Communities Behind Bars: A Review of Mass Incarceration and the Coercive Mobility Hypothesis

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The community that one resides in has a substantial impact on their life. Communities that are disadvantaged – with high rates of poverty, joblessness, family disruption, and racial isolation –experience crime and criminal justice responses at higher levels. With the evolution of mass incarceration and its racially-biased practices, poor and largely minority communities continue to experience its effects and repercussions most heavily. That is, incarceration has disproportionately affected disadvantaged communities that house large portions of the U.S.'s racial-ethnic populations. The coercive mobility hypothesis contends that this concentration of incarceration has two negative effects on communities. First, incarceration forcefully removes community members who likely offered some social support; and, second, the communities to which they return must bear the burden of accommodating large portions of the population with few opportunities given their criminal label. This dual effect destabilizes the ability for communities to form strong social cohesion and, thus, informal social control, which is argued to be more important to communities than formal forms of control (i.e. police, incarceration). Contrary to providing safety and order, incarceration may disrupt communities; especially those already struggling from various social disadvantages. Previous research has shown that incarceration detrimentally affects the community and creates a cycle by adding to the conditions that foster criminal activity. This essay reviews the effects of mass incarceration on communities through the theoretical lens of the coercive mobility hypothesis and informal social control literature.

Introduction:

A defining characteristic of the United States is its reliance on criminal imprisonment and the subsequent unprecedented number of persons locked behind bars. This use of confinement has been highly concentrated and stable within communities that have already suffered and are suffering from various forms of disadvantage – joblessness, poverty, family disruption, and isolation (Alexander, 2011; Clear, 2007, 2008; Massey & Denton, 1993; Peterson & Krivo, 2010; Sampson & Loeffler, 2010; Wilson, 1987, 1996). In addition, communities that experience these disadvantages are also concentrated in those places that house large portions of the U.S.'s racial and ethnic minorities (Alexander, 2011; Clear, 2007, 2008; Peterson & Krivo, 2010; Sampson & Loeffler, 2010; Wacquant, 2001; Wilson, 1987). Due to historical forces and the lasting effects of policies, these communities remain highly segregated from white America, which further deepens the concentration of disadvantage (Alexander, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1993; Peterson & Krivo, 2010; Wacquant, 2001; Wilson, 1987). The intersection of such disenfranchisement and high

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rates of incarceration breaks down social cohesion and the capacity for informal social control within the community (Rose & Clear, 1998; Clear, 2007, 2008). Incarceration has also been identified as a process that exacerbates crime within communities (Clear, 2007); the opposite of what it is supposed to achieve.

Due to these negative consequences resulting from mass incarceration, it has become immensely important to begin to consider whether imprisonment is really a benefit to the U.S. as advocates of "get tough" and "law and order" ideologies purport (Clear, 2007, 2008; Sampson, 2011). In this paper, I discuss in detail the literature that has explored the negative consequences of imprisonment. First, I historically situate mass incarceration as a form of racialized social control and briefly touch on its impact on the individual and family. Then, I move on to the main focus of this paper – the detrimental effects mass incarceration has on the community, based on evidence from criminological and sociological literature. The paper will further outline the coercive mobility hypothesis which posits that the forced removal of persons and the later reentry of those previously incarcerated back into communities weakens the ability for these communities to form informal social control; thus, exacerbating crime and disadvantage (Rose & Clear, 1998).

Mass Incarceration

In the 1970s, President Richard Nixon declared the War on Drugs in the United States, the impact of which is still being felt today (Alexander, 2011; Pager, 2007). With the declaration of the drug war, the criminal justice system was bolstered, and we began to incarcerate members of our society at unprecedented rates (Alexander, 2011; Pager, 2007). This reliance on prisons and jails has led to, what is now called, mass incarceration. There have been three major contributors to the rise of mass incarceration. First, there was the general growth and reliance on incarceration as the dominant strategy of control, including the focus on retribution, law and order, and the notion of "getting tough on crime," which has had

widespread public support over other focuses such as rehabilitation (Pager, 2007; Western, 2006). Second, we have seen the implementation of longer and stricter sentences through mandatory minimums and "three-strikes" laws (Alexander, 2011; Pager, 2007), which means those incarcerated are spending more time behind bars. Finally, there was a boom in drug offense prosecution and the reliance on prison, over treatment; particularly with reference to black males (Clear, 2007; Pager, 2007). Therefore, mass incarceration has not been driven by increases in crime rates or the prevalence of violent crime rather, by changes in the law – especially drug laws – and the conflation of race and crime (Alexander, 2011).

According to Wacquant (2001) there have been four historical eras, or "peculiar institutions," of racialized social control in the United States. First among these was slavery and the subsequent abolition of slavery. Second, there was the era known as Jim Crow (1865-1965) in the South (Wacquant, 2001) which comprised of a set of Black Codes and systematic exploitation of black labor, as well as the forced segregation of the races and the use of lynching as a form of social control (Wacquant, 2001); Third, was the rise of the ghettos prompted by racialized social control between the years of 1914 and 1968 (Wacquant, 2001). The promise of industrial jobs and an escape from the racial caste system of the South, caused large numbers of African Americans from the South to flee North resulting in, what is popularly known as the Great Migration (Wacquant, 2001). This large influx of African Americans into northern industrial cities, necessitated the creation of the ghetto to physically separate them from white populations that harbored increasing animosity towards the black migrants (Wacquant, 2001). Importantly, Wacquant (2001) likens the ghetto to prison by stating that it "is a manner of 'ethnoracial prison' in that it encloses a stigmatized population…" (p.103). Finally, this evolution of ghettos along with the rise of prisons, or *hyperghettoization*, has become the fourth peculiar institution of social control - with both existing symbiotically (Wacquant, 2001).

This symbiotic relationship arose through the combined forces of class and racial segregation, since the hyperghetto houses a surplus population with no economic function, the state now provides institutions of social control instead of the community, and there is a lack of buffers for community residents from external forces (Wacquant, 2001).

The War on Drugs and the rise of mass incarceration - the fourth peculiar institution, has been accompanied by clear racial-ethnic biases in enforcement and sentencing (Alexander, 2011; Wacquant, 2001; Western, 2006). Michelle Alexander (2011) explains that this war was waged against dealers and users, and attention was especially focused on "others" that were defined racially and as undeserving. In fact, Bruce Western (2006) reported that, "Black men are six to eight times more likely to be in prison than whites" (p.16). The current state of racial-ethnic biases in the implementation of mass incarceration has been referred to as modern-day Jim Crow (Alexander, 2011). This "new" Jim Crow is upheld through racial-ethnic biases, but in a manner that is "colorblind," which means that mass incarceration is covertly racialized (Alexander, 2011). That is, while there is a racialized character, the law and its enforcement may not be overtly racist (Walker, Spohn, & DeLone, 1996) but, rather, it relies on coded race-neutral language and imagery which lends credence to the notion that the law is applied fairly and justly (Alexander, 2011). As Alexander (2011) points out in her work, the enforcement of status relations is adaptable, and this includes racism and the enforcement of the racial hierarchy. This malleability stems from the development of new forms of rhetoric and language (i.e. coded, race-neutral terms) that conceal the racialized nature of previously used rhetoric and language (Alexander, 2011). These codes often refer to negative stereotypes and stigmatizations regarding racial and ethnic minorities; especially, the conflation of blackness with criminality (Alexander, 2011; Clear, 2007; Pager, 2007; Western, 2006).

As Bruce Western (2006) points out, mass incarceration, as a "uniquely American system of social inequality" (p.8), has an immense and lasting impact on the lives of individuals; it completely alters their life-course. Alexander (2011) discussed this idea of "second-class citizenship," which starts once the label of felon has been applied to an individual (Alexander, 2011, p.94). A criminal record symbolizes a form of second-class citizenship, that leads to discrimination in the job and housing markets based on legal sanctions and social barriers, as well as various civic activities such as serving on juries and voting (Alexander, 2011; Pager, 2007; Western, 2006). Black men that are young and those that are less educated have been especially impacted (Morenoff & Harding, 2014; Western, 2006). In fact, incarceration "…has become a normal life event for many disadvantaged young men…" (Sampson & Loeffler, 2010, p.1; see also Pager, 2007 and Western, 2006). Additionally, there is evidence that a criminal record may stigmatize blacks more than whites (Pager, 2007). For example, the amalgamation of being black and having a criminal record produces employment blockades that are seemingly insurmountable (Pager, 2007). This is of great importance since there is a link between being unemployed and recidivating, which alludes to the ineffectiveness of the reentry process and how employment barriers likely lead to further crime (Pager, 2007).

Not only does incarceration negatively affect those who have been imprisoned, it also has a secondary impact on their families (Rose & Clear, 1998; Foster & Hagan, 2007). For instance, Foster and Hagan (2007) contend that children who have had an incarcerated father are at risk of social exclusions in their own lives such as less educational attainment and homelessness. In addition, children who have had parents or siblings incarcerated have a higher risk of incarceration themselves (Clear, 2007). This line of enquiry is essential to the study of the ecological makeup of communities, given the fact that the impact of imprisonment on households leads to significant distortions within the neighborhood ecology (Fagan, West, & Holland, 2002). A deeper study of this intersection lies beyond the scope of this paper,

the remainder of which offers a review of how mass incarceration impacts the community by focusing on the coercive mobility hypothesis and its impact on informal social control.

Mass Incarceration and the Community

One of the most common assertions in criminological literature is that place matters. Where we live determines our quality of life and mediates our access to social institutions – such as schools, healthcare facilities, libraries, parks and more. (Clear, 2007; Wilcox, Cullen, & Feldmeyer, 2018). Similarly, crime and the use of formal social control varies across communities (Wilcox et al., 2018). Notably, structural forces across places work in a manner that privileges whites over other racial-ethnic groups (Peterson & Krivo, 2010). For instance, segregation is embedded within deeper structural issues and social disadvantages – a key outcome of which is the spatial concentration of crime within disadvantaged communities (Peterson & Krivo, 2010). That is, crime patterns are differentially distributed across communities and racial-ethnic groups, and these patterns do not result from individual criminality or concentrations of criminals within these geographic areas (Peterson & Krivo, 2010). Instead, crime patterns are a result of structural forces within communities (Peterson & Krivo, 2010). In fact, Peterson and Krivo (2010) found that violence occurs at much higher rates in the typical black neighborhood than it occurs in the typical white-majority neighborhood, while differences in property crimes are less extreme but still present. In addition, law enforcement organizations have considerable discretion in which individuals and communities they target, which further increases the likelihood of racially biased outcomes in the criminal justice system (Alexander, 2011).

In addition to its impact on the prevalence and geographical concentration of crime, social context also correspondingly influences imprisonment. Moreover, the effects of mass incarceration reach beyond the walls of prison facilities, serving to perpetuate social disenfranchisement geographically (Rose & Clear, 1998; Western, 2006). This is because mass incarceration is highly concentrated and stable over time within communities; especially communities with high-levels of disadvantage, even after controlling for crime rates (Clear, 2007, 2008; Sampson & Loeffler, 2010). As Alexander (2011) explains "Today, the War on Drugs has given birth to a system of mass incarceration that governs not just a small fraction of a racial or ethnic minority but entire communities of color. In ghetto communities, nearly everyone is either directly or indirectly subject to the new caste system. The system serves to redefine the terms of the relationship of poor people of color and their communities to mainstream, white society, ensuring their subordinate and marginal status… The nature of the criminal justice system has changed. It is no longer concerned primarily with the prevention and punishment of crime, but rather with the management and control of the dispossessed" (p.188). Importantly, these patterns of geographic concentration and stability are also observable in the subsequent release of those previously imprisoned back into the same disadvantaged communities (Clear, 2007; Sampson & Loeffler, 2010).

The disadvantage of communities has often been defined by concentrated poverty, joblessness, family disruption, and racial isolation (Pager, 2007; Wacquant, 2001; Wilson, 1987, 1996). Additionally, it has been defined by segregation and *hypersegregation* (Massey & Denton, 1993). Segregation and the ghetto concentrate poor minority populations within communities that have little interaction with those of other social statuses and this has hidden their plight (Alexander, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1993; Wacquant, 2001). Further, whites rarely live in neighborhoods similarly situated to African American neighborhoods regarding "*hyperdisadvantage*," which is defined by a minimum of four out of six factors of disadvantage being at extreme levels – poverty, joblessness, presence of low-wage jobs, families that are female-headed, presence of nonprofessional workers, and presence of non-college graduates (Peterson & Krivo, 2010, p.62). This pattern of *hyperdisadvantage* is generally

consistent when considering predominantly white neighborhoods in comparison to those with a concentration of racial-ethnic minority populations (Peterson & Krivo, 2010). Taken together, these factors have made "convenient targets" out of poor racial-ethnic minorities when it comes to police tactics since there is little political or economic power within these communities (Alexander, 2011, p.124). Evidence further suggests that while disadvantaged communities have relatively higher crime rates, incarceration rates are substantially higher there in comparison to other neighborhoods – especially when they are majority-black (Dhondt, 2012). Thus, racial-ethnic minority communities are at a clear disadvantage when it comes to various social factors and the use of formal social control.

The incarceration of predominantly male members of minority communities living in neighborhoods that are consistently impoverished and crime ridden has further been criticized for being potentially futile (Clear, 2007, p.5). To highlight this, Sampson and Loeffler (2010) refer to "…a mutually reinforcing social process: disadvantage and crime work together to drive up the incarceration rate…" and "this combined influence in turn deepens the spatial concentration of disadvantage…" (p.5). Specifically, "communities that experienced high disadvantage experienced incarceration rates *more than three times higher* than communities with a similar crime rate" (Sampson & Loeffler, 2010, p.5). Similarly, Pager (2007) refers to the prison system as a "revolving door" where "the prison has become its own source of growth, with the faces of former inmates increasingly represented among annual admissions to prison" and this is further supported "by the social contexts in which crime flourishes" – communities of disadvantage (p.2). As others have stated, the ghetto has become more like a prison (Wacquant, 2001), where disproportionately high rates of incarceration do not substantially impact crime rates, but continue to funnel returnees with limited employment and social assimilation prospects into disadvantaged communities – increasing the risk of recidivism, and creating a

"prison cycle" (Clear, 2007). Therefore, "incarceration may be a self-defeating strategy for crime control" (Western, 2006, p.5).

Social Control and Coercive Mobility

The cyclical process of incarceration and community disadvantage has been highly theorized To discuss the coercive mobility hypothesis, it is important to situate it within the theoretical tradition that it grew from within the criminological literature. With the rapid changes felt across many U.S. cities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries – industrialization, demographic shifts, etc. – social theorists began to focus attention on communities and crime (Wilcox et al., 2018). This was especially true of Chicago since this city not only felt these transitions, but also housed a collection of academics interested in this area of study (Wilcox et al., 2018). These forces in Chicago led to the development of the Chicago School tradition within the field of sociology, and later - criminology, which focuses on how the social environment impacts individuals – poverty, urban decay, demographic shifts – particularly in relation to crime (Wilcox et al., 2018). Leading scholars at that time in Chicago include: William Isaac Thomas, Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Louis Wirth, and Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay (Gottdiener, Hutchison, & Ryan, 2015; Wilcox et al., 2018). This focus on factors that were altering cities and communities, and the works of the scholars noted here led to the development of the theoretical tradition know as social disorganization theory (Gottdiener et al., 2015; Wilcox et al., 2018).

The social disorganization theory proposes that there are three forces that contribute to the breakdown of informal social control and, thus, lead to crime when they are felt at high-levels: 1) poverty; 2) population heterogeneity; and 3) residential mobility, all of which often lead to little attachment to the community, a lack of relationships among neighbors, and little upkeep of the property (Clear, 2007; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Shaw & McKay, 1942). Building on this foundational work of Shaw and McKay (1942), Bursik and Grasmick (1993) focused extensively

on the idea of social control – behavioral regulation efforts from residents in pursuit of community safety – and brought it into their "systemic" model that focuses on the ways that disorganization limits social networks and, thus, limits social controls (Clear, 2007, p.85). The social controls they discussed were three-fold: private (i.e. informal control from primary socializing agents: family, friends, significant others), parochial (i.e. informal control from members of the community and presence of institutions such as churches and schools), and public (i.e. access to formal social control beyond the community) (Clear, 2007; Frost & Gross, 2012). They hypothesized "that instability within (due to processes of mobility) and heterogeneity of (due to ethnic and socioeconomic composition) communities would affect all three levels of control," and, consequently, crime and delinquency would occur (Frost & Gross, 2012, p.461). Ultimately, social disorganization impedes these forms of control and residential mobility takes center stage since the constant churning of the population destabilizes social ties (Frost & Gross, 2012). Where informal controls are weak, there is a greater dependence on formal control and therefore, more contact with agents of control – such as the police - within these communities (Frost & Gross, 2012).

The theoretical conceptualization of the impact of incarceration on communities also draws from the concept of collective efficacy (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). Collective efficacy refers to social cohesion within communities, along with the willingness of neighbors to intervene in pursuit of the common good, or normative consensus, of the neighborhood (Clear, 2007; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Specifically, collective efficacy is concerned with the formation of mutual trust among residents within a neighborhood, which acts as a mechanism of informal social control (Sampson et al., 1997). When communities have strong social ties among residents, they are better able to informally control each other. This informal control occurs through community members' participation in community monitoring as well as their willingness to intervene (Sampson et al., 1997). Where collective efficacy, or social cohesion is strongest, informal social control can be expected to be strongest (Sampson et al., 1997). Formal forms of control (i.e. prisons, police) may be needed where neighborhood controls are limited (Rose & Clear, 1998). It is important to note that both "informal and formal social controls regulate behavior and control crime within ecological areas" (Martin, Wright, & Steiner, 2016, p.63); however, formal controls may negatively impact communities (Rose & Clear, 1998). Existing research in the field has supported the proposition that where collective efficacy is most prevalent, the effects of social disorganization – in the forms of violent crime, residential instability, disorganization and disadvantage – are mediated, and crime may deteriorate (Frost & Gross, 2012; Sampson et al., 1997).

The intersection of high crime, incarceration and social disenfranchisement has also been studied through the theoretical lens of coercive mobility. This concept has been heavily influenced by the work of Bursik and Grasmick and the development of the concept of collective efficacy (Frost & Gross, 2012), and refers to a dual process that has been theorized and discussed heavily by Dina Rose, Todd R. Clear, and colleagues. Coercive mobility, on one hand, refers to the forced removal of persons from the community, and on the other hand, it captures the disruption associated with the release of those previously imprisoned back into the community (Clear, 2007, 2008). Rose and Clear (1998) first outlined this concept to bring attention to the ways institutions designed to control criminality may in fact intensify the factors that prompt crime. Specifically, social networks in communities may be destabilized by incarceration heightening social disorganization (Clear, 2007). It should be noted that this is not to suggest the use of incarceration is always unwarranted; rather, it is the concentration of many persons being imprisoned and released that may have consequences for the community (Frost & Gross, 2012). The forced removal of persons to prisons and their later release follows the general destructive process of residential

mobility; thus, the stability of communities is jeopardized by coercive mobility (Clear, 2007). For either of these processes to occur, those being removed and those reentering must exceed a substantial amount, or reach a tipping point, to affect the community (Clear, 2007, 2008). Specifically, "the most deleterious effects of coercive mobility would take effect after a certain large number of people are caught up in the removal and return cycle" (Clear, 2007, p.159). That is, there is a linear effect and a curvilinear one (Clear, 2007). The linear relationship suggests the number reentering leads to a positive and direct effect on crime in the community (Clear, 2007; Clear et al., 2003). The curvilinear relationship indicates that where incarceration is low, it has little or no relationship with crime; however, when communities have high rates of incarceration, rates of crime will likely be higher (Clear, 2007; Clear et al., 2003).

Overall, coercive mobility and the concentration of incarceration have weakened the capacity for informal social control (Clear, 2007; Clear, Rose, & Ryder, 2001). First, the forced removal of residents through incarceration dismantles collective efficacy within communities. For instance, some of those incarcerated likely provided some sort of support for their family – money, childcare, and the like – and/or the community – through social capital networks (Clear, 2007). However, as interviews with people from communities in Tallahassee, Florida with high-levels of incarceration indicate, there has been some evidence that incarceration may help in some instances by removing problem family members (Clear et al., 2001). That is, persons reentering the community after incarceration place additional strains on collective efficacy. Those returning from prison "…tie up the limited interpersonal and social resources of their families and networks, weakening the ability of the families and networks to perform other functions…" (Clear, 2008, p. 118).

Therefore, considering the impact of coercive mobility on informal social control is important given informal control is more crucial for public safety than formal controls (Clear, 2007). In addition, communal deficiencies resulting from the impact of concentrated incarceration on informal social controls may prove to be criminogenic (Clear, 2007). Ultimately, "the normative consensus and interpersonal connectedness that are the foundation of collective efficacy are undermined by high levels of concentrated incarceration and reentry" (Clear, 2007, p.84). In the end, the effect of high levels of imprisonment may destabilize the organization of communities, especially their capacity for informal social control, generating environments that are even more criminogenic (Morenoff & Harding, 2014). This process, in turn, weakens prospects of effective reentry for individuals released back into the community (Morenoff & Harding, 2014, p.412). That is, due to the limited social and economic opportunities after incarceration, returning to crime is an enticing offer (Western, 2006) and, unfortunately, most released end up back in prison (Alexander, 2011). Clear (2007) aptly captures this and states that "concentrated incarceration in those impoverished communities has broken families, weakened the social-control capacity of parents, eroded economic strength, soured attitudes toward society, and distorted politics" (Clear, 2007, p.5). Thus, a cycle is created involving community disadvantage, crime, incarceration, reentry, and recidivism.

Evidence of Coercive Mobility

Given the complex nature of incarceration and re-entry after release, attempts made by researchers to document whether and how coercive mobility impacts communities have yielded mixed results (Clear, 2008). Some studies have found that high rates of incarceration within communities consequently lead to increases in crime within these communities. For example, Clear, Rose, Waring, and Scully (2003) found a direct and positive increase in crime with the reentry of those previously incarcerated. That is, in Tallahassee, Florida neighborhoods, Clear et al. (2003) found support for the curvilinear hypothesis which states that incarceration will lead to a decrease in crime; however, if there are

substantially high-levels of incarceration, then crimes are also likely to be higher. In 2005, this analysis of Tallahassee was replicated with additional years of data and the findings regarding coercive mobility were identical to Clear et al.'s (2003) earlier analysis (Waring, Scully, & Clear, 2005; Clear, 2008). In addition, Clear (2007, 2008) points out that this curvilinear hypothesis has been similarly replicated and generally supported in other cities including Columbus (Powell, Peterson, Krivo, Bellair, & Johnson, 2004) and Chicago (George, LaLonde, & Schuble, 2005) – both studies are unpublished though.

Similarly, Renauer, Cunningham, Feyerherm, O'Connor, and Bellatty (2006) studied 95 neighborhoods in Portland, Oregon to assess the curvilinear relationship between incarceration and informal social control proposed by Rose and Clear (1998). That is, the authors tested whether there is a tipping point that must be reached before incarceration within neighborhoods leads to more criminal activity. In support of this notion, they found that where rates of incarceration were moderate, violent crime rates decreased; however, high-levels of incarceration were related to more violent crime in neighborhoods (Renauer et al., 2006). Renauer et al. (2006) also considered property crime rates but found no support for the curvilinear hypothesis.

While there has been some evidence of a nonlinear relationship between incarceration and crime, as noted in the studies above, not all the coercive mobility research has conceded on the nature of this relationship being curvilinear. Fagan, West, and Holland (2002) observed New York City neighborhoods and found evidence of incarceration leading to more incarceration and liken this to a spiral dynamic. When they considered the impact of incarceration over time, they noted that incarceration rates are connected closely to crime to start, but eventually become independent of crime to some degree (Fagan et al., 2002). The authors also delineate how incarceration deepens racial residential segregation and how it rearranges the social networks of a community in negative ways –

alluding to the impact of incarceration on informal social control (Fagan et al., 2002). More recently, Dhondt (2012) revisited neighborhoods in Tallahassee, Florida for the time-period of 1995-2002. In this study, the author considered both rates of prison admission and the combined effect of admission as well as release, commonly conceptualized as "prison cycling" (Dhondt, 2012). The author found that high levels of admissions and cycling are related to crime rate increases in neighborhoods that are disadvantaged (Dhondt, 2012).

In addition to the impact on crime, DeFina and Hannon (2013) found that incarceration has increased poverty significantly based on their statewide analysis using data collected from 1980 to 2004. They found that had incarceration related laws and policies been executed in a different manner, poverty would have likely fallen across the United States (DeFina & Hannon, 2013). Based on several analyses that examined different measurement metrics of poverty, the authors concluded that if rates of incarceration had not risen at such extreme heights since the 1970s, poverty rates would have decreased (DeFina & Hannon, 2013). This analysis supports the notion of "two-way causality," or that imprisonment is both caused by and exacerbates poverty in the United States (DeFina & Hannon, 2013, p.582).

Coercive Mobility and Collective Efficacy

In addition to the studies noted above, there has also been some (direct and indirect) support for the contention that coercive mobility negatively effects collective efficacy, or informal social control, specifically. Hipp and Yates (2009) considered how the influx of persons released on parole impacted crime in Sacramento, California census tracts, and found that as parole populations increased, so did rates of crime within the tracts. This was especially true of the effect of parolees with violent histories on increases in rates of burglary and murder (Hipp & Yates, 2009). Regarding informal controls, they found that tracts with more residential stability were able to moderate, or lessen, the effect of parolees on crime rates (Hipp & Yates,

2009). Furthermore, the authors postulate that families who are reunited after a parent's release from prison may increase the capacity for informal social control within communities (Hipp & Yates, 2009).

Drakulich, Crutchfield, Matsueda, and Rose (2012), in their study of Seattle, Washington, found that highly concentrated returning populations are associated with lower capacity for collective efficacy. That is, the stability of the neighborhoods – residential and economic – are negatively affected by large reentering populations and this restricts a community's ability to form informal social control (Drakulich et al., 2012). However, the effect of reentry proceeds through the turmoil felt within labor and housing markets due to the aftereffects of incarceration (Drakulich et al., 2012). Overall, these factors create an environment that is further criminogenic (Drakulich et al., 2012). Therefore, where reentry is concentrated, recidivism increases; however, when parolees enter neighborhoods that are stable they are less likely to recidivate (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016). Thus, improving residential stability may reduce reoffending among those returning to neighborhoods on parole (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016).

Some research has gone beyond incarceration and release and used the concept of coercive mobility to examine the effects of other formal controls concentrated in the community. For example, Martin, Wright, and Steiner (2016) found general support for the contention that formal social control has unintended consequences within neighborhoods across U.S. cities when they considered arrests, but no evidence regarding incarceration. Specifically, police arrests exacerbated the connection between extreme disadvantage in neighborhoods and violent crimes whereas the risk of incarceration within jails tended to reduce violent crime in the localities considered. They did not, therefore, find direct evidence that incarceration negatively affected the community as originally hypothesized by Rose and Clear (1998); however, other formal controls proved important. In a similar vein, some research has pointed to the detrimental effects on the community that exposure to violent police tactics have on citizens (see Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016).

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has provided a critical analysis of scholarly literature on the effects of incarceration on American communities, against the theoretical backdrop of coercive mobility and collective efficacy. The body of literature reviewed in this analysis reflects widespread recognition of the lasting negative impact of high incarceration rates among communities of low income and minority population subgroups. Communities that are highly disadvantaged are also those that are likely to experience incarceration at higher rates, which exacerbates the probability of forthcoming disadvantage. Furthermore, these communities also must cope with an influx of individuals returning from overcrowded prisons with limited prospects for gainful employment and social assimilation. This cycle of crime and incarceration may be doing more harm than good within communities across the United States. The complexity of these phenomenon as well as their detrimental socioeconomic impacts are well captured by the theoretical concepts discussed in this paper. These include coercive mobility, collective efficacy and the intersection of the two.

Coercive mobility allows for the understanding of incarceration as having disproportionately impacted communities experiencing various forms of disadvantage, frames incarceration as a vicious cycle that reinforces patterns of segregation and well as socioeconomic marginalization and acknowledges the role of incarceration as a mechanism for social control. As Western (2006) concludes, mass incarceration has confined poor blacks to a lower echelon of American society and it "has significantly subtracted from gains to African American citizenship hard won by the civil rights movement" (p.194).

The theoretical nuance within the concept of collective efficacy allows for the identification of the multiple mechanisms through which incarceration has become debilitating force for

social cohesion between community members, as well as their interaction with social and law enforcement institutions. This paper explains how formal forms of social control, such as the use of incarceration do little to create safer environments and may be causing lasting and irreparable harm to disadvantaged communities. Imprisonment destroys networks of informal social control by forcefully removing parents, friends, neighbors, and significant others from communities, which further exacerbates criminal behavior.

The paper further draws attention to the disparate law enforcement and criminal justice system practices embedded within racial, ethnic, class, gender, and educational biases, that concentrate the risk and effects of incarceration amongst populations and communities already experiencing notable disadvantages. It discusses the conditions under which incarceration has been found to reduce crime and poses questions with respect to the relative impact of incarceration given its known social and economic costs.

It may be time for researchers to approach mass incarceration by considering its costs and benefits within our society. As Clear (2008) pointed out, "despite the absence of a single, definitive study, it is hard to see how incarceration cannot be implicated as a problem for poor communities. There are simply too many studies that point to the problem for the hypothesized connection to be ignored" (Clear, 2008, p.122). For future research, concepts such as coercive mobility and collective efficacy should also be applied to examine the effects of other mechanisms of formal social control (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003), such as concentration of arrests, exposures to police brutality, and lethal force.

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