alone with an adult that has an ID book. I am just thankful for their bond and love they share, even though they not together all the time and she did not grow up with him, she loves him. For my daughter it was nothing that he father is in prison and all that she knew when growing up, she found him in prison and does not understand the stigma when someone is in prison".</i></p>

		<p><b>Partner 3:</b> <i>"I cannot do the maintenance, it is a struggle. Gangsterism is hectic and I relate to my daughter that said: "Mommy you cannot go with me to the taxi rank, if my father was here now then he would have taken me, you will not survive with the gangsters". The gangsters bother my daughter, because they know that there is no father at home, a father is needed in a home. I remember that my eldest daughter needed to do a project and her father helped her, he worked through the night and she got the highest mark. "He was always good in assisting the children with their projects; therefore a father plays a huge role in a home. Both did very badly in their school work, they are very clever, but their school performances dropped due to their fathers' absence. They were very close to their father; he was the one that assisted them with their school work, designing of projects and could really share anything with him. He always saw to everything, the emptiness is visible and he is missed".</i></p>
<p><b>Economic hardship</b></p>	<p>Four partners identified the financial hardships that resulted from the incarceration of the father. The reality that a second income was taken away caused dependency and required seeking financial support from extended family members. The extra expenses and financial demands of the incarcerated father caused financial pressure. Various sacrifices had to be made to ensure more conducive and comfortable living conditions.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Partner 2:</b> <i>"Your husband goes away and there are daily challenges, with the children, household duties and therefore financially there is that lack, knowing that you were use to having two (2) incomes".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 2:</b> <i>"I must get on a train to go visit him for to spend an half an hour with him."</i></p> <p><i>"As an independent person I then had to go back to my parents to assist me financially".</i></p> <p><i>"When my daughter was four (4) years old I could only provide to Her father financially as well as see to me and my child. I thought why I must support him financially where I am able to give my daughter and I a better life and reason why I decided to not support him financially for about 2/3 years. Financially it is difficult, but we support him as much as possible, it is once a month, but we can afford to go to him".</i></p> <p><i>"If we can go more, we will, it is far and then I must provide to him in prison as well with money, toiletries and his television must be paid".</i></p> <p><i>"We pull through and also thankful that he is alive".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 3:</b> <i>"He was in Northern Cape at the beginning of his incarceration, in De Aar. There was no money to go there and the only contact was through phoning and letters".</i></p> <p><i>"It is a long trip into Northern Cape, but he eventually landed up at the West Coast, which was closer".</i></p>
<p><b>Life changing events</b></p>	<p>Three partners disclosed the emotional stress that they experienced when the father was imprisoned. Two out of three partners were severely affected by the father's incarceration and had no way of knowing whether they would recover. The changes were emotionally demanding which they were not prepared for. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Partner 1:</b> <i>"It affects you and it effects the children because at first you in such a state you do not function properly for a good few years".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 2:</b> <i>"It was very difficult emotionally more than financially, because as a couple we are excited for the arrival of our new baby. Not easy, my daughter was born at seven (7) months due to the stress that I experienced when her father went to prison. His uncle then came to me and said that he tried to commit suicide and it was such a huge shock to me, knowing that I still loved him. It became too much for me, going to the prison, taking food, money and belongings and my daughter and I suffer. After his uncle told me it was a huge eye opener, what if he got it right, he would not have been here, and my daughter would have been without a father, his life would have been lost".</i></p>

		<p><i>"When I heard that I changed a bit and decided to visit him again as well as take his daughter". As the time passed they grew closer, I have always loved him, but financial stress became too much. At school one day they found out that her father was in prison and they made an ugly comment and said something rude that she had to experience alone".</i></p> <p><i>"She does not understand the stigma when someone is in prison and has always been proud of her father".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 5:</b> <i>"I was not at the court when he was sentenced, it was difficult, and my son was 6 years old. Where they stay it is rough and at times it becomes difficult".</i></p>
<p><b>Lack of support</b></p>	<p>The partners explained that their extended families were antagonistic because of the incarceration of the biological fathers. One of the partners indicated that her parents regarded the incarceration as humiliation for the whole family. The partners said that the extended families experienced difficulty relating to the incarcerated father. They could not relate to the type of personality and character who would commit crime. Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Partner 1:</b> <i>"I am married for 4 years and marriage has its ups and downs, but I love him. I have three (3) sisters and my youngest is very close to him. My other two (2) sisters are very intellectual, so they can't understand how someone can think straight and do that to jeopardize his family and then end up in prison. Remarkable thing happened when he went to prison my parents were very angry, they saw him as abandoning us, doing things to land up in prison".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 2:</b> <i>"A time came when I could not support him anymore and I stayed away, he was then sentenced at that point and the sentence he got was very difficult. My mother is very protective, so she was the worse, she felt that he humiliated me, was disappointed and did not even want to hear his name. My father did not talk much and my sisters just made as if he did not exist, there was no support from them at all".</i></p> <p><i>"I told my mother that my daughter father phoned today and my mother became so angry with an outburst, her whole day was spoiled and she said do not mention that man's name".</i></p> <p><i>"I remember not having money to go see him in prison and had to do it in secret, they did not know. I went and no one knew and today 14 years ago my mother changed".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 3:</b> <i>"My youngest brother was very close to my husband and my eldest sister says nothing. My eldest sister is terrible; she will forgive, but not forget, she will say something about him now and then, but not always. My husband carried the title of a priest in our church, a deacon first and people could share a lot of things with him, they knew him and how he assisted them".</i></p> <p><b>Partner 5:</b> <i>"Our relationship is close, we got closer, there was a time that we were apart because of anger, but we worked it out and his son visits him now".</i></p>

The data contained in the above table show the linkages with the main themes, the narratives and are supported by participant quotations

#### 5.4. Data Analysis: Significant Carer

This study set out initially to explore the experiences of partners, but in one case there was a significant carer taking care of the child of an incarcerated father, in the absence of the biological intimate partner/mother. According to the significant carer, the biological mother

and the biological father had separated, when he was incarcerated and the relationship subsequently deteriorated, due to the biological mother's repeated drug addiction. The daughter was neglected by her biological mother long before the significant carer became her legal guardian and was granted full guardianship. The child had had no contact with her biological mother since the age of 10.

The significant carer's experiences were explored through the following identified themes:

- Breadwinner of the incarcerated father's Home
- Economic hardship
- Life changing events

The above themes emerged from focus group discussions with the significant carer of incarcerated father's daughter and the main themes originated from the analysed data.

**Table No. 4: Thematic Analysis**

Themes	Narrative	Significant Career's Quotations
<b>Breadwinner of the incarcerated father's home</b>	The paternal grandmother provided the feedback as she was the full time guardian of the offenders' daughter.  Refer to quotation.	<b>Significant carer:</b> "I always fetched her weekends and school holidays. When she turned (10), I went to fetch her and decided that she would stay with me and her parents can continue their thing, after that her mother neglected her".
<b>Economic hardship</b>  <i>Single source of income</i>	The significant carer disclosed that she and her husband were appointed as the legal guardians to the daughter of her son. Despite financial constraints as a pensioner, with only a single income from her husband, who was currently employed, she confirmed that she cared for the child and occasionally provided financial support to her incarcerated son in the Correctional Centre. She said, as a mother and grand-mother, her first priority is the well-being of her grandchild.  Refer to quotation.	<b>Significant carer:</b> "If there is nothing, whatever challenges there is the family must adapt. Her father also understands when he phones from prison for money, if I don't have I will tell him and when I have I will give him. He has been in prison for thirteen (13) years and he understands the financial difficulties and challenges a grandmother has taking responsibility for raising a grandchild with a father being in prison".
<b>Life changing events</b>  <i>Emotional damage caused by the paternal incarceration</i>	The significant carer disclosed that the substance abuse of both her son and the biological mother reached breaking point when she reported their neglect to the police and her son was arrested. When her son was arrested, she knew that he would be safe, although on his way to "prison". She also disclosed that the biological mother disappeared after the arrest and they had not seen or heard from her again.  Refer to quotation.	<b>Significant carer:</b> "Both the parents were on drugs, so I went to court in Cape Town one day and I read that as from the age of ten (10) a child is able to say where and by whom she wants to stay with. Her father went on and was so bad, that I phoned the police to arrest him and when they arrested the father, the mother disappeared. The mother phoned and still concerned, but after that nothing and until today she has not heard or seen the biological mother, she is still on drugs".

The data contained in the above table show the linkages with the main themes, the narratives and are supported by participants' quotations.

### 5.5. Data Analysis: Adolescent children

Separation from the family limits the father's ability to remain connected and maintain a parental role. This is especially unfortunate, as the father-child relationship is immensely important for the child's development (Hairston, 1998, 2002, cited in Barrett et al., 2006: 7). A strong father-child relationship is not only a preventative for the father's recidivism, but it may also protect the child from future involvement in criminal activities (Bilchik, Seymour, & Kreisher, 2001, cited in Barrett et al., 2006: 7).

This study explored the experiences of the incarcerated biological fathers' adolescent children through the following identified themes:

- Stigma attached to paternal incarceration
- Share personal achievement with father figure
- Lack of father-child relationship
- Supportive friendship circles

The above themes emerged from focus group discussions with the adolescent children of incarcerated fathers and the main themes originated from the analysed data.

**Table No. 5: Thematic Analysis**

Themes	Narrative	Adolescents' Quotations
<p><b>Stigma attached to paternal incarceration</b></p> <p><i>Labelling and judgmental remarks</i></p>	<p>One of the adolescent children shared his experience of labeling, when fellow classmates discussed his biological father's crime and incarceration. While sharing the incident, he was emotional and it was clear that he still felt pain and anger about the incarceration of his father. He chose not to disclose that it was his father they were talking about, as he was too shy. He rather joined in the conversation and laughed along with them. The stigma of his father's incarceration was clear.</p> <p>Refer to quotation.</p>	<p><b>Adolescent child 2:</b> <i>"At school there were two children in my class, then they talk about my father that he killed the one child's father and I sit there and listen. "They don't know that it is my father that they are talking about, and then they say that they will dot him what he did to the child's father.</i></p> <p><i>"I said nothing, I don't know if they know it is my father that they spoke of, but I did not tell them. I rather laughed with them and talked with them, I was too shy to say that it is my father".</i></p>

<p><b>Share personal achievement with father figure</b></p> <p><i>Lack of parental experiences</i></p>	<p>The adolescent children disclosed how the absent father affected their home environment. They identified important achievements in their lives that their father did not witness and expressed their disappointment. A father is central to the well-being of a child and contributes to all areas of growth and development: an aspect they missed out on. Based on what their peers with fathers were sharing, reminded them of the value of fatherhood and how much they needed him during this vital period in their lives. They referred to fatherly influence, approval and role modeling that they never had.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Adolescent child 1:</b> <i>“Other children at school share their experiences with their fathers at home or what they went through. I can’t say that, I want him to be proud of I and I do a lot of things to impress him. I need to be strong, because I know that he will come home”.</i></p> <p><i>“When I started doing gymnastics I got my WP colours and the fact that he was not there to see it was not nice and now I don’t do it anymore, because he will never see it. Was one of the worse he is never there to see it, as well as when I receive prizes”.</i></p> <p><b>Adolescent child 2:</b> <i>“In class the teacher asked about being camping with my father, but I can’t share in that conversation”.</i></p> <p><b>Adolescent child 3:</b> <i>“It is sad for me, because at school children talk about their fathers and I can’t speak about my father, but I know when he is released we will spend that time together. “I was in Primary school in my last year, it was prize giving and it was bad for me. I was the head girl and I always wanted my father to see it. He was not there for me and it touched me”.</i></p> <p><b>Adolescent child 4:</b> <i>“I always scored top marks in all subjects, but now I don’t do it anymore, because what is the use, he is not there to see it anymore</i></p> <p><b>Adolescent child 5:</b> <i>“He is never there to see my achievements”.</i></p>
<p><b>Lack of father-child relationship</b></p> <p><i>Quality time spend</i></p>	<p>Two of the adolescent children identified the need for a father-child relationship. There was a need to share activities with their fathers that created closeness. One of the children’s fathers was incarcerated before she was born. A semblance of a relationship only started to developed months after her birth, when the biological mother decided to take her to visit him in prison. Children need to form a well-bonded parent-child relationship with involved fathers. The strong attachment leads to secure long-term relationships.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Adolescent child 1:</b> <i>“Not easy for me, things that I want to do with him, that I can’t and difficult because he is in prison.”</i></p> <p><b>Adolescent child 2:</b> <i>“I want a relationship with my father, play soccer with him on the field; I can’t anymore, now I must sit at home and look after my sisters.</i></p>
<p><b>Supportive friendship circles</b></p> <p><i>Positive peer acceptance</i></p>	<p>Three adolescent children shared very positive, supportive friendship circles. They explained that they had always been accepted by their friends, without any judgment. It is important that children have supportive friendships to make school performance and developmental processes easier.</p> <p>Refer to quotations.</p>	<p><b>Adolescent child 2:</b> <i>“There is one friend that knows that my father is in prison, her father is not there, but she is also growing up without a father. Some children at school knows that my father is in prison and others also know that I don’t have a father at home, but they say it looks like you have one at home, judged by how you look”.</i></p> <p><b>Adolescent child 3:</b> <i>“I have two best friends at school and they know that my father is in prison, they are very supportive. If I had a bad day they will tell me not to be sad. I am not shy to tell them about my father, because my father has changed a lot and he is a good person”.</i></p> <p><b>Adolescent child 5:</b> <i>“Yes the whole class knows that my father is in prison, when I feel sad they tell me everything is going to be fine”.</i></p>

The data contained in the above table show the linkages with the main themes, the narratives and are supported by participants' quotations.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

In this summary of the findings, the participants had similar experiences as portrayed in the literature regarding absent fathers: uninvolved and absent through many important developmental stages of their children. The absence of their own fathers when growing up, their own non-participative behaviour as fathers, constant re-offending, the loss of relationships and a lack of masculine identity, all contributed to the incarcerated fathers becoming absent fathers.

From the partner's responses, it was apparent that heading up their homes, as single mothers, forced them into economic adversity. The struggle of having to get by on only one source of income was arduous. All of the partners endured emotional setbacks with the incarceration of the biological father that they never thought they would overcome. The loneliness and emptiness, as a result of the incarceration of a biological father/husband, were difficult emotions to accept and bear. Various relationships were challenged, when extended family members voiced their displeasure at the fathers' incarceration. Taking on the responsibility of two parents eventually becomes unbearable that it causes the resentment toward the incarcerated father to escalate.

From the findings gathered, it was clear that adolescent children had to tolerate labelling and judgement as a result of their fathers' incarceration. It was also obvious that the need of a father was vital to the adolescent children, as every personal success that could not be shared with a father, led to disappointment and regret for the adolescents.

The theoretical framework used for this research study was the Attachment Theory which advocates a healthy and secure bond between a parent and a child. The theory also focused on the works of both John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, the founders of Attachment theory. The theories of these authors basically illustrated the secure base, attachment and dependence that should develop between a parent and child. It also revealed what transpires when that bond is disturbed and broken by incarceration. The biological father, who is seen as the protector, must also become the defender of that parent-child attachment. The theoretical framework



also aimed to demonstrate that the father's incarceration had an effect on the adolescent child regarding their growth and progress in life. Furthermore, it intended to confirm that Attachment Theory affected children, who have resided with their fathers before imprisonment, even more than in the case of non-resident fathers. However, this does not indicate that there is no effect on children with non-resident fathers; the degree of effect is more with resident fathers, due to a closer attachment that had developed within the home. The attachment styles were briefly discussed by demonstrating secure and insecure attachments that children have toward attachment figures.

The next chapter will provide a discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for future studies.



## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1. Introduction

This final chapter provides a discussion of the findings, an outline of the conclusions, the relevant importance for further study, as well as, recommendations. The rationale of this study was to explore the experiences of incarcerated biological fathers and the effects on the partners and adolescent children. A correlation was established by exploring the incarcerated participant's fatherhood role, his absence due to incarceration and how his absence influenced the family functioning. There were 3 main objectives for this study:

1. To explore the experiences of incarcerated biological fathers, who were separated from their families;
2. To explore how the incarceration of the father affected the biological partner and their adolescent children;
3. To explore whether fathers in prison view their roles differently, as a result of the incarceration.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with fourteen (14) participants, all biological fathers, incarcerated for different crimes. They had openly and honestly accepted responsibility for their incarceration and understood the impact it had on their families. The researcher also conducted focus groups discussions with four (4) partners, one (1) significant carer and five (5) adolescent children.

The theoretical framework used in this study was Attachment Theory that explored how the biological father's incarceration directly impacted family strengths, personal attachments, separations and parental challenges. The discrepancies around the decision-making processes and lifestyle preferences of the biological fathers in the past were indications of their inability to be consistent and responsible father figures. The findings of this study highlighted the following aspects, which have to be regarded as major focus points for the biological fathers to understand the effects of their paternal absence, when incarcerated, and be sensitive to the adversities that their families have to endure.

Children need care and the world needs men – biological, as well as, social fathers – to be part of that care (Africa report: Van den Berg, 2015: 2). This role demands psychological, as well as, biological impact that affects the development of both their children and themselves, as the fathers experience the changes that occur in understanding their responsibilities and obligations. Van den Berg (2015: 45) emphasizes that there is a reciprocal influence on the development of the child and the father. Research, generally, shows that fathers may be absent for many reasons, yet may continue to fulfil the important role of contributing to the development of their children (Van den Berg, 2015: 45; Robertson, 2007: 9). The overall findings of this study are supported by Van den Berg (2015: 45), who cautions that ‘Fathers matter in the lives of children’ and research, largely, suggests that fathers matter for children’s emotional, social and intellectual development; ‘fathers matter as children grow up, and not just in the early years of life’.

Finally, Morrell (2001) posed a question as to whether South African men are in crisis and in need of assistance to define their masculine roles, which seems relevant to the incarcerated participants in this study. The challenges these participants demonstrated in the constructions of their own fatherhood, strongly suggest that intervention is required.

## 6.2. Discussion of findings: Participant Fathers

**Table No. 6: Summary of the themes and sub-themes**

Themes	Literature	Discussion
<b>Lack of a father during childhood in the family of origin</b>	Palkovitz (2002, cited in Scott & De La Hunt 2011: 1) state that the value of father involvement is determined by the quality of the interaction between fathers and their children – for example, a father’s responsiveness to the needs of his child – rather than the amount of time fathers spend with their children.	<p>A father plays a vital role and affects the developmental stages of a child’s life. Two participants mentioned growing up without a father and that they were, therefore, challenged in their role as a father. During childhood, one participant became an orphan and the other, rejected by parents, while both never knew their fathers. Their experiences could be the core reasons why they found it difficult to be involved father figures to their own children.</p> <p>The impact of father involvement is evident in the way a child progresses as an infant, toddler, school aged child, eventually becoming better adults and life achievers. Father involvement is positively correlated with children’s overall social competence, social initiative, social maturity, and the capacity for relatedness with others (Allen &amp; Daly 2007: 4). This impact begins early in the child’s development. Father involvement also protects children from engaging in delinquent behaviour, is associated with less substance abuse among adolescents, less drug use, truancy, stealing and less drinking (Allen and Daly 2007:4). Allen and Daly (2007:22) asserts that a father is defined as an involved father, if his relationship with his child can be described as being sensitive, warm, close, friendly, supportive, intimate, nurturing, affectionate, encouraging, comforting, and accepting. In addition, fathers are classified as being involved if their child has developed a strong, secure attachment to them.</p>

<p><b>Implications on the family when the father is absent</b></p> <p>Financial strain experienced</p> <p>Non-participative roles as a father</p>	<p>According to Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006: 11), fathers are far more than just 'second adults' in the home." "Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is likely to bring." Fathers have a direct impact on the well-being of their children.</p> <p>Fairchild (2009, cited in Houghton &amp; Navarro, 2014: 43) states that there is a correlation between the incarceration of fathers, their personal experiences of loss and trauma, and a limited ability to attach with their children. By being incarcerated, the fathers created a loss for their children, repeating this detrimental cycle.</p>	<p>The theoretical framework used for this study was Attachment Theory as it supported the fact that a father and child should have a stable and secure connection/bond, which is disrupted, when the father is incarcerated.</p> <p>Richter and Morrell (2006: 2) state that not all fathers are proud to be fathers, and unfortunately, not all fathers want to participate in the lives of their children. In fact, most South African men do not seem especially interested in their children. They seldom attend the births of their own; they don't always acknowledge that their children are their own; and they frequently fail to participate in their children's lives.</p> <p>Erasmus (1998, in Richter &amp; Morrell, 2006: 2) asserts that in the early 1990s, of the 22 000 children born in Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital, in Johannesburg, half the mothers had no male support.</p> <p>Accessibility is a critical component of father's involvement, as it enables many of the interactions that may enhance or undermine family relationships and child well-being (Geller, 2013: 6).</p> <p>Incarceration can damage the financial situations of families left behind (Travis, McBride &amp; Solomon 2005: 5). It shows that the family structure, financial relationships, income levels, emotional support systems, and living arrangements may be affected (Travis, McBride &amp; Solomon 2005: 4). Each of these factors has the potential to destabilize family relationships, confounding estimates of the relationship between incarceration and father involvement (Waller &amp; Swisher, 2006, cited in Geller, 2013: 8).</p> <p>From the responses given by the participants, it was apparent that they struggled with being absent fathers in the lives of their children. Most of them found it difficult being isolated from all decision-making processes, everyday tasks, activities and extra mural activities of their children. They also admitted that, even as present fathers at home, they were still absent. Two of the participants acknowledged their own self-absorbed habits that caused detachment between them and their families, even before their incarceration.</p> <p>Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006: 11) point out that one of the most important influences a father could have on his child is indirect; fathers influence their children, mainly, through the quality of their relationship with the mother of their children. A father, who has a good relationship with the mother, is more likely to be involved, spending time with the children, who will also be healthier, psychologically and emotionally (Rosenberg &amp; Wilcox, 2006: 11).</p>
<p><b>Expected role of a father</b></p>	<p>Father involvement is a multi-faceted construct based on fathers': accessibility to; engagement with; and responsibility for; their children (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov &amp; Levine, 1987; Ryan, Kalil Ziol &amp; Guest, 2008; both cited in Geller, 2013: 5).</p> <p>In compromising parental relationships, incarceration will also undermine fathers' relationships with their children (Cheadle, Amato &amp; King, 2010; Mincy, Pouncy &amp; Zilanawala, 2011; both cited in Geller, 2013: 7).</p>	<p>The findings clearly highlighted that the roles and responsibilities of a father could not be defined by some of the participants. One of them admitted that he considered money as the focal point of family support, not taking into account their emotional needs. From the responses given, it was evident that their lifestyles were very self-centred and after incarceration, they suddenly started to realize what it meant to be a father.</p> <p>Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006: 16) state that the involvement of a father in the life of a family is also associated with lower levels of child neglect. Fathers are not all the same and being an effective father takes on many different forms.</p> <p>According to Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006: 19), fostering a positive relationship with the children's mother, spending time with the children, nurturing the children, disciplining the children appropriately, serving as a guide to the outside world, protecting, providing and serving as a positive role model is effective parenting. Fathers may not excel in all eight of these dimensions, but fathers who do well in most of them, will serve their children and families well. Some of the dimensions are generic indicators of good parenting; others apply specifically to men in their role as fathers (Rosenberg &amp; Wilcox, 2006: 19).</p>

<p><i>Lack of character, roles, qualities and abilities to be responsible</i></p>	<p>Fathers not living with their children before incarceration may also see their children less, following contact with the criminal justice system (Argys, Peters, Cook, Garasky, Nepomnyaschy &amp; Sorensen, 2006; Tach, Mincy &amp; Edin, 2010; both cited in Geller, 2013: 7).</p> <p>Incarceration threatens the relationships between fathers, their partners and children. Father-child contact may also be compromised among incarcerated fathers, for reasons other than the prison or jail experience itself (King, Massoglia &amp; MacMillan, 2007, cited in Geller, 2013: 8)</p>	<p>For most of the participants, it was a matter of re-shaping themselves and allowing the incarceration to change their view about becoming responsible fathers.</p>
<p><b>Impact of incarceration on the behaviour of adolescent children</b></p>	<p>According to Farrington (2002, cited in Berg, 2011: 19) there is a very strong correlation between parents' incarceration and the development of delinquent behaviours in children.</p> <p>Berg (2011:19), asserts that early delinquent behaviours may lead to the establishment of criminal behavioural patterns in children of incarcerated parents and are more likely to be incarcerated themselves.</p> <p>Children of incarcerated parents are also more likely to drop out of high school, as compared to peers whose parents are not incarcerated (Berg, 2011: 19) Parental incarceration can have a lasting effect on long-term outcomes for children (Berg, 2011: 19).</p> <p>Mumola (2000, cited in Berg, 2011: 20) claims that children are likely to have a greater exposure to drugs and alcohol than other peers, as a majority of incarcerated parents were sentenced due to either drug-related charges or violent crimes.</p>	<p>It is evident through the findings that adolescent children were faced with emotional difficulties, when losing their father to incarceration. When the father is imprisoned, the children encounter various challenges and face risks that ultimately lead to poorer outcomes for the child. The children enter dysfunctional behavioural patterns that affect them in the long-term.</p> <p>Five (5) out of fourteen (14) participants identified behavioural changes within their children after incarceration. Fathers felt disturbed, yet restricted in their own parenthood abilities, especially with decision-making processes. Fathers also highlighted that mothers experienced stressful times with their absence, which was often evident when they had to head up homes on their own. Three (3) out of fourteen (14) participants' also experienced maternal gate-keeping as a barrier from them having regular contact with their children, which created tension and conflict. Good communication was, therefore, encouraged.</p> <p>The effects of parental incarceration on children indicated that children of incarcerated parents experienced a substantially increased risk for negative outcomes and at-risk behaviours, in comparison with children of non-incarcerated parents (Berg, 2011: 20).</p> <p>Children of incarcerated fathers are hugely at risk of either becoming young criminals or adopting decision-making methods that will eventually lead to delinquency, however, incarceration also has a positive role and that is, to address criminality and embrace the positive effects of rehabilitation. In the absence of these positive outcomes of incarceration, the child is disadvantaged and introduced to a system that is unconstructive and distorted.</p>

<p><b>Re-offending behaviour</b></p>	<p>According to Travis et al. (2005:1) more than three-quarters of incarcerated parents report a conviction prior to their current sentence. More than half were previously incarcerated. This demonstrates that many parents have repeated exposure to the criminal justice system, which disrupts familial relationships.</p> <p>This also leads to the possibility of inadequate on-going care for children, resulting from changes in care-giving arrangements (Travis et al., 2005: 2).</p>	<p>Two (2) of the fourteen (14) participants admitted that they were caught up in severe criminal activities, resulting in re-offending and disregarding their role as fathers. They admitted that it became a norm, together with longer sentences and extended time away from their families. The participants could identify the cycle that developed, but had no insight to envisage their destruction.</p> <p>Ultimately, children and parents have to deal with issues of abandonment and loss, as well as, weakened attachment caused by the constant separation. In addition, with fathers' absence, mothers are then required to accept sole responsibility for all forms of child rearing activities, including discipline, education and supervision.</p>
<p><b>Gang associations within the Correctional Centre</b></p>	<p>According to Sonder (1996: 11), gangs differ from a group of friends because they are partly involved in illegal or antisocial acts.</p> <p>Decker (2001: 38) defines a prison gang as an organisation that operates within the prison system itself, as a self-perpetuating criminally oriented entity, consisting of a select group of inmates, who have their own particular code of conduct.</p>	<p>According to Haysom (1981: 2), prison gangs are not unique to South African prisons. What makes them so distinctive in South Africa, however, is firstly their form of operation, and secondly, they are a national organisation. The third defining feature is their historical roots.</p> <p>Five of the participants admitted to gang involvement for survival purposes but although they acknowledged no positive attachment to gangsterism, they remained part of the gang. When the researcher enquired about the period of association, two out of three participants indicated that they were no longer active. The researcher is of the opinion that the culture of the 'prison gang' becomes a norm, and also a lifestyle that they become accustomed to, and find very difficult to extricate themselves from. Prison gangs serve as a buffer against poverty, because when a gang member scores, he is expected to share with others.</p> <p>From the findings of the study, it was evident that most of the gang connections are due to survival in the Correctional Centres, and the period of involvement is determined by how easily anyone can rehabilitate from gang associations.</p>
<p><b>Effects of Substance abuse</b></p>	<p>According to Horgan (2011: 9), substance misuse jeopardises the individual's ability to parent consistently and to provide structure in their child's life. Horgan (2011: 9) states that the longer the child is exposed to parental substance misuse, the more likely cognitive development and educational outcomes will be adversely affected</p>	<p>There is a link between the use of alcohol, drugs, violence and crime. Substance abuse by parents interferes with their ability to care for and monitor their children. Children can become victims of violence, not only because of the use of alcohol and drugs by those in their own home, but also through the use of such substances by individuals within their social environments such as, parents or peers (Violence against children, 2012).</p> <p>Six participants admitted to misusing substances (alcohol, drugs or both) and attested to the adverse effects of substance abuse on their lives. Two participants admitted to a broad life experience with drugs at a very early stage in their lives. Many participants could relate to substance abuse as a way of life, but had no insight to actually see how it destroyed their homes.</p> <p>One participant disclosed that he was never home and that drug addiction became an existence that he had no control over. One participant also disclosed how he lost his business, due to his drug addiction and can now only look back with remorse and regret.</p>

		<p>Statistics indicate a sharp increase in substance abuse in the Western Cape over the past 5 years. The strategic importance of addressing harmful alcohol and drug use in the Western Cape is partially illustrated by SAPS (South African Police Services). Statistics show that the Province has the highest rate of drug-related crime in South Africa (52 000 cases by 2008/2009 financial year). The ratio per capita is over four times higher than the second nearest Province and the Western Cape currently accounts for almost half of all South Africa's drug-related crime on the SAPS records (Provincial Government of the Western Cape, 2009).</p> <p>Problems experienced by the children of drug users, reflect the impact of their parent's substance misuse during key phases of their development and could result in negative effects that endure, regardless of their parent's drug-use status (Horgan, 2011: 9). It was evident from the participants' responses that the choices they made were the causal factors of their incarceration.</p>
<p><b>Loss of relationships due to incarceration</b></p> <p><i>Relational Incompetence</i></p>	<p>Wildeman and Western (2010: 157) state that imprisonment diminishes the earnings of adult men, compromises their health, reduces familial resources, and contributes to family breakup. It also adds to the deficits of poor children, thus ensuring that the effects of imprisonment on inequality are transferred inter-generationally.</p> <p>And, because these families and communities are generally those with the fewest resources, the extended consequences of incarceration can be devastating (Braman 2002: 24).</p>	<p>Seven of the fourteen participants experienced loss of relationships when incarcerated. The participants referred to a loss of relationships as: separation with no contact; separation but remain civil for the sake of the children; or divorce and permanent separation. The participants admitted that some of the partners re-established their lives, as they were not prepared for the lengthy imprisonment.</p> <p>One of the participants revealed that the mother of his child was pushed further into drugs, as she could not cope with his incarceration. The participant indicated that, eventually, all contact was lost and she started a new life. Few of the other participants also pointed out that all contact was lost with their partners, due to the incarceration.</p> <p>Incarceration today no longer affects only a small portion of families in low-income neighborhoods in the District; incarceration has expanded to touch a sizeable majority of such families, and a surprising number of middle class and suburban families, as well (Braman 2002: 22).</p> <p>Incarceration, at least, as it is currently practiced, is socially damaging because it erodes modes of exchange and reciprocity that are fundamental to family and community well-being. It does this, not only by physically removing individuals from the networks of exchange in which they are involved, but also by restraining them from returning the assistance, gifts, and concern that others show them (Braman 2002: 24).</p>
<p><b>Aggression vs. behaviour modification</b></p>	<p>An analysis of aggression, from a skills perspective, suggests that people behave aggressively to the extent of their acquired relevant skills (Eagly &amp; Steffen, 1996: 312).</p> <p>An analysis of aggression, from a beliefs perspective, suggests that people behave aggressively to the extent that their beliefs about the consequences of aggression, legitimize aggression. Therefore, people also behave non-aggressively to the extent that their beliefs inhibit aggression (Eagly &amp; Steffen, 1996: 312).</p>	<p>Research on gender stereotypes has shown that men are rated as more aggressive than women, and as more extreme on related qualities such as, assertiveness and competitiveness (Eagly &amp; Steffen, 1996: 309).</p> <p>Four of the participants showed signs of aggression that was triggered by destructive behaviour, drug addiction, negative lifestyle, smuggling, criminal involvement, friendships and gangsterism. One participant claimed the ability to control his anger which was only triggered at times. One of the participants realized what effect drugs had on his life and how important family was. He acknowledged that drugs were mostly abused with friends, which always led to aggression.</p>

<p><b>Lack of masculinity/manhood</b></p>	<p>Nock (1998, cited in Krivickas, 2010: 1) state that masculinity is demanded of all men and that men “must be sufficiently masculine to receive full rights as a member of our society”.</p> <p>Connell (2005, cited in Krivickas, 2010: 1) also posits that although masculinity is demanded of all men, the majority of men are unable, and some are unwilling, to achieve the idealized societal version of masculinity.</p>	<p>Most of the participants said that men have a tradition of being the providers, protectors and breadwinners of their families.</p> <p>Masculinity has a certain character and quality that is portrayed by men and society places expectations on men to show their physical strength, robustness and authority over women. Two of the participants mentioned that they grew up without a father and could not actively commit themselves as fathers. For those, who maintained an image of how a father should be, great demands are placed on men and fathers to execute.</p> <p>During the interviews it was obvious that the participants aimed to provide the best description of what the role of a father should be. They also believed that men should be the providers of their families. The participants acknowledged that some of them lacked nurture, support and care-giving abilities.</p>
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### 6.3. Discussion of findings: Partners

**Table No. 7: Summary of the themes and sub-themes**

Themes	Literature	Discussion
<p><b>Female headed homes</b></p>	<p>Christian (2009: 3) indicates that because many more men than women are imprisoned, the number of single-parent female households is almost five times higher than that of single parent male households. Parental incarceration is associated with greater risk that a child will experience material hardship and family instability (Christian, 2009: 3)</p>	<p>Lloyd and Blanc (2006, cited in Richter et al, 2012: 3) state that female headed households are invariably worse off, in terms of resources, than male-headed households. Mothers in these households are much more likely to invest in children’s well-being (i.e. health and education) when some fathers neglect their obligation financially to support their children. The partners had common experiences regarding the responsibilities and roles of single mothers. They had to prepare themselves for every emotion and incident involving their children and had to know what to do. Three of the participants acknowledged that the biological father fulfilled such a huge role, and when he was incarcerated, his absence was very difficult to process. The partners also admitted to struggling with decision-making in the household and having to assume the role of two parents. From the results of this study, it was clear that two parents were vital to the development of any family pattern, especially regarding the education and guidance of children.</p>
<p><b>Unable to fulfil the role of the head of his family</b></p>	<p>McGrath (2007: 18) states that the second important traditional role for fathers illustrates a continuing division of domestic responsibilities in the family.</p> <p>McKeown, Ferguson and Rooney (1998, cited in McGrath, 2007: 18) assert that the father’s role lies outside of the home as provider and breadwinner.</p>	<p>Parental involvement in the criminal justice system disrupts families and creates new family roles and obligations (Hairston, 2007: 10).</p> <p>Three of the partners explained that their teenage girls need their “dads” around to fulfil that role of dealing with the boys; there is just no substitute for that. Another partner indicated that the biological father used to assist the children with school projects, as he knew exactly what had to be done. She continued that, since his incarceration, their school performance had dropped as his absence had affected them severely. From these responses, it was clear that, in these three of homes, the father-child and partner-to-partner relationships were intact. The biological father fulfilled his role as dad and male figure, yet he also exposed himself to the lifestyle that isolated him from his family.</p>



<p><b>Economic hardship</b></p>	<p>Children, who live with only one parent, usually their mothers, are six times more likely to be poor, than children who live with both parents. (Horn, 2002, cited in Eastin, 2003: 14).</p> <p>Hairston (2007: 14) states that families also subsidize prison operations by sending prisoners money to buy toiletries and food from the prison commissary, cover prisoners' co-pays for health care and pay for collect-phone costs.</p>	<p>According Hairston (2007: 14), when fathers are imprisoned, most of their families experience financial loss or incur additional financial expenses. Their families, many of whom are poor, use their meagre incomes to meet most of the costs of raising their children. Financial problems are greatest for families, when the imprisoned father fulfilled responsible parenting roles prior to imprisonment. Subsequent to imprisonment, families seek to assist the prisoner, provide care for his/her children and maintain a parent-child relationship, adding to the economic hardship.</p> <p>One partner mentioned that no one could understand or identify with the loss and emptiness that she experienced when the biological father was incarcerated. She continued that he funded a large portion of the finances on a monthly basis, which was suddenly lost after his incarceration. The partners explained that the single source of income was not sufficient and tending to all the needs of the children had become nigh impossible.</p> <p>The partners added that every month they also had to pay for the television viewing at the Correctional Centre, as well as, 'put money on his property'. The researcher would like to clarify that 'putting money on his property' refers to a type of bank account that the offender has at the Correctional Centre. Families are allowed to deposit money that will reflect on the account and be used when the offender receives 'shop' every two weeks. At the shop, the offender is allowed to purchase toiletries, tea, sugar, can products etc. These findings confirm that partners, who were left to secure the family, could suddenly be overcome with this unplanned stress and hardship.</p>
<p><b>Life changing events</b></p>	<p>Relationships between couples are strained, with most prisoners, even those, who are married, relying on their mothers, rather than their spouses or partners, for support (Hairston, 2007: 15).</p>	<p>After incarceration, daily interactions, experiences and sharing that sustain marital and other intimate adult relationships are disrupted, resulting in loneliness, mental health problems and a range of feelings about the separation, criminal justice system and each partner's honesty and fidelity.</p> <p>The partners voiced feelings of loss and emptiness that took a while to resolve. One partner also disclosed that she was pregnant at the time the offender was arrested; it caused her so much stress that she gave birth at seven (7) months and had to deal with the birth complications by herself.</p> <p>From these responses, it was apparent that the fathers were not receptive to the needs of their families, when they became involved in any misdemeanour or criminal activity as ultimately, it was the family, as a whole, that suffered the consequences.</p>
<p><b>Lack of support</b></p>	<p>According to Hairston (2007: 15), the divorce rate and break-ups are very high during incarceration, especially among young couples, where fathers' relationships with their children's mothers are strained and contentious, rather than warm and supportive.</p>	<p>As prisoners are prevented from actively participating in reciprocal relationships, the effects can filter through to relationships between family members. As a result, their families are not only materially impoverished by incarceration, but more significantly, the strength and quality of the relationships, within the extended kinship networks of the family, are eroded, as well (Braman, 2002: 2).</p> <p>The partners disclosed the challenges they experienced when their families did not support them, after the biological fathers' incarceration. One of the partners mentioned that, whenever the name of the biological father (her partner/husband) was mentioned, anger, tension and outbursts followed on a regular basis. Two of the partners also highlighted the rejection and disapproval of the biological father by their extended families. They explained how positive relationships just failed with families formulating their own perspectives and views regarding the biological father's imprisonment. The intolerance of the extended family members, constant judgement and labelling, was what some of partners, and their children, had to endure with paternal incarceration.</p>

## 6.4. Discussion of findings: Significant Carers

**Table No. 8: Summary of the themes and sub-themes**

Themes	Literature	Discussion
<b>Breadwinner of the incarcerated father's home</b>	The paternal grandmother provided the feedback .	The significant carer (the child's paternal grandmother) disclosed that her granddaughter initially spent weekends and school holidays with her. When the girl reached the age of ten years, the grandmother decided that the girl should live with her, as the biological mother and father were both addicted to drugs and were neglecting the child. After the father's incarceration, the grandmother and her husband became the child's full time legal guardian, assuming all financial and other responsibilities attached to raising a child.
<b>Economic hardship</b> <i>Single source of income</i>	Grandparents raising grandchildren indicated that financial problems represented their main difficulties, as well (Hairston, 2007: 14).	The significant carer mentioned that with only one source of income (she was a pensioner and her husband was the only one working) she could not support the financial needs of the biological father as she wanted to. She had a clear rule that the well-being and requirements of her grandchild was her first priority and only, if funds were available, she would support the financial needs of the biological father in prison.
<b>Life changing events</b> <i>Emotional damage caused by the paternal incarceration</i>	The paternal grandmother provided the feedback.	The significant carer disclosed that both biological parents were abusing drugs. She laid a charge against both for neglect of a minor child. She also discovered that from the age of ten (10) years, a child could decide where and with whom s/he wanted to live. The father was furious at her audacity and was aggressive towards her. She called the police and he was arrested, after which, the biological mother disappeared. For a while, she would call and show some concern for the child, but eventually she stopped and was not heard from again. Apparently, she is still a drug addict, but the father, is recovering and is 'safe' although incarcerated.

## 6.5. Discussion of findings: Adolescent Children

**Table No. 9: Summary of the themes and sub-themes**

Themes	Literature	Discussion
<b>Stigma attached to paternal incarceration</b> <i>Labelling and judgmental remarks</i>	The impact of parental imprisonment on children can be profound and long-lasting. Often children of prisoners are discriminated against and stigmatised as a result of parental imprisonment and have suffered from trauma, fear, shame, guilt and low self-esteem (Robertson, 2007: 9).	<p>According to Braman (2002: 2-3), stigma is associated with families of prisoners and as they are in the communities that are disproportionately victims of crime, they often face more difficulties managing the stigma of criminality, during the incarceration of offenders.</p> <p>One of the adolescent children shared his experience of labeling when his fellow classmates were discussing and joking about his father's incarceration. He was very emotional, when he related the account, and it was clear that he was still hurt and angry about his father's absence. He had the opportunity to defend his father, yet he chose not to, and rather became part of the conversation, laughing and joking with them. He later disclosed that he was shy and too embarrassed to disclose that they were joking about his father. The stigma attached to his father's incarceration was so apparent and the need to avoid judgment and labeling was his first priority.</p>

<p><b>Share personal achievement with father figure</b></p> <p><i>Lack of parental experiences</i></p>	<p>According to Robertson (2007: 9), imprisonment, or even arrest, of a parent usually provokes strong reactions in their children. These vary greatly and may include sadness, anger, worry and a sense of loss; they also vary between different children.</p>	<p>Three adolescent children identified important achievements in their lives that their fathers did not witness and expressed feelings of anxiety regarding acceptance. This type of statement indicates that a father is central to the well-being of a child and contributes to all areas of growth and development; an aspect that these three children missed out on. They emphasized the value and need of fatherhood, referring to the fatherly influence, advice, approval, as well as, role modeling, which they had never had, especially during this vital phase of their lives.</p> <p>The findings of this study highlight that parental incarceration affects children's progress and places great strain on them socially and academically.</p>
<p><b>Lack of father-child relationship</b></p> <p><i>Quality time spend</i></p>	<p>Theoretically, a high quality parent-child relationship should serve as a protective or buffering characteristic that helps the child to cope with the temporary loss of a parent (Myers, Smarsh, Amlund-Hagen &amp; Kennon, 1999; Thompson, 1998; both cited in Parke &amp; Stewart, 2001: 7)</p> <p>Unfortunately, however, many parents, who end up in prison, are limited in their parenting skills, and this potential protective characteristic is unavailable to their children (Johnston, 1999, cited in Parke &amp; Stewart, 2001: 7).</p>	<p>Attachment theory was the theoretical framework used for this study, as it advocates the importance of a healthy and close bond between a parent and a child. The theory also highlights what the consequences are when this bond is detached and broken by incarceration. Sudden separation compromises the quality of the parent-child relationship. Attachment Theory also posits a causal relationship between children's experience with their parents or attachment figures, and their capacity to form close bonds later on (Grossman &amp; Grossman 2007: 2).</p> <p>According to Parke and Stewart (2001: 5), even if a child-parent attachment bond has already developed, as in the case of infants who have been in their mother's or father's care for the first 9 to 12 months of life, the disruption associated with parental incarceration would most likely adversely affect the quality of the child's attachment to their parent.</p> <p>Children may also feel the impact of other effects of parental incarceration such as, parental separation or divorce as a result of imprisonment, or the loss of income due to imprisonment (Robertson, 2007: 9).</p> <p>Two adolescent children identified the need to share things with their fathers and engage in activities that create imminence and memories. One adolescent child never knew her father, as he was incarcerated before she was born. A real relationship only developed months after her birth, when the biological mother decided to take her to visit him in prison. The attachment she has with her father shows that, even though he was not present from birth, a genetic connection still remains between them.</p> <p>The findings of this study highlight that children need to form a well-bonded parent-child relationship with involved fathers.</p>
<p><b>Supportive friendship circles</b></p> <p><i>Positive peer acceptance</i></p>	<p>Having an imprisoned parent can lead to stigma and social isolation for adolescents. This is particularly problematic because secondary students attach great value to peer relationships: spending time with peers; acceptance from classmates; and appearance are often viewed by adolescents as more important than academics. (Braman &amp; Wood, 2003, cited in Rossen, 2011: 12).</p>	<p>Three adolescent children shared very positive friendships with school classmates, who had always supported them against the stigma of being the children of incarcerated fathers.</p> <p>They explained that they had always been positively accepted by these friends, without any judgment: one received a compliment from friends, who had indicated that s/he did not act or look like someone who did not have a father at home; the other two had their friends comfort them, when they were feeling sad. As a result of the supportive friendship circle, one participant had the confidence to disclose not being shy of telling others about her incarcerated father, as he had changed for the better, while in prison and was a good person. The findings of this study clearly highlight the importance of children, especially children at a very young age, having good support systems in place (e.g. encouraging, supportive friendships) to make school performance and developmental processes easier or uncomplicated.</p> <p>Not surprisingly, the quality of peer relations can significantly influence psychosocial adjustment and identity development for adolescents (Harter, 1997, cited in Rossen, 2011: 12), and positive relationships can help diminish social anxiety and symptoms of depression (La Greca, Moore &amp; Harrison, 2005, cited in Rossen 2011: 12).</p>

The researcher realises that qualitative studies favour the narrative discourse to show the findings and main threads, however, this convention was deviated from, and the use of tables employed, to provide the reader with a quick glimpse of the main themes, narratives, the participants' words and the main threads in literature.

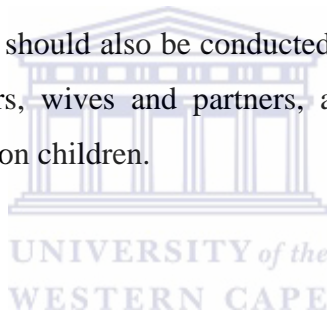
## 6.6. Recommendations for Social Work Practice

In light of the findings and discussions the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

- Introduce 'Responsible Father' programmes to address their own masculine identities, manhood and fatherhood challenges: The participants must understand the role of a father and husband in the family functioning and must relate to a positive male identity. When identifying with a positive male identity, the process of becoming a responsible father and husband becomes more achievable. It will give men the opportunity to discover their own paternal identity, which requires being an involved father.
- Educate parents on practical parenting styles that endorse active parenting and aids fathers to serve as positive role models in their children's lives. It is important that they overcome obstacles that block them from maintaining an active role in the family component.
- Provide information that will assist fathers to evaluate themselves, in order to find ways of applying same to their own lives. Advancing fatherhood and a positive male identity will also assists with spousal responsibilities and equip fathers with guidelines to marital interaction and positive marital functioning.
- Establish support groups for families and loved ones affected by paternal incarceration. With the facilitation of the focus group discussions, partners and adolescent children were given a platform to ventilate. Upon completion, they agreed unanimously that support groups should be established for families to disclose and share similar challenges.

### 6.7. Recommendations for future research

- Future research should explore whether the effects of paternal incarceration on children persists through to adulthood. In addition, also explore whether it creates fear in the child of becoming a father and doing the same to his child.
- Support services to encourage families affected by paternal incarceration and to educate communities to ensure the correct coping mechanisms, so that partners and children will in future not be judged, labelled or stigmatized for the mistakes of the father. To educate the people in the communities.
- Ensure that more local literature (South African) becomes available and encourage authors to do research on the effects of paternal incarceration on families, as there is more international than local literature available.
- More in-depth research should also be conducted on the effects of incarceration on mothers, single mothers, wives and partners, as there are more studies on the effects of incarceration on children.



### 6.8. Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered a delay in gaining approval for the research study to be conducted in the Correctional Facilities of the Department of Correctional Services. This is understandable, as inmates are entitled to their constitutional rights and the Department of Correctional Services is obligated to ensure that the research study is ethical and credible. The process to gain approval was, therefore, challenging because of the delays. In addition, a sample of twenty participants was chosen for this research study, but due to strict criteria, the sample was restricted to only fourteen participants. With the focus groups discussions, fourteen partners and their adolescent children were supposed to form part of the study, but some of the partners could not be allocated and others declined due to personal reasons.

### 6.9. Conclusion

The findings of this study concur with a recent report by Sisonke Gender Justice on the state of fathers in Africa, which emphasizes that fathers must be involved as care-givers. The

conclusion reached is that children are more likely to thrive with multiple, nurturing caregivers, regardless of their sex, and not because fathers do uniquely 'male' things.

The participants in this study understood their biological role as fathers, yet experienced many challenges in fulfilling the range of obligations that accompanied this role. It is evident that fathers have an essential care-giving and developmental role as care-givers, similar to that of the mother or significant carer. This role demands emotional, as well as, biological impact, which affects the maturity of both their children and themselves as fathers, to undergo the changes that transpire in accepting their responsibilities and obligations. The findings of this study, however, show that the participants held a simplistic notion of their role as, and the changing influences of, an effective care-giver. The participants in this study all confirmed that the fathers may not have fully understood their emotional, psychological and intellectual contribution to the development and care of their children.

The findings of this study indicated that the fathers abdicated many of the obligations, attached to their role, to their partners and significant carers involved with their children, during their physical absence through incarceration. The consequences of this abdication also showed the cyclical effect of being emotionally absent and uninvolved with their children, which resulted in diverse challenges experienced by their adolescent children.

The findings also showed that the fathers engaged in criminogenic aspects during their incarceration. This further aggravated issues, such as, role modelling and providing appropriate guidance or support to both the children and those tasked with the care-giving and nurturance of the children. The absence of a father figure, or biological father, in the families of origin, also presented as a key finding in this study. The deficits in their masculine identity appear to have played a significant influence in the challenges that the incarcerated participant experienced. It was also apparent that the challenges experienced in construction of their masculinity, were linked to their own earlier experiences, prior to incarceration.

Incarceration created a further barrier in fulfilling their obligations. The lifestyle choices, which included, substance abuse and gang associations, further contributed to the lack of adopting an appropriate masculine identity as fathers. They struggled to engage with their masculine identities, as they were immersed in the gang subculture, while incarcerated. From

the responses given by the participants, managing themselves during incarceration superseded any commitments to positively influence their children.

Partners were faced with economic demands, yet needed to also undertake the financial needs of the biological father. The study shows that these demands forced the partner to seek financial support from the extended family. Partners reiterated the humiliation this factor caused and referred to the stigma this created. This stigma was also identified by the adolescents, who participated in this study. Partners, care-givers and the adolescents confirmed that, during early childhood, there was ignorance about having a father incarcerated. As children grew older, they were subjected to teasing by peers.

The findings of the study showed that, although some of the adolescents could be supported when teased about having an incarcerated father; it was his absence that caused emotional distress. The subsequent lack of involvement and contribution in important life-events was debilitating and detrimental to their coping abilities. The sudden separation between father and adolescent child was a difficult and a serious experience; this deprivation contributed to a sense of loss and abandonment. The extra mural activities and sharing of personal achievements were the most challenging markers identified due to the separation.

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasized the importance of joint decision-making, care-giving and parenting of children in order to enhance their development and growth. This study also shows that when the father is incarcerated, specific challenges are experienced by himself, his children, as well as, the partners. The findings further suggest that the conditions in the detention centre, as well as, the activities that the biological father engages in (e.g. a deviant subculture, like gangs) often supersede any obligations towards the immediate family. It is evident that more research is required to further explore the impact of those conditions in prisons and the impact it has on the extended family network of the incarcerated individual.

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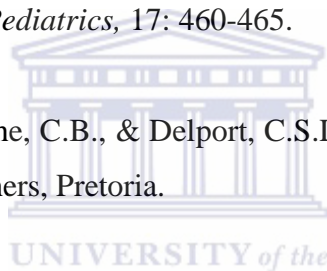
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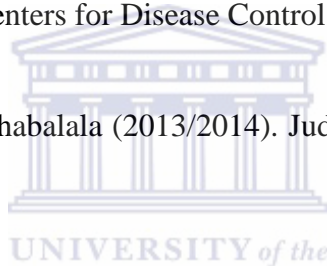
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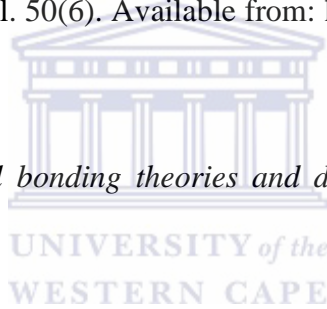
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A



#### OFFICE OF THE DEAN DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

11 March 2014

#### To Whom It May Concern

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the following research project by:  
Mrs MS Kock (Social Work)

Research Project: An explorative study of the experiences of partners and adolescent children when the biological father is incarcerated.

Registration no: 13/8/11

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

## APPENDIX B



## correctional services

Department:  
Correctional Services  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/O WF Nkomo and Sophie De Bryn Street, PRETORIA

Tel (012) 307 2770, Fax (012) 328-5111

**Ms. M.S Kock**  
**Zandvliet Close**  
**Richwood**  
**Cape Town**  
**7441**

Dear Ms. M.S Kock

**RE: FEEDBACK ON THE APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON "AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF PARTNERS AND ADOLESCENT CHILDREN WHEN THE BIOLOGICAL FATHER IS INCARCERATED"**

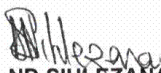
It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved.

Your attention is drawn to the following:

- The relevant Regional and Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- Your internal guide will be **Ms G.P Pienaar, Regional Coordinator: Development and Care: Western Cape.**
- You are requested to contact her at telephone number **(021) 550 6006** before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document and this approval letter should be in your possession when visiting.
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) e.g. offenders not prisoners and Correctional Centres not prisons.
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits, however the audio recorder is allowed.
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the National Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the Directorate Research for assistance at telephone number 012-307-2770/ 012-305 8554.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

  
**ND SIHLEZANA**  
**DC: POLICY CO-ORDINATION & RESEARCH**  
**DATE: 18/08/2014**

## APPENDIX C



# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: 021-9593170, Fax: 27 21-7881577

E-mail: mlondt@uwc.ac.za

## INFORMATION SHEET

**Project Title: An explorative study of the experiences of partners and adolescent children when the biological father is incarcerated**

### **What is this study about?**

This is a research project being conducted by Martine Sue Kock at the University of the Western Cape. This study will focus on the how partners and adolescent children are affected by the incarceration of biological fathers. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because your knowledge can make a contribution in assisting us to understand the challenges families face when biological fathers incarcerated.

### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

You will be interviewed privately in an office within the Correctional facility by me. We will be under supervision of the Correctional officer, which will not be part of the interview, but will be positioned in the next room; therefore our conversation will be confidential. The correctional officer must observe the interview for security purposes, but will not be able to hear the discussion. Partners and adolescent children of the incarcerated father, will be interviewed and participate in two separate focus groups, focus groups referring to group interviews. It will consist of twenty participants that will be interviewed together with other participants that share similar experiences. After information is gathered comparisons will be made.

As per signed agreement by parents and adolescent children, the interview will be audiotaped and the interviews will be guided by a set of questions. The questionnaire will deal with personal aspects and experiences that will acquire your analysis. The facets will also focus on your opinions relating to your family, relationships and family formation. Focus groups will be presented by using a questionnaire to create a process of sharing and comparing among the participants. The duration of the interview will be 1 hour.

### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

The researcher will assure confidentiality and privacy of all sensitive information shared by the participants. The participants will be assured that all data collected will be handled with confidentiality and individuals will remain anonymous. The audio-taped information will be kept in a

locked cabinet for a period of 5 years by the research supervisor, Dr. M Londt in her office. It will be kept until completion of research study. The research supervisor, Dr. Londt will be the only one to have access to the information. Participants will be interviewed privately in an office within the Correctional facility by the researcher. Although we will be under supervision of the Correctional officer, which will not be part of the interview, but will be positioned in the next room; therefore the conversation will be confidential. The correctional officer must observe the interview for security purposes (this is part of the prison protocol), but will not be able to hear the discussion.

### **What are the risks of this research?**

The adolescent children that are used in research will be protected by ensuring that they are not coerced or manipulated into being part of the study and understand all guidelines of their participation. Support will be available to the participants in the possibility of emotional harm. Parental permission will be specified for the adolescent children to form part of the research study. The adolescent children age 13-17 must be available, willingly complete an assent form to agree to be part of the study. Researcher should ensure a comfortable and safe environment to avoid any difficulty for the adolescent participants to disclose. Participants will be informed beforehand as to the nature of the research study to avoid complications and to enhance voluntarily participation and interaction.

All participants must be legally and psychologically competent to give consent. The participants will be notified that they will not be harmed during research study and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without any penalty. There may be some risks from participating in this research study. Due to the nature and sensitivity of information revealed in this study it might be difficult to disclose. It may trigger emotions, leading to anger, outbursts, sadness, fear, shame or embarrassment. If it occurs the researcher will make a referral for counselling and the research supervisor, Dr. Londt (contact no: 0824906469) will be notified to provide the necessary counselling service with immediate effect.

Focus groups will create a process of sharing and comparing among the participants. Participants that will be part of the focus groups will be exposed to an environment that is non-judgmental and a setting that promotes trust to disclose and open up. Participants should feel comfortable and never be forced to divulge even under sensitive circumstances. The researcher should give assurance that the participants may withdraw at any time and that support would be available after the group, should they have the need to talk to someone (Morgan & Krueger, 1998: Vol 2:96).

### **What are the benefits of this research?**

You will have access to an objective researcher, willing and capable to listen to your story without passing judgement. This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about the experiences of families when fathers are incarcerated. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of how partners and adolescent children are affected by the incarceration of the biological father.

### ***Describe the anticipated benefits to science or society expected from the research, if any.***

The information gathered in this research study may assist the biological father to understand how their incarceration has an effect on their direct loved ones, partners and adolescent children. The research study will also assist the Department of Correctional services with better parole after care services and programmes, as it will decrease and address re-offending. Parolees need to be assisted

with better skills development courses, to acquire employment, become financially stable and maintain a long-term role as father.

### **Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

### **What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by ***Martine Sue Kock, employed at the Department of Correctional Services*** at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact

Martine Kock [*principal investigator's name*] at:

No. 7 Zandvliet Close

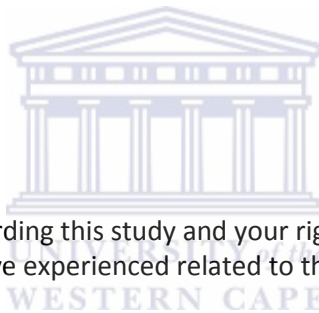
Richwood

7441

(H) 0215597879

(Cell) 0826994722

Or on email: [mskock73@gmail.com](mailto:mskock73@gmail.com)



Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Research supervisor: Dr. Marcel Londt

Cell Phone: 0824906469

Office: 0219593170

Email: [mlondt@uwc.ac.za](mailto:mlondt@uwc.ac.za)

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

Social Work Section Head: Mrs. Rina Gantana

Contact no: 0215599185

Cell Phone: 0727513127

Email: [Rina.Gantana@dcs.gov.za](mailto:Rina.Gantana@dcs.gov.za)

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

**APPENDIX D**

**Consent Form**

**Title of Research Project: An explorative study of the experiences of partners and adolescent children when the biological father is incarcerated**

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

**Participants name:**

**Participants signature:** .....

**Witness:** .....

**Date:**



**Audio taping**

I understand that by agreeing to participate in the study, I agree that I can be audiotaped and that this recorded information will be kept in a locked cabinet by the research supervisor, Dr. Londt, upon completion of the study. This audiotape will be kept for a period of twelve months.

-----I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

**Head of Department: (Supervisor) Dr. Marcel Londt**

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

Contact no: 021 - 959 3170 / 082 490 6469

Email: [mlondt@uwc.ac.za](mailto:mlondt@uwc.ac.za)

**Area Commissioner: Mrs. M Sebotsa**

Goodwood Management Area

Private Bag X 4

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Contact no: 021 5599100

Email: [Moliehi.Sebotsa@dcs.gov.za](mailto:Moliehi.Sebotsa@dcs.gov.za)

**Researcher: Martine Sue Kock**

Goodwood Management Area

Private Bag X 4

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740

Contact no: 021 5599100

Email: [mskock73@gmail.com](mailto:mskock73@gmail.com)





## APPENDIX E

### Assent Form for Children (13-17 years)

**Title of Research Project: An explorative study of the experiences of partners and adolescent children when the biological father is incarcerated**

A research study is when people like me collect a lot of information about a certain thing to find out more about it. Before you decide if you want to be in this study, it is important for you to understand why we are doing the research and what it is all about. Please read this form carefully and discuss it with your parents or anyone else. If you have questions about this research feel free to ask me. We are doing this study to find out how kids your age feel about their fathers being in prison. This study is not part of your school work, and you will not get grades on it. We are inviting you to take part because we want to know what you think. If you decide at any time not to finish, you can ask us to stop and you will not be forced to take part. The questions we will ask are only about what you think and will not hurt you in any way. There are no right or wrong answers because this is not a test. If you sign this paper, it means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be part of this study you do not have to sign this paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you do not sign this paper or if you decide to change your mind later.

**Child's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Child's printed name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of person obtaining consent:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Printed name of person obtaining consent:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

### Audio taping

If you agree to be part of this study, you say yes to allow us to record the information while you take part in the study. The recorded information will be kept by an adult person from the

University of the Western Cape; Dr. Londt and will be kept in a locked cupboard after the study is done. This information recorded will be kept for one year.

-----I have no problem to be recorded while taking part in this study.

Should you have any problems around this study or anything that made you feel bad when you were part of the study, please ask your parent to contact the study coordinator:

**Head of Department: (Supervisor) Dr. Marcel Londt**

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

Contact no: 021 - 959 3170 / 082 490 6469

Email: [mlondt@uwc.ac.za](mailto:mlondt@uwc.ac.za)

**Area Commissioner: Mrs. M Sebotsa**

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**Researcher: Martine Sue Kock**

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Contact no: 021 5599100

Email: [msock73@gmail.com](mailto:msock73@gmail.com)

**APPENDIX F**

**PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM**

**Title of Research Project: An explorative study of the experiences of partners and adolescent children when the biological father is incarcerated**

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree that my adolescent child may participate in the study. My concerns about the study have been answered. I understand that his/her identity will not be disclosed and that as a parent I am free to withdraw him/her from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively impact him/her in any way.

**Participants name:**

**Parent signature:** .....

**Witness:** .....

**Date:**



**Audio taping**

I understand that by agreeing that my adolescent child participates in the study, I agree that he/she will be audiotaped and that this recorded information will be kept in a locked cabinet by the research supervisor, Dr. Londt at the University of the Western Cape, upon completion of the study. This audiotape will be kept for a period of twelve months.

-----I agree that my adolescent child can be part of this study and be audiotaped during his/her participation in this study.

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

**Head of Department: (Supervisor) Dr. Marcel Londt**

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

Contact no: 021 - 959 3170 / 082 490 6469

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**APPENDIX G**

**Focus Group Confidentiality Form**

**Title of Research Project: An explorative study of the experiences of partners and adolescent children when the biological father is incarcerated**

The study has been explained to me in a manner which I understand and to which I willingly and voluntarily consent to participate. The concerns I had around the study has been clarified and I am aware that my identity will not be disclosed. I understand that I am open to withdraw from the study at any time, no reasons provided and that it will not negatively affect me in any way. I agree to be audio-taped during my participation in the study. I also agree not to reveal any information that was discussed during the group discussion.

**Participant's name**.....

**Participant's signature**.....

**Witness's name**.....

**Witness's signature**.....

**Date**.....



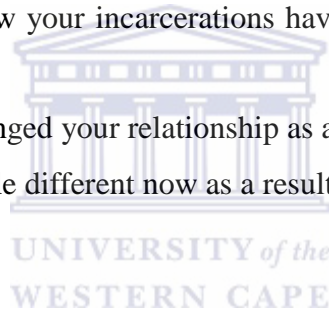
## APPENDIX H

### Interview Guide: Biological fathers

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. Indicate your marital status and number of dependent children?

Married		Divorced		Cohabiting		Single	
---------	--	----------	--	------------	--	--------	--

3. How would you describe your relationship with your partner and children?
4. In your opinion, what is the role of a father?
5. Explain your experience being incarcerated?
6. How do you feel being separated from your family?
7. Has prison affected your relationship with your partner and children?
8. Give an indication of how your incarcerations have changed circumstances for your family?
9. Have incarceration challenged your relationship as a father? Explain how?
10. How do you view your role different now as a result of the incarceration?



### Interview Guide: Partners

1. How do you feel being part of this research study?
2. Do you think you can contribute by being part of this study?
3. Please give a short description of yourself?
4. Are you married, single or cohabiting with your partner?

Married		Divorced		Cohabiting		Single	
---------	--	----------	--	------------	--	--------	--

5. How would you describe your relationship with your partner?
6. How do you feel about your partner being in prison?
7. How has your partner's incarceration affected you and your children?
8. Explain the everyday challenges you experience with your partners incarceration?
9. Is your family aware of your partner's incarceration? Explain
10. How do you cope (go on everyday)?
11. Indicate how you view your role now as a result of your partner being in prison?



**Interview Guide: Children (13-17)**

1. How do you feel being part of this research study?
2. Briefly describe yourself?
3. How old are you and what grade are you currently in?
4. How do you feel about your father being in prison?
5. How would you explain your relationship with your father?
6. How do you feel not having you father at home?
7. Do your friends know that your father is in prison? Explain briefly
8. If your friends or anyone else want to know where your father is, what do you tell them?
9. What is the worst about your dad being in here?
10. Do you think that being part of this study will help us to understand how you feel about your dad being in prison? Explain briefly why you say yes





**APPENDIX I**

12th June 2015

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Editorial Certificate**

This letter serves to prove that the thesis listed below was language edited for proper English, grammar, punctuation, spelling as well as overall layout and style by myself, publisher/proprietor of Aquarian Publications, a native English speaking editor.

**Thesis title**

THE EXPERIENCES OF PARTNERS AND ADOLESCENT CHILDREN  
WHEN THE BIOLOGICAL FATHER  
IS INCARCERATED

**Author**

Martine Sue Kock

The research content or the author's intentions were not altered in any way during the editing process, however, the author has the authority to accept or reject my suggestions and changes.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this edited document, I can be contacted at the listed telephone and fax number, e-mail address or website.

Yours truly,



E H Londt  
Publisher/Proprietor



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