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Education & Incarceration

How Their Intersection Affects a Latino/a Household

SURF Conference Panel Session 8

By: Wendy Hernandez

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Victoria Robinson, Ethnic Studies

Introduction

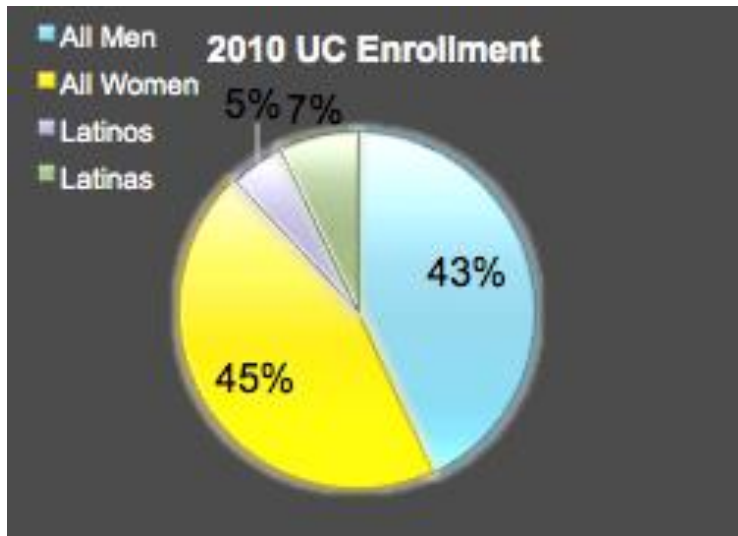


Figure 1



Figure 2

- In 2010, Latinos/as populated 12% of the UC system. 7% were female and 5% were male.¹
- In 2010, 27% of incarcerated males were of Latino origin, making them the second most incarcerated² race in the nation, behind African-Americans.³

1. State of CA Custom Data Reports Aug. 11, 2013

2. I use the word *incarcerated* versus *prisoner* to disown the proprietary baggage and negative connotation that the word “prisoner” carries. The use of conscious rhetoric deflects the subjectivity that some may have when reading about a population that has often been deemed negatively.

3. Prison Policy Initiative. “Incarceration Rates by Race & Ethnicity, 2010

Primary Contradiction to Research

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth-79 Child/Youth Sample
 Showed that youth with incarcerated parent, sibling, or extended household member (cousin, aunt, uncle,) = high dropout return, fail to graduate high school, or both respectively

Figure 3

- My personal narrative as a Latina at an institution of higher education who has had incarcerated loved ones contradicts current research which correlates *incarceration and education, negatively*.
- Additionally, colleges continue reporting the increased enrollment for Latino/a students—which, as is for other races, is predominantly female students, while Latino/a males incarceration rates continue to increase.⁵

4. Loper, Ann. *Incarceration in the Household: Impact on Prisoners, Children and Their Families*. University of Virginia, Curry School of Education.

5. State of CA Custom Data Reports Aug. 11, 2013

Research Question

What family affects do two parallel state institutions, the University of California (UC) and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), produce when they intersect in a Latino/a household?

Methodology

- I interviewed female Latina students in the UC system, ages 18-25, with a male family member who was or had previously been incarcerated in order to:
 1. Establish the head of household and family dynamics.
 2. Analyze the existing relationship among both parties *prior* to incarceration.
 3. Examine the trajectory of relationship *post*-incarceration and the correlation to her education, if any.

Discussion

- Limitations
- Case study is only ten Latino/a families in the entire UC system.
- The students interviewed were from the following UC campuses: Berkeley, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Cruz, and Riverside.
- I only interviewed one member per family.

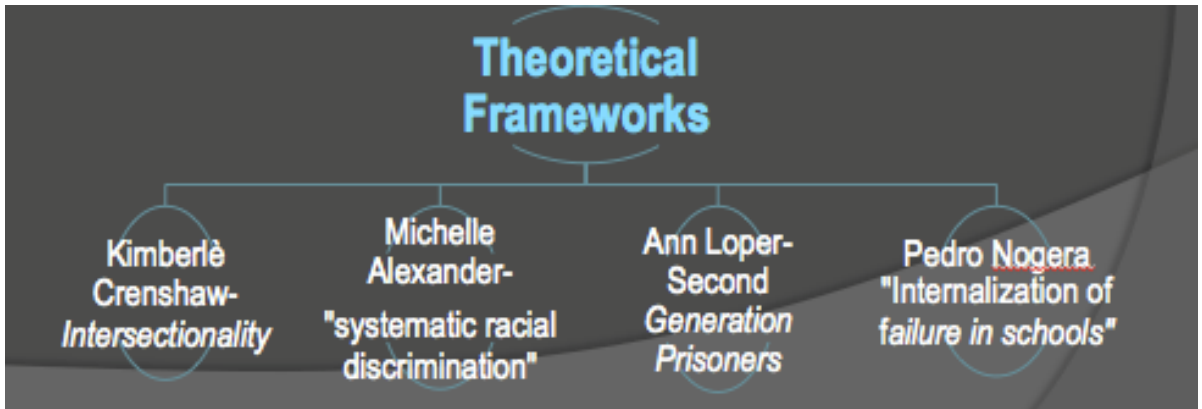


Figure 4

Kimberle Crenshaw

- The notion of intersectionality states that social issues, in this case family and carceral issues, should be viewed in a multi-layered perspective including an individual's race, gender, class, and sexuality in order to get a holistic sense of the conflict at hand.⁶

Michelle Alexander

- Her recent book *The New Jim Crow* argues that the prison-industrial complex is a duplication of the old Jim Crow codes which systematically disenfranchised black people and upheld different racialized institutions. This work is a response to her call to action for scholars of color to continue researching and investigating the different ways in which the prison-industrial complex systematically targets people of color and succeeds in oppressing communities of color.⁷

6. Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Foreword and Introduction." *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. New York: New York, 1995. Print.

7. Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New Press. 2010

Ann Loper

- Loper’s study on families and incarceration argues that children with incarcerated family members are more likely to have negative schooling outcomes and become involved with the criminal justice system themselves, thus becoming “second and third generation prisoners.”⁸ This research project does not seek to negate these findings but instead aims to contribute an additional component by looking at the understudied population of children with incarcerated family members who have *positive* schooling outcomes, at the University of California.

Pedro Noguera

- Noguera’s work on school discipline reveals that punitive punishment in schools, such as the practice of zero-tolerance policies, leads to the internalization of school failure for many young men of color, which ultimately discourages them from seeking schooling as a possible trajectory. Noguera’s *internalization of school failure* is utilized in this study to further relate the oppositional trajectories of the men and womyn⁹ in the target households.¹⁰

8. Loper, Ann. *Incarceration in the Household: Impact on Prisoners, Children and Their Families*. University of Virginia, Curry School of Education.

9. I use the word *womyn* versus *women/woman* to highlight independence of the female gender from the male gender. I use this word as inclusive to womyn of all races, ethnicities, and sexualities– but in this study, it is used to refer to Latina womyn explicitly.

10. Noguera, Pedro A. “Schools, Prisons, and Social Implications of Punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices.” *Theory into Practice* 42.4 (2003) 341-350.

60% of interviewees had a fluctuating head of the household due to incarceration or parental separation.

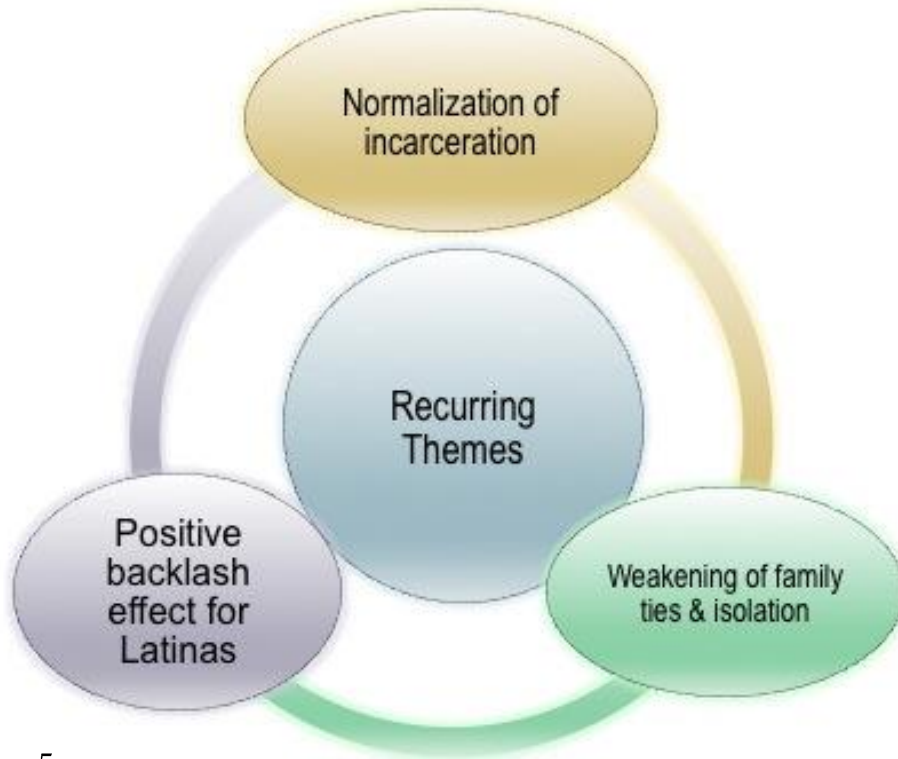


Figure 5

“[P]eople would come and be like, ‘oh where’s your cousin?’ ‘Oh he’s locked up.’ It was almost like a normal thing, which made me see it like a normal thing.”

—Makayla Sanchez, 19, UCB
(Formal Interview, Aug 3, 2013)

“This whole situation has just motivated me to stay in school and show him that one of us made it.”

— Brigitte, 22, UCSC
(Formal Interview, July 20, 2013)

“It definitely isolated the particular family that it happened to. I mean my cousin just kind of went AWOL . . . had her own troubled times, had a lot of drug addiction problems. My uncle had a relapse in alcohol abuse so he had to go back to AA and my madrina [godmother] had severe depression.”

— Jasmine, 20, UCLA
(Formal Interview, July 7, 2013)

Conclusion

The intersection of the UC system and CDCR in the Latino/a homes affected most negatively the homes with the fluctuating head of the household. These families demonstrated to have been affected more negatively by the incarceration of the males than affected positively by the educational trajectory of the females. Therefore, I conclude that the intersection of the UC system and CDCR in a Latino/a home creates a negative outcome in the family, which leads to *second- and third-generation incarceration* and the *disruption of the family as a unit*. Additionally, this intersection also created a positive backlash effect in the life choices made by the females in these homes regarding relationships, gang membership, education, and career paths. However, this study is not meant to justify the incarceration of loved ones as a positive factor for womyn in the homes studied but instead as a stepping stone to further investigate the effects of the prison-industrial complex on families.

Educational and Penal Policy Suggestions

- Incorporate the family into the “rehabilitation” aspect of incarceration by encouraging family counseling to target unaddressed internal issues for incarcerated folks and their families.
- *De-normalize* incarceration for male youth of color through increasing mentorship programs in schools where the school-to-prison pipeline is high, and replace punitive school discipline policies with restorative justice practices.

Bibliography

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New Press. 2010
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- Loper, Ann B. *Incarceration in the Household: Impact on Prisoners, Children and Their Families*. Rep. Curry School of Education, 2013. Web. 1 August. 2013.
- Nogera, Pedro A. "Schools, Prisons, and Social Implications of Punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices." *Theory into Practice* 42.4 (2003) 341-350.
- Prison Policy Initiative. "Incarceration Rates by Race & Ethnicity, 2010." <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/raceinc.html>
- State of California. Custom Data Reports. Aug. 11, 2013.

Figures

Figure 1: Enrollment rates in the UC system in 2010

Source: State of CA Custom Data Reports Aug. 11, 2013

Figure 2: Incarceration Rates by Race & Ethnicity

Source: Prison Policy Initiative. "Incarceration Rates by Race & Ethnicity, 2010"

Figure 3: Self Explanatory, no caption or source

Figure 4: Loper, Ann. *Incarceration in the Household: Impact on Prisoners, Children and Their Families*. University of Virginia, Curry School of Education.

Figure 5: Self Explanatory, no caption or source

