

2021

African American Fathers' Experiences of Alienation from Their Children due to Texas Family Code

Fatima Tremale Thomas-Moody
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Public Policy Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Fatima Thomas

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Jessie Lee, Committee Chairperson,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Darius Cooper, Committee Member,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Tamara Mouras, University Reviewer,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

African American Fathers' Experiences of Alienation from Their Children due to Texas

Family Code

by

Fatima Thomas

MA, Walden University, 2017

BS, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2021

Abstract

Throughout the years, Texas Family Code: *Title 5. The Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship* has the coined term *best interest of the child*. In fact, it has created an unintentional indoctrination to parental alienation therefore, leaving little to no access for courts to rectify and resolve the parent-child relationship. Arguably, researchers have suggested that the legal system engages in gender ideologies that contributes to parental alienation. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of African American noncustodial fathers' interaction and how Texas family code possession order impacts the father-child relationship. Social construction and policy design theory was used to analyze their experience. Using a qualitative phenomenological study, data from seven African American noncustodial fathers were collected. The results of these analyses indicated nine themes that identified the African American noncustodial fathers experience with Texas family code. The nine themes were: (a) great father-child relationship, (b) standard legal rights as a father; (c) child support system biased and unfair treatment toward them as a father; (d) lack of understanding to the term best interest of the child; (e) equal parental rights (time, roles, finances); (f) removing the label of being deadbeat; (g) wanting more parental time with children; (h) updating the child support policies to be fair to mothers and fathers, (i) limited familial structure. Legislators may benefit from the results by creating policies and laws based on scholarly research leading to positive social change.

Parental Alienation Social Construction to Texas Family Code: A Father's Perspective

by

Fatima Thomas

MA, Walden University, 2017

BS, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2021

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to every individual who acted as my positive support system throughout this process. Whether it was via telephone call, text message, email, and social media post, I am very appreciative of the overwhelming words of encouragement. This process was very challenging and arduous for me. However, you continuously pushed me to move forward with my accomplishments. I am deeply appreciative of all your support. A special dedication to my grandfather, Roosevelt Weston Sr. Your Lips did it! I miss you dearly. With humble regards, mission accomplished!

Acknowledgments

First, giving all honor to God for ordering my steps throughout this entire process. Without God's grace, favor, and love, none of this would be possible. I would like to begin by thanking my incredible husband, Michael Moody for being the most amazing man, friend, and supporter any wife could ask for. I don't know where my life would be without you, and for that I am beholden unto you. Thank you to my family, especially my parents, Georgetta Fulford, and Tracy and Maria Weston Fields. Thank you for raising me to be an overtly, well-driven young woman. Thank you to my siblings, Quentin Thomas Sr., Shamekia Thomas-Glass, and Lekevius Thomas, for making sure I remain dedicated to my purpose while still being an awesome aunt to my nieces and nephews. I would also like to thank my spiritual advisor, Jalea Rowe-Norman for assisting God with guiding me on my spiritual journey; my bestfriend, Jasmine Hopkins-Young for all your encouraging words; Bettye Gayfield-Scott for your encouraging words, social media post, and unplanned gatherings just to relax. I would further like to thank all my family and friends who have supported me on this journey. I love you all. Thank you to my dissertation coach, Dr. Derrick Jones for dedicating your time and abilities to ensuring I completed this process successfully. No matter the time or day, you made every effort possible to answer any questions I had or listen to me rant about how hard this process is for me. I am humbly indebted to you. Thank you to my trainer Glenda Herron for keeping me physically and mentally grounded. Thank you to Dr. Jessie Lee, my Chairperson for all your assistance, time, and valuable expertise throughout this process. You have

pushed me beyond my expectations and for that, you deserve to share this dissertation with me. Thank you for going above and beyond your duties to ensure I receive those two letters, Dr. in front of my name. Thank you to my committee, Dr. Darius Cooper for your assistance. To my God children, Jasyk Thomas, Madisyn Hines, Shamaurion Walker, and Marik Scott, I hope you will be inspired by my efforts to achieve all your goals in life. Furthermore, special thank you and respect to all my participants, the wonderful brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., and the so lovely, so beautiful, so finer ladies of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Z-Phi... Sooooo Sweet!!!!!!!!!!

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the study	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	5
Problem Statement.....	9
Purpose of the Study.....	11
Research Questions.....	12
Theoretical Framework.....	13
Nature of the Study.....	15
Definitions.....	17
Assumptions.....	18
Scope and Delimitations	19
Limitations	20
Summary.....	22
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	24
Introduction.....	24
Literature Search Strategy.....	37
Theoretical Framework.....	40
History of Parental Alienation	52

Parental Alienation Syndrome vs. Parental Alienation.....	62
History of Juvenile Delinquency	66
Gender Roles in Delinquency	72
Custodial Parent Alienation Strategy and Contribution.....	75
Non-Custodial Parent Alienation Strategy and Contribution	85
Risk Factors and Contribution to Delinquency.....	95
Factors to Race, Gender, and Status to Delinquent Behavior.....	104
The Best Interest of the Child.....	107
Parental relationships and the interaction of family structure	119
Perception of Parent-Child Relationship to Delinquent Behavior.....	121
Perception of Father-Child Relationship to Family Structure	128
Summary.....	141
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	145
Introduction.....	145
Research Design and Rationale	147
Research Questions.....	147
Research Tradition.....	148
Design Rationale.....	151
Ethical Concerns	156
Methodology.....	159
Instrumentation	163

Research Participants	166
Data Analysis	168
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	169
Ethical Procedures	171
Summary	173
Chapter 4: Results	176
Introduction.....	176
Setting	177
Data Collection	179
Data Analysis	180
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	182
Results.....	185
Primary Research Question.....	186
Subquestion 2a.....	220
Subquestion 2b.....	221
Subquestion 2c.....	221
Summary	222
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	228
Introduction.....	228
Interpretation of the Findings.....	230
Limitations of the Study.....	235

Recommendations.....	236
Implications.....	238
Conclusion	240
References.....	245
Appendix A: Research Questionnaire.....	292

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographics	212
Table 2. Themes	223

List of Figures

Figure 1. Word Cloud	217
----------------------------	-----

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

Introduction

Parental alienation syndrome (PAS) is an alleged disorder syndrome constructed by Dr. Richard Gardner in 1985. Dr. Gardner's illustration of PAS is a disorder commonly used by one parent to purposefully estrange a child's attachment from the other parent in child-custody disputes. This type of alienation results in one parent influencing or programming the child(ren) negative behavior towards the other parent, considerably identified as the rejected parent. (Kelly & Johnston, 2001). Alienated children often exhibit problematic and disturbed behavior, usually in the rejected parents' home based on the continuum efforts of the alienated parents' behavior. (Kelly & Johnston, 2001). Parents of adolescents are often blamed for their child's delinquent behavior (Hoeve, 2009).

The behaviors of parents' association with PAS employs a phenomenon generated by the custodial parent using techniques of alienation to inflict vengeance, harm or control of the non-custodial parent, or to deny physical and legal custody of the children from the noncustodial parent (Gardner, 2002a). The linkage between parenting and delinquency includes factors such as parent-child involvement, parental alienation, and several family factors (e.g. family size, attachment, punishment; Hoeve, 2009).

In 2017, there were more than 400,000 live births in the state of Texas (Health Texas Babies Data Book, 2017). Texas has the fourth highest birth rate in the United States, more than 390,000 births were to mothers who reside in Texas (Health Texas

Babies Data Book, 2017). Despite being one of the highest birth rate states, Texas's birth rate for unmarried mothers declined by less than 2% from 2015 (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2018). Among the largest race group, Hispanics estimated a live birth rate in Texas of 188,393 in addition to their unmarried birth rate of 67.9% (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2018). Ranking second highest in live birth rates, Whites estimated at 134,262, with only a 29.5% unmarried birth rate. (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2018). The number of Whites' live births are disproportionate to African Americans by a significant amount. African Americans' live birth rate estimated at 15,889. However, the unmarried rate is calculated at 58.3%. The number of unmarried births by African Americans has doubled in comparison to Whites. However, Hispanics' unmarried births tripled in comparison to African Americans.

According to Texas Demographic Data (2016), the head of the household represents 20% of females alone in comparison to males alone of 7%. The average unwed births and on state assistance represents 1% of the Texas population. The U.S. Census Bureau (2016) estimated an average of 73.7 million children under the age of 18 reside with two-parent household families (69%). Children residing with single mothers is the second most common family arrangement estimated at 23% in the United States. Little is known about what affects Texas Family code §153.3101-317 contained within, *The Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship*, have on African American noncustodial fathers.

Under Texas jurisdiction, each parent acts as *joint managing conservators*, meaning they will share parental rights and duties. Before joint-custodial policies and practices, the mother was identified by the courts as a seminal figure in the child's life, acknowledging the mother as the *custodial* parent, and the father as the *noncustodial* parent. The fact that children are generally more closely bonded with their mothers, during the burgeoning of child-custody disputes, the mother is designated as the custodial parent and the father as the noncustodial parent.

Texas Family Code, §153.3101-317, addresses conservatorship and possession and access that act in the best interest of the child. The standard possession and access provisions are generated based on the father's and mother's parental rights and responsibilities to the child(ren). These provisions are designed to provide the noncustodial parent (usually the father) rights and responsibilities to the child(ren) as he or she is no longer an active party in the household with the mother and child(ren).

Texas Family Code incorporated the standard possession and access order as a way to help create a positive relationship between the parents and child(ren). The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the lived experience of African American father's experiences with parental alienation and examine how the codification of Texas Family Code §153.3101-317, possession and access provision impacts the noncustodial fathers' relationship to the child. The study examined the relationship to delinquent behavior.

These experiences assisted with capturing the impact of Texas Family Code §153.3101-317 on African American noncustodial fathers as it pertains to parental rights

that are enacted in the best interest of the child and how it contributes to delinquent behavior. According to Eaton et al. (2009), approaches to understanding delinquent behavior focuses on parental behavior and personality. Doggett (2001) contends that children who are rejected by their parents, who are involved in the extensive conflict between parents, and who are inadequately supervised are at greater risk of becoming delinquent. According to Kelly & Johnston (2001), children's behavior is determined by each parent's influence and the development of anger is reflected in alienated children in their preadolescent and adolescent years.

The examination of the entire child support system must be analyzed based on the relationships, not just between child and parent, but between parents. Child support cases are established involuntarily (TANF, Medicaid, CPS, etc) or voluntarily (custodial, noncustodial, nonrelative). The gap in the literature is that few qualitative studies that focus on "first-hand reports on African American fathers" perspective of parenting (Doyle et al., 2015, p. 7). This qualitative study my provide literature on law and child custody with a deeper understanding by using a phenomenological approach to African American noncustodial father's perspective on parental alienation and to gain insight on the impact of Texas Family Code §153.3101-317, possession and access provisions that may affect African American noncustodial fathers and inadvertently contribute to delinquent behavior.

In Chapter 1, I will present the introduction and background of the proposed research study. Chapter 1 will also consist of the problem statement that will adduce

Texas Statistics' demographic data and possession and access provisions. I will also present the purpose of the study, the research questions, the scope of the study, assumptions, limitations of the study, and implications of the study. Finally, I will introduce the theoretical framework for the proposed study, the definition of terms, and the significance of the study that will generate a positive social change.

Background

Throughout the history of parental involvement, the conflict between parents has advanced into ongoing custody disputes involving children's equal access to both parents. The aggressive conflict amongst parents reported a subset of contributions that have driven parents to exaggerate the term brainwashing in the legal child custody disputes. The unfair treatment displayed by parents in custody disputes has shifted the equalized formulation of normative parenting. Expectations of men and women's roles have changed over time, removing the traditional parental roles from the household (Harmen et al., 2016).

To examine parental behavior in custody disputes, the relationship with their children post-divorce or separation, the negative stereotypes associated with parents, and the behavioral issues subjected to the children in conflictual situations, it is important to analyze from a parental perspective. Essentially, parental alienation, history of delinquent behavior, the custodial parent alienation strategy, the noncustodial parent alienation strategy, the risk factors and contribution to delinquent behavior, the best interest of the

child, and the perception of parent-child relationships, and delinquent behavior were applied to the literature review to support the rationale of my study.

Many noncustodial parents believe Texas child support guidelines limit fathers' rights and access to their child(ren) while ensuring the financial guidelines are upheld as permitted by court order. One underlying factor other than the financial circumstances of the custodial parent is a lack of acknowledgment the custodial parent fails to adhere to as the joint managing conservator under the Texas Family Code. The child support division of the Office of Attorney General is the public child support agency of the state of Texas. Acting under the Social Security Act of 1975, Title IV-D is employed through the federal government as an active child support enforcement program. The purpose of the Texas Child Support Division is to ensure that children receive the support they need and deserve from both parents.

Under the Title IV-D, the state of Texas is allowed to help families with establishing paternity, establishing child, medical, and dental support order, collecting child support, modifying a child support obligation, and establishing conservatorship with regards to possession and access. During the child support process, parents are identified as the custodial parent and noncustodial parent. The custodial parent is recognized as the *managing conservator*, and the noncustodial parent is identified as the *possessor conservator*. According to Grall, in 2014, one in every 6 custodial parents were fathers (17.5%) while about 5 of every 6 custodial parents were mothers (82.5%). Grall also reported that less than half (45.7%) of custodial parents were non-Hispanic white, one-

half (27.0%) were black, and 24.1% were Hispanics. The findings also indicated that more than 59.3% of custodial fathers were non-Hispanic, 17.1% were black, and 18.7% were Hispanic.

Despite the increased effort to encourage parental responsibility, establish a parent-child relationship, and perform duties in an efficient manner that offers assistance involving the federal government, the child support system has failed to provide support to fathers who are denied possession and access to their child(ren). Texas Family Code refers to custody as *conservatorship* and visitation as *periods of possession*. Researchers suggest through interactional perspective-unsupportive parents increase the probability of delinquency among their children (Cernkovich & Giordano 1987; Patterson et al. 1992; Stewart et al., 2016).

Obstructing the enactment of parent involvement associated with the child support policies, custodial parents inflict contact refusal as a way to alienate the other parent from the child. Contact refusal exhibits alienating behavior, at which point allows the coalition between the child and the alienating parent. Despite the many influences related to delinquency, researchers have found common interaction with the family structure has an impact on the phenomenon. According to Rowen (2015), conflict issues between parents during the developmental stages of adolescents before, after, and during parental separation is toxic to the influence of social behavior. Kruk (2010) reported that fathers' description of their attachment to their children is stronger than any attachment, and there

is very little empirical research that examines the father's views on their child's relationship in light of custodial arrangements.

McLanahan and Sandefur's (1994) moved to suggest that girls with absent fathers were 9% more likely to get pregnant as teens, and young men are less than 11% likely to be unemployed. The reflection of the parents is of the child's perception. When a child becomes an adult, their future relationships are usually based on their relationships with their parents (Schwartz, 2015).

Communication between parents and children is one form of a positive family structure that provides safety and security to the dynamics of delinquent behavior in adolescents (Donges, 2015). According to researchers, Yablonski (2002) and Erickson (1963) both found the lack of adequate family structure can influence juvenile behavior and facilitates the development of delinquency. Texas Family Code is designed to act in the best interest of the child §153.002-317. Therefore, parental alienation is a defense that is used to determine the interest of the child and the influences that may appear to alter that interest. This research examined the experience of African American noncustodial fathers as it pertains to the alienation, delinquent behavior, if any, and the father-child relationship associated with the child support division.

The gap in the literature is that there are many qualitative studies on "parenting literature to date has been based to a large extent of the mother" (Doyle, et al., 2015 p.2). This qualitative research study enhanced literature that examines the phenomenological aspect of the African American noncustodial fathers' experiences with alienation

techniques under the Texas Family Code while gaining insight into delinquent behavior in the children associated under the child support division.

Problem Statement

There appears to be a problem in the state of Texas regarding the disproportionate number of African American noncustodial fathers who have experienced a form of parental alienation as it pertains to the Texas Family Code §153.3101-317 possession and access. The growing concerns have also contributed to the father-child relationship and possible impact on delinquent behavior in children. In 2016, there were more than 400,000 live births in the state of Texas (Health Texas Babies Data Book, 2017). Despite being one of the highest birth rates states, Texas' birth rate for unmarried mothers declined by less than 2% from 2015 (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2018). The number of Whites live births are disproportionate to African Americans by a significant amount. African Americans' live birth rate estimated at 15,889. However, the unmarried rate is calculated at 58.3%. The number of unmarried births by African Americans has doubled in comparison to Whites.

The problem with parental alienation is the disproportionate argument regarding its inception when used in many court proceedings as a reference to the noncustodial parent's significance in their children's lives, in comparison to the custodial parent's significance. Many researchers have considered parental alienation as a psychological condition that is used in the clinical arenas. However, the term has since been identified as a diverse entity that is considered a problematic descriptive in nature (Harmen et al.,

2019). According to Harmen et al. (2019), parental alienation acts as an estrangement mechanism that “refers to the problem with a parent-child relationship that is due to the relationship within itself” (Texas Family Code Title 5, pg. 2). Texas Family Code *Title 5* refers to their possession and access provision as a *Standard Possession Order* (SPO). Under the provision, the parties can be awarded joint managing conservatorship over the children.

Before joint-custody policies and practices, the mother was identified by the courts as a seminal figure in the child’s life, acknowledging the mother as the custodial parent, and the father as the noncustodial parent. According to the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau, one in every six custodial parents (17.5%) was a father. During custody disputes, an alienating parent enacts distancing behaviors such as coercion, control, limited time with the targeted parent, and manipulation tactics that make establishing a positive parent-child relationship difficult (Harmen et al., 2019).

According to Doyle et al., 2015, researchers have identified African American fathers as authoritative parents who believe in displaying physical and verbal punishment, but still being encouraging and affectionate. In a study conducted by Nebbitt et al. (2013), research concluded that African American fathers who presented an authoritative parenting style along with encouragement and support, reported a low level of delinquency among African American youth residing in a public housing project (as cited in Doyle et al., 2015). According to Harper and McLahanan (2016), who conducted a study on the likelihood of youth incarceration, fathers’ absent in a household accounts for

the majority of youth incarceration, and children born outside of the marriage presumably have little contact with their father.

The gap in the literature is there are many qualitative studies on “parenting literature to date has been based to a large extent of the mother” (Doyle, et.al, 2015 p.2). This qualitative research study enhanced literature that examines the phenomenological aspect of African American noncustodial fathers’ experience with alienation techniques under the Texas family code while gaining insight into delinquent behavior in the children associated under the child support division.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the lived experiences of African American noncustodial fathers’ interaction to parental alienation and how Texas family code §153.3101-317 impacts the social construction of the father-child relationship while determining if any, a correlation to delinquent behavior. The phenomenon of interest is the alarming rate of African American males in the state of Texas immersed in the child support program with limited visitation access. In conjunction with the 6.5 million custodial parents awarded child support in 2013, only half (52.2%) of the noncustodial parents were permitted visitation, but denied joint or shared physical custody, in addition to 30.5 % of noncustodial parents who were granted joint or shared custody (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Unfortunately for the children involved in shared custody disputes, the underlying representation of the child(ren)’s relationship with the absent father goes unnoticed.

Furthermore, the state of Texas child support division implements a standard possession and access provision that acts as a visitation arrangement. However, the state of Texas does not enforce the provision. This creates a barrier between the father and child relationship, dismissing the mission that serves as a program designed to help noncustodial parents establish and maintain an active relationship with their children.

Additionally, to hold the parent in contempt of the possession and access provision, the other parent must file their petition of contempt. This qualitative study intends to examine the lived experiences of African American noncustodial fathers' interaction to parental alienation and identify the ways the possession and access component of Texas family code impacts the social construction of the father-child relationship specifically looking to also identify correlations to delinquent behavior in their children as a result of the alienation. The phenomenon of interest is an alarming rate of African American males in the state of Texas immersed in the child support program with limited visitation access.

Research Questions

The intent of this phenomenological study is to reach the core of African American noncustodial fathers lived experience with alienation and how the possession and access §153.3101-317 of the Texas family code impose on the social construction of their lives while impacting their family structure, father-child relationship and if any, delinquent behavior from the noncustodial father's perspective. Primary questions are posed following a subquestion:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How does parental alienation impact African American noncustodial fathers' perception of the Texas Family code §153.3101-317 possession and access order? Describe their experiences?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How does the codification of §153.002-§153.317 of Texas Family Code impose on family structure and the father-child relationship.

Subquestion 2a: What role does the father exhibit that influences the father-child relationship?

Subquestion 2b: What indoctrinating behavior has the father experienced with the other parent and child?

Subquestion 2c: What indoctrinating behavior has the father engaged in that contributed to the alienation?

Theoretical Framework

Social construction and policy design theory provides a framework for my study. Social construction policy was introduced in the late 1980s by policy theorist (Schneider & Ingram, 1988; Ingram & Schneider 1990, 1991) as a way to demonstrate how policymakers' interpretation of target populations in a social setting can reflect positive and negative perspectives from the phenomenon. Schneider and Ingram designed an approach that could be relatable to understanding the policy process (Pierce et al., 2016). Ingram's interpretation of social construction and policy design theory incorporates the reasoning behind specific policies and procedures that have failed to meet the standard criteria for "solving problems, supporting democratic institutions, or producing greater

quality of citizenship” (Ingram et al., 2007 p. 93) that allows the social construction of a target population and democracy to be analyzed (Pierce et al., 2016).

According to Pierce et al. (2016), Ingram and Schneider conceived social construction and policy design theory to contribute to the theory of normality that displayed the advantage some groups experienced with various policies and how another group did not experience the same end result with the same policy. Cairney and Pierce (2018) insisted that degenerative policies failed to solve problems in the United States such as: “racism, poverty, crime, sexism, and equal access to health and education” (p.1). The most pertinent question asked in social construction is the understanding of “why some groups reap the benefits, and others reap the burdens” (Pierce et. al., 2014, p.3). The race is the term used to identify the benefits and burdens of target populations.

Social construction and policy design theory is an ideal framework for this qualitative study as it focuses on the African American noncustodial fathers’ experience with the Texas Child support division and the simulations of their policies on possession and access to their children. While this program was designed to act in the best interest of the child, the aforementioned child support mission creates a division amongst the “negative and positive social construction on the deserving and undeserving axis” (Ingram et al., 2017, pg. 98, 101). As reported by Cairney and Pierce (2018), Schneider et al. (2014) insisted that policymaker’s incorporation of policies regarded the “good and bad” groups. The “good” groups were rewarded through support from the government while the “bad” groups were punished with sanctions for their participation (pg. 2).

The conceptual lens reproduced a phenomenological qualitative study that examined the lived experiences of African American noncustodial fathers interaction to parental alienation and how Texas family code §153.3101-317, possession and access, impacts the social construction of the father-child relationship while seeking to understand if any contribution to delinquent behavior. By utilizing the social construction and policy design framework, the study evaluated how Texas Family code §153.3101-317 impacts family structure by examining African American noncustodial fathers' experience with alienation and if any, contribution it has on delinquent behavior. This study assisted with law reviews and the obstruction of disparities.

Nature of the Study

The nature of my study was a qualitative phenomenological research inquiry. Qualitative research provides an outlook on the lives of individuals or groups of individuals to convey an individual's feelings, thoughts, or experiences that might affect their behavior (Austin and Sutton, 2015). The purpose of the qualitative method for this study is to understand how parental alienation affects the father's relationship with their children, and how the Texas child support family code on possession and access contributes to alienation. It was to gather the perspective of the phenomena from the father's point of view and experience. Qualitative inquiry is designed to operate using "context, dynamics, interdependent, textual, nuanced, unpredictable and understanding through stories, and more stories" (Patton 2016, p.87). This research study allows the

researcher to explore people's understanding, beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions (Pathak et al., 2013).

To explore the overall account of the phenomenon studied, I utilized a face-to-face and internet via Skype, Facetime, or Zoom to conduct the semistructured interview of 7 African American noncustodial fathers in Dallas/Fort Worth Texas, specifically Tarrant County. The participants were instructed to respond to an invitation of intent to participate. No secondary data was used in this study. I acted as the primary instrument for the study; therefore, I collected, analyzed, and transcribed the data collected. The interview was recorded using an audio-recording device. Afterward, the interview and notes were transcribed and coded within 3 days from each interview. The data was coded using a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.

Nvivo is a software that stores and organizes a large amount of data. This software makes it easier for researchers to access and assign codes. Coding requires labeling data with phrases that identify meanings and patterns through “essence-capturing” of the research story (Saldana, 2016, p. 9). If any issues arise with Nvivo, I will utilize another qualitative software, ATLAS.ti. The data was divided and organized based on the phrases found in the study. The data was collected and stored on my personal, password protected computer hard drive. I also used a USB key to store the data as a secondary storage device. The significance of my study was to cultivate an understanding of African American noncustodial fathers' experience with parental alienation contributed by the Texas Family Code possession and access provision.

Definitions

The best interest of the children: a coined term adopted by family law as a standard reference to the parent-child relationship, granting each parent rights and duties to the child (Texasattorneygeneral.gov).

Joint managing conservators: shared parental rights and duties of the child(ren). (Texasattorneygeneral.gov).

Family: the social environment operated under micro-social factor that primitively directs the behavior of an individual, while the relationship to members of the family and personality traits act as the macro-social factor (Rathinabalan et al., 2017).

Parental alienation: programming of the child results in the alienation of one parent to denigrate the other parent contributing to the ongoing issue of supporting the campaign of the alienating parent's augmentation of denigration against the alienated parent (Kelly & Johnston, 2001).

Alienating parent: responsible for the enlistment of child participation in various antics in an attempt to disengage the child with the targeted parent (Balmer, 2017; Warshak, 2015; Gardner, 2002; Hands et al., 2011; Harman et al., 2018).

Deadbeat: negative stereotype about noncustodial parents or unmarried fathers as being "bad" parents (Haman et al., pg. 866).

Target parents: presumably the father that is experiencing alienating behavior (Balmer et al., 2018).

Intense hurt: feeling that harbored an analysis that is traumatic as the death of a child (cited in Bosch-Brits et al., 2018; Baker et al., 2014; Goldberg and Goldberg (2013).

Fathers: men who are viewed by society as “providers” (Harman et al., 2016).

Parent-child relationship: relationship that is established between a parent and a child (Gaik et al., 2016).

Delinquent: an individual that experiences learned behavior that constitutes the technique of a crime, motive, drive, rationalization, and attitude favorable to the violations of laws (Sykes & Mata, 2013).

Mediation- an adjunct to the court's determination of child custody and visitation (Stoner, et al, 2011).

Social construction and policy design: a theory on how policymaker's interpretation of target populations in a social setting can reflect positive and negative perspectives from the phenomenon (Schneider and Ingram 1988; Ingram and Schneider 1990, 1991).

Assumptions

These are a few assumptions that I addressed in the study that is critical to the meaningfulness of my study. The first assumption I addressed is African Americans' indication that the child support system is designed to “keep the black man” down. The second assumption I addressed is that that the possession and access provision under Texas Family Code is designed in the best interest of the child. The third assumption that

I addressed is society views African American fathers as not actively involved in their children's lives. The fourth assumption I approached is that all the participants had experienced some form of alienation by the other parent from a father's perspective. These assumptions cannot be proven true in my study that is constructed to examine the lived experience of African American noncustodial fathers' exposure to parental alienation under the Texas Family Code.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of delimitations conducted in this qualitative study on 10 in-depth interviews on 7 to 9 African American noncustodial fathers' experiences with alienation under the Texas Family code, possession, and access provisions. The scope of delimitations also confronted the impact alienation has on the father-child relationship and delinquent behavior. This specific focus was chosen because the significance of the child support division emphasizes on the best interest of the child; however, that broad assumption is open to many forms of interpretation.

The boundaries of this study included African American noncustodial fathers in the state of Texas. The study limited its selection of participants to the Dallas/Fort Worth area in Texas with an active child support case specifically in Tarrant County. The child support order must also include the possession and access provision. Women of all races, men under the age of 25, children, and men of all races other than African Americans were be excluded from this study. Most of the current study on alienation and parental

involvement includes a higher perspective from the mother and child and limits the perspective of the father.

Transferability was addressed in this proposed study by providing a *thick and rich* description of the social construction and policy design framework that is easily interpreted and understood throughout the study. The alignment of the purpose, problem statement, research questions, and theoretical framework was used to transfer a more descriptive context of the study.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the qualitative research study. The first limitation is that I am a current employee for the Texas Attorney General Child Support Division. I am an active child support enforcement officer III and I have a general concept on the operational and procedural criteria related to parental rights under Texas Family code §153.3101-317. As the above statement was addressed due to my perspective of the child support system, parental rights, and possession and access provision under the Joint Managing Conservatorship clause could impact the results of my research study. The objective of my study could be perceived using my personal biases to ongoing research.

To ensure transferability and dependability, my participants were informed of my active position with the agency and that the study is not a reflection of the Attorney General; the information for this study did not influence any decisions the Attorney General enacted on participants' future and ongoing child support order. I entered into

this research study without any preconceived notions about my participants and the relationship with Texas Attorney General, the other parent, and the children on the case.

Another limitation of this research is the rationale of a qualitative phenomenological approach rather than a quantitative study. This study was not based on larger data analysis but on a smaller yet, generated massive data that is complex and provides a great insight into the participant's experience of the specific phenomenon. The sample size for this study is populated on a smaller representation of data for the participants to provide the researcher with access to a deeper and more unconscious understanding of the phenomenon. These limitations were addressed throughout the interview, transcriptions, coding, and emergent themes. The findings of this study included how the themes emerged during the study, and which I presented to my dissertation committee, to ensure personal biases were addressed. The findings were not manipulated in any way to enhance the research study.

In doing interpretative phenomenological research, the researcher has to incorporate “sensitivity to the participants' values and norms” (Romanoff, 2012 p.14). According to Romanoff (2012), the purpose of sensitivity prevents the researcher from collecting biased data for their study. Qualitative research provides many approaches to understanding the world as perceived through various lenses. Positive social change is used through a qualitative analysis that is based on in-depth information rather than statistics used in quantitative analysis that is beneficial to policymakers (Romanoff, 2012; Trochim and Donnelly, 2007). I was aware as a researcher, the participant's responses

were based on a marginalized population and rarely heard. Therefore, the participants may have embellished some accounts or not responded to the questions asked. I remained receptive to their responses and applied reflexivity during the interview to encourage participants to remain open and honest.

Summary

Chapter 1 began with the introduction of the phenomenon of interest and the proposed research study. This includes the background of African American families and their counterparts on the recognized contortion of the family dynamic and the history of the child custody disputes as it pertains to Texas Family code §153.3101-317 possession and access. In Chapter 1, the problem statement was presented with in-depth information on the disproportionate rate of African American fathers through the use of significant statistics. The purpose statement that detailed the general rationale behind the study, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, definition of terminology, an assumption, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, significance of the study, and the summary of the study were also addressed.

Chapter 2 will review the history of literature and the history of African American family structure as it pertains to the African American father's challenges faced in child-custody disputes and their parental involvement under Texas Attorney General Child support division. The child-custody disputes refuted the assumption, best interest of the child, as its stands were designed to increase joint custody concepts. However, the disparities between the best interest of the child and alienating behaviors create an

unbalanced perception of parental involvement and responsibilities required further assessment.

The history of parental alienation and juvenile delinquency reveals a correlation to the African American family structure and how the behavior of the individual influences the perpetual cycle of sociological and criminalizable behavior. From gender roles in delinquency to custodial, noncustodial contributions to alienation, father-child relationships, everyone is affected by the dynamics of family structure. Chapter 2 will also include other topics such as: parental alienation syndrome vs. parental alienation; parental alienation interaction to family structure; risk factors and contributions to the delinquency; factors to race, gender, and status of delinquency; perception of parent-child relationship to delinquency; the best interest of the child concept; and the theoretical framework social construction and policy design as they are all relevant to my research study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Parental alienation is an alleged disorder syndrome constructed by Dr. Richard Gardner in 1985. Dr. Gardner's illustration of PAS is a disorder commonly used by one parent to “brainwash” the child from the other parent in child-custody disputes. The problem with parental alienation is the disproportionate argument regarding its inception when used in many court proceedings as a reference to the non-custodial parent’s significance in their children's lives, in comparison to the custodial parent’s significance.

Researchers have argued parental alienation is used in many court appearances as a clear rejection of denied access to the child by the other parent (Vessel, 1999). Parental alienation has been commonly used about family law as the deciding factor in high conflict cases (Smith, 2016). Noteworthy critics, Kelly and Johnston (2001) argued the context of PAS had been misunderstood in judicial and legal circles, implying the use of PAS is identified in many child custody disputes (Houchin et.al. 2012). According to Gardner (2002), since the 1970s custody disputes have become unparalleled favoring the recent realms of the advancement of child custody ligations. The presumption of the court’s ruling merely engaged on the emphasis of the best-interest-of-the child, “increasing the joint-custodial concept” (p.192).

Families that experience intense conflict during child custody disputes are seemingly based on the contest of visitation or custody by one parent’s anger or allegations of abuse (Bruch, 2001). Over the years, many people speculated during child-

custody mediation the courts concept of operating under a less than strenuous litigation, assumed gender bias in determining the placement of a child. According to Texas Attorney General, 10 % of non-custodial parents are mothers as to, 90 % of non-custodial parents are fathers. Despite the increased effort to encourage parental responsibility, establish a parent-child relationship, and perform duties in an efficient manner that offers assistance involving the federal government, the child support system has failed to provide support to fathers who are denied possession and access to their child (ren).

Texas Family Code, The Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship refers to custody as conservatorship and visitation as periods of possession (Texas Attorney General.gov). Under Texas jurisdiction each parent act as joint managing conservators, meaning they will share parental rights and duties. Before joint-custodial policies and practices, the mother was identified by the courts as a seminal figure in the child's life, acknowledging the mother as the custodial parent, and the father as the noncustodial/ parent. Gender bias is a concern that many people believe is overlooked or under-represented, seemingly fathers in family court proceedings involving the primary placement of a child.

According to the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau child support statistic report, one in every six custodial parents (17.5%) were fathers. Issued in January 2016, the report recorded a decrease in children residing with two parents from 1960 to 2016 at a rate of 88% to 69%. The results also indicated during the period of 1960 -2016, the children

residing with only the mother tripled from 8 percent to 28 percent, and children residing with the father only increased from 1-4 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

On average, the proportion of custodial mothers declined by 53.1 % since the 2004 reporting. The decline in custodial mothers presented an astounding increase in custodial fathers at 31.4% in 2014 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). African American males represented the proportion of 34.7 % of custodial fathers, in comparison to their White counterparts, estimating an average of 52.9% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Although statistics have demonstrated an alarming increase in father's role as the primary custodial parent, the courts still rely on the presumption that the father's paternal deficiencies are less substantial, identifying the mother as a suitable parent (Gresk, 2013).

In the before mentioned of Texas conservatorship, possession and access guidelines, the parents are identified as *joint managing conservator*. Under these guidelines, both parents are granted shared privileges to their child (ren). Although the guidelines indicate *joint conservatorship*, the custodial parent is awarded additional access and privileges regarding the well-being of the child (ren). In conjunction with 6.5 million custodial parents awarded child support in 2013, only half (52.2%) of the non-custodial parents were permitted visitation, but denied joint or shared physical custody; in addition to 30.5 % of non-custodial parents who were granted some sort of joint or shared custody (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Unfortunately for the children involved in shared custody disputes, the underlying representation of the child (ren)s' relationship with the absent father goes unnoticed. According to Kelly and Johnston (2001), children's

behavior is determined by each parent's influence and the development of anger is reflected in alienated children in their preadolescent and adolescent years.

Empirical studies have concluded through theorizing and research that ineffective parenting leads to delinquent behavior (Stewart et al., 2002). Children are considered the targeted population for alienation and the subjective realm to exposure of alienation tactics by the alienating parent. Balmer et.al (2018) found mothers frequently used parental alienation tactics exposure over a time period such as: interrogating the child; speaking rudely about the alienated parent in front of the targeted child; withholding affection from the child when the child is showing support toward the alienated parent; demanding the targeted child illustrates loyalty towards them; encouraging the targeted child to be defiant toward the alienated parent when in his or her custody; demanding the targeted child refute custody and visitation with the alienated parent; encouraging an active alliance with the alienating parent against the alienated parent.

The development or improvement of the parent-child relationship and delinquent interventions and strategies relies heavily on parents who are active in their children's lives using similar dimensions of parenting. The most used parenting dimensions are support and control (Hoeve, 2009).

The early adolescence and middle childhood are the most influential time for changes that exhibits between parent and child relationship. Researchers suggest through an interactional perspective; unsupportive parents increase the probability of delinquency among their children (Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Patterson et al. 1992; Stewart,

Simons et.al., 2016). As adolescents become more socially competent; and emotionally and interpersonally functioning, the parent-child relationship in the early stages of adolescent development increases conflict as their parents are perceived as less supportive (Nickerson and Nagle, 2004). Studies have shown that single-parent family structures commit significantly more delinquent behavior than adolescents from an intact (living with both parents) family structure (e.g., Anderson, 2002; Demuth and Brown, 2004; Kierkus and Baer, 2002; Torresgrosa, 2014).

To date there have been several research studies on fathers' involvement with their children, the importance of personal contact, establishing a close relationship with their children, and remaining active as a responsible parent (Yogman and Garfield, 2016). Other studies conducted a more transitional bidirectional approach to the relationship between fathers' involvement and delinquency behavior. Affirmed by Coley and Medeiros (2007), a bidirectional relationship between fathers' involvement and delinquency were conducted and assessed whether the fathers' involvement is predictive of adolescent delinquent behavior, or whether the delinquent behavior is predictive of the fathers' involvement. Research confirms that children who are rejected by their parents are adequately prone to delinquent behavior; furthermore, illustrating that parents are more likely to reject their children who experience delinquent behavior, causing an escalation of behavior from the children (Wright, 1993).

To examine various parenting dimensions, parental control must be aligned and generated from each parent, providing a dynamic that allows children to adapt to recent

changes involving custody disputes socially. Children often experience great difficulties transitioning from one parent to the next. If the child is under the impression that he or she must conform a stronger bond to the primary parent, the child may refuse contact with the other parent resulting in an unhealthy alliance with the alienating parent.

Once the unhealthy alliance with the alienating parent is established, the relationship between the target parent and child is left destroyed (Baker, 2005). The most effective way to address parenting and delinquency behavior, Hirshi assert parents must control his or her child utilizing three strategic parental techniques that include: monitoring the child, recognizing the child's behavior, and correcting the child's transgressions (Bell, 2009; Beaver et al., 2007).

Family is the key component to healthy relationships and prevention of delinquency. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported that parental involvement shapes the outcome of children's behavior to crime. The report states, (forwarded by the U.S. Department of Justice, 1993) "Children who are rejected by their parents, grow up in homes with considerable conflict; and are inadequately supervised are at great risk of becoming delinquent" (Wright, 1993). To comprehend how parental alienation and delinquent behavior has impacted African American non-custodial father's relationship with their child (ren), it was important that a qualitative phenomenological study is conducted to determine whether the non-custodial fathers' involvement in the child (ren) life is a continuity predictive to delinquent behavior.

Gender expectations are considerably the deciding factor in child support cases regarding the non-custodial father's relationship with their children (Baker, 2004). Many non-custodial parents believe Texas child support guidelines limit fathers' rights and access to their child (ren) while ensuring the financial guidelines are being upheld as permitted by court order. One underlying factor other than the financial circumstances of the custodial parent is lack of acknowledgment the custodial parent fails to adhere to as the joint managing conservator under the Texas Family Code §153.001-§153.317. Under the specified Public Policy provision 153.001. (a) It asserts the following:

1. The public policy of this assures that children will have frequent and continuing contact with parents who have shown the ability to act in the best interests of the child;
2. provide a safe, stable, and nonviolent environment for the child: and
3. encourage parents to share the rights and duties of raising their child after the parents have separated or dissolved their marriage

(b). A court may not render an order that conditions the right of a conservator to possession of or access to a child on the payment of child support.

Unlike factors constituted in the child support system that offers "liable consequences" to non-custodial parents who failed to adhere to the legal court order in providing financial support, the state of Texas offers no legal ramifications for parents who fail to adhere to the conservatorship, possession and access provisions.

The child support enforcement system has associated with parental responsibility as a criminal act that overshadows the initial program concept, the best interests of the child. Parents, who failed to pay their required obligation of support can legally be held in contempt by the courts. Researchers have determined the institutions of child support enforcement and the criminal justice court systems overlap based on reasoning, the parent accrued child support and interest while incarcerated, on the other hand incarcerating the non-custodial parent for failing to pay the obligated child support and interest (Cozzolinio, 2018). Under Texas law, the office of the Attorney General has the authority to contempt the non-custodial parents based on non-payment.

The contempt actions can range between a jail sentence up to six months or more and can also accrue fines for each violation at \$500.00 or more plus court cost. Other enforcement remedies the state of Texas is allowed to take upon the non-custodial parent are: licenses suspensions (commercial, drivers, personal, and recreational), liens (property, financial institutions, assets, federal tax offset, etc) passport denials and suspension, wage garnishments (social security benefits (SSA), employer, retirement plans, pensions, etc) and vehicle registration denials. The most common mechanism that allows the government to enforce contempt on the evasion of child support is civil contempt under noncriminal support provisions (Cozzolinio, 2018).

The examination of the entirety child support system must be analyzed based on relationships, not just between child and parent, but between parents. Child support cases are seemingly established through involuntarily (TANF, Medicaid, CPS, etc) or

voluntarily (custodial, non-custodial, non-relative). Many factors play into the voluntary process of child support establishment and enforcement actions. According to Cozzolinio (2018), mothers are more prone to establishing child support against the father, if the father is in a new relationship; and most likely to cooperate with the child support system contempt efforts if the relationship between the parents has gotten worse.

As children enter the transitional period of adolescence, children immediately acquire the role of adulthood from childhood. Through the transitional period of adolescence, children can generate various personality traits associated with the social and familial structural environment that causes delinquent behavior. The imposed factors are identifiable on two functional social normality of delinquency, micro-social, and macro-social (Rathinabalan and Naaraayan, 2017). According to Rathinabalan and Naaraayan, (2017), the family is the social environment operated under micro-social factor that primitively directs the behavior of an individual, while the relationship to members of the family and personality traits act as the macro-social factors.

The family structure involves a parent's commitment to actively participating in their children's lives. As Doggett (2013) referenced to Wright and Wright (1994), "family is the foundation of human society" (p.2). Developing a relationship that perceives parents' social involvement with the child reinforces the dual role of parents by providing nurture and structure balance; hence a parent-child relationship. The parent-child relationship is perceived as a bonding approach that solidifies the social inadequacies that is a partial moderator to delinquency. More previously mentioned, Hirschi affirms that

adolescents from non-intact family structures experience weaker parent-child bond than an adolescent from an intact family structure (Torresgrosa, 2017).

Once the parent-child relationship weakens, the child becomes vulnerable, making him or her more inclined to engage in delinquent behavior (Hirschi, 1969; Kierkus and Baer, 2002). Changes in the family structure relate often when the father is absent from the child's life. Things that transpire in a child's life has an immediate effect on the child's behavior and choices (Wright, 1993). As stated above, parental rejection is a significant variable to delinquency. Fathers are considerably the rejected parent, so their absence is usually controlled by the mother. Obstructing the enactment of parent involvement associated with the child support policies, custodial parents inflict contact refusal as a way to alienate the other parent from the child. Contact refusal exhibits alienating behavior, at which point allows the coalition between the child and the alienating parent.

The complex interplay between the parent's behavior and the children's response to alienation provides a complex interaction between parent and child. An advert analysis of contact refusal conducted by Huff (2015) suggests, in regard to the coalition and parental warmth; mothers are the identifiable predictors in the coalition, while the children experience a better relationship with their fathers during separation. The separation of parents can offer multiple factors that contribute to parental alienation; however, preventing contact refusal for malicious intent is unacceptable. Previous

research has shown that fathers will report greater severity of parental alienation than mothers (Balmer, 2018).

Previous literature has examined the focus of parental alienation and the characteristics of the alienating parent and the child. Children that are subjected to inadequate supervision, emotional support, and parental rejection and alienation are recognizably the most powerful predictors of delinquent behaviors (Stewart et al., 2016). Children who face rejection by their parents are at greater risk of delinquent behavior (Doggett, 2013). The research will examine how the inclusion of parental alienation affects the non-custodial father's relationship with the child and examine how delinquency reacts as a co-dependent to alienation as a reciprocal relationship.

Parental involvement requires the dual roles of nurture and structure from both parents. In respect to previous literature on the characteristics of parental alienation, the experience of the targeted parents (non-custodial) is under-researched. From 1973 through 1995, the Texas Family Code has received many changes, big and small, in the fundamental aspect of "parental custody and visitation" (Sampson, 2011). Due to the overwhelming lobbyist interest group such as the fathers' rights group, the legislative procedure enacted many underlying issues that offered a more rational approach to a parent-child relationship (Sampson, 2011). Texas Family Code adopted the coined term best interest of the child, as a standard reference to the parent-child relationship, granting each parent rights and duties to the child. However, many believe the best interest of the child supported in a court of law is presumably the mother.

Over time, the expansion of the best interest of the child is based on the interpretation of the courts. By the 20th century, the courts begin to recognize during a child's most "tender years" (p.3) the best interest lies within the maternal custody (Cahn and Caborne, 2018). The gap in the literature is that "despite the body of literature that examines and describes alienation from the alienating parent and child perspective, there is little research that describes alienation from the targeted parents' perspective" (Balmer, 2018). Previous literature provided an analysis of the targeted parent as being emotionally detached, unskilled parental wellbeing, and undesirable parental involvement (Balmer, 2018; Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Vassiliou and Cartwright, 2001).

The separation of parental involvement within the sociocultural phenomenon of fatherhood is culturally prevalent in the development of any child (Barnes, 2016). Other authors attribute to the father's involvement in the child-rearing years is beneficial to developing a positive relationship between father and child. Children who receive adequate involvement and nurturing from their fathers perform better in school, exhibit enhanced socio-emotional skills, increased self-esteem, and literacy development (Barnes, 2016; Howard et al., 2006; Rimm-Kaufman and Zhang, 2005). Since parental alienation is considerably a new concept, the number of cases that are reported is unknown and tracking and measuring the phenomenon makes is difficult (Baker, 2005; Turkat, 2002). What is known is that the National Council of Children's Rights estimated that about 37% of custodial parents interfere with visitation in divorce cases (Lassko and Adams, 2006; Griswold et al., 2000).

Several contributors to fathers' involvement suggest that fathers who are actively involved in their children's lives prefer a co-parenting relationship with the other parent that is less strenuous. Lassko and Adams (2006) assert the interparental conflict the non-custodial engages with the custodial parent is distracting to the relationship the father has with the child. Allen and Doherty's (1996) interpretation of fathers' involvement, their study concluded that one obstacle that hinders fathers from being actively involved in their children's lives is the "strained relationship with the mothers of their children" (Lassko and Adams, 2006, p. 87). Research on the effectiveness of family structure indicates a pattern of higher-risk substance abuse, adjustment problems, emotional problems, and delinquent behavior with children raised in a single-parent household (Jablonska and Linberg, 2007). The relationship between parents is a critical concept of parental involvement.

The U.S. Bureau Census (2009-2011) speculated that a child in a single-parent household is more likely to commit a crime, experience violence, commit suicide and become drug dependent. Despite the widespread nature of this problem, surprisingly little is known about fathers who are the targeted alienated parent. Further qualitative study is needed to add to the literature by incorporating the phenomenological technique by examining the impact of parental alienation on the noncustodial fathers' perceptions of parental involvement and explaining the reciprocal relationship to delinquent behavior.

The presence of both parents is essential to a child's life, and foster's an experience that can influence a child's development. Teitelbaum (2013) (cited by

Paquette, 2004), asserts the parental involvement between mother and father ensures the complementary social competence, intellectual development, and the verbal and teaching skills necessary for a child's development. Fathers are more receptive to promoting an ability that enables children to take risks, while mothers provide nurturing and care for the children (Teitelbaum, 2013). It is important to understand and emphasis both parents' role in their child's life, and how the absence of a father can lead to behavioral difficulties and delinquency in children and adolescents.

In chapter 2, it will consist of an introduction, literature search strategy, theoretical framework, and literature review from a historical and current perspective that demonstrates the influences of parental alienation and the relationship to delinquency. The restructuring of the father-child relationship complexity and influences of developmental behavior within the child are supported by the literature that has generated circumstances that actively affect father's involvement, exhibiting the influences of future delinquency behavior in children.

Literature Search Strategy

I obtained the information in this review of the current through a wide range of sources (peer-reviewed, government websites, articles and journals related to the topic, dissertations, government articles, and textbooks written by authors who have studied the phenomenon). The literature review consisted of 377 articles, of which 247 were relevant to the topic that addressed the issues in conjunction with both phenomena: parental alienation and delinquent behavior. A variety of databases and search engines were used

through the Walden University Library for the purpose of this literature review. Some of the Walden University databases and search engines that accessed articles, dissertations, and other review included the following: Sage Publications, SAGE Journal (formerly Sage Premier), Ebscohost, Pro-Quest Criminal Justice, Google Scholar, LegalTrac, NexisLexis, Oxford Criminology Bibliographies, and ResearchGate to assist with further locate of additional articles. McGraw Hill Education published the use of current literature from textbooks on criminal justice, parental alienation, and delinquency behavior. Oxford University Press, Pearson Education, Prentice Hall, and SAGE Publications were also used to obtain information for this current study. I searched google scholar for specific articles that related to the phenomena and reviewed other articles that also mentioned or related to the phenomena.

Following my outline that was previously constructed, I also enhanced by searching Google Scholar using specific words and categories that discussed parental alienation from a criminal justice aspect and not a psychological one. During the search for articles, books and dissertations were also recommended as a source for review. I also searched in the Walden University Library for dissertations that represented similar topic interests as to my study. For example, I researched dissertations that addressed noncustodial parents and parental alienation.

The terms and phrases I utilized in my search for information for this study contained in the literature review included terms as: *parental alienation*, *child support*, *non-custodial parents*, *custodial parents*, *juvenile delinquency*, *targeted parents*,

alienated child, family relationships, non-custodial fathers relationship to child, non-custodial father perspective on parental alienation, African American, criminal behavior, structural family, parent involvement, co-parenting, delinquent behavior, alienation relationship to delinquent behavior, effects of parental alienation, alienation syndrome, racial disparities, social construction theory, social control theory, criminal justice, father-child relationship, policy and procedures, Texas Family Code, mediation, child custody, possession and access, court hearings, best interest of the child, father involvement, emotional attachment, Texas Attorney General, visitation rights, mother and father relationship, offender, methodology, qualitative, phenomenological, framework, social dynamics, parental roles, single-parent, two-parent household, deviant behavior and social control theory.

The results of those terms were used to research further articles by using the references as a guide to other sources and databases. I also searched other dissertations that were not accessible in the Walden University Library but was accessible using other databases such as Digital Commons UCON, National Center for Biotechnology Information, Taylor and Francis Online, and Semantic Scholar. I also searched for various articles in the Walden Library within the Criminal Justice & Security databases.

The Criminal Justice & Security databases offered a variety of journals and articles that I used from SocioIndex with full text, Political Complete, and Criminal Justice databases were all used in my search for current articles and journals on the phenomenon for this study. I also access the U.S. Department of Justice and Bureau of

Justice Statistics portal located in the Walden University Library to help provide information on the accuracy account for inquiries involving child support and the ratio of African Americans, single parents, and two-parent household.

I was able to access other dissertations to find similarities within my topic of choice by accessing the Walden University Library, dissertation and theses database. That database provides a selection of dissertations to review, such as: Walden dissertations, all dissertations, or scholar works portal. I wanted to focus on specific topics as it pertained to my dissertation, as well as policies and procedures. Therefore, I accessed government websites to become familiar with different policies and codes as it referenced to Texas Family Law.

In cases that involved little or no current research suitable for my topic, I expanded my search by accessing public libraries for textbooks, journals, and other published sources online that provided current research. I also searched for quantitative studies like my topic to gain a different perspective and to gain access to other current sources. To help broaden my research, I made sure to search for “scholarly articles” as it pertained to my topic.

Theoretical Framework

Social construction and policy design theory is a useful framework that requires understanding through interpretations. Social constructionism asserts the notion that human interaction within a given network enables a relationship that is intersubjective and interpersonal (Patton, 2015). Social construction and policy design theory was

introduced in the late 1980s by policy theorists (Schneider and Ingram 1988; Ingram and Schneider 1990, 1991) as a way to demonstrate how policymakers' interpretation of target populations in a social setting can reflect positive and negative perspectives from the phenomenon. According to Ingram et al. (2006), social construction is a public policy design that is used to explore the target populations and "realities" of the world that provides pivotal elements to the public policy problem. Its purpose is to study multiple realities constructed by different groups of people and their implications to the constructions of other lives and their interactions (Patton, 2015).

Qualitative inquiry from the perspective of social construction and policy design is based on the concept of multiple realities. Social construction and policy design offer significant viewpoints of people's beliefs and interactions of the world are based on their realities. According to Pierce et al. (2014), social construction and policy design creates a generalized relationship that relatively shapes the way individuals construct the "truth" in the context of shared meanings and consensus experience. It releases the notion of objective reality implemented by a systematic institution to produce a concept that lacks a holistic worldview of what is known or unknown.

The urgency for social construction and policy design emerged to address the development and understanding of why public policies sometimes fail to solve problems, support democratic institutions, or produce greater equality of citizenship (Pierce et al., 2014 p. 3; Ingram et al., 2007). These theorists declared that some targeted populations have more advantage than most regarding some policies and through corrective policy

design reinforcement, the notion of socially constructed values could be redirected to benefit populations who experience disadvantages within a given policy.

The most pertinent question asked in social construction is the understanding of “why some groups reap the benefits, and others reap the burdens” (Pierce et. al., 2014, p.3). According to Pierce et.al (2014), Lasswell and Kaplan’s (1950) direct response to social construction theory is based on the premises that provides an answer to “who gets what, when, and how” (p.3). Eight assumptions that are socially constructed to this policy design method that allows for powerful analysis and reinforcement of social policies through an individuals’ experience.

The eight assumptions are leveled in three categories which are: (a) the model of the individual, (b) power, and (c) the political environment (Pierce et.al, 2007). Social construction and policy design is the ideal theoretical framework as it provides a shared individual experience that is operational to measure the level of concepts that is applied to parental alienation and the examination of delinquent behavior children experience when the father-child relationship is interrupted. The policies created in the child support program creates a separation of power, promoting a division in many families, specifically the African American family in a way that usually affects the father-child relationship.

For example, African American males are represented in “policy discussions” (Gadsden and Smith, 1994) as irresponsible with erratic behavior that constitutes for their lack of employment and responsibilities as a father (Martinez et al., 2013). Although the

involvement of fathers has been tainted with societal factors such as employment or economic status as social barriers, the father's role is drastically changing the false narrative placed on African American males. Martinez et al., characterize the positive narrative that African American males' asserts are "family unity, stability, and adaptability" (as cited in Fatherhood, 2003).

Over the past years, social construction, and policy design theories introductory into understanding policy procedures through publications range from 1993 to 2013. According to Pierce et al. (2014), the increase in social construction and policy design theories increased within the past 5 years. The theory levels on diversified correspondence that incorporate a correlation of power within a target population whereas the social construction is designed to understand the development and implications of public policies. As stated previously, the level of assumptions is grouped into three categories: power, individual, and political environment.

Each role is designed to show how to direct realities are formed in various ways as it relates to the structure of policies. The structural design for the given procedure is based on "which target population is more deserving and who benefits the most." The child support system is designed with a concept that focuses on the best interest of the child. That coined term has been controversy in many instances as it fails to provide a precise account as to "what is actually in the best interest of the child?"

According to Carbone (2014), the best interest of the child provides different meanings in different eras, and third-party interventions are standard when the courts are

asked to intervene in judicial proceedings to determine the child's interest that affects the parent-child relationship. The standard indication of the best interest of the child expands into distinctions that are considered the justification for intervention and resolution of intervention that does not offer merit (Carbone, 2014). The parent-child relationship recognizes the importance of family involvement that establishes a role that requires active participation from both parents.

Although the best interests' doctrine was influenced by the perception of recognizing the mothers' role as the most important interest in a child's life, the father's role in the child's life became just as significant overtime in mediations between mothers and fathers (Carbone, 2014). In the last decade fathers' matter movement has shifted in response to their rights and responsibilities regarding the level of access they are granted to have with their child (Lassko and Adams, 2006). Social construction and policy design theory evolved as an interjected critical theory that provided an understanding of policy design and how the construction of the policy benefited the target population.

The overall framework of the policy offered a relative analysis of "how" beneficial the policy was and "who" had encountered a better advantage from the policy. Founded by Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram in 1993, the theory incorporated the social construction of the power of the target population that is used to describe the implications and developments of policies and procedures (Pierce et.al. 2014). The target populations are represented as deviant and dependents, and the evidence founded offers a

theoretical analysis of a specific policy domain that contributes to the understanding of policies that centers on many social problems (p.4).

Social construction and policy design theoretical assumptions to analyzing policies that are designed to address the positive or negative connotations in an environment with a directed target population are being implemented based on individual, power, and political environment. The assumptions of each model are based on the inclusion of policies and the designed notion that socially constructs the knowledge used to represent those policies (Pierce et. al. 2014). There are many variables that are considered significant in the political phenomenon as the structure element in the implication of policies.

To analyze the core structure that contributes to the importance of social construction of the target population, it begins with the studies of legislative behavior, area settings, and the formulation of policies and design (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). The overall alignment of policies is designed to adhere to the desired needs of the people in a generated population and to determine the effectiveness of each policy. Social construction and policy design primary objectives are to show how the social construction of a target population shapes and defines the policies and procedures implemented by lawmakers.

The problem is the mere definition that is recognized in the innovation process of design. The decision-makers identified consequences, the solution to problems, reduction of complex problems to simple causal stories, and the direct connection to other related

cases assist with policies and procedures (Boushey, 2013; Rochefort and Cobb, 1994; Stone, 1988). Social construction of a target population summarizes a holistic approach to the ongoing questions that help shape an institution with broader culture, that in terms; affecting policies that interact as the messaging guide that enables government officials to implicate policies that influenced based on the target's behavior and understanding (Pierce et.al., 2014).

The individual is one assumption that is recognized under the stigma that requires decision-making from a heuristic approach. According to Pierce et al. (2014), the purpose of individual assumption derives from the inability of an individual encounter during the process of gathering prevalent information required to make underlying decisions. The individual relies on the ability to understand the need for certain policies; however, their biases retracts to the decision-making based on mental heuristics examination (Pierce, 2014 pg. 3). The individual's social reality is perceived under the notion of generalizable social construction patterns, therefore the manner of using social constructions is more subjective and relies on preexisting beliefs and reject anything any information that isn't.

For example, children who grow up in a rejected household, conflict situations, or inadequately supervision are at greater risk of experiencing delinquent behavior (Doggett, 2014). This assumption can be determined using various variables to assess the accuracy of the theory required for decision-makers to implement the most suitable policy design for the specific target population. If a group of delinquents were chosen as the target population of a study on their relationship with their family and the level of delinquent

behavior each experienced, one could suggest that rejection from one parent lead to the conflict in the household in terms, leading the adolescent to a lifestyle of delinquent behavior.

If one has experienced that form of rejection from their parents and have experienced some form of a delinquent act, they are more subjective to understand why the behavior occurred. If preconceived notions of why adolescents engage in delinquent activities is based on personal beliefs or bias experiences, the information provided is likely to strengthen the argument presented. The results of filter information are aligned with social construction that provides an approach to “what shapes reality conception?” (Schneider and Ingram, 1997; Sabtier, 1999b; Pierce et al., 2014).

Power is another assumption that identifies the level of control represented in social construction and policy design. Power is not equally distributed among the individuals within the political environment and is controlled by the willingness to dissever the burden and benefits of policies. (Pierce et al., 2014) In general terms, power is distinguished by who is more deserving of the policies, and who would it be less beneficial. Choices are usually the over-play on the assumption of power relating to the three dimensions associated with the patterns of social construction (Lukes, 1974; Pierce et al., 2014). The three dimensions of power include observable behavior, influence, and conflict; what is observable and not present in the realm of observation, and the various ideologies that help shape and design the implicated policies (Pierce et.al., 2014).

According to (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, 1997), social construction and policy design represent the entities of “three faces” (asserted by Pierce et al. 2014). The three faces of power enact policies that feeds forward the creation of new policies, advances the interaction amongst citizens and policies that affects their pattern of participation, and creates policies under the assertion of political uncertainty (Schneider and Ingram, 1997; Ingram et al., 2007; Pierce et al., 2014). The policies implemented are designed by specific politicians that negate the individual image of the target population, allowing policymakers to enact policies that are beneficial to the people and the government. During the implications of policy-design, the social construction of the target population is negotiated into four categories: advantaged, contenders, dependents, and deviants (Ingram et.al., 2007).

The target population’s typologies were created representing political power resources and whether the population has a negative or positive socially construction (Ingram et al., 2007). Individuals are not treated equally under the development of public policy design (Schneider and Ingram, 1993, 1997; Ingram et al., 2007; Pierce et al., 2014). According to Jensen (1996), congress created categories of citizens as “most deserving” and directed many of the benefits toward that population (Ingram et al., 2007 pg. 104). Pierce et al., (2014) identifies Schneider and Ingram (1993, 1997, and 2005) policy design forum into four distinctive groups, *advantage, contender, dependents, and deviants*.

The most powerful groups are the advantaged group as they are operated on high levels of political power with positive construction. Like advantages, contender groups are powerful with little political resources that provide a negative impact on social construction. Dependents and deviant groups are identified as having little to no political resources. However, dependents have positive social construction in comparison to deviant groups who are resisted to positive construction leading to higher burdens and sanctions than any other group. *Deviant* groups are viewed as powerless and impose a severe burden on target populations that offers public officers a strategic behavior in policy design that ensures the retaining of power.

To maximize their electoral support, public officers selectively impose policies that cause burdens on the target populations that are viewed as “powerless or deviants” (Boushey, 2013). Power requires the control of the government. If the government can influence their target population to understand from their perception, the use of power remains in the hands of political officers. Who is deserving of policies is the manipulation of the government incited by the people? Ingram and Schneider (2005) asserted, “Governments have exploited peoples’ tendency towards group categorization, positive group identification, and willingness to accept negative perceptions of undeserving individuals” (p.3).

The political environment is the final assumption in social construction and policy design theory. The political environment is the basic usage of recognizing the form of policies that creates politics, in terms of creating more policies and more politics. The

feed-forward conception is used to internalize the political environment's role in creating policies that feeds forward to create new policies (Pierce et al., 2014). The policies created enable the form of communication with citizens that affects their orientation and participation patterns (Ingram and Schneider, 1991; Pierce, et al., 2014). The policies are designed with uncertainty and the messages indicated to the target population detail policies assigned and treated by the government (Pierce et al., 2014).

In consonance with Pierce et al. (2014), understanding of the feed-forward policies, Ingram & Schneider's definition of the policy design is based on the content of the public policy and the treatment of target groups of social construction and power. Hence, *feed-forward* policies are based on how the target groups are treated through policies (Pierce et al., 2014). Ingram and Schneider policies are conveyed under public policy theory that is observed using elements of design. The nine elements of design illustrated by Ingram and Schneider includes: (i) target populations, (ii) definitions of goals or problems to be solved, (iii) rules, (iv) rationales, (v) assumptions, (Ingram and Schneider, 1997; Pierce et al., 2014), (vi) burdens and benefits, (vii) tools, (viii) implementation structure, and (ix) social constructions (Schneider and Sydney, 2009; Pierce et al., 2014).

Policies that are implemented are designed as an opportunity to shape the target populations by imposing policies that are beneficial to the government and the community while shaping social construction (Ingram et al., 2007; Pierce et al., 2014). Political power is a social construction that is used to capitalize on how effective or

ineffective policies are relatable to specific target groups, and how beneficial it is to the government. Political power acts a tool used to objectify societal norms between groups that are separated not by races but by the distinguished basis of social constructions of deservedness, trustworthiness, honesty, and proclivity toward criminality (Ingram and Schneider, 2005).

Social construction and policy design represent a theory that is justifiable in examining and explaining how policies are implemented based on deservedness and entitlement. This theory is appropriate for my study because it provides an enactment of procedures that marginalized a community of individuals by providing policies that are “deserving and entitled”, but also demonize those who are less deserving and entitled to the same policies. According to Ingram and Schneider (2005), groups that are identified as undeserving and ineligible for specific policies are treated very differently in the governance process. Social construction theory is based on the model of an individual, power that is being held, and the political realm used to predict the outcome of society's reaction to reality.

To interpret policies that are suitable for every individual, change and power are key to social constructionism. Vivien Burr (1995) illustration in Sexton (2014) research, asserted the process of power and change as a relationship that enables the most powerful to enact change, and the individual enacting change holds the most power (pg.18). Social construction and policy design will assist with answering the questions that show a relationship to social construction and designed policies in my overall research study.

The qualitative theory will provide the groundwork for my study that pertains to understanding social construction and policy design, and the alienation and separation of target populations that affects marginalized individuals, regardless of the reason.

History of Parental Alienation

The history of parental alienation began its burgeoning introduction into child-custody disputes in 1985. Child-custody litigations were drastically increasing under the presumption incorporated in mediation proceedings, the-best-interests-of-the-child in joint custodial disputes (Gardner, 2002). According to Baker (2005), every year one million marriages end in divorce, resulting in more than 100,000 couples battling visitation and child-custody disputes (retrieved from Turkat, 2000). Coined by Dr. Richard Gardner in 1985, parental alienation syndrome (PAS) is a disorder used to describe the programming of a child by one parent to denigrate the other parent creating a supporting contribution of the alienating parent by the child to the denigrate parent (Baker, 2005; Warshak, 2001; Gardner, 1985, 1987a, 2005).

Gardner's (1985, 1987a) introduction of the term insisted on the combination of two contributing factors to parental alienation. The definition of parental alienation suggested by Gardner is a disorder that is used to compromise custody litigations by indoctrinating a child's campaign of denigration against the other parent through programming and other applicable contributions against the target parent. The alienating parent in many custody cases establishes their dominance over the child by inflicting an emotional approach that Gardner identified as a campaign of denigration against the

targeted parent. Gardners' approach to the campaign of denigration is the alienating parents' contribution to enabling the child to participate in support of alienating the targeted parent (Gardner, 1985, 1987, 1992, 2002, 2005).

As a former psychoanalyst and child psychiatrist, Gardner's' interpretation of PAS is based on his research conducted in 1985 as to the pathological alignment between the child and parent who occurred during child custody disputes. Gardner's clinical research was his own patients that experienced sexual abuse. Gardner argued PAS as a vengeful tactful move of child abuse that mothers used as "powerful weapon" to implement punishment against the ex in custody disputes (Gardner, 1992a, 1992b; Meier, 2009). As PAS begins its recognition into the world as a psychological diagnosis, and the courts failed to acknowledge of PAS existence; the gender shift begins its formidable prospect from mothers to fathers.

Fathers were also indoctrinating PAS into the children (Gardner, 2001b; 2005) using their experiences as the targeted parent created a separation in the father-child relationship. Balmer et al. (2018) conducted a study analyzing parental alienation from the targeted parent's perspective. The study examined both male and females targeted parents as an aim to understand the severity of parental alienation and to determine if differences in the targeted sex had any barriers to the type of experience. (Balmer et al., 2018). The researcher's conclusion of the severity of exposure to alienation tactics differs from previous research conducted. Balmer et al. (2018) suggested mothers experienced a significant amount of exposure to parental alienation tactics than fathers.

Balmer et al., implied other researchers have concluded that fathers are exposed to a higher level of parental alienation tactics than mothers (Ellis and Boyan, 2010; Gardner, 2002; Meier, 2009; Vassiliou and Cartwright; Johnston, 2003). Once the targeted parent has identified the extensive indoctrinating campaign of programming by the other parent, the need to spend time with the child begins to diminish. The child's denigration towards the target parent in response to his or her allegiance to the alienating parent has resulted in the targeted parent alienating himself from the child (Bernet et al., 2010).

Parental alienation is an indoctrinated phenomenon that operates as a predictor maneuver utilized in custody disputes in which is genuinely a deceitful tactic. Gardner concluded that as PAS expanded in research, legal and mental health professionals begin seeing cases where both parents were accusing the other parent of inducing PAS in the children (2005). According to Gardner, once one parent has incited PAS as a response, the other parent (usually the mother) would counter-response by insinuating neglect or abuse by the other parent (usually the father). As the accusations between parents intensify, the children's alienation is supported by acting as a contributor to rejecting the father's access. Father's claim of the mother's programming of the child is substantiated when the child begins to deny the father access to him or her when visitation is implied.

Gardner (2002) infers that programming is a level of manipulation and "brainwashing" enables the alienating parent the ability to program the targeted child to reject the targeted parent's contact (Hands and Warshak, 2011). Kelly and Johnston (2001) insist that the aligned parents' behaviors that involve spiteful and vindictive

techniques are potentially damaging to the relationship the child has with the other parent. However, researchers suggest, children's rejection of a parent may also result as a protective shield for the alienating parent due to feelings of guilt for the ongoing dispute (Dunne and Hendrick, 2010; Johnston et al., 1987).

Typically, techniques could be the aligned parents' rejection of the targeted parents phone calls, messages or letters failed to be passed along to the child from the parent, and psychological comments such as: "*I was your real parent, or "I'm sure he will be late as usual"*" are simple solicitations of control techniques used by the aligned parent (Kelly and Johnston, 2001). Alienating behaviors of the aligned parent confirms the child's notion that the other parent is not interested in having the child around, therefore not worthy of the child's attention (Kelly and Johnston, 2001). The type of manipulation is generally controlled more by mothers than the fathers (Gardner, 1985, 1987, 2002; Smith, 2016). In many parental conflict cases, during separation; the parent's and children's anger is the predictor of behavior under those circumstances (Bruch, 2001).

Gardner's theory of PAS emphasized three types of syndromes found in children: mild, moderate, and severe (2005). Analyzing the theory of PAS, Gardner advanced his findings by identifying techniques used by the alienating parent as a campaign of denigration against the targeted parent. Smith (2016) identifies Gardner's eight symptoms to parental alienation that determines the presence of the phenomenon. The symptomatic manifestations of the syndrome that consist of a valid diagnosis includes:

1. A campaign of denigration against the parent. Campaigning occurs “when the targeted parent is alienated from his or her child and is the recipient of the ongoing manipulation from the parent and the child instituting the alienation.
2. An inadequate rationale for the deprecation. This occurs when the child provides frivolous, weak, or absurd rationalizations for his or her hatred or resentment towards the targeted parent. These inadequate rationalizations are a sign of animosity the child exhibits to prevent the alienating parent from rejecting him or her.
3. The “independent thinker” phenomenon. This occurs when the alienated parent has unwillingly alienated the child from his or her parent. The alienated parent encourages the child to act out or and supports his views and decision making of the other parent as the child’s own free will or thinking.
4. Reflexive support of the alienating parent in the parental conflict. The reflexive support occurs when the child is being manipulated to despise the targeted parent and remain completely aligned to the alienating parent.
5. Absence of guilt over cruelty and/or exploitation of the alienated parent. This symptom occurs when children, who are manipulated into

denigrating the other parent, and exhibits no remorse or guilt toward alienating the target parent.

6. The presence of borrowed scenarios. This symptom involves recitation of stories or scenarios constructed by the alienating parent, the child support as reasons for despising him or her. In many cases, the child description of the stories consists of a level of functioning and knowledge beyond the appropriate child's age.
7. The spread of animosity to the alienated parents' friends and extended family. This animosity is initiated in the denigration campaign of the targeted parent that expands to the alienating family and friends.

Gardner's (2005) believes the primary purpose of indoctrinating into the children campaign by the alienating parent inflicts three levels of ongoing parental alienation on the child. Gardner describes mild alienation as "relatively superficial" (pg.193). Children that experience mild alienation tend to cooperate with visitation, but intentionally express anger towards the targeted parent (Gardner, 2005). Moderate and severe cases require a more thorough approach as possible and should be descriptive in differentiate the two applying psychotherapeutic and legal remedies to the occurrences (Smith, 2016).

The child indoctrination into the campaign of parental alienation is prevalent when the behavior becomes more disruptive and disrespectful, due to the mother's attempt to withhold visitation from the father (Gardner, 2005). This type of behavior instructed by the mother creates a strain in the father-child relationship that polarizes the

perception of rejection and alienation. In moderate alienation, Gardner asserts children are more favorable to establishing a healthy psychological bond with his or her mother. In cases, with severe alienation, the child is adamant about his or her hatred and disregard towards the targeted parent. The child usually becomes physically violent and hostile toward the targeted parent (Gardner, 2005). The relationship between the parents is distorted and the relationship with the child is irreparable with the targeted parent (Baker, 2005).

Severely alienated children feel less engaged with the rejected parent and overtime will become content with the lack of contact. Therefore, the behavior is defiant given the custody agreements. The child's ongoing concerns not to engage in any form of communication with the targeted parent is validated by the alienated parent alliance with the child. The approach to severe cases distinctiveness requires psychological and legal observation (Gardner, 2005). It is unknown as to the number of severe parental alienation cases (Turkat, 2002). However, what is known is the number of children that experience mild, moderate, and severe cases of parental alienation.

According to Opperman (2004), approximately 20 million children were already victims of mild, moderate, and severe alienating behavior (see Baker, 2005). Many children in their adolescent years develop unjustified animosity, negative beliefs, and fear of the absent parent alienating behavior. These behaviors are seemingly due to adolescents being more receptive to alienation by the parent than a child in his or her younger years (Jaffe et al., 2017; Fidler and Bala, 2010; Kelly and Johnston, 2001).

Once a child has endured such alienating behavior by the parent, they express themselves by applying emotional conflict. Kelly and Johnston (2001) describes an alienated child as “one who expresses, freely and persistently, unreasonable negative feelings and beliefs (such as anger, hatred, rejection, and/or fear) toward a parent that are significantly disproportionate to the child’s actual experience with that parent” (pg. 249).

It is important to note that parental alienation negative effects not only produce serious mental and emotional damage but provides a long-term consequence with the child and its relationship with each parent. Due to child’s programming by the alienating parent, the relationship between the child and the targeted parent is controlled by the behaviors of parent that spends more time with the child, engaging in manipulating tactics, controlling all power of communication in their hands, affecting any future closeness between the child and the targeted parent (Jaffe et al., 2017; Mone and Biringen (2012). Although researchers have determined that children are subject to influences by the parent who they reside with, others have concluded the fallacy of such claims.

Bala, et al. (2010) confounded fathers who had contact with the children primarily when school was out, had an ongoing influence on the child to reject their mother. Other researchers, Drozd and Olsen (2004) confirmed the children’s need to please the father to avoid the father becoming angry. Gardner credited his diagnosis of the three symptoms by measuring their levels based on the frequency of programming thoughts, frequency of complaints, and the risk of intensifying programming is awarded primary custody (Schwartz, 2015). Initially, Gardner stated PAS was confirmed in nearly 90% of the

children whose families are involved in custody disputes (Bruch, 2001). However, Gardner's studies of these claims were never determined.

Gardner's discovery of PAS intermittently substantiated on the children's denial of visitation based on sexual abuse. During the earlier stages of PAS (1980's), mothers were the indoctrinating alienators with claims as alienation of the child because of neglect/abuse subjected by the father (Gardner, 2005). As PAS relevancy expanded in litigation proceedings, fathers begin to recognize the symptoms and indoctrinated the phenomenon in child custody and visitation access cases. According to Gardner's research of PAS indoctrination in custody disputes, the father accuses the mother of inducing PAS on the children; and in response, the mother would submit allegations of abuse or neglect on the children by the father. The aligned parent denigrated ways constitute dangerous encounters such as violence, physical and sexual abuse, or neglect committed by the targeted parent against the child (Kelly and Johnston, 2001).

Once claims of abuse are presented in custody disputes, visitation arrangements become an issue between parents. Johnston (2001) describes the aligned parent's behavior of blocking access to the child includes but not limited to: seeking restraining and supervised visitation orders, installing security equipment in residence, and maneuvering reasons to reject or cancel visits implemented in court orders. Other researchers contested parental alienation theories in custody disputes.

Nielson (2018) affirms parental alienation scientific support lacks appropriate relevance in custody and access cases involving domestic family abuse. The misuse of

the parental alienation theory disregards the best interest of the child theory, which interrupts the parent-child relationship underlying the empirical factors constructed to protect the child from negative family experiences (Nielson, 2018).

In many court cases, the blame for parental alienation is usually claims made by the mother. Nevertheless, other courts discovery suggest blame should be shared equally. According to the Canadian courts, an empirical study determined 50% of cases in which parental alienation claims were made presented no actual findings existed; therefore, the courts held both parents equally responsible for the child's rejection of the other parent (Nielson, 2018). Warshak (2015) believes in many cases where PAS is persistent, both parents are equally responsible for children's pathological alienation. Evaluators have determined through a survey, 98% agreed in support that "children can be manipulated by one parent to reject the other parent who does not deserve to be rejected" (Warshak, 2015; Baker et al., 2011).

Professionals, Friedlander and Walters (2010), introduced the coined term *hybrid* that identifies the responsibility of both parents being equally accountable contributors to children's alienation (Warshak, 2010 pg. 3). As the manipulation continues, the child's rational and irrational impulses to rejection is a component of the alienating parent and targeted parents' contribution. Warshak (2010) indicates these impulses are due to the targeted parent alienating the child for a short period, and the alienating parent's behavior to that alienation, simply interfering with the relationship the alienating parent is

attempting to rebuild. This type of alienation is identified in conditions where child custody disputes are carefully examined.

Children's involvement in high conflict situations between their parents is highly exposed to divorce proceedings (Jaffe et al., 2016). In presumption to Dr. Gardner's initial claims of sexual abuse was one factor about parental alienation. However, those claims were retracted to include high conflict cases with no sexual abuse allegations (Smith, 2016). Throughout Dr. Gardner's research of severe parental alienation syndrome, he suggested removing the children from the mother's home and placing them in the home with the father (Gardner, 2005; Smith, 2016; Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Baker, 2005).

Gardner's analysis indicates the mother experiences erratic behavior and her lack of willingness to complete therapy complicates the father-child relationship. The process of removal is to help re-establish the relationship between the children and the alienated father (Gardner, 1985, 2001, 2005; Smith, 2016).

Parental Alienation Syndrome vs. Parental Alienation

Common beliefs about parental alienation syndrome attained by therapists and lawyers suggest the fallacies of the argued syndrome. During the earliest implementation of PAS, mothers were convinced by their attorneys, denied their involvement as PAS programmers, denying the existence of PAS (Gardner, 2005). According to Bruch (2001) over the years, PAS involvement drastically modified its perception to include cases of custodial disputes pertaining to the child's refusal to visit the non-custodial parent.

Gardner's generalized description of PAS focuses exclusively on the alienating parent as the primary component to the child's alienation.

This characterization contrived by Gardner, criticize by Johnston (1993), by reason as the analysis failed to introduce supported clinical research that diagnoses that etiological agent in high conflict divorce cases (alienating parent primary to alienation). Johnston also asserts many parents engage in indoctrinating behavior, but only a small percentage of children experience alienation. PAS generally was described as a pathological alignment between angry parents and adolescents that takes place during separation periods between parents (Kelly and Johnston, 2003; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1976, 1980).

As Gardner attempt to establish a recognizable indoctrination of contributing factors surrounding PAS, he recommended reverse brainwashing through custodial transference. This deprogramming transformation involves the removal of the child from the alienating parent (usually the mother) and placing the child with the child in the residence with the alienated parent (usually the father); (Gardner, 1985, 1987, 2002). PAS indoctrination revealed to researchers as an overlooked, absent empirical syndrome that lacks careful analysis required to formulate scientific rigors in professional areas surrounding child custody (Kelly and Johnston, 2003). Custody cases implicating PAS has been called "junk" (pseudo) science that could cause harm to children (Burch, 2001).

PAS disputes are not only discussed in mental health and psychological professions but have gained worldwide attention in child custody disputes. Lawyers in

child custody litigation often present PAS in their cases in order to establish which parent is entitled to primary conservatorship (Gardner, 2002). The psychological alignment in contributing to PAS offers little or no support in child custody cases. Therefore, the term PAS has been replaced with Parental Alienation (Gardner, 2002).

The DSM committee refused to acknowledge PAS as its existence failed to identify the relatable context. Gardner refuted the DSM revelations to PAS. According to Gardner (2002), the DSM committee consists of conservative professionals whose inclusion of newly found clinical phenomenon require years of thorough research and publication before PAS could be considered a disorder or syndrome. Nonetheless, more recently researchers have published research endorsing Gardner's study of PAS.

The controversy surrounding PAS invoked researchers to initiate PA (parental alienation) rather than PAS in establishing the alienation claims in custody disputes. The rejection of PAS by multiple sources in the scientific community as "nil" research (Meier, 2009; Emery et al., 2005 p. 10; see also Gold, 2006; Johnston and Kelly, 2004b; Myers et al., 2002). The phenomenon called PAS warranted no clinical data to the claims of alienation by the mother's interference with the father-child relationship. The rejection campaign of PAS caused researchers to implement the term, Parental Alienation disorder; which was also rejected by the DSMV committee in 2012 (Meier, 2013; Crary, 2012). The misuse of the term is used in custody litigation by evaluators to "descent children's fears of hostile and psychologically abusive situations" (American Psychological Association on violence in the family, 1994 p.40; see also Meier, 2013 p.5).

Due to the overwhelming controversy and negative responses to the disorder, various states acknowledged PA rather than PAS in custody disputes. Texas is one of the states that accept PA as a legitimate defense in family courts. The term coined PAS has been replaced with PA in order to show the denigration campaign and programming as a result of the other parent in custody disputes. Texas Family Code acts in the best interest of the child, therefore parental alienation is a defense that is used to determine the interest of the child and the influences that may appear to alter that interest. Evaluators or Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) exacerbate parental alienation syndrome in family courts without questioning the validity of the syndrome (Meier, 2013).

The shift from PAS to PA allowed researchers and scholars to amend the phenomenon. Scholars and researcher's analysis of the phenomenon interjected "parental alienation or alienated child" as the appropriate term supported in custody disputes or under litigation evaluations (Meier, 2013; Johnston and Kelly, 2013; Bruch, 2001; Steinberger, 2006). The difference in PAS and PA is the disproportionate analysis of evaluation and questioning that requires an examination into the process, not just on the alienating parent but on the realistic approach that all factors of alienation is the result of both parents behavior and the child vulnerabilities Johnston, 2005; Johnston and Kelly, 2001; Meier, 2013).

Therefore, the term PA is acceptable for this research study as it properly provides multiple factors that can be scientifically addressed with empirical support that follow a focus on legal and psychological case management. Texas Family law allows PA into

family courts as it has the capability to affect the child custody agreement implemented in custodial orders. Texas family law also has the affirmation to re-visit conservatorship regarding possession and access or private custody agreement in child support orders. Texas family law ensures the best interest of the child, and parental alienation is a violation that can be detrimental to the child involved. Texas court of appeals in El Paso ruled on a trial level decision granting a father's motion to modify conservatorship. This case involved the denial of the father's access and possession to the child on his scheduled visitation order (see *In the Interest of T.M.P. and J.C.P.*, 2013).

Modification of conservatorship is ordered if preponderance of the evidence shows: (1) the modification would be in the best interests of the child; and (2) the circumstances of the child, a conservator, or the person affected by the other have materially or substantially change since the date of rendition of prior order (see Texas Family Code Ann. § 156.101 (West Supp, 2012). Texas family code suggests the best interest of the child supersedes any other proceeding and is the court's primary concern (Texas Family Law Code, 2013).

History of Juvenile Delinquency

The history of juvenile delinquency begins with a significant relationship to social behavior. The women's suffrage movement, the campaign against child labor laws, the fight for an eight-hour workday, and the usage of journalism exposure of "big business" corporation enacted during the Progressive reform era. The demands for social change reform gained notoriety of support of Americans between the 1800s and 1920s. During

the Progressive era, several issues that confronted society and Americans enabled societal views to help identify the cultural views involving social welfare and laws to protect juvenile offenders (Springer et al., 2015). The balance between protecting both public safety and welfare and rehabilitation of youth required social change and implementation of policies and laws (Brown, 2012).

A cultural change to society required social Darwinism implication of the house movement. The housing movement, better known as “house of refuge,” was developed to offer at risk children with assistance (Springer et al., 2015). Houses of refuge laid foundations in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia with the interest in helping children who were at risk of committing or had committed crimes within the community (Springer et al., 2105). The enactment of the house movement originated as a “support haven” for juveniles but failed in preparation as a “haven” for children. The children within houses of refuge were forced to work in labor industries and factories for eight hours a day without any compensation (Springer et al., 2015).

Once the juvenile has reached a certain age limit, the house of refugees transferred the juvenile to an adult facility for further rehabilitation. According to Bartol and Bartol (1989), the house argued that children at the age of 15 and 16 reacted little or to no form of rehabilitation. As the need for protection and rehabilitation for juveniles expanded, legal and juvenile welfare movements’ implemented laws and policies guided to deal with delinquent children (Springer et al., 2015).

By 1989, individual states confronted the problem of youth incarceration and begin to establish their own reform homes like the “house of refuge”. As the changes in social reform policies exercised the responsibility of delinquent children, states became an active party of responsibility for young offenders. In the northern portion of the United States, the protection for juvenile children manifested. In 1906, the juvenile courts were included in the federal court system. The embedment of the juvenile court's initial implementation relied on the basis of the British justice systems and principle called the “*parens patriae*”. This momentous origin is derived from Latin meaning, “parent of the nation”.

The indoctrination applied to the state’s power to act as a substitute of authority in representation as to the parent or guardian over children presented in court (Custer, 1978). The state assumes parental responsibility and acts in the best interest of the child. (Springer et al., 2015). The United States court believed the best interest of the child required their intervention when parents were unwilling or unable to provide care for the child. Without the assistance of the attorney, juvenile courts processed cases *ex parte*; consequently, no use of jury was present, and the final decision was made by the judge (Springer et al., 2015).

The emphasis on the best interest of the child was believed to be one with the state and child, decidedly granting children different constitutional rights as adults (Springer et al., 2015; Trojanowicz, 1978). The primary objective of the progressive aforementioned is to incorporate quality parental involvement. Delinquent behavior

became a prevalent part of social behavior theory as it was identified as a learned behavior through the process of social interaction (Sykes and Mata, 2003). Recent studies determined that parental involvement may be a cause and effect of delinquency/crime but also correlates as a mediator in future crimes (Walters, 2013; Gault-Sherman, 2012; Baron and Kenny, 1986).

Sutherland's theory of differential associations identified delinquent behavior as the assertion of deriving criminal/delinquent learned behavior, with the affirmation that the content of delinquent behavior is a form of behavior based on multiple variables (Sykes and Mata, 2013). Criminal delinquent behavior is a learned behavior that constitutes the (a) techniques of committing a crime, (b) motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes favorable to the violation of laws (Sykes and Mata, 2013). Hence the previous statement was constructed using the descriptive narrative of Sutherland's theory of differential association.

Researchers, Virginia P. Henderson and Jesse Taft implemented the causal theory concept and concluded that family issues were the cause of delinquent behavior. The theory caused parents to be held responsible for their children's crimes. The results often ended in parents being fined or jailed for the crimes their children have committed. By the 1930s, researchers were still in the process of defining "juvenile delinquency" and understanding its rehabilitation process (Springer et al., 2015). Sociologists, Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay, partnered together with the Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago and conducted a study on the observations of neighborhoods in the Chicago

area. Upon completion of study, findings indicated that residence and neighborhoods contribute to delinquent behavior (Springer et al., 2015). The findings suggested that social cause and criminal behavior support a correlating relationship (Springer et al., 2015; Schlossman and Sedlock, 1983 p.399).

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department organized its first youth council in 1949. The Texas Youth Development Council assisted with administered state juvenile training school in 1973 (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2016). In 1953, the Texas Youth Council became the Texas Youth Commission and proceeded with the same duties and responsibilities. In 1975, the funds were disbursed from the Texas Youth Commission to endorse the Community Assistance Program. By 1981, The Texas Juvenile Probation Commission replaced the Texas Youth Commission to aid technical training assistance and data collection from local juvenile probation departments (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2016). In 2009, the 81st Legislative created funding for Community Corrections Diversion programs. This program offered approximately \$460 million to local juvenile probation departments to assist with treatment programs and services needed to help juveniles divert of the TYC.

Around 2011-2015, the 82nd and 84th Legislature passed the Senate Bill 653 and 1630, establishing the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. These bills also abolished other agencies and developed a regional plan that supported the enlistment of juveniles closer to their local jurisdiction during the post-adjudication and provided security to prisons (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2016).

The unconstitutional conditions in juvenile correctional facilities brought on concerns from judges, in particular, Judge William Wayne Justice. In *Morales v. Truman* (1974), the courts ordered mandatory investigators to monitor the conditions and complaints of juveniles in Texas reform schools (Kemerer, 1991; Springer et al., 2015). Along with the mandatory investigation, the courts also implemented its first major policy to assist with the juvenile delinquent program. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) of 1974, became the primary act of ensuring the safety and security of juveniles.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 facilitated the funding for test prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies programs (Springer et al., 2015). The results of the prevention act initiated the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (Springer et al., 2015; Alexander, 1995). The enactment of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect developed hospital-based child abuse assessment and treatment areas in 1978. History is the root of several issues that exist between juvenile delinquency and the prevention and treatment programs. By the 1990's the United States experienced a decline in juvenile crimes and violence. This decline in crime went into the early years of the 21st century (Springer et al., 2015).

In 1995, Texas revamped its juvenile laws that established a more serious offense to juvenile sentencing. Texas expansion of the program was known as a “blended sentencing” statute, allowing more youth to receive sentencing for up to 40 years (Springer et al., 2015). This maximum sentence requires juveniles to serve their sentence

in a juvenile facility and in adult prisons or adult parole. The statute also required juveniles to be transferred to adult criminal courts at the age of 14 years. These Texas legislative changes required longer minimum lengths in juvenile facilities with a maximum increased at a cost of about \$200 million (Springer et al., 2015). The inflation in cost helped to ensure spacing was not limited in juvenile facilities, which caused many to wonder if there was a difference in juvenile facilities and adult facilities in Texas (Springer et al., 2015).

Gender Roles in Delinquency

The shift in juvenile delinquency also produced altered children's family dynamics. Many children's experiences with delinquent behavior occur during their adolescent stages. The more critical their transition to adolescent-hood becomes, the more aggressive the children's behavior becomes. Regression studies suggest adolescent males are more delinquent than daughters (Demuth and Brown, 2004). Demuth and Brown (2004) conducted a regression study on the effects of family structure on delinquency. Their findings indicated male to female delinquency rate had 0% on whether the resident parent was mother or father.

Another regression analysis by researchers, Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur (1994) insists that children's involvement with their father is parallel to their delinquent behavior. McLanahan and Sandefur's (1994) article, *Growing Up with a Single Parent* moved to suggest that girls with absent fathers were 9% more likely to get pregnant as teens, and young men are less than 11% likely to be unemployed. The reflection of the

parents is of the child's perception. When a child becomes an adult, their future relationships are usually based on their relationships with his or her parents (Schwartz, 2015).

Absent parents and alienated parents can have lasting effects on children which can carry-on into adulthood. If children are not involved in active treatment to address delinquent behavior and other behavioral issues, they will detect further difficulties in adulthood (Moore and Ordway, 2013; Baker, 2010; Ben-Ami and Baker, 2012). The relationship between delinquency and alienation fundamental questions concerning their existence lies within gender roles (Kerr and Stattin, 2000).

As reported by Kerr and Stattin (2000) correlational and multiple regression strategies, boys scored higher on the externalized issues (such as behavior delinquency peer-deviance) while girls scored higher on internalized problems (depressive symptoms, low self-esteem, failure expectations). Girls also scored high on the regression model related to the parent's knowledge and sources of knowledge. What parents know about their children versus parents knowing the whereabouts of the children and children's activities are different (Kerr and Stattin, 2000).

The closer the child is to the parent; the more information children may feel comfortable disclosing. Children's disclosure tends to reduce depressive symptoms, self-esteem issues, and less delinquency (Kerr and Stattin, 2000). Child-rearing methods are one social emphasis that links the causes of delinquency to various parental patterns. The child-rearing methods concepts of delinquency served as a social structure in research

studies. Supervision, monitoring of the child, discipline or parental enforcement, and parental involvement with the children are primary dimensions of child-rearing methods (Farrington, 2013).

Lack of parental monitoring enables delinquent behavior (Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984). The level of strong parental-monitoring and supervision helps to deter adolescents from alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and committing violent crimes (Fletcher et al., 1998 p.220; Kerr and Stittin, 2013). Many studies have shown that parents who are not informed about the whereabouts of their children when out with peers unsupervised at an early age tend to exhibit delinquent behavior (Farrington, 2013).

Gender differences have always played an important role in the identification of crime. Several theorists proclaimed their findings on the explanation of male and female behavior and crime to the Agnew strain theory (Broidy and Agnew, 1997). Agnew general strain theory argues that various strains help to understand the gender gap in crime and argues that several types of strains identify females' engagement to crime (Agnew, 1995; Broidy and Agnew, 1997). Considering the consistent findings in crime related to gender is more significant in men than women (Choy et al., 2017; Archer, 2004; Connolly et al., (2018). Based on their delinquent involvement, women's trajectory to delinquent behavior is formed during the adolescent years and usually lasts a short period (Miller et al., 2010; Fergusson and Horwood, 2002; Connolly et al., 2018).

Research strategies involving delinquent behavior indicates male delinquent trajectory occurs during adolescent and can last over a lifespan (Broidy et al., 2015;

Miller et al., 2010; Connolly et al., 2018). Despite the ongoing research that provides a controlling difference between the onset trajectories, early onset of delinquent trajectory is found in both males and females, occurring uniformly (Silverthorne et al., 2001; Connolly et al., 2018). Clinical practitioners argue when related to the wilder relationship between children and delinquency, the focus should rest on the attachment relationship among themselves and their parents (Vries et al., (2015).

Externalizing behavior is to show the effects of positivity as factors for adolescents' aggressive and delinquent behavior (Vries et al., 2015). Adolescent's cognitive distortions represent adolescent aggression and delinquency transpired due to adolescents and parental attachment (Fearon et al., 2010; Hoeve et al., 2012; Vries et al., 2015). However, in some studies, the age and gender of adolescent behavior have shown no preliminary bivariate correlation on the three dimensions of attachment (Vries et al., 2015).

Many children tend to express their feelings based on the normalized accounts they witnessed. Children who witnessed violence and committed physical aggression correspond with the association of delinquency (Tisak et al., 2016; Farrell et al., 2014). The aggression variance between genders differential on pathways related to the exposure and witnessed accounts.

Custodial Parent Alienation Strategy and Contribution

To comprehend why the relationship with alienation and delinquency is significant to the non-custodial parent's perspective, a person would only have to

research the history of parental alienation and who benefits from it. Custodial issues arise during many divorce proceedings, in which the mediation process becomes overwhelming for all parties involved. According to Lamb, Sternberg, and Thompson (1997), the disintegration of the family results in emotional and psychological distress to the entire family. These researchers identified parents in high-conflict cases as separated couples share similar characteristics: “high rates of litigation and pre-litigation, high degrees of anger and distress, intermittent verbal and/or physical aggression, difficulty focusing on their children’s needs as their own, and chronic difficulty cooperating and communicating about their children after the divorce” (p.396).

The behaviors that are associated with parental alienation is intended to hurt the parental figures and the relationship the child has with each parent (Warshak, 2015; Harman et al., 2018; Kelly and Johnston, 2001). During many child custody disputes women are believed to be the primary alienator (AP), and the father is identified as the target parent (TP) (Gardner, 2002; Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Harman et al., 2018; Houchin, et al., 2012; Balmer, 2018; Baker, 2005, 2006; Nicholas, 2013). The alienating parent is responsible for the enlistment of child participation in various antics in an attempt to disengage the child with the target parent (Balmer, 2017; Warshak, 2015; Gardner, 2002; Hands and Warshak, 2011; Harman, et al., 2018).

Previous literature has incorporated the use of alienation on children from their personal perspective (Baker, 2005; Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Johnston and Goldman; Warshak, 2013). Children that experience a severe form of alienation, are indirectly and

directly hurt in the alienating parents' disintegration campaign (Warshak, 2013; Harman, et al., 2018). Although parental alienation is associated with the child's refusal or rejection of the other parent, their psychological and emotional characteristics are examined in many studies to determine the effects (Baker and Eichler, 2016; Baker, 2005; Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Warshak, 2013; Harman, et al, 2016b.).

The rationalization of the frivolous acts committed by the alienating parent in order to deny the target parent access to the child should be recognized (Harman, et al, 2018). In a recent study conducted by the Children's Rights Council, 40% of divorce mothers have admitted to having denied child visitation access to their ex-spouse as a retaliation move or a way to punish them (Turkat, 1997). Pearson and Anhalt (1993) reported in a qualitative and quantitative study on the analysis of divorced parent's resolution to visitation that 71% of the nonresidential fathers complained that their ex-wives deny them access to visit their children. Another 35% complained that their ex-spouse failed to allow the nonresidential father access to make up the missed visitation without any regards.

Inconsistency with visitation and refusal of access to the child is a form of alienation that influences the child's emotional stance to reject the targeted parent. Alienating parents who subsequently encourage their child to engage in alienation have been described as narcissistic, vindictive, and attaches to emotional abandonment (Kelly and Johnston, 2001). The alienating parent will stop at nothing to achieve the ultimate goal in destroying the relationship between the child and the target parent (Baker and

Darnall, 2006; Warshak, 2016; Gottlieb, 2012; Harman et al., 2018). In the absence of the targeted parent, the alienating parent will derive to verbal aggression and vengeful behavior that enables the child to reject the target parent (Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Nichols, 2013; Gardner, 2002). Dunne, et al., (2009) assert aggressive verbal parenting is an extremely common form of psychological maltreatment.

Most researchers identified alienation measurements used by parents to show their displeasure with the child, by yelling at the child, calling the child names, or rejecting him or her (Baker; Verrocchio, 2014; Baker, 2009). The parent psychologically plays on the child's emotional need to please the alienating parent; and out of fear of rejection, and without regards will assemble rejecting the other parent's attempts to visit the child (Kelly and Johnston, 2002). Indoctrinating the campaign of rejection by the child requires skillful programming by the alienating parent. The alienating parents' negative views of the other parent may be repeatedly expressed by saying things like, "he doesn't care about us, Otherwise, he wouldn't have left us; or "she never wanted you" (Kelly and Johnston, 2002 p. 257). These unwarranted comments create "intolerable confusion" (p. 257) on the child's confidence and relationship with the other parent. The range of alienating behavior is freely inflicted by both parents.

According to Gardner (2002), fathers and mothers frequently indoctrinate alienation into their children. Gardner (2002) insist the gender role shift have been increasingly leading to father's indoctrinating the alienation as a victim and as the alienator. While exploring the visitation access of the child with the father, Gardner

(2002) suggests that fathers are inclined to utilize their shared visitation time by programming the child to reject the alienating parent. In many cases, the children become distorted and unable to decipher which parent is being truthful (Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Warshak, 2013, Gardner, 2002). Parents are inclined to share the responsibility for the involvement of alienation. Despite the parent's refusal to accept responsibility, the claim is equally shared by both parents.

According to Nielson (2018), the complaints involving alienation claims are common in mothers and fathers, however, the claims against mother's double the percentage compared to fathers. Gender bias tends to confirm the process of parental alienation concepts (Nielson, 2018; Kelly and Johnston, 2001). A retrospective search on Canadian cases involving "child alienation" (pg.8) determined out of 357 cases containing alienation, 244 of those cases (68%) were claims against the mother. Compared to the 110 cases (31%) implying claims against the father. Nonetheless, other researchers have shown that experts insist custodial status, rather than gender, be determined to as a predictor for parental alienation (Harmen, et al., 2016; Harmen, et al., 2018). In reference to claims of alienation by both parents, the best interest of the child is slightly modified (Nielson, 2018).

Transparency is one factor that is recommended during the process of parental alienation claims. The strategy of the alienated parent is to gain leverage of control of the child and the targeted parent. Harmen et al., (2016) conducted a study using an online sample report of parents alienating behaviors. The findings indicated between 5% and

42% of parents frequently used alienating behaviors (eg., yelling at another parent in front of a child, moving child out of state) in conflict situations with the other parent as a strategic opportunity. However, the parent's behavior can occur as a “routine conflict” (p.1276) (eg., yelling at the other parent in front of the child), or as a “necessity” (p.1276) (eg., moving out of town) (Harmen, et al., 2016).

Parents who claim parental alienation in divorce proceedings or custody disputes must provide supporting documents to prove the claims in a court of law. Many claims against the father and mother are rejected due to the lack of evidence showing coercion by the mother regarding father’s relationship with the child, and the coercion of the father to discourage the mother’s relationship with the child (Nielson, 2018). Therefore, the court of law can hold both parents equally responsible for the failed parent-child relationship. However, there are cases that warrant alienation concerns. According to Nielson (2018), parental involvement normative is observed when domestic violence or physical abuse resonates. The courts are responsible for examining evidence on the basis of all abuse claims and determine the best interest of the child.

Often, these claims are generated by the alienating parent rejection of the targeted parent and may lie based on anger (Nielson, 2018; Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Harmen, et al., 2018). As the best interest of the child relies on the cooperation and responsibility of both parents, the roles of both parents are significantly different. In many alienation cases, mothers who are sole custodial parents often reject the targeted parent (father) due to safety concerns (Johnston and Kelly, 2001).

Mothers may insist on the father's anger problems, temper, past and present acts of violence require adequate supervision (Nielson, 2018). Gardner (2002) claimed that abuse allegations made against the father by the mother tend to be false accusations. As a parent, the custodial parent asserts the best interest of the child is properly considered and is only protecting the child from the targeted parent's violent behavior.

Another concern that is derived in custody disputes is allegations of sexual abuse. Gardner's initial proposal to alienation is the child's rejection, and the mother campaign of denigration against the target parent is employed based on abuse allegations (1985, 1987, and 2001). Gardner later refuted the claims and asserted the analysis of PAS does not apply to cases of actual abuse (Gardner, 1992, 2001; Burch, 2001; Smith, 2016). The alienating parent may exhibit their discourse for visitation as protective concerns.

Gardner's interpretation of the alienating parent's acceptance to indoctrinating the false allegations of abuse is not to protect the child but to manipulate the fragile child and damage the relationship with the target parent (2001). In response to the manipulation tactics enacted by the alienating parent, Gardner warned judges in high-conflict divorce cases to proceed with caution when abuse allegations are mentioned (Gardner, 2002; Burch, 2001).

The alienating parent's behavior is recognized by many as a form of manipulation and acts as a contributing factor of isolating and deprogramming the child (Smith, 2016; Burch 2012; Gardner, 1985, 1987, 2001). The behavior reflects the alienating parent's direct disregards to the best interest of the child. During the early periods, mothers were

primarily the sole parent and fathers were presumed as the non-custodial parent (Gardner, 2002; Mack and Lieber, 2005). John Bowlby (1951) argued in his “broken home theory,” that children who suffer from a prolonged period of maternal deprivation will experience delinquent behavior. He asserts that the essential components of a warm, loving, and caring mother are what children should experience (Bowlby, 1951; Farrington, 2003).

Gardner’s presumption exchanged in custody litigations as the children generally bonded more closely with their mothers during various stages of adolescence (Gardner, 1985). As a consequence, the close bond allowed the campaign of denigration and the programming of the child against the target parent. The strong relationship between the alienating parent and the child is often developed during the marriage or separation stages. The alliance between children and parents might arise during the high-intense conflict (Kelly and Johnston, 2001) and requires the demands of the child’s loyalty.

More often, children’s minds are more impressionable during adolescence years, making it accessible to manipulation and brainwashing (Kelly and Johnston, 2001; Nielson, 2018; Warshak, 2015). Attempts to interrupt communication or visitation between the target parent and child is misguided and most likely to fail then succeed (Warshak, 2015). According to Kelly and Johnston (2001) the estranged child, more often in later latency or adolescence will develop some capacity to “clarify, make choices, and distance themselves from the corrosive effects of a parent who is unreliable, consistently inadequate, and abusive” (p. 254). These responses are indirectly and directly affected by one of the parent’s negative behaviors.

Relationships between children and parents that are lasting, strong, and healthy play a bigger role in reducing delinquency (Sheehan, 2010). Communication during high-conflict cases is extreme ambivalence used as an expression of anger. Verbally aggressive behavior in adults is extremely common practice in custody disputes (Dunne et al, 2009). A psychologist has determined verbally aggressive behavior is a form of aggression that is identified as psychological maltreatment (Baker and Verrochio, 2014) and can lead to substance abuse in children (Elden et al., 2007; Baker and Verrochio, 2014). The alienating parent contributes to alienation by forcing the child to think, feel, talk, and behave in a manner that correlates to the aligned parent's response (Rand, 2010).

If the child fails to adhere to the alienating parent's request, the aligned parent projects dissatisfaction onto the child. The parent's level of the displeasure of the child can include yelling and rejecting the child advances for love and emotional attachment (Baker and Verrochio, 2014; Baker, 2009). Children that experience parental rejection is usually affected by the aligned parent's behavior. Rand (2010) stated that children who experience indoctrinating behavior are affected more than others based on the "child's age, temperament, quality of relationship with the indoctrinating parent, and the amount of time spent with the target parent without the interference of the other parent" (p.60).

The parent's behavior can shift from a positive, loving, and warming care to negative disapproval when a child begins to display positive behavior toward the target parent (Baker and Verrochio, 2014). The aligned parent's insensitivity and anger towards the child's affection for the other parent subsequently inflict fear in the child (Baker and

Verrochio, 2014). Although other researchers (Johnston, 2003) asserts “both parents are to blame” for the child’s rejection of the other parent; Kelly (1991) affirms her opposition to the parent's responsibility. Kelly (1991) affirmation of responsibility is in fact due to one angry parent creating “conflictual situations” (Rand, 2010 p. 52), to which the other parent has to respond in the manner as the other parent (Rand, 2010; Kelly, 1991).

Other critics deny the allegations of the alienating parent acting as the benefactor of the child’s alienation toward the target parent (Johnston, 2003; Emery et al., 2005; Gardner, 1998). Rand (2010) and other critics assume that a child’s rejection of the other parent must be within good reasoning, and children will not align with another parent in the campaign to reject the other parent. However, other critics (Burch, 2005; Warshak, 2001) insist that parents deliberately manufacture false allegations against the target parent to destroy the relationship between the child and the other parent (Rand, 2010).

Sexual abuse allegations amplify the child advocates' justification to imply the child’s reluctance to visit the parent (Rand, 2010). Others relevance to sexual abuse claims were unfounded and unwarranted by the alienating mothers' claim. In a follow-up study conducted by Kopleski and Rand (2001), researchers confirmed unfound claims of sexual abuse usually consist of the mother interjecting affectionate made by the father to the child as sexual exploitation. This analysis was based on the “abnormally” (p. 55) exclusive relationship between the child and mother (Rand, 2010).

To advance knowledge about the causal strategies and contributions of the alienating parent, it is important to note that children's interpersonal relationship with both parents is prevalent in resolving the profound context of alienation.

Non-Custodial Parent Alienation Strategy and Contribution

Alienation experiences have confirmed the ratio of 50/50, with the fathers and mothers likely to indoctrinate children into PAS (Gardner, 2001). The contribution to parental alienation is often asserted by the gender stereotypes society has applied to the mother and father roles in the household. According to Harman et al. (2016), the stereotypical standard for the mother (care-givers and nurturing) and father (bread-winners) in a single household has been judged by the rational expectations that are demanded within society and when those roles deviate, the men and women are roles are shifted; establishing the normative of gender roles and sex to be closely evaluated.

As the father presumes different roles, the negative stereotype attaches to the father such as "dead-beat" as related to being identified as the non-custodial parent in cases involving child custody. For instance, in a child support proceeding, the parent who doesn't have primary custody of the child (usually the father) is identified as the non-custodial parent. Many fathers believe the label solidifies them as being unworthy or a bad father in the eyes of society. Haman et al., (2016) stated that further researchers (Pleck and Masciadrelli, 2004) have determined that many negative stereotypes (such as "dead-beat") about non-custodial or unmarried fathers as being "bad" (p. 866).

Modern cultures of stereotyping fathers as “dead-beats” is reflecting on the traditional role fathers have failed to identify with. However, the overwhelming results have shown that target (non-custodial) parents experience PAS at different levels than alienating parents (custodial). Baker and Darnell (2007) surveyed 92 target parents to determine whether any of Gardner's (1998) eight symptoms of PAS experienced. They reported that 99% of target parents experienced at various levels, campaign denigration, rejection, and antics by the children; 90% reported that the child showed a reflective support for the other parent. According to the National Council for Children’s Rights (as cited by Lassko and Adams, 2006 p. 86) studies estimated that the custodial parent interferes with visitation in at least 37% of divorce cases.

Wolchik et al., (1996) reported that custodial parents experience high levels of hurt, anger, and indoctrinating the custodial disruption of visitation. Wallerstein and Kelly (1976, 1980) revealed that children’s rejection of or refusal to visit the non-custodial parents was aligned with the help of the “angry” custodial parent. In retaliation to inflicting hurt on the target parent, the alienating parent will use visitation denial as a common tactic for denigration. This technique is also combined with restricting communication between the target child and the parent. In this situation, the children are used as pawns in a revenge plot for parents engaging in divorce “war” tactics (Stoleberg et al., 2002, p. 2).

Interrupting phone calls and text messages are also used to intrude on the children’s time with the other parent, initiated by the alienating parent (Warshak, 2005).

Nevertheless, other researchers insist that children's refusal or rejection of the visitation is not incited by the alienating by the parent. Kelly and Johnston (2001.p. 249), reported that multiple reasons children resist visitation includes: "resistance rooted in normal developmental processes (eg. separation, anxiety), "resistance rooted in high-conflict marriage and divorce (eg.fear or inability to cope with transition), "resistance in response to a parent's style of parenting (eg.anger, insensitivity to the child), "resistance arising from the child's concern an emotionally and delicate custodial parent (eg.fear of being alone), and the "resistance arising from the remarriage of a parent" (p. Johnston, 1993; Johnston and Roseby, 1997).

Alienation not only has lasting effects on children, but also causes a traumatic effect on the target parent. According to Schwartz (2015), the loss of contact with one's child, parents may respond to the child's rejection passively and withdrawn emotional attachment. One of the parent's major responsibilities is the ability to protect their children from traumatic experiences, so to protect the child's feelings, the target parent may respond to the child's rejection by giving the child "space" to comprehend the situation that is taking place. That level of "space" may generate an interpretation of rejection by the target parent from the child, contributing to the denigration of the child and the target parent (Schwartz, 2015).

The next overlooked component in alienation cases are the target parents (non-custodial, rejected parents, alienated parent, father, (often mother)). As the target parent experiences rejection by the child upon the alienating contribution the psychological and

emotional responses are examined. Balmer et al., (2018) indicated in a survey that determines the 325-target parent's experience to parent alienation exhibited depression and anxiety when exposed to alienation. Balmer et al., (2018) stated, despite the overwhelming results of literature describing the targeted child and alienating parent's perspective, the target parent perspective remains under-researched. However, several studies have reported the emotional state of the targeted parent (Kruk, 1992; Baker, 2010; Baker and Andre, 2008; Vassiliou and Cartwright, 2001; Vassiliou, 2010).

Balmer et al., (2018) reported data from a quantitative study on 225 targeted parents, both males and females. The study concluded that fathers reported a significantly higher propensity to seek out their child and show interest in their child's life and activities than mothers. The effects of the target parent's lack of contact, visitation, and access to the child play a psychological and emotional stance on the relationship toward the phenomenon and the other parent. Bosch-Brits et al., (2018) described a study conducted by Sauber (2006) and Stahl (2011) that detailed the influence of parental alienation on the father during a divorce.

They reported the similar experiences among the fathers: (1) fathers are robbed of his visiting rights and recognizes the role of the parent, feels helpless in the process to do anything; (2) they experience anxiety and fear that the good father-child relationship can be destroyed; (3) they experience anger towards the parent who brings about alienation, and often hear the words in these of children; (4) they experience fear since victimization occurs in parental alienation. They fear the court system as the alienating parent lies may

contaminate the court's decision and fear losing visitation and custody rights to their children. This fear of the legal system can drive a father to experience depression and develop low self-image as it pertains to his active role in their children's lives (Bosch-Brits et al., 2018). They also indicated that the father's exposure to negative behavior and criticism over a long period can develop withdrawal from the child and the entire situation (Bosch-Brits et al., 2018).

Dunne and Hendrick (2011) used a narrative study on sixteen selected cases that met the majority of Gardner's (1985, 1987) description of parental alienation. The study presented that out of sixteen cases, fourteen of the cases were mothers who had primary custody and was the alienating parent. However, in one of the cases, the non-custodial mother was alienating parents, and, in another case, the non-custodial father was the alienating parent. When the quality of a father-child relationship is abruptly interrupted, the bond becomes unhealthy and damaging. The emotional attachment to the child progressively hinders the bonding process.

Bosch-Brits et al., (2018) stated that feelings of rejection, loneliness, and anger may be present in fathers creating long-term emotional damage. The loss of a child becomes prevalent in the father's emotional state, causing extreme traumatic experiences for the father and child (Boson et al., 2018). Dunne and Hendrick (2010) reported on one of their cases involving a father's experience with alienation that after one father attempt to contact the children, the father gained 80 pounds since the separation from the mother and children.

During the court proceedings filed by the father in family court, the mother implied the children's decision to reject the father's contact was due to catholic schools and their upbringings. However, letters written by neighbors detailed the mother's animosity motivated the refusal toward the father. Negative comments projected by one parent about the other parent can be labeled as an attempt to manipulate the child to engage in denigration toward the other parent (Hoult, 2006).

Bosch-Brits et al. (2018) completed a qualitative study about the feelings and experiences of fathers and the perception of parent alienation using in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. Their findings revealed that fathers expressed a sense of intense hurt (1) unparalleled anger, (2) loss of self-worth, (3) distrust of women (4) parental responsibilities and rights, (5) consistent concerns about their children's physical and social well-being, (6) distrust of the court system and contact supervision between a parent of the child. The most common emotional feeling fathers reported were intense hurt at the loss of contact. This feeling harbored Baker et al., (2014) and Goldberg and Goldberg's (2013) analysis that confirmed this type of hurt is traumatic as the death of a child (cited in Bosch-Brits et al., 2018). Some fathers stated that their intense hurt was longing and everlasting. Some of them even stated that the loss of contact felt worse than death.

According to Baker and Fine (2014) and Goldberg and Goldberg (2013), the conflict between parents can lead to the harassed parent experiencing anger towards the alienating parent because the control over the child is so intense that contact with the

child is time loss. One parent reported in an interview conducted by Bosch-Brits et al., (2018) that a physical attack against the mother is warranted if they repeatedly refuse contact between the father and the child. Another father reported that their rights and responsibilities as a parent is a loss and the lack of empathy displayed by the judicial system is a direct reflection of the failure to act in the best interest of the child.

For several of the fathers, the relationship with the other parent and the legal system acts in the interest of the alienating parent, rather than the child. In many cases the legal system is designed to implicate parental alienation acts in litigation, mediation, and negotiation evaluations as a way to prolong the process; therefore, restricting the father from the child longer than anticipated (Steinberger, 2006; Bosch-Brits et al., 2018). The legal systems' interest remains contradictory to helping fathers build a relationship, nevertheless, acting in support of the alienating parent's behavior. One father incited in an interview conducted by Bosch-Brits et al., (2018) the biased actions of the courts as they fail to hold the alienating parent in contempt of legal court orders.

Baker and Fine's (2014) assertions of the legal system and health care professions lack sufficient training required to identify and address parental alienation (cited in Bosch-Brits et al. (2018)). Without the proper training tools, parental alienation will continuously remain as the gateway between parent-child relationships. Some fathers have reported that the alienating parent engages in the campaign of denigration against them to damage the relationship between the father and child; with the help of the system contributing to the indoctrination. According to Baker and Fine's (2014) study on the

target, parents experience with alienation, the target parent (fathers) insist the legal system is favorable of protecting the mother and children through the tactics of manipulation and exploitation indoctrinated by the alienating parent.

The phenomenon constructed by the custodial parents' initiation, is common in mothers than fathers. The alienating parent in many custody disputes or divorce proceedings are often the custodial mother (Dunne and Hendrick; 2010; Gardner, 2001; Wallerstein et al., 2000; Kelly, 1997; Johnston and Kelly, 2001; Baker and Fine, 2014; Bernet, et al., 2015; Turkat, 1995). The gender ideologies that societal expectations placed on men and women were engraved to inflict a role specifically designed to enrich normative behaviors. Men were viewed by society as “provider” (cited in Harman et al. 2016) and women were seen as the “caregivers” (Coltraine and Parke, 1998).

As reported by Lehr and MacMillan (2001), the gender roles involving caretakers (caregivers) have resulted in 40% of American children not residing in the household with their fathers. Harman et al., (2016) also reported that mothers are solely granted primary custody of the children in custodial litigations “nine times out of ten” (Paradise, 2010) and the negative expectations of the fathers are only examined. Kruk (1993) argues that parental discrimination has society identifying parental roles based on what has been implied as to the “gender necessity roles”. Fathers are labeled as the “breadwinner”; therefore, the father must provide for the children, whether he is residing with the children or not.

As the mother remaining as the “primary caregiver” of the children, this assertion of parental roles refutes the responsibilities of parents based on gender. Harman et al. (2016), examined data on custodial recommendation court cases by legal experts and determined that fathers who are accused of being the alienating parent are perceived as “dangerous” or a “threat” to their children, by which they are denied custody. However, mothers who are identified as the alienating parent, are perceived as none threaten by the courts, therefore preventing the courts from challenging the alienation claims by the father.

Harman et al. (2016) also reported in a quantitative study investigated the mother’s and father’s that support or discourage the relationship with the other parent and child is assessable towards the mother. The data reported that on a Loyalty/Negative Portrayal behavior scale, 22.7% of the parents revealed participating in the child rejecting the parent or signaling the child not to approach the other parent. In addition, 66.8% admitted to yelling at the other parent in the presence of the child. The study confirmed that the loyal/negative portrayal behavior was more acceptable for the mothers to exhibit than the father. Nonetheless, the study also concluded that fathers were acceptable to alienating behavior.

Although acceptable by the fathers, it is hard to determine a mother’s “unfit” approach to parenting a child in the eyes of the courts (Harman et al., 2016). Kruk (2013) conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis using a three-part questionnaire to gain a father’s perspective on the father-child relationship pre- and post-divorce parenting

arrangements. 82 divorced fathers were interviewed to obtain information to compare to Kruks' (1989) observation of pre- and post-divorce arrangements from 20 years ago. The data for the study was conducted using three core areas:

1. Quantitative data on custodial status, arrangements, and preferences:
2. Qualitative data from fathers' storied accounts of their changing relationship with their children in the context of parental divorce:
3. Qualitative data from the structured interview about children's needs, paternal responsibilities, and the responsibilities of social institutions in the context of parental divorce (p. 162).

The study revealed that 38 of the 82 fathers reported post-divorce they shared parenting arrangements and only 11 of the 82 shared parenting arrangements after the divorce. In the best interest of the child, 69 of 82 (84%) fathers reported a stronger preference for shared parenting arrangements after the divorce. Asked to identify with the legal presumption involving parental disputes regarding post-divorce arrangements, 64 of the 82 fathers (78%) expressed their desire for equal or shared parenting. The fathers also expressed their issues with the relationship of the child. 30 of the 82 fathers indicated their disengagement and no contact with their children, while others were struggling to maintain contact. Kruk (2013) also identified eight core themes from the fathers' narrative perspective of their divorce process. The eight-core themes identified included:

1. Divorced fathers experienced a grieving process that contains all the major elements of bereavement.

2. Mother's discouragement of contact, access denial, and parental alienation.
3. Fathers' narratives focused on the role of the adversarial system in heightening conflict and fueling family violence and no support of services existence.
4. Physical, emotional, legal abuse against the father by the other spouse.
5. Fathers' stories focused on the effects of the divorce and the stress that has interrupted the father-child relationship with their children.
6. Fathers' financial loss
7. Fathers' positive outcome for repairing the relationship with their children.

The final theme included several attachments the father experienced with their children:

8. The new partner and child responsibilities were composed of the disengagement of the father and the child the custodial mother's relocation, forcing disengagement between the father and child the lack of adequate legal representation to assist with custody disputes and fathers' rights.

According to Kruk (2103) father's assertion of the best interest of the child is "equivalent to children's needs, with the children's metaphysical needs more salient than their physical needs during the divorce transition" (p.172).

Risk Factors and Contribution to Delinquency

Researchers examined the most common attachment to delinquency behavior and determined that the basis of the phenomenon is the relationship associated with parents

and children. Bowlby (1982) theorized the term known as attachment theory. John Bowlby (1982) suggested that children relate to an emotional attachment of the parent during infancy and early adolescence (cited from Gaik et al., 2016). He asserted that the earliest relationship to the parent allows the infant to establish an attachment to the parent. According to Harmen et al. (2016), a recent study conducted by Lehr and MacMillan (2001) determined that 40% of American children do not live with their fathers.

This circumstance places a disconnect between the father-child relationships, causing an effect on the positive outlook many children experience having both parents actively involved in their lives. Past studies have revealed that many factors can contribute to delinquency behavior (Gaik et al., 2103). Kelly and Johnston (2001) stated in a reformulation focus on the alienated child using a family system formulation, proposed that during divorce or separation, children who have experienced a positive relationship with both parents, value both parents, and spend significant time with both parents are the healthiest.

According to Armsden and Greenberg (1987), three factors identify the quality of the parent-child relationship: trust, communication, and alienation (cited from Gaik et al., 2016). Having a warm and consistent parent that adheres to the well-being of the child (ren) portrays a secure sense of attachment. Adolescents who are securely attached to the parent lowers their level of depression and views on life are more positively affected and will less likely participate in delinquent behavior (Gaik et al., 2016). Crime and deviant

behavior in young adolescents evolved, analyzing the contribution and effects of understanding the phenomenon.

Shoemaker (2013) reinforces Hirschi & Selvin (1978) study on the identification of delinquency contributing factors: (1) there must be an association or connection between the contributing or causal variable and delinquency, (2) connection must be temporarily established such as the causal factor known to occur before the effect, that is delinquency; and (3) the original connection between delinquency and casual variable must not disappear when the appearance of another variable is present. The implication that relates to any theory that systematically and empirically analyzes the causes of crime and delinquency is a modernized positivist approach.

Shoemakers' (2013) example reflects on the emphasis that broken homes are one variable that constitutes as a form of delinquent behavior, however; the broken home could be due to the death of a parent, or the presence of family violence in the household. These are several contributing factors that could be used to identify delinquent behavior but also to use variables (death of a parent) as a contributing casualty to the factor. Shoemakers' (2013) interpretation of the casualties that are present within the phenomenon, reports a variety of explanations for the given phenomenon. The art of identifying delinquency is based on personal, social, and environmental factors that elude criminal behavior (Shoemaker, 2013).

To understand the nature of a phenomenon, the claims of effectiveness must be tested to determine the outcome. Various researchers have developed many theoretical

models that describe the relationship to delinquency and the outcome factors between juvenile offenders. Agnew suggested that delinquency is prone to certain stressors in juveniles that lead to delinquency. He explains strain theory “focuses explicitly on negative relationships with others” (p.49).

Adolescents are more pressured into committing delinquent acts based on the negative connotation linked to their negative relationships. Contrary to what other researchers believe, the strain theory affects the delinquency acts but, the control theory argues that a negative relationship may lead to delinquency as a base of the reduction to social control (Agnew, 2007). However, many researchers have concluded no single path has identified delinquency. Shader (2001) argues that multiple risk factors associated with juvenile offenders often increases the chances of delinquent behavior. The risk factors examined by researchers are used as a counteractive method that determines the likelihood of a juvenile committing a crime.

Although the levels of risk are based on multiple factors, many youths who experienced multiple risk factors may never commit a delinquent or violent act (Shader, 2001). Many control theorists believe that if the delinquency is committed due to the physical abuse by the parent, the child will detach oneself from the other parent (Agnew, 2007). In custodial disputes, the level of conflict is so intense that the parents may express their anger and frustration in damaging ways. Coates (2004) examined 10,000 divorce cases and reported that 35% of the cases indicated they had experienced strong feelings of hatred toward the other spouse.

Extreme conflict among parents not only carries a continuum message of hate, but it also exposes the child (ren) to a violent, hostile environment. Exposure to violence in children among parents creates a psychological, cognitive, and social developmental content that affects the child (ren) social system. The relationship established between parent and child (Diclemente et al., 2001; Jagers et al., 2015) correlates to the “control” of the children’s behavior (Jagers et al., 2015).

Previous studies have reported that children who are exposed to violence amongst parents have a higher prevalence rate of “depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal behaviors, phobias and insomnia than un-exposed children (Cenet et al., 2015 p.4). In a study conducted by the Office of the Surgeon General (as cited in Shader, 2001) suggested the risk factors involving delinquent behavior is based on the individual, social, and community. Among these domains are subgroups such as family, school, and peer-groups. The study also reported that an individual is most likely at a higher risk linked to delinquency in the early onset (ages 6-11) if exposed to:

- General offenses,
- Substance use,
- Being-male,
- Aggression,
- Hyperactivity,
- Aggression problems (anti-social behavior) (males only),
- Exposure to television violence,

- Medical, physical problems,
- Low IQ,
- Anti-Social attitudes and beliefs,
- Dishonesty (males only),

The late onset (ages 12-14) of offenders identified in the study included:

- General offenses,
- Restlessness,
- Difficulty concentrating,
- Risk-taking,
- Aggression (males only),
- Being-male,
- Physical violence,
- Anti-social attitudes and beliefs,
- Crimes against person,
- Low IQ,
- Substance abuse,

Furthermore, juvenile offenders in late-onset experiences with family include poor-parent child relationship, harsh and lax discipline, poor monitoring, supervision, low parental involvement, anti-social parents, broken homes, low socioeconomic status/poverty, abusive parents, family conflict (males only). Cenat et al. (2015) conducted a study using a one-stage stratified cluster sampling of 34 Quebec high school

participants from grades 10 to 12. The study concluded that half of the participants (50.6%) committed at least one form of delinquent behavior during the last 12 months, more than 58% of males had a higher prevalence rate of delinquent behaviors than females (44.3%). The study also revealed that girls reported a higher rate of delinquent behavior of “*going out without permission*” (29%), The most cited behavior for males were the *destruction of other's property* (31%). Among the other behaviors, *theft* (19.7%-females, 27.4%-males); *destruction of property of others* (19.7%-females); *going out all night without permission* (27.1%-males).

Females also reported a higher rate of running away from homes than males. 7.2% of females indicated running away from their homes in the last 12 months, compared to 5.5% males. In addition to delinquent behavior, family violence exposure revealed at least 61.8% of youth were exposed to at least one episode of interparental violence, 61.4% were exposed to psychological violence, and 14.7% were exposed to physical violence. The results of the family structure study presented characteristics required to reduce the risk of delinquent behavior.

Social factors involving family and parental involvement are commonly linked to juvenile delinquency. McCords (as cited in Shader, 2001) reported in a study consisting of 250 boys, that boys around the age of 10 experienced a higher exposure to violent offenses due to parental supervision, parental conflict, and parental aggression. Shader (2001) also showed McCord et al. (2001) study that revealed children who reside in single-parent households are linked to an increase in delinquency.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported that an estimated 809,700 arrests of a person in 2017 were children under the age of 18. Nine hundred ten arrests were juveniles who committed murder and non-negligent manslaughter. The overlap in future behavior and past behavior in juveniles presents a pattern of disruptiveness that will eventually erupt to serious crimes. Loeber et al. (2003) asserted that children who display a persistent act of disruptive behavior are likely to become child delinquents, and in turn, most likely to become serious, violent, or chronic juvenile offenders.

A Pittsburgh Youth study sample revealed that the average age of serious delinquency and problem behaviors is 11.9, minor problem behavior on an average of 7.0 age, moderately serious problem behaviors age around 9.5; whereas the average age of a male juvenile first court contact for index cases is around 14.5. Index cases consist of murder, robbery, rape, aggravated assault burglary, larceny auto theft, and arson (Loeber et al., 2003). This study indicates that a child who should be attending 9th grade will most likely spend the rest of his life incarcerated.

Although stages of adolescence are closely examined to identify and under the nature of delinquency, the recognition during the pre-school stages should be administered. Loeber et al. (2003) stated that factors such as language, temperamental characteristics, and low attachment to caregivers may affect the developmental “pro-and anti” social responses to preschoolers (p.5). The researchers focused on delayed

language, and how its presence in a child, may cause the child to develop stress and anxiety that could possibly lead to later delinquency.

In an effort to understand the attitudes of delinquent behavior, the researchers also suggested that anger, resistance to controlling behaviors and emotions in the early onset may result in anti-social and behavior problems. Finally, they argued that displaying affection to the child enact as an appropriate response to preventing delinquency.

According to Loeber et al. (2003), “the closer a child is to his mother, the less likely a child is to be at risk of delinquency (p.5). Kruk (2012) argued that fathers are an important factor in their children's lives just as mothers and children need both parents, both parents need their children.

Loeber et al. (2003) stated that risk factors associated with juvenile offenders are considerably linked to biological, individual, and family factors. It is important to identify factors at an early stage. According to research conducted by Loeber et al., the main predictor of delinquency is aggression and usually starts when children enter kindergarten until the age of 12. As children get older, the social structure changes. Children often attend different schools over a time frame, and seemingly most likely to integrate with peers that experience the same behavior or less aggressive behavior as the child. This social system of peers could affect children. Loeber et al. (2003) asserts that children who have a history of delinquent behavior frequently interact with their deviant peers; and more likely to increase their levels of delinquency.

Factors to Race, Gender, and Status to Delinquent Behavior

The average representation of juvenile delinquent offenders is astronomically disproportionate in gender and race. As the total number of child delinquency cases continuously expands within juvenile courts, the intersection between race, gender, and early childhood social developmental skills is largely overlapped with the policymaker's stance on the stereotypes attached (Loeber, 2013). According to Kempf-Leonard et al. (2001), the most over-represented arrest in the juvenile system are African American males. On the contrary, females are under-represented in arrest compared to males (Loeber, 2013).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Loeber, 2013) reported in 2014 U. S population cases handled by white juvenile youth were 43%, 36% African American youth, 18% Hispanic youth, 2% American Indian youth (including Alaskan Natives), and 1% Asian youth (including Native Americans and others). According to the 2010 Census Bureau (DeLone and DeLone, 2017) database reports indicated that 76.5% of children under the age of 18 were white, 16.6% African American, 5.5% Asian and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and 1.9% American Indian and Alaska Native. The ethnicity database conducted the Census Bureau equated to 76.8% non-Hispanic juveniles and 23.2 Hispanics juveniles in the United States population.

These problematic disparities among races highlight the miss-representation that minorities are subjected to and scrutinized by the judiciary system. The bias associated

with race and crime suppresses, and reveals the relationship affected with a crime. In a summary report conducted by Pope and Feyerherm (1995) revealed a preliminary analysis that race and ethnic status may be a “factor that influences decisions in certain jurisdictions” (DeLone and DeLone, 2017 p.1; Pope and Freyerherm, 1995 p.iii).

Nevertheless, other researchers have concluded that gender and race do not define delinquency social status. The Study group constructed under OJJPD confirmed through routine research that “no difference” was founded amongst race and relationship to the offender class status.

The Office of Juvenile Justice Prevention Department reported in 2014 that 56% of white youth accounted for in the United States juvenile population, 15% African American youth, 23% Hispanic youth, American Indian 10%, and Asian 5%. The gap in self-reporting of youth arrest represents the violent offenses that are not too comply in the juvenile database; therefore, the representation of minorities is reported at a higher rate than non-minorities. In a Uniform Crime Report that investigated under-and-over, represented crime data collected in 2011 revealed that white youth represent 64.3% of arrest in youth, but are under-represented following the presence in the juvenile system. They also reported that 51.6 % African American youth arrested for murder-non-negligent manslaughter, 68.7% African American youth arrested for robbery, 61.40% African American youth arrested for prostitution/commercialized vice, and 54.3% of African American arrested on suspicion (DeLone and DeLone, 2017).

Regardless of race and gender, serious and chronic delinquency are prevalent in the early onset of children. In addition to the racial disparities associated with delinquency, in 2014 the OJJDP reported that white youth accounted for larger portion of drug offenses (55%) in juvenile courts, followed by African American youth (20%). However, African American youth accounted for a larger portion of offenses against the person (42%); while Hispanic youth represented only one-fifth of all offenses ranging from: person offenses, property offenses, drug law violations, and public order offenses (Hyland, 2018). Other races, Asian and American youth only accumulated a smaller portion of the overall offenses in the OJJDP database (Hyland, 2018).

The average analysis paradigm of crime, gender, and the race was designed from a theoretical perspective capitalizing on the offender and the characteristics of the arresting officer. In a research study examining police arrest, Khuruakham and Hoover (2001) revealed that “police discretionary decision making particularly whether to arrest for minor or nuisance offenses are influenced by the officer characteristics, situational factors, and community factors” p.121 (as cited from DeLone & DeLone, 2017 p.2). For example, this is to imply that if an officer who has a prior history of racially profiling offenders located in impoverished communities, would assume that a black kid standing on a corner that is well-known for drug usage is committing a crime. The officer, based on prior history, may possibly arrest the kid for standing on the corner under the assumption that the kid is dealing with drugs.

The American Sociological Association (2007) reported on a multipart series of gender, crime, and race disparities that “police are prone to more assertive surveillance of low-income communities, stereotyping them as bad neighborhoods” (p.10). This over-analytical assumption of an officer’s perception influences the relationship between race and crime. According to the American Sociological Association (2007), researchers reported that in 2002, youth between the ages of 10 to 17 doubled in arrest rates for African Americans than White arrest rates. As referenced earlier, the OJJDP reported 809,700 (arrest per 100,000 persons) overall arrest by juvenile; blacks accounted for 5,142.5 compared to whites at an average of 1,980.9, African Indian at 2,727.0, a minority at 3,784.7 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency program, 2018).

According to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, in 2017 male’s demographics admission accounted for 92.5% and females accounted for 7.5%. The database of race/ethnicity accounted for 43.6% African American; 39.0% Hispanics; 17.0% of Whites. The average arrest for juveniles in the United States in 2014 represented 3,084.50 (arrest per 100,000), Texas comprised a total of 2,598.2. Although there is little research on the biases implemented on the effects of race and arrest, the disproportionate arrest between minorities and whites identifies a flaw in the judicial system that policymakers should generate a plan of action to correct the ongoing issue.

The Best Interest of the Child

The effects of alienation and the understanding of delinquency revealed specific reasoning behind each phenomenon. The interpretation of the legal remedies associated

with alienation and delinquency relies heavily on family courts. Divorced parents have exploited the judicial system to determine the significance of the parent-child relationship. During the “tender-years”, the presumption of the best interest of the child was established in a custodial agreement between parents (Schwartz, 2015). The presumption to this rule seemingly favored in the interest of the mother.

Based on the characteristics associated with women, history has assumed that women were “better suited to have physical custody of a child in disputed custody cases” (Kim, 2014 p. 39). According to Kim idealization of guardianship, a mother exhibition of pristine morals and values, selfless presence, and warm nurturing spirit; and ideally “white” were more cultivating and caring based on society's interest of parental involvement. On the other hand, the characteristics of a black mother were significantly different. Kim (2014) asserted that black women were viewed by society as “pushy, overbearing, overly sexual, assertive, and domineering (p.40). This negative depiction of black mothers only solidified the identity of black fathers. The image of a black man was that of an unfit, uninvolved father.

Kim (2014) furthered identified two masculinities that society implemented on heterosexual black men. The bad black man: in which is threatened by masculinity, the good black man, who is seen as a man conforming to the white man’s normative standards. Due to the new identity roles of both parents, society continued to value the mother’s role over the father’s role in their children’s lives. Women were viewed as more receptive to traditional social roles than men during divorce proceedings. Researchers

have indicated that women revealed to be more understanding of non-custodial divorced fathers, while divorced men tend to experience a level of distress due to the loss of their “head of household status” (Rando, 1993). As women begin to undergo the new identity role in their household, the adjustment as a single parent begins to effect the changes financially for both parents.

To assist mothers with financial assistance, the federal government enacted the Office of Child Support Enforcement in 1975. The purpose of this program is to provide parents an obligation of financial support for their children. The OCSE, created under the federal governments' enactment of the Child Support Enforcement and Paternity Establishment program assisted with the reduction of welfare expenses by collecting financial support from the non-custodial parent to help establish a positive parent-child relationship during custody disputes. The context adopted by the government included the best interest of the child as the primary objective in custodial disputes (The Department of Justice, 2017).

Initially, the coined term best interest of the child, began under the authority granted by the government, superseding parental authority (Carbone, 2014). The federal government acting as a third party in legal proceedings between parents enabled appointee of custodianship. The indoctrination of the best interest of the child varies and it broadens specification provided various meanings. The interpretation of the best interest of the child is a feasible phrase with no specific definition under family law.

Schwartz (2015) stated that the representation of the state clarifies the meaning in the interest of the parent rather than the child.

The proper response to promoting the best interest of the child is by allowing the state to promote equal contact between both parents and children. Having the best interest of the child has been challenged by many. In 1979, the United States Supreme Court ruled in case *Cohan v. Mohammed* that mothers' and fathers' relationships were of equal importance and questioned whether the continuance of identified presumption was plausible (as cited from Schwartz, 2015). This approach limits the judicial preference for both parents (Stoner et al., 2011). The child support division of the Office of Attorney General is a public child support agency of the state of Texas.

Acting under the Social Security Act of 1975, Title IV-D is employed through the federal government as an active child support enforcement program. The purpose of the Texas Child Support Division is to ensure that children receive the support they need and deserve from both parents. Under "Title IV-D", the state of Texas is allowed to help families with establishing paternity, establishing child, medical, and dental support order, collecting child support, modifying a child support obligation, and establishing conservatorship with regards to possession and access. During the child support process, parents are identified as the custodial parent and non-custodial parent. The custodial parent is recognized as the managing conservator, and the non-custodial parent is identified as the possessor conservator.

The custodial parent is responsible for receiving financial support from the other parent. The custodial parents have the right to determine where the child will reside. The non-custodial parent is responsible for providing financially for the child. The noncustodial parent has legal rights to visit and spend time with the child and is provided the whereabouts of the child. Texas Family code identifies this right as “custody”. According to Grall, in 2014, one in every 6 custodial parents were fathers (17.5%) while about 50 of every 6 custodial parents were mothers (82.5%). Grall also reported that less than half (45.7%) of custodial parents were non-Hispanic white, one-half (27.0%) were black, and 24.1% were Hispanics.

The findings also indicated that more than 59.3% of custodial fathers were non-Hispanic, 17.1% were black, and 18.7% were Hispanic. Even though non-custodial and custodial percentage differences were based on age, race, current marital status, educational attainment, and other selected characteristics, little research is explored to examine the custody disputes regarding the best interest of the child. The most important process of child custody and visitation arrangements is the mediation. This process is significant to the parents, the children, the courts, and society (Stoner et al., 2011) involved in the case. The process of mediation is rendered in order to determine the standard custody and visitation arrangements between parents.

The term meditation is described as an “adjunct to the court's determination of child custody and visitation (Stoner et al., 2011). During the mediation process, the purpose is based on deciding which parent will establish legal parental sole guardianship

of the child. Many critics have publicized their disdained interest regarding mediation proceedings. Some have criticized the mediation process of being unfair and forces parties into a settlement that is unjust to one parent and child relationship (Stoner et al, 2011). The joint custody agreement initiated by the courts is not to decide which parent is better or to speculate based on who the child is “better off” with, but the nurturing aspects that are required for the child’s needs (Charlow, 1986).

Implemented in 1980, the state of California was the first to administer mediation in child custody and visitation case. According to Stone, Sandra, Perry, & Marcum, the state experienced many flaws that were later corrected such as: (1) the state did not address the best interest of the child; (2) it did not protect women who lacked power in their marital relationship; (3) it did not protect any parties with cases that involve spousal abuse. This allowed other states to embrace the mediation process, but also enhance their mediation proceedings due to the mistakes made by California (Stone et al., 2011). The mediator is selected as a nonbinding represent or third party that help to dispute parties reach a mutual agreement. The mediators can be attorneys, judges, counselors, or other social workers, or any actively involved service entity within the state or federal level. Under the Title IV-D guidelines, the non-custodial is giving possession and access to the child.

The term possession and access are described as providing access to the child by establishing visitation and possession, by allowing the other parent possession of the child when the child is in their custody. Under the control of Title IV-D, federal

regulations prohibits Texas Office of the Attorney General the use of child support funding to modify or enforce a child custody or visitation orders (Texasattorneygeneral.gov).

The Texas OAG (Office of Attorney General) have established outside local organizations to assist parents with visitation and access disputes. The service entitled, The Office of the Attorney General's Access & Visitation program is designed to help noncustodial parents with establishing or maintaining a relationship with the child.

The program is a service provider. However, the program isn't effective as parties are led to believe. The program is designed for attorneys to provide legal advice regarding visitation concerns the non-custodial parent has. They provide them with other attorneys who can assist them further with their case, and the pay is determined by the attorney the parent selects. Many of the complaints associated with the father's lack of access to the child. Friend et al., (2016) conducted a qualitative study using a large-scale multi-component sample and in-depth interviews of fathers who are actively involved in the Parent and Children Together (PACT) responsible fatherhood program.

The findings indicated that most fathers engaging in conflict co-parenting relationships have reported frustration due to the inability to establish or maintain contact with the child. The study determined that nearly one-third of the father's conflicted co-parenting relationship was unable to maintain open communication with their children's mother and to avoid conflict, which will limit contact with the mother. One father indicated that the mother of his child informed him that the child never wants to speak

with him when he calls, and the mother makes other excuses to block communication between him and the child.

Mediation is the initial process that allows parents to actively agree to possession and access that interacts with the best interest of the child. Not only does the mediation act as a gateway for addressing visitation and custody concerns, but it also rehashes years of anger and frustration between parents. Perry et al., (2011) in a qualitative study on approved mediators that have handled mediator cases used in-depth interviews to gain deep insight into mediation issues and concerns by examining their views, opinions, and perspective.

The study reported that one factor that affected the mediation process was the emotional state of the parents. The communication exchanges among parents resulted in extreme screaming matches and often followed by one parent shutting down; failing to communicate throughout the process. Unraveling communication also contributed to parents becoming dismissive and using sarcastic interactive styles. Despite the ongoing debate on the best interest of the child, the courts have determined the deciding factor is on the children's needs. This comes with speculation from critics that the interest of the child can't be defined by the opinions of society when both parties are actively involved with the child.

In the landmark case, *Pointer v. Bannister* the standard issue to the best interest of the child solidified the misappropriated term used in court child custody disputes. The case involved a custody dispute between a father and maternal grandparents. The mother

recently died, and the courts rule in the interest of the father. This ruling resulted in an overturned verdict by the Iowa Supreme Court, awarding custody to the grandparents. According to Charlow (1986), the Supreme Court ruled that both parents were fit however, the father's "unstable, unconventional, bohemian" lifestyle was not in the child's best interest. Unfortunately, the courts were unable to identify sufficient factors that constituted the best interest of the child. This decision was determined upon personal preferences in response to the vagueness surrounding the term, allowing for speculation and discretionary proceedings in a court of law. During the process of mediation, a large number of non-custodial fathers frequently have visitation concerns.

Lassko and Adams (2006) in a qualitative study on non-custodial fathers in the program called Devoted Dads used semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews to examine the relationship with the mother and child, and what changes have occurred in the relationship over time. The non-custodial parents were selected based on non-marital relationship and having only one child. The study concluded that the stereotype surrounding fathers having little interest in parenting is contradictory. They reported that out of the 36 mother cases, 12 of the fathers in the 36 mother cases established a parenting plan and 6 of those still did not see their child regularly. Another 18 cases established no parenting plan, 10 of those fathers did not see their children regularly.

Many of the father's comments of their children were emotionally bothered and were trying to do right by the child. One interviewee who has three children by two mothers declared the emotional withdrawal he has experienced without physical contact

from his children and not be able to “protect them” (pg.89). The fathers’ inability to pay child support resulted in arrears, therefore, the mothers of children did not allow the father access. Courts' points of view insist on the separation of child support payments and visitation. The child’s best interests include factors of safety and consistency, not the ability to pay the obligated child support amount. Regardless of the non-custodial parent is behind in child support payments, the rights to have possession and access to the child is still legally binding.

Despite the ongoing debate of separation between child support payments and visitation, researchers have found a correlation between the two variables. According to Cheadle et al. (2010), the correlation between the two variables is positive but unclear as fathers who visit their children frequently may see the economic need and may provide extra money to their children. However, fathers who do frequently pay support may not be inclined to visit the child regularly or may feel entitled to have access to the child whenever he or she feels. The researchers also asserted that mothers who receive child support payments regularly do not withhold visitation and access from the father (Cheadle et al., 2010).

Other researchers have determined that fathers who are on child support reject the desire to maintain a relationship with the child. Fruestenberg et al., (1992) (as cited from Koball & Prinicpe, 2002) revealed in an interview study that low-income men stated mothers’ cooperation with the child support agency increased the conflict between the parents. The quality of the relationship amongst parents affects the relationship between

parents, therefore the initiating or increase in child support payments may cause fathers to deter from the child (Koball and Principe, 2002; Nord and Zill, 1996).

In 2002, Koball and Principe conducted a study using data from 1997 and 1999 National Survey of America's Families to examine the visitation relationship and changes between nonresident fathers and their children since the implementation of child support. The variables were: (1) children of single mothers; (2) children in households headed by single mothers; (3) factors associated with frequent contact. The study determined that children who have support orders and receive payments have frequent contact with the nonresident father.

The study further determined that 34% of children born out of wedlock did not see their fathers at all in the previous year, in comparison to the 16% of children born to married parents. In addition, about three-quarters of young children born to unmarried parents had frequent visits with their father in the previous year. In the previous year, 73% of African American children visited their fathers, 63% of white children visited their fathers, and only two-thirds of Hispanic children visited their father. The study concluded that children born into poverty were less likely to visit their father in the previous year. The results concluded families below income poverty levels, 63% of children born to unmarried parents had visited their father; 80% of children born to married parents had visited their father.

However, high-income levels reported 72% of children born to unmarried parents had visited their father; 80% of children born to married parents had visited their father;

43% of children born out of wedlock who did not have a child support obligation or paid no support saw their father in the previous year; 64% of children whose fathers did have a child support obligation and has not paid saw their father in the previous year; 79% of children whose fathers had a child support obligation and paid support saw their father in the previous year.

This information corresponding to child support and visitation concluded that the level of support did not warrant the visitation of the child, however; it did show that nonresident fathers were more inclined to visit their children frequently if support is provided. As the results from the study reported, 91% of children from married parents visited their father if child support was paid in comparison to 62% who did not visit their father due to unpaid child support. The conclusion of the study suggested that children were more likely to see their father in 1999 than in 1997. This is most likely due to the establishment of increasing PRWORA (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act) provisions to expand the child support enforcement programs.

The incorporation of programs under the PRWORA such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) forces the parents who are receiving the benefits to cooperate with child support enforcement agencies (Koball and Prinicpe, 2002). According to the 2016 census bureau, 386,000 fathers requested government assistance. About 104,000 contacted the child support agency for assistance; 129,000 fathers requested location on the other parent; 262,000 fathers contacted the agency to establish a legal agreement or court order; 115,000 contacted the agency requesting to change the

legal child support order. The report also concluded that an estimated 1,227,000 custodial mothers did not want the child to have contact with other parent compared to 296,000 custodial fathers.

The conflict with visitation is based on the relationship between parents. If the relationship between parents is dysfunctional regardless of child support payments, the relationship with the child would more than likely be dysfunctional and the blame will rely on the mother and courts (Koball and Prinicpe, 2002). Poor parental interaction, restrictive access to a child, and new romantic relationship interest are barriers that greatly affect the visitation and access, as well as child support payment obligations (Lerman and Ooms, 1993; Bloomer et al., 2002).

Parental relationships and the interaction of family structure

The roles of parental responsibility have changed significantly during and after marriage (Stoner et al., 2011). According to Hahn et al., (2018) by the age of 18, about half of all children will experience living with one parent, Children residing in poverty are more than likely to experience the absence of their father. It is important to examine family relationships within a context to better explain alienation and juvenile delinquency. As mentioned earlier, Hirschi (1969) explored the effects of broken homes and hypothesized the social theory using naturalistic methods to rational meaning to understand the family structure.

Hirsch's assertion of the family structure was the cause and effect of social theory. His stance indicated that adolescents from the non-tact family structure are more

inclined to participate in delinquent behavior than adolescents from the tact family structure. He further elaborates on the conception of delinquent behaviors to the non-tact family structure entrenched on the low-level experiences of parental attachment. The level of detachment from the parent influences the child's decision to interact with the parent; therefore, weakening the parent-child bond (Torregosa, 2014). Parent's involvement in their children's lives offers a stress-free lifestyle for all individuals involved.

Co-parenting is one key element that the child support division highlights in their possession and access clause. The epoch of Joint Managing Conservatorship concedes on the access of the child to both parents. The division of child support encourages the emotional and physical involvement of both parents by establishing the parent-child relationship. Despite the child support division healthy parent-child relationship initiative, the agency also hinders the establishment of the relationship. As reported by Bloomer et al. (2002), low-income levels and inconsistent child support payments can cause a strain in relationships between separated parents. The nature of strained relationships also becomes an issue with the non-resident (also known as non-custodial & usually the father) and his children (Bloomer et al., 2002, p.78).

It is meaningful that children have equal access to both parents. Limited or restricting access to the child, obstructs the parent's relationship, therefore, impeding on the parent-child relationship. Repairing the relationship between parents increases social support, encouragement, and assistance in children. Bloomer et al., 2002 also reported

that positive interaction and emotional support are beneficial to the custodial (mother) and non-custodial (father) parent. Despite the many different perspectives on child support, both parents agree that supporting their children is the most important objective.

Bloomer et al. (2002), conducted a qualitative study on the perspective and problems that emerged from child support on non-resident fathers and residential mothers. Their findings revealed that fathers' and mother's main priority is spending time with their children and their emotional support. One father stated in Bloomer et al. (2002) study that child support means providing for his child financially and physically. During the same interview, one mother agreed that quality time spent between her child and the father is more important than receiving child support payments.

The study also concluded that parents suggested that parental responsibility relies on both parents. Although the parents agreed to financial and emotional support, many of the participating fathers were vocal about paying child support. Some of the fathers insisted that child support agency enact a policy that holds mothers accountable for providing documentation on how the child support money is spent.

Perception of Parent-Child Relationship to Delinquent Behavior

A positive parent-child relationship plays a significant role in the developmental stages of children's behavior. Communication between parents and children is one form of positive interactional family structure that provides safety and security to the dynamics of delinquent behavior in adolescents (Donges, 2015). According to researchers, Yablonski (2002) and Erickson (1963), the lack of adequate family structure can

influence juvenile behavior and facilitates the development of delinquency. Researchers have studied many factors that determine the cause and effect of delinquent behaviors.

In 1977 Albert Bandura, the reflection of delinquent behavior was acquired from negative peer relationships along with negative peers, and negative-student relationships (as cited in Donges, 2015). Other researchers argued that the direct impact of delinquent behavior from family relationships and parental style associated with supervision.

Yablonski (2000) suggested that family is the “single most significant” (Donges, 2015 p. 1010) influence on personality development in juveniles. Without proper structure and guidance, juveniles will subsequently engage in delinquent behavior (Donges, 2015).

In contrast to family structure, Gorman-Smith, Tolan, and Henry (2000) argued that a strong parenting style of supervision and positive involvement reduces the risk of delinquent behavior in children. Child socialization examines the interactional responses to parental guidance and peer influences that help predict the quality of family and the fundamental determinant of delinquent behavior (Stewart et.al., 2002). Parental rejection, lack of emotional support, and lack of supervision are other common factors researchers argued causes antisocial and delinquent behavior (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986).

The respondents were asked to indicate what type of crime they committed on a 5-point Likert Scale using (1) for “never” (2) for “not frequent” (3) “moderately frequently” (4) for “frequent” and (5) “very frequent”. The categories were listed as crime, vandalism, drugs, pornography, and sexual behaviors, dishonesty, and other

misbehaviors. The categories ranged from 35 (lowest) to 175 points (highest). The highest ranks indicated the highest levels of acts performed by the students.

The results showed that other misbehaviors were higher ranked ($M=2.421$, $SD=0.607$) compared to crime, vandalism, drugs, pornography, and dishonesty. Crime ($M=1.767$, SD) followed secondly, in which students admitted to assaulted other students, bringing weapons to school, hit others and stole. The Parental Attachment was measured using two parts: 30 items for mothers' attachment and 30 items for the father's attachment. Based on the John Bowlby (1982) theoretical framework, the attachment theory consisted of three-part dimensions: trust, quality communication, and extent of anger and alienation

Regarding the family structure co-dependency of delinquent behavior, other researchers argue the bidirectional interactional process to delinquency. Patterson et al., (1992) affirms that inconsistent parenting leads to delinquent behaviors, initiating a cycle of negative interaction that is consistent with one another. For example, delinquent behavior in adolescents may contribute to the parent's inconsistency to provide parental guidance to adolescents. Many researchers have studied this bidirectional relationship. However, many have determined the empirical studies regarding the relationship was not significant to one another.

According to Liska and Reed (1985), parental attachment significantly affected the negative responses to delinquent behavior, yet delinquent behavior did not influence parental attachment. It is important to offer an extended perspective on family

relationships and delinquent behaviors. The involvement with delinquent behavior tends to explain the disruptive relationship between parents and children. Rathianbalan and Naaraayan (2017) used a case-control study on juvenile boys in state Government facility who was convicted for acts of juvenile delinquency, with family factors variables: (1) parental age, (2) education, (3) employment, (4) parental personal habits (ex: smoking, alcohol intake, and substance abuse), (5) involvement in crime, (6) number of children at home, (7) family disharmony, (8) single, (9) separated, and (10) punitive parents.

All the variables were recorded using a univariate analysis to determine the relationship between factors and juvenile delinquency. The results revealed the most significant risk factors to juvenile delinquency were being born as a single child and having separated or single parents. The results further showed that the strongest predictor of juvenile delinquency was parental supervision. Cauffman et al. (2008) reported claims in conjunction with Dodge et al. (2006), that males engage in more delinquent behavior than females. According to Odgers and Moretti (2002), delinquency behavior in females resulted in a more relationship-oriented defense.

Typically, female offenders often engage in sexual experiences that are aggressively developed in normative relationships (Cauffman et al., 2008). Romantic relationship involvement also reflects on the relationship that juveniles have with their partners and their parents. Although the effects of delinquency have sufficient and insufficient data to determine the cause of its behavior, other researchers indicate that parent-adolescent relationship influences the stability of and quality of adolescent's

romantic relationship (Cauffman et al., 2008; Conger et al., 2000). Further research suggests that positive quality parent-adolescent interactions limit adolescent romantic partners (Kim and Capaldi, 2004; Cauffman et al., 2008).

According to a longitudinal study conducted by Meeus et al. (2004), youth who have experienced a positive parental influence showed little or no intimate partner involvement. Even though parental influence had an effect on the number of intimate partners, results indicated no interconnection with delinquency. Gaik et al. (2005) reviewed literature that shows negative parental attachment influenced delinquency.

The rationalization of the empirical study also concluded that family and schools provide interconnection to social bonding in the context of delinquency. Unfortunately, the literature provides very little empirical research on the characteristics associated with delinquent behavior which could mediate the link between parental-adolescents relationship counterparts and delinquency (Gaik et al., 2013).

In 2013, Gaik et al. performed an empirical study on 300 students analyzing two social developmental influences: delinquent behavior and parental attachment. The study identified the delinquent acts performed over an eight-month period and how the cognitive dimensions of the behavior impact the relationship with their parents. The researchers measured the levels of behavior and parental attachment in 200 boys. Using a two-dimensional instrument, 100 girls ages 15-18 were measured on the Behavior of Students, and Parental Attachment (PA). The scale consists of 35 items with six subscales to identify the six different types of delinquent acts.

The five-point Likert-scale questionnaire consist of the quality of parental attachment responses indicated using (1) *never true* to (5) *always true*. The scale showed that a mother's attachment in trust was highest (M=3.40, SD=0.63), followed with alienation (M=3.48, SD=0.71), and communication (M=3.40, SD=0.69). The results of the fathers showed attachment in trust was high (M=3.51, SD=0.72), which communication being the lowest (M=3.16 SD=0.73) and alienation (M=3.23, SD=0.74). The study further revealed a significant negative relationship between delinquent behavior parental attachments, with total reliability of $r=0.282$, $p<0.01$).

Also, parental attachment appeared to be related to delinquency. The predictor explained that higher levels of parental attachment reduce the levels of delinquent behavior. Parental involvement enhances the support for children, financially and emotionally. The office of child support encourages co-parenting and recommends family-building plans that ensure equal support provided by both parents that is in the best interest of the child (Hahn et al., 2018). Although child support helps promote co-parenting building skills and vehemently assures the best interest of the child is established, some individuals insist that instability and conflict between parents hinder the co-parenting relationship-building process.

Friend et al. (2016) reports that many fathers and mothers were able to co-parent after romantic affairs ended, however, others found it difficult to maintain a co-parenting relationship. Friend et al. (2016), in their 1-year clinical study concerning 87 low- income fathers' co-parenting relationships with the mothers of their children reported that about

one-third of the fathers interviewed had conflicting co-parenting relationship styles. The style of parenting-related to discipline, financial support, and the amount of access the father has to the child. The qualitative study was conducted using two-rounds of in-depth interviews.

The fathers were interviewed on the effects of the relationships that the other parent had on the children and their current views on the mother and child relationship. The study was examined using indicators: cooperative, conflicted, and disengagement. The study revealed that one-third of the fathers had a cooperating co-parenting relationship during the 2nd round interview. Half of the fathers (n=10) were non-residential fathers who had frequent contact, and the rest (n=8) were residential fathers; n=11 of the fathers complained that the tension experienced had to do with financial support; n=20 fathers expressed their tension was due to lack of access.

Unable to maintain consistent contact with their children was one-third of the fathers' complaints. One father claimed that he isn't allowed to talk to his child and if he does speak with her, she has to sneak on the phone with him and hang up quickly if someone walks in the room. In addition, n=17 of the nonresidential fathers lacked court ordered or legal parenting visitation agreement, one-quarter of the fathers sought formal or joint custody during the first and second interview. The study confirms that the problem within co-parenting is conflict and disengagement. The lack of contact visits was also founded due to the non-cooperative co-parenting relationship. Father's confirmed

that equal access to their children was significant and that would highlight the important roles that both parents play in their children's lives.

Perception of Father-Child Relationship to Family Structure

Many researchers have associated factor that causes delinquency in adolescents. Lack of attachment to parents (Egeland and Farber, 1984; Loeber et al., 2003) towards Cernkovich and Ciordano 1987; Sampson and Laub, 1993); temperament characteristics (Goldsmith et al., 1987. see Loeber et al., 2003); Language (Statin et al., 1993); and Sutherlands theory to learned techniques and motives, drives, rationalizing, and attitudes towards favorable laws are factors (Sykes & Matza, 1957) that have examined the causes and delinquency.

Parents who engage in paternity patterns such as low supervision, rejection, and harsh and inconsistent discipline have been aligned to high-risk behavior that eventually increases delinquent behavior (Loeber et al., 2003). Lober and Stouthamer- Loeber (1986) also found that adolescents who experience inadequate supervision and parental rejection are common predictors to delinquent experience and antisocial behavior.

Despite the many influences related to delinquency, researchers have found common interaction with the family structure has an impact on the phenomenon. According to Rowen (2015), conflict issues between parents during the developmental stages of adolescents before, after, and during parental separation is toxic to the influence of social behavior. Conversely, mothers are idealized as the natural caregivers, adherently implying that fathers are considerably the secondary caregivers. The initial representation

of a father's role was to provide financially for the family while mothers enacted the role of the nurturer and caregiver of the children (Kim, 2014).

As both parents are equally identified as "providers" for their children, the child support program designed to ensure the financial responsibility is carried out by the non-custodial parent (hereafter "father"). Fathers are obligated to provide a financial obligation as they are absent or no longer present in the household. As the father is removed from the household, the traditional notion of parental roles is reinforced (Kim, 2014). Kim (2014) contends that during child custody cases, mothers were placed back into the traditional role under default assumption as the primary caregiver. Generally, the father is awarded support financially for the child and granted access to possession and visitation.

Although financial support is paramount to a child's existence, the presence of the father is essentially the critical aspect that helps ensure a father-child relationship. As mentioned by Kruk (2013), there has been a growing recognition to help analyze the importance of fathers in child development. Cohen (1987) asserts that the developmental concept of fathers' lives is based on the attachment of child and fatherhood is the primary attachment, and significantly most important in social roles (Kruk, 2010). Kruk (2010) reported that father's description of their attachment to their children is stronger than any attachment, and there is very little empirical research that examines the father's views on their child's relationship to custodial arrangements.

Father's impact on children in every society is exceptionally important and affects the socioemotional development pertaining to the father-child relationship dynamic (Gray et al., 2015). The role of a father in custody disputes often depicts the father's relationship as less meaningful with their children. The concept of the father's social role with their children was considered "visitor-like" (Brinig and Nock, 2003; Kruk, 2010). Gray et al., (2015) reports that the father's absence has shifted to a negative influence on children that increases the risk of dropping out of school, lower attachment, poorer physical and mental health, and behavioral problems.

The presence of fathers considerably impacts the children's social skills, children's later IQ, and other learning resources (Gray et al., 2015). Considering the psychological and social competence, the effects of denigration plays on children also highlight the negative responses. According to Rowen (2015), many young adults reported that they suffered from high levels of depression symptoms, life decisions, and frequent conflict with their parents. Generally, the blame for the children's psychological and social behaviors deflect from the denigrated parent to the denigrating parent (Rowen, 2015).

The term "*deadbeat*" has been the identifier that has plagued non-custodial fathers for years. Deadbeat, constructed by Congress under the 1997 bill entitled, "Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act. To mitigate policies that demonstrate equal support, the child support program implemented policies that offered non-custodial fathers the right to establish a relationship. Many fathers question whether the system is generally

designed to focus on the interest of the mother and less on the relationship with the children. In a study conducted by Arendall (2005), 75 fathers reported that legal bias toward mothers assists with the implication of injustice for fathers.

Lassko and Adams (2006) conducted a study using a semi-structured interview on 75 fathers participating in the Devoted Dad Program in Washington State. Fathers were asked about the relationship with the mother, what the relationship was like before the mother became pregnant, and changes in relationships over time. The study also included the satisfaction rate of the parenting plan, if the mother refused visits, and what is the connection between paying child support and seeing the child. The study identified 4 themes related to the fathers involvement with their children, (1) the family origin influence on fathers, (2) the fathers who were committed to being a part of their children's life, (3) behaviors of both mothers and fathers that lead to relationship issues that interfere with the father-child relationship, and (4) court are biased towards mothers.

The report from the origin of the fathers reported that 14 of the participants were raised in a two-parent household and 11 fathers were raised in one-parent families, 8 of the fathers reported good experiences raised in two-parent families, and 2 fathers in one-parent families reported good raising as well. The participants viewed the relationship with their families as "good" due to stability and the caring loving nature of the parent's relationship, as well as the involvement of each parent had in their lives, especially the father. Ten of the fathers stated, less time spent with their father was due to working hard

and six (60%) of the participants who had “good” relationships with their fathers were not seeing their children.

The study also reported that nine of the fifteen fathers who had “poor” relationship with their fathers were not seeing their children. Six of the “poor” relationships were from fathers of two-parent families and 9 were from single-parent families. 78% of the fathers were paying child support, 12 of the 36 (relationships with the mothers) were on a parenting plan and six still didn’t see their child regularly; 18 relationships reported no parenting plan and six of these fathers did not see their child regularly.

Some fathers revealed that child support payment was the issue that interfered with the parenting plan established. One father reported that because he was on social security disability, he was unable to make the child support payment and accumulated arrears. Due to the father's mishap in unpaid child support the mother denied the father access to speak with the child. Given different accounts to parental relationships, little research has been explored in the interest of the non-custodial father’s involvement and the effect of limited access to the child with the directional relationship to social behavior.

Father’s involvement continues to be a growing recognition of their children’s social development and the impact the relationship has on the child’s well-being. According to Demuth and Brown (2004), youth that resides in single mother-homes engage in a higher risk of drug and alcohol usage, violence, and illegal activities. Other

studies have shown an overwhelming amount of evidence that displays a relationship between non-residential (non-custodial) involvement and lower levels of delinquency (Demuth and Brown, 2004; Coley and Medeiros, 2007). Father's roles in society are just as important in children's lives and are credible in assessing the relationship to delinquent behavior.

Research conducted in the 1990s suggested that a father's love was significant to a child's social development, psychological well-being, emotional and behavioral issues, and academic status that pertains to drug use and risky behavior (Ellis et al., 2014; Rohner and Veneziano, 2001). Father's impact on a child's social development has shifted the way society has identified the function and structure of parental roles. Parenting has since been "operationalized" (Coley and Medeiros, 2007) on the attachment children experience with mothers, or any parental figure operating as a unit.

According to Kruk (2010), children's developmental well-being is based on the interaction of the father. In response to Barnett and Kibria (1991), a positive parent-child relationship enhances several aspects of a child's psychological well-being while eliminating the negative relationships that are foreseen to affect psychological distress (see Katorski, 2003). This interaction produces a profound effect on the father-child relationship. Kruk (2010) conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of fathers who have struggled to maintain a relationship with their children. 150 respondents met the study criteria, but only 82 were selected for the study.

The 3 part questionnaire were gathered on 3 core areas: (1) quantitative data on custodial status, arrangements and preferences; (2) qualitative data from a fathers strained accounts of their changing relationships with their children in the parental divorce context; (3) qualitative data from a structured interview about the children's needs, parental responsibility, and the social context behind social institutions responsibilities in parental divorce proceedings. The study was compared to current changes in pre- and post-divorce parenting arrangements observed by Kruk (1989) 20 years ago.

The core themes Kruk generated from the study included: (1) grief & loss, (2) mothers discouragement of contact, (3) adversarial systems amplification in conflict situations, (4) conflict & violence, (5) effects on children, (6) financial losses, (7) positive outcomes, (8) other themes: new relationships, new childbirth, and legal representation. The study revealed that sixty-five of the eighty-five fathers identified with a lack of access to their children as the core issue they face with the other parent. Forty-six of the fathers stated gender bias and legal inequality were another core issue, followed by thirty-three fathers insisting on the need for legal system reform.

Thirty- fathers also identified parental alienation as another factor that influences the parenting plan. Some fathers stated that the lack of enforcement by the court systems against the alienating parent only strengthens the mother's control over the child. The fathers also disclose their complaints regarding access by parents interfering with visitation. Kruk (2010) declared that many of the father's frustration incited on required legal remedies to hold parents responsible for noncompliance with a court order. 69 of

the 82 fathers who participated in the study were in court for shared parenting or joint physical custody mandatory mediation. In addition to the other parent being held liable for access denial, fathers believed the court system should hold some blame for parental alienation.

Furthermore, Kruk's (2010) study determined that the father's representation of the court system is an institutionalized corporation based on policies that fail to deal with inadequate parenting and exhibits a "win-lose" destructive outcome. The fathers also expressed their need for support in the father-child relationship and insist that shared parenting responsibilities reflect on both parents, not the court system practices. In response to parental responsibilities, forty-five fathers infer that shared parental relationship is the primary factor for children after parental divorce. The study confirms that parental responsibilities are connected to parental involvement following the parent's separation or divorce. Fathers rely upon consistent contact with their children and uphold a bond that can be achieved without "constraints to accessing and visitation" court orders (Kruk, 2010).

Child support has also been described as an internal growing trend many fathers abhor. The depth of the father-child relationship is substantially relevant to child support payments. Although the child support division affirms the relationship between child support payments and visitation is not warranted on the other, parents do not support the operationalized perspective. The quality of the mother-father relationship and contact

with their children is displayed through the compliance of child support agreements (Gallaher et al., 2014).

Previous research has determined that fathers who have frequent contact and visit with their children complain about their child support obligation (Arditti and Keith, 1993; Dudley, 1991; Gallaher et al., 2014). Although possession and access do not have a direct reflection of financial support, many parents enforce barriers that prevent visitation due to lack of child support payments. Bloomer et al. (2002) conducted a study on current and former nonresident fathers and resident mothers participating in the Georgia Fatherhood program on the barriers to child support and child visitation.

The study included open-ended questions revealed gender differences and similarities to the identification of child support, visitation rights, and child support laws and policy. Several fathers reported visitation access to their children was based on the relationship he had with their mother. Some fathers stated that even if they didn't pay child support, they were granted equal access to see their children because of the relationship they had with the mother. Other fathers expressed their frustration with visitation and access when payment was not received.

Several fathers expressed their conflict and issues with non-child support payments and how they felt powerless to the other parent when discussing access to the child. Some fathers expressed how they do not pay child support but still can visit and spend time with their children. Lassko (2004) reported that custodial mothers analyze various reasons to determine the frequency of contact initiated between fathers and their

children (cited from Gallagher et al., 2014). As reported by Allen and Daly (2002), mothers are the “gate-keepers” (p.7) to the father-child relationship.

Due to the mother’s active involvement as the primary caregivers, children are more receptive to establishing a relationship with the father if the mothers permit the participation (Allen and Hawkins, 1999; Daly, 2002; Allen and Daly, 2002). Ellis et al. (2017) reported that one of the benefits of a father-mother relationship is the ability to co-parent in ways that are supportive of each other's decisions. The positive outcome of healthy parental relationships increases the chances of a father’s involvement and time spent with their children (Rosenberg and Wilcox, 2006; Ellis et al., 2017).

Although many fathers report their concerns with visitation denial is because of child support, many mothers have refuted such claims. Lassko (2004) noted that mothers who believed that the child would benefit more from the visitation with the father, are more likely to continue visitation access even if child support was not permitted. As reported in a study by Gallagher et al. (2014), mothers did feel that withholding the child from the father was not beneficial to the child and father. One mother stated that whether the father made a child support payment or not she still allowed the child to spend time with the father because of the child's love for him.

Whether the support from the father is financially, emotionally, or socially; a father’s relationship with their children should be viewed as a critical element to a child’s cognitive development. The father’s presence and involvement are just as important as the mother’s and should not be limited to barriers that hinder time spent with their

children. Not only do these barriers influence the child's psychological and well-being development but, it also leaves a negative reflection on the child's life.

According to Ellis et al. (2017), involved fathers reduce their children's risk of dropping out of school, engaging in risky behavior, frequent sexual activity (mostly in females), acting out in school, and drug and alcohol usage. The notable father who is not actively involved in children's lives is mostly viewed as the *absent* father. However, the term "absent" is used in many instances that are not merely identifiable but can shape childhood development and influence values (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001; East et al., 2006).

A father's absence can be predefined in societal views. A father who is absent in the household doesn't necessarily mean the father is absent in the child's life (Ellis et al., 2014). The absence of a father is usually voluntarily or involuntarily. The term lacks definitional clarity and can be interpreted in many forms such as: non-existent in one's life, lost through death, divorce or family discord, absent through work, absent from family due to incarceration, and absent physically due to neglect (Barber and Eccles, 1992; Jensen et al., 1989; Phares, 1993; East et al., 2006; Silverstein & Auerbach, 1991; Spruijet et al., 2001). The role of the father is determined by the responsibilities each parent is willing to share in the best interest of the child. The well-being of the child is the predictor of the single parent headed household.

As mentioned by other researchers, typically single-parent headed household operated by females have experienced higher behavioral problems, poorer academic

achievement, early sexual activity encounter, and life adversaries than children in dual family household (East et al., 2006; Ellis et al., 2003; Farrell and White, 1998; Hetherington et al., 1998; Govind & Stein, 2004 Spruijet et al., 2001). Herthrington et al. (1998) reported that children in single-head households had experience intimate relationship and autonomy issues. Other findings also included that children between the ages of 5 and 11 years with an absent father have an increasingly higher symptom of behavioral and anti-social developmental behaviors.

Additionally, children who have positive relationships with their fathers have a seemingly lower chance of violence, delinquent, and disruptive behavior, and drugs (Ellis et al., 2017). A father's absence can inflict emotional and psychological life adversaries on a child's well-being. Whether the child is a male or female, the well-being is significantly affected when the father is no longer present. Ellis et al., (2003) revealed in a study involving single parent headed households that female adolescents had an increased rate of sexual activity and teenage pregnancy before the age of 16 due to the experience of an early age absent father.

The early onset was likely to occur in the adolescents if the father has been absent from the child's life beginning at the age of five (Ellis et al., 2003). Farrell and White (1998) also suggested that females who have experience absent fathers are associated with frequent drug use and negative peer influences. In response to female's behavioral issues, East et al., (2006) assert, Harper and McLanahan (2004) report that male adolescents from absent-father homes have experienced a higher rate of incarceration

compared to males in dyadic households. According to East et al. (2015), in a study conducted by Pfiffner et al. (2001), children between the ages of five and eleven years who have an absent father have revealed to have higher anti-social and behavioral symptoms. This finding was determined based on the stepfather present or not.

Both male and female adolescents also faced life adversaries such as low socioeconomic status, familial conflict, low education attainment, psychological distress, maladaptive behavior, poor academic achievement, low self-risk identity, risky behavior, delinquent behavior, and early sexual activity and drug use (East et al., 2015). The effect of a father's involvement indicates multiple variables that influence a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development as well as the importance of a healthy co-parenting relationship.

Allen and Daly (2002) constructed a dialog of researchers that have documented how the father's involvement influences the overall well-being of their children's development. Pedersen et.al. (1979) indicated that a father's presence in an infant child results in the child's cognitive competence at six months and scores high on the Baley Scales of Infant Development (cited from Allen and Daly, 2002). Children who have an involved father reduces stress and frustration (Mischel et al., 1988), able to manage emotions and adapt to stressful situations (Easterbrooks and Goldberg, 1990), attach to their father easily (Cox et al., 1992).

Children are more likely to have a higher social competence and maturity level with other children like them (Parke, 1996). Researchers continue to evaluate the effects

of fathers and how their involvement impacts their children, social, psychological, and emotional development. It is important to remember the parent-child relationship applies to both parents, and the impact on the family environment is significant to determine the developmental outcome of the child. Co-parenting is essential to building avenues that improve and maintain fathers' and mothers' involvement.

Parents must understand that when co-parental relationships are not supportive, children suffer (Allen and Daly, 2002). To continue the father-child relationship, fathers must have frequent contact and an equal amount of time spent with the child to preserve that father-child bond.

Summary

Parental alienation was defined in child-custody litigation proceedings that focused on the best-interest-of-the-child (Gardner, 2002). The tender year's doctrine was composed of the societal stereotype that acknowledges the development of children being raised by their mothers. The tender years granted custody primarily to mothers and fathers were generally identified as the "non-custodial parent" in child custody disputes. Father rights movements have evolved to remove the stereotype placed on them as a "deadbeat" in the child support system.

Over the past 30 years, father's involvement has advanced drastically to include fathers in their children's lives while offering them support with building co-parenting relationships (Allen and Daly, 2002). Fathers' influence on their children's lives has been linked to social, emotional, and cognitive development. Researchers have determined that

children who have an active involvement with their fathers are less likely to engage in delinquent, sexual or risky behavior, drop out of school, and engage in drug and alcohol abuse. The social construction and policy design theory provides a vital foundation for this research as it helps to identify policies, laws, and the legal system that addresses positive and negative connotations in an environment with a directly targeted population.

Some people would assume that the objective of the child support system is designed to target African American families by removing the father from the household, then labeling the father as a “dead beat”. Researchers have determined that a father’s involvement is a critical component in a child’s developmental process and life adversities. According to East et al. (2015), Researchers documented that children raised in single-parent families (typically headed by females) exhibit behavioral problems, poor academic achievement, engagement in early sexual activities, delinquency, poor psychological well-being adversity, and poor values and beliefs (Ellis et al., 2015; Hetherington et al., 1998; Spurijt et al., 2001; Stewart et al., 2016).

Social developmental concerns have been linked to delinquency as delinquent behavior is a severe concern as a social behavior theory. While there are many causes of delinquent behavior, family dynamics continue to act as a leading factor. Parental rejection, lack of emotional support, and lack of supervision are other common factors researchers argued causes antisocial and delinquent behavior (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). Hirschi asserted the cause and effect of social behavior intertwines with

family structure and parental roles. Issues with parental alienation have been an interesting topic of discussion in the child support system.

Fathers continue to voice their concerns regarding alienation, denied access and possession of their children, and lack of involvement that helps create a positive father-child relationship. Whether the topic of the best interest of the child is from the custodial parent's perspective or non-custodial parent's perspective, it is important to understand the risk factors associated with parental alienation in response to delinquency. Parental relationships and interaction with family structures influence delinquent behavior and the father-child relationship.

Several research studies were conducted that primarily concentrated on the perspective of the child or mother as a reference to parental alienation, but few focuses on the father's perspective on parental alienation and the relationship to delinquent behavior. This research is vital and significant as it will offer fathers an opportunity to share how alienation affects the relationship he has with the child and mother as being enrolled in the child support division while exploring the link to delinquent behavior in their children. Minorities make up a high percentage of non-custodial fathers in the child support division which makes it extremely important to underrepresented groups like African American non-custodial fathers.

In Chapter 3 I will describe the methodology of this research study on parental alienation impact or effect to Texas family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access and the relationship to delinquent behavior. The research design and rationale will

include the research questions that will be asked in this research study. Chapter 3 will also cover the concept of the study, the research tradition, design rationale, role of researcher, ethical concerns and the participants in this research study. Chapter 3 will also describe how the data will be collected, analyzed, and verified based on the findings conducted for this study. Chapter 3 will also trustworthiness and other ethical issues that may occur within this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The behaviors of parents' association with PAS employs a phenomenon generated by the custodial parent using techniques of alienation with the purpose of inflicting vengeance, harm or control of the non-custodial parent, or to deny physical and legal custody of the children from the noncustodial parent (Gardner, 2002a). The linkage between parenting and delinquency includes factors such as parent-child involvement, parental alienation, and several family factors (e.g. family size, attachment, punishment; Hoeve, 2009). In conjunction to the 6.5 million custodial parents awarded child support in 2013, only half (52.2%) of the noncustodial parents were permitted visitation, but denied joint or shared physical custody, in addition to 30.5% of noncustodial parents who were granted some sort of joint or shared custody (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Unfortunately for the children involved in shared custody disputes, the underlying representation of the child(ren)'s relationships with the absent father goes unnoticed.

According to Kelly & Johnston (2001), children's behavior is determined by each influence and the development of anger is reflected in alienated children in their preadolescent and adolescent years. The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological research study was to examine and dissect the lived experience of African American father's experiences with alienation and examine how the codification of Texas Family code possession and access §153.002-§153.317 imposes on the social construction of noncustodial fathers. My desire with this research was to ascertain what impact, if any,

this phenomenon had on family structure, father-child relationship, and delinquent behavior from the noncustodial father's perspective. Unfortunately, there are barriers attached to the Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 access and possession that prevent unwed fathers' involvement in their children's lives that contributes to the alienation between fathers and their children.

Although the Texas child support division operating under Texas family code, promotes and helps establish a father-child relationship, the interconnection between payment of child support and relationship with the other parent is a significant factor with contact between father and their children (Lassko and Adams, 2006). For a father to have rights and access to their children in the state of Texas, the father must establish himself as a legal entity in their children's lives. For parents who are unwed, the state of Texas does not recognize the father as a legal parent and has no legal rights to the child. Fathers are required to complete a court-order paternity test or an acknowledgment of paternity to become a legal parent (Texasattorneygeneral.gov).

The intent of this phenomenological study was to reach the core of the African American noncustodial parents lived experience with alienation and how codification of the Texas Family code possession and access provision imposes on the social construction of their lives while impacting the family structure, father-child relationship and delinquent behavior from the noncustodial father's perspective.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the research design and rationale of my study followed by the role of the researcher, ethical concerns, methodology, research participants,

instrumentation, sampling strategies, research questions, and data analysis on how I collected, analyzed, and interpreted the analyzed data. Finally, I discussed the ethical concerns, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

The intent of this phenomenological study was to reach the core of African American noncustodial fathers lived experience with alienation and how codification of the Texas Family code possession and access provisions imposed on the social construction of their lives while impacting their family structure, father-child relationship, and delinquent behavior from the noncustodial father's perspective. The primary questions are posed following three subquestions:

RQ1: How does parental alienation impact African American non-custodial fathers' perception of Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 access and possession order? Describe their experiences?

RQ2: How does the codification of §153.002-§153.317 of the Texas Family code impose on family structure and the father-child relationship.

Subquestion 2a: What role does the mother exhibit that influences the father-child relationship?

Subquestion 2b: How does alienation and father's involvement contribute to delinquent behavior in their children?

Subquestion 2c: Has the mother, father or both engaged in indoctrinating behaviors?

These phenomena of interest are based on an alarming rate of custodial parents receiving child support in the state of Texas, while only half of the noncustodial parents (52.2%) were permitted visitation but denied joint or shared physical custody (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Many of the fathers in child custody disputes have experienced some form of alienation by the mother. The most common form of alienation was denied access to the child during visitation hours. Although the state of Texas predetermines the rights of possession and access in their child support orders, they are limited to enforcing the possession statute of the order.

Research Tradition

The tradition I selected for my study was a qualitative research method. Qualitative research provides an outlook into the lives of individuals or groups of individuals in order to convey one's feelings, thoughts, or experiences that might affect one's behavior (Austin and Sutton, 2015). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), qualitative research is not limited to any one discipline, theoretical perspective, or approach, therefore the characteristics in the research reveal a shared understanding about a specific social phenomenon.

The perception of qualitative research offers an understanding of the way people “see, view, approach, and experience” (p.7) a specific phenomenon through the worlds view. Patton (2016) asserts that qualitative research captures the underlying perspective

of an individual story through observation and analyzing pattern behavior. The context found in examining patterns of what human beings do and how they think shapes our methods and overall approach to a certain phenomenon through a diverse perspective (Patton, 2016).

Qualitative research has evolved into a diverse implication of unidentified groups. Ravitch & Carl (2016) reported Erickson (2011) description of qualitative research as the following:

Qualitative inquiry seeks to discover and to describe in narrative reporting what particular people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them. It identifies meaning-relevant kinds of things in the world-kinds of people, kinds of actions, kinds of beliefs, and interest-focusing on differences in forms of things that make a difference for meaning. (Erickson, 2011, p.7)

In addition, qualitative research strives on methodological practices that derive a theory or paradigm and is based on a set of complex interpretive practices (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011a). The purpose of the qualitative method for this study is to understand how parental alienation affects the father's relationship with their children, and how the Texas child support codification on possession and access contributes to alienation. It is to gather the perspective of the phenomena from the father's perspective.

Researchers, Johnston and Kelly, 2004; Johnston, 2005; Dunne and Hedrick, 1994; Rand and 2006; Johnston and Kelly, 2004b; Baker, 2007, have consistently focused on the severity of alienation from the child's perspective; therefore, under-

utilizing the effects of alienation from the targeted parents (noncustodial father) perspective. Baker and Darnell (2006) have reported multiple behaviors from parents who have experienced access denial by the other parent.

Qualitative inquiry requires “documentation of real people in the real world in their own words, from their own perspectives, and within their own context” (Patton, 2016 p.12).

For my research study, I employed a phenomenological design. The origin of phenomenological dates to Kant and Hegel, Vandenberg (1997); however, Edmund Husserl (1858-1938) developed the concept of the psychosocial method and became known as the “fountainhead of phenomenology” in the twentieth century (as cited from Groenwald, 2004). The five approaches to a qualitative research inquiry include case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative research, and phenomenological (Rudestam et al., 2015). In addition to the qualitative researcher’s five main inquiries, Ravitch and Carl (2016) reports that there are ten main approaches with the additional including action research, critical ethnography, evaluation research, participatory action research, and practitioner research.

Patton (2016) reports that phenomenological approach to research requires capturing and describing how people experience a specific phenomenon- “how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (p.15). I selected the phenomenological design to examine the lived experience of the non-custodial father’s perspective of alienation and to report how the

Texas Family code possession and access contributes to the phenomenon and delinquent behavior in their children.

Through creating and examining patterns of behavior, phenomenology allows the researcher to explore multiple phenomena to understand how or why something occurred from an individual or group of individual's perspectives. According to Giorgi (as cited in Groenwald, 2004), a phenomenologist attempts to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon while staying true to the facts. Miner-Romanoff (2012) asserts critical and interpretative phenomenology seeks to provide researchers with an understanding of how an individual experience changes to the world or how they view specific situations.

Design Rationale

My rationale for selecting a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach was based on the ability to capture people's stories and provide detailed accounts about how and why things formulated. I believed this design method provides a descriptive analysis of the experience of the underrepresented population within a given phenomenon. Noncustodial fathers are often misrepresented or forgotten in child custody disputes. Many of the fathers actively involved in the child-serving system as the child support division are often voiceless and their involvement is usually discounted (Martinez et al., 2013). According to Martinez et al. (2013) fathers are identified in the child support system using various terms such as non-custodial and absent fathers, enabling the assumption that many of the fathers are not actively involved in their children's lives.

Despite popular opinion, many of the fathers are not “absent” fathers, however, they do not reside in the household with their children. Fathers also presented with the responsibility of providing financially for the child through child support services, as in terms considering the primary component is payments. Studies have shown that a father’s involvement in their children's lives reduces high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and delinquent activities in children.

In a study conducted by the Urban Leadership Institute, 71% of children from fatherless homes are high school dropouts, 75% are in chemical abuse centers, and 70% of youth are in state-operated institutions (Martinez et al., 2013). Patton (2015) affirms that a qualitative researcher seeks the inquiry of how human beings engage in meaningfulness or make sense of the world. The qualitative researcher aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of a phenomenon from an individual or group of individual’s perspectives or experiences.

Yin (2016) asserts that a researcher conducts a study in a way that depicts how people survive in their world. The researcher provides different perspectives and explanations as to why or how something happens using context to understand. According to Patton (2015), context and understanding are both priorities for data collection and reporting findings. Qualitative inquiry is design to operate using “context, dynamics, interdependent, textual, nuanced, unpredictable and understanding through stories, and more stories” (Patton, 2016 p. 87). Unlike quantitative research that operates

using key provides an understanding of a phenomenon, and to do so, I captured the participant's story.

My role was to tell what happened, why it happened, and to whom and what consequences followed. I continued my research using a naturalistic approach. Relying on what is happening now without assumptions, naturalistic researchers focus on understanding what has happened in a specific situation, explain what has been seen, and how people interpret the external world (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). "Naturalists researchers observe and explain a complex situation or process without simplifying it" (p. 17). As a researcher, I created an atmosphere that allows participants to feel comfortable expressing their issues about a specific topic without placing stipulations on their answers.

As a phenomenological researcher, the questions asked requires patience and skill on behalf of the researcher for the participants to discuss their experience. I remained unbiased in my selection of participants; therefore, I did not have any prior relationships with my participants. I remained professional with my participants and engaged in an open conversation to create a positive and trusting atmosphere. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012) when interviewing participants, researchers must be viewed as honest, open, fair, and accepting to build trust between the two.

The most important data that was used in my research is interviewing, therefore the process involved understanding the research topic, the participants, and the question that was utilized. My research style for interviewing remained my style of choice. My

current profession exposes me to adopt my own style of interviewing as I interview clients throughout the day. I have managed to create a style that reflects my personality.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), “how much chat you engage in, how you react to contradictions or inconsistencies, how much sympathy you express, depends on your personality as well as the interviewee” (p. 73). As a Child Support Enforcement Officer for the state of Texas, I properly engage in interviewing processes throughout the day and I have managed to handle all conversational encounters, whether aggressive or naturally calming. I have developed a system that allows me to show understanding and empathy from both the custodial and non-custodial parent.

My interview consisted of open-ended questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation. It remained rich and detailed that assisted me with providing open ended-answers, and selected questions that are not “fixed. Patton (2016) affirmed that qualitative researchers create a framework for people to respond in a way that represents their views on the world. I did not pressure my participants to answer questions or speak on topics that were sensitive and personal. I know that it is hard for participants to express their experiences due to fear, humiliation, ongoing problems, or lack of trust, wherefore I encouraged the participants whether than criticized them in order to build a rapport that lasted throughout the study.

Moreover, my role as a researcher remained an active listener, always showed respect, honor any promises made, and did not pressure participants within my study. My role was to “tell a story” (Patton, 2015 p. 54). The questions that was asked remained

pertinent to the study that provided accurate information about the subject. As a researcher, it was important to understand and address the moral and ethical obligations of a researcher.

To view the perspective of others from an unbiased lens makes a good researcher. Yin (2016) insists that a qualitative researcher conducts a study for others to try and understand. As a researcher who is familiar with the ongoing study I conducted, I was fully aware and knowledgeable of the Texas Child support division, Texas Family code possession and access provision, parental alienation, delinquent behavior in children, and the importance of the father-child relationship.

I did not discuss any information about my participants' previous, past, or current child support cases. Without question, Rubin and Rubin (2012) believe a researcher relies on three main reasoning for their study: what questions to ask, what to ask based on knowledge, and suggestive questions based on literature and preliminary research. Your main questions are applied based on what you know (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Patton (2015) reports that a researcher's credibility of their research requires training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self.

As I completed my interviews, I used data collection that was appropriate for my study. I made sure that my data align consistently with my research study. I did not use second-hand data; therefore, my data collection involved taking the necessary steps to formulate my research conclusion. As a researcher, my role included transcribing the data collected, as which I had some experience in that category as well. I knew that as a

researcher, my role required an open-minded tract that is critical to open inquiry. I expected the unexpected and understood how and why something was happening, while explaining the matter in context. As a researcher, I understood that there is always so much to learn about yourself and your research, this concept prevented “repetition and reinvention” (Yin, 2016). My biases remained controlled and observed by my chair and research committee as required by the IRB.

Ethical Concerns

As a researcher, my main concern of validity within the study determined the ethical decisions made by self. Patton (2016) reports that ethical concerns begin during the initial process of a qualitative study. My role required establishing a supportive and respectful relationship between myself and my participants. To avoid any mistakes throughout my research I initiated awareness to data collection, data analysis, reported data, and publication of my study. Qualitative inquiry ensures many risks in comparison to the potential harm it might cause (Yin, 2016).

Qualitative researchers are encouraged to treat respect to the study, data collection, and participants of the study. A researcher is required to show respect, honor promises, refrain from added pressure, and do no harm (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). I first began by explaining the purpose of my study to my participants. I provided them with a background description of who I am, my current job description, why I selected this specific topic, and what I expected my study to offer society.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is designed to help facilitate potential doctoral candidates through the process of meeting university ethical requirements and U.S. federal regulations. My research mainly consisted of human beings that were guided appropriately throughout the study. Ethical guidelines approved by the IRB ensures the quality of your capstone by minimizing risk to human beings (Rubin and Rubin, 2012) under the federal regulations. In order to proceed with data collection, approval was obtained by the IRB and all guidelines were met with discretion. As a current employee for the Office of Attorney General, I ensured the participants that anything discussed within the interview was simply for research purposes only and I could not address their past or current child support status.

I recruited participants for my study using various social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, and referrals from other participants. Texas Office of the Attorney General did not act as an organization for support, as I did not want to risk jeopardizing the integrity of my study and my job. I did not have access to the Texas Office of the Attorney General's internal documents, records, or case data. My participants completed an informed consent approved by Walden University IRB.

This informed consent prevented the disclosure of previous, past, or current legal actions between the Texas Attorney General Office and the participants. I informed my participants that any discussion of any legal actions that they may have pending or ongoing was forbidden. I did not provide legal advice to my participants, however I directed them to contact their local child support office for any questions regarding their

case. The researcher is responsible for conducting an interview that does not put people at risk and should be straightforward, transparent, and understanding (Patton, 2015).

I reported my research findings regardless of my personal beliefs or knowledge about the subject matter. No negative instances emerged within the study. According to Yin (2016) negative instances are “highly cherished as ways to buttering a study, even if leading to modifications to its original premise” (p. 39). Therefore, no contact with IRB regarding changes were necessary.

To ensure my data was collected and handled with care all notes were neatly organized and recordings were transcribed and held externally for 5 years, afterwards will be discarded. I avoided any kind of bias that may have interfered with the data being ignored or not selected. Yin (2016), for the benefit of having “strong ethical standards” (p. 39), requires the researcher to be clear of their own rules by asserting what data may be excluded before the study began, and remain firm on the rules he or she sets.

As a researcher, integrity starts within and must adhere to great lengths in order to obtain the information required for your study. I informed my participants to speak freely about their experiences as a non-custodial father regarding parental alienation, child support provision to possession and access, and delinquent behavior in their children if any. Yin (2016) states, “one sign of research integrity is the willingness to be proven wrong, or even to have your earlier thinking on a matter challenged” (p. 41). I disclosed to my participants my views on the subject matter.

I believed the voiceless and underrepresented deserve a chance to be heard and represented, my job is to create a platform for them. Yin (2016) agrees that it is important for the researcher to disclose any advocacy roles on the topic being studied, whether its formally recognizing the role or favoring certain views, it is imperative that participants aware. My IRB approval number was 06-09-20-0362642. The approval of the IRB required ethical protocol that protected the study, the participants, and the researcher. My biases were managed by the committee chair, and the findings of the study were reported to the research committee.

Methodology

My qualitative inquiry explored the phenomenological approach African American noncustodial fathers lived experiences of a specific phenomenon of interest. Phenomenological research allows the researcher to explore how human beings experience a specific phenomenon. The qualitative approach to understanding a phenomenological study requires capturing and describing people's experiences as they have lived through it (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research provides an overall subjective account of an individual's perspective. The notion of qualitative research is to provide a broad interpretation of the world (Ravitch and Carl, 2016).

Qualitative research inquiry employs a methodological concept of precedent when selecting participants to achieve the depth of understanding, unlike quantitative which laces emphasis on generalizability (Palinkas et al., 2016). The size of the samples tends to be much smaller than that of a quantitative study (Mason, 2010). This research included a

small sample size. Morse (2010) argues that even though your study is larger, it does not necessarily mean the study is richer. The study consisted of 7 to 9 African American non-custodial fathers.

Patton (2015) aptly stated, “There are no rules to sample size in the qualitative inquiry” (p. 311). Mason (2010) describes the sampling size in qualitative research as a reflection of the researcher’s study. “Sufficient sampling size is determined by the qualitative research inquiry the researcher is conducting. According to Mason (2010), phenomenology research suggests a sample size of 6 to 10 participants. However, other researchers have determined that generalizing the sample retorts the study. In response to “generalizing your study” Yin (2016) asserts that no smaller number of data can represent a larger population of units.

I selected a sample size based on what I wanted to discover, why I wanted to discover it, what I considered useful, and how my findings were credible to my study. Smaller sample sizes for this study allowed sufficient in-depth information that provided an understanding of the studied phenomenon. Maltrud et al. (2015) conceptualized sample study asserts, narrow research requires the least number of participants, while broad research requires a larger number of participants. In other words, a small number of people can provide in-depth rich information, while larger numbers of people help to explore a phenomenon explaining multiple variations (Patton, 2015).

I implemented a purposeful sampling technique for my study because it provided a different technique for various sampling that included a logic selection of information-

rich cases for an in-depth study. According to Patton (2012), “The purpose of a purposeful sample is to focus case selection strategically in alignment with the inquiry’s purpose, primary questions, and data being collected” (p. 264).

Palinkas et al., (2015) indicates that purposeful sampling effectiveness administers information with the use of limited resources, without ensuring generalizability findings that minimizes bias in the selection process and leverages control like probabilistic or random sampling. Each purposeful sampling method is designed to “compare and contrast, to identify similarities and differences in the phenomenon of interest” (Palinkas et al., 2015).

My criteria selection included seven African American non-custodial fathers, who have a current child support court order with possession and access provisions in Tarrant County (Dallas/Fort Worth Texas), does not reside in the household with the child or children, children are under the age of 18, never been married to the custodial parent (mother), and who has experienced characteristics of parental alienation. To add credibility to my research, I did not limit my selection process based on socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, and political affiliation. Upon volunteering to participate, I emailed the participants a brief questionnaire to complete and return to ensure he meets the criteria to proceed further (See Appendix A).

The questions asked included: Are you African American? Do you reside in the Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area? Do you have a current child support order in Tarrant County? Does your child support order include possession and access? Are you currently

identified as a non-custodial parent? Were you ever married to the custodial parent? Do you currently reside in the household with the child or children you're on child support for? Upon selecting the participants that met the criteria, I provided information to the participants about the study. I asked the participants to send me their contact information, availability dates and time to schedule their interview if they were still interested in participating in the study.

After my IRB application was submitted and officially approved, a social media ad was posted on Facebook, Instagram and Linked In targeting African American noncustodial fathers that reside in Dallas/ Fort Worth Texas area and have a current child support order in Tarrant County. In interested, they left their contact information including numbers and email addresses through Facebook and Instagram messenger or via email. Upon receiving an email from the participants via Facebook and Instagram messenger and via email, I sent the consent form and once I received, "I consent" by the participant, I sent the participants a brief questionnaire to complete and return to ensure he meets the criteria to proceed further (See Appendix A).

The questionnaire included: Are you African American? Do you reside in the Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area? Do you have a current child support order in Tarrant County? Does your child support order include possession and access? Are you currently identified as a non-custodial parent? Were you ever married to the custodial parent? Do you currently reside in the household with the child or children you're on child support for? If answers met all the criteria I proceeded with further information about the study

(See Appendix A). The participant reviewed and wrote down his answers. Once the questionnaire was received. I sent the participant an official invitation with information he can use to contact me

After receiving the questionnaire and response, “I consent” by the participant, an electronic interview was scheduled. Upon scheduling the interview, I emailed the participant a copy of the questions that I would ask. The participants were contacted via Zoom, the interview was completed based on the approved questions asked. Patton (2015) retains a smaller sample size that is “*truly-in depth*” (p. 312) and provides rich information that offers more validity and meaningfulness to the research study. The design utilized created open-ended questions that captured insightful information of the lived experience from each person’s perspective. According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), qualitative research requires sampling until the data saturation has been achieved. This simply means analyzing your data until the phenomenon of interest can no longer produce any more information. I captured behavior, meanings, stories, backgrounds, and beliefs.

Instrumentation

In qualitative research, the researcher uses various instruments for gathering data. Other than the broader procedures to research, most of the common instruments in research are well-structured with closed and open-ended questions (Yin, 2016). In a phenomenological study, the in-depth interviews act as the primary data collection method (Creswell, 2013). I acted as an instrument for my study. Like the instrument, I

employed interactional and conversational observation while listening and taking notes. I also collected data for my study. Qualitative researchers recognize that the instrument of choice is the human observer (Rudestam, 2015). The evidence collected from your data is based on the questions you as the researcher will answer (Yin, 2016). According to Mesa et al. (2014), selecting the right instrument should meet the goals of your study. I conducted seven in-depth interviews by electronic face-to-face via Facetime, Zoom, or Skype. This was based on the convenience and preferred interview method of each participant once they consented to participate.

Each of the participants were asked the exact open-ended questions that was provided to them before the scheduled interview via email. During qualitative interviews, “the researcher repeats the same set of questions and same personal demeanor with each interviewee” (Yin, 2016 p. 135). You must word your questions so that the participants can tap into the knowledge and experience of your interview (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). These open-ended questions were constructed in advanced. It is possible to begin preliminary questions based on your experience or knowledge (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). I proceeded with probing questions for the purpose of gathering more insightful information. When interviewees provide little or less desired information on a given topic, probes and follow-up questions are initiated to “stimulate the participant to expand upon the original topic” (Yin, 2016 p. 136).

To further address the impact of family structure and father-child relationship to delinquent behavior, the participants were asked a question on their child(ren)’s behavior

surrounding parental alienation. This allowed the participants to clarify on the meaning of their experiences and any missed information. This in-depth analysis required altering questions during the interview process as warranted. Questions are composed based on the framework of the study but are given to the participants according to the context (Yin, 2016), therefore the interviewer does not have to stick to the script and can make up new questions on the spot to gain more insight (Rubin and Rubin, 2012).

The interviews were audio recorded, and notes were taken in conjunction with asking questions and actively listening to the participant's experience. A good listener also "listens between the lines" (Yin, 2016 p. 151) during the conversation. I used notes taken to avoid the answers getting lost in translation from the audio recorder. A listener uses notes to record what the participant is saying yet allows the listener the opportunity to think deeply about what the participant is saying that could possibly lead to a follow-up question. Yin (2016) argues the impossibility of recording everything nevertheless notes taking leads maximizing the amount of unrelated information recorded. Taking notes refines the information, but when an interview becomes lengthy the researcher must revert to a recording device. Other data for this study included notes, written answers from the questionnaire, transcriptions, and a journal for record-keeping of my own unwanted biases, feelings, and reactions about the study.

For the purpose of establishing validity, I incorporated ATLAS.ti to ensure validity by coding and transcribing the data. ATLAS.ti is the latest version of a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software that analyzes, stores, manages, and shapes

qualitative data. The software allows the researcher to make decisions about assigning codes, categories, concepts, and patterns of the data (Moser and Korstjens, 2018).

Research Participants

The target population for my research study was seven to nine African American noncustodial father within Tarrant County, Dallas/Fort Worth Texas that have never been married to the custodial parent (mother), have experienced characteristics of parental alienation, does not reside in the household with the child(ren), and have a current child support case with possession and access provisions in Tarrant County. I used several social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, and Linked In to assist with the recruitment of my participants.

I designed a Facebook and Instagram page specifically for recruiting participants for my research study. It included the invitation to participate in my study. The interested participants responded to the invitation via Facebook and Instagram direct messenger with their contact information and email. I did not receive any participant response via Linked In. Upon receiving the participants contact information, a consent form was emailed to the participants. Upon receiving "I consent" via email, the participants were sent the questionnaire. The participants were encouraged to review and answers the questions on the questionnaire. The participants were also granted the opportunity to elaborate more on the questions for clarification. Upon receiving confirmation of questionnaire, I emailed the participants a list of dates and times of my availability based on the preference of the participant. The population of interest for my study consisted

seven to nine participants within Tarrant County. As mentioned in the previous section of my study, I utilized a purposeful sampling strategy for the recruitment of my participants and selected them based on the predetermined criteria met. If too few participants respond, I planned to expand my recruitment process further through other forms of communication that occurs in chat rooms or weblogs.

I collected, transcribed, coded, and stored all data. The data was collected after seven participants sent their contact information. Upon receiving their contact information, I sent the consent form. Once I received "I consent" via email, the questionnaire was emailed. Afterwards, the participants received I emailed the participants a list of dates and times of my availability schedule based on their preference.

Prior to the interview, I reiterated my current position and the topic of my study. I informed the participants of their need to participate is voluntary, their right to withdraw from the study at any time without a reason, and not to feel pressured into answering questions they're not comfortable with. The participants were given the 800 number to the Attorney General Office regarding questions about their case, and an 800 number to a crisis center if any emotional and psychological feelings have ensued throughout the interview. The interviews were between 45 minutes to an hour in length, disregarding the 15-minute debriefing and exiting time. The data was recorded on a digital audio-recorder, then transferred on an HP computer for further transforming.

At the end of the interview, the participants were thanked for their participation and asked if they had any further questions, comments, or reflections about the interview or next steps. The transcriptions were completed within three days of the interview. Upon completion, the interviewee was notified for follow-up questions if understanding of the information was unclear.

Data Analysis

For the connection of data, interviews were connected for research questions one and two followed by sub questions 2a, 2b, and 2c. The data will be analyzed through 5 analytic phases of qualitative analysis: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Yin, 2016). Yin argues, each phase is designed to construct a different order of analytic operation. Compiling and disassembly are phases that can be repeated many times by the researcher, as well as the reassembly phase. As detailed by Yin (2016), the phases act in “recursive and iterative” (pg.179) processes with each other.

Each phase is formed or build on one another that allows the researcher to understand the findings of his or her data (Ravitch and Carl, 2016). In order to ensure my data is coded accurately, I employed ATLAS.ti to assist with my data analysis. ATLAS.ti is a computer software program that is designed to store, manage, and analyze qualitative data. Although the software is designed to store and record data, it does not code data. The data was treated using the same format and structure. The data was organized and stored by the order listed on the questionnaire.

Coding was generated based on the meaningful information such as the father-child relationship, the father's experience with parental alienation, the father's views on child support policies and procedures.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research has placed standard validity with set criteria that include trustworthiness, validation, and credibility. Upon these standards in research, qualitative researchers ensure the paradigms are aligned with the research goals such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ravitch and Carl, 2015; Guba, 1981).

Credibility relies on the researcher's ability to use multiple complexities from the research that relates to research design, data, and the researcher's instrument. In qualitative research, credibility is designed to explore all strategies the researcher applied to their study. To ensure credibility, I recorded each interview using an audio recorder, transcribed the interview through the REV recorder, sent the transcription to each participant for verification to ensure their perspective was resonated, and coded the interview for interpretation of patterns and themes.

Transferability enacts as an external validity that can be transferred to a more descriptive context. The researcher manufactures contextual information and data that is easily interpreted and understood by others. I utilized transferability by applying a thick description of the theoretical framework and how it was applied throughout my study. Furthermore, my study aligned with the purpose, problem statement, research question, and theoretical framework.

Dependability is defined by the researcher's stability of their data (Ravitch and Carl, 2015). I utilized dependability by recording and storing audio and interview transcriptions, notes taken, and journaling of my reflections from the study. In accordance with qualitative analysis software programming, the data collected has been properly handled and stored away in a safe location for a minimum of 5 years.

Ravitch and Carl (2015) asserts, Toma (2011) guided principles of credibility requires "implementing the validity strategies of triangulation, member checking, presenting thick description, discussing negative cases, having prolonged engagement in the field, using peer debriefing, and/or having an external auditor" (pg.189). The researcher uses multiple data sources to examine the perspective from various points (Ravitch and Carl, 2015). To achieve validity, I saturated the data through triangulation. Triangulation was achieved when four or more of my participants experienced the same thing and showed a pattern of those experiences. The saturation was achieved multiple African American noncustodial fathers said the same thing. I continued to conduct electronic interviews with seven participants until saturation was achieved.

Confirmability is the researcher's willingness to seek confirmation of their data and findings. Ravitch and Carl (2015) suggest researchers include triangulation strategies, researcher reflexivity processes, and external audits in their study to explore and address any biases from their findings. I journaled any of my biases that occurred during the interview process in which, I incorporated within the limitation of the study for the purpose of replication.

Ethical Procedures

Before the collection of data, the study was approved by The Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the committee. Furthermore, I completed the National Institute of Health's (NIH) Protecting Human Subjects Research participant training that ensures ethical standards are initiated with the intent to do no harm for all research pertaining to human subjects. According to Yin (2016 pg. 46), the IRB authorizes four main procedures to protect human subjects: (1) obtaining voluntary informed consent form; (2) assessing human rights and benefits of the researcher and monitoring all threats of harm; (3) selecting participants equally; (4) and assuring confidentiality about the participants' identities. The most important step to protecting the research, data, and participants is informed consent.

Informed consent is a detailed form that consist of ethical information that pertains to the researcher's action with effective communication between oneself and the participant. Informed consent provides a brief synopsis of the research study and the agreeance of participants to engage in the study. Pursuant to Nusbaum et al. (2017), the challenge regarding informed consent adjures "the right way and right words" (pg.9) to explain the study for the participants to fully understand the research. After IRB approval, I provided a brief overview of the research study in a clear and straightforward manner. Moreover, I presented the consent form to the participants prior to conducting the interview.

I used identifiers for each participant during the interview. To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants answers. I explained to the participants their right to withdraw from the study at any time without reason, to not feel pressured into answering questions they're not comfortable with.

I conducted a semi-structured interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions and possibly a few follow-up open-ended questions. Each participant emailed me after a Facebook and Instagram page for was set up for the recruitment process for my study. A social media ad (See Appendix B) was posted on social media, mainly Facebook, Instagram, and Linked In.

The people that were interested and met the criteria for my research study emailed me and left their name and contact information for follow-up. Once I received seven to nine participants, I emailed each participant a consent form to review. After I received the response, "I consent", I sent each participant to schedule of my available time and date pursuant to the participant availability. After interview confirmation, I sent the participants a copy of the questions that would be asked during the interview. The participants had the option of Zoom, via telephone, Facetime, or Skype. Before the interview began, I discussed the criteria questions to confirm the participant's eligibility to participate in the study. I asked each participant the same set of questions. Before the interview ended, I asked the participant if they had any questions, comments, or reflections from the interview and next step. After the interview ended, I sent the interview to REV recorder application to be transcribed within 72 hours.

I sent each participant a copy of his transcription to review for accuracy and to address any concerns, questions, or comments they may have regarding the interview. I then uploaded the transcription and my notes to Atlas.TI for word cloud and clusters of words to form themes and patterns. The data was collected and stored on my personal password protected home computer, back up drive, and USB hard drive. I was able to obtain seven to nine participants from my original social media sites. I also utilized a casual “word of mouth” recruiting process. The participants that responded via Facebook and Instagram informed others who met the criteria and had the same perspective to contact me in response to participating my study.

Summary

Patton (2015) aptly stated, “There are no rules to sample size in the qualitative inquiry” (p.311). Mason (2010) describes the sampling size in qualitative research as a reflection of the researcher’s study. The sample size for a phenomenology research study is generally consisted of 6 to 10 participants (Mason, 2010). For my recruitment process, I employed social media and “word of mouth” to retrieve participants for my study. The criteria for participation included: African American noncustodial fathers, who have a current child support court order with possession and access provisions in Tarrant County (Dallas/Fort Worth Texas), does not reside in the household with the child or children, children are under the age of 18, never been married to the custodial parent (mother), and who has experienced characteristics of parental alienation.

For my research study, I featured myself as the main instrument. According to Rudestram et al. (2017), “Instrument of choice for qualitative research is the human observer. Thus, qualitative researchers place particular emphasis on improving human observation and make no claims for the reliability and validity of the instrument in the rationalistic sense” (p. 17).

Upon IRB approval, I utilized Atlas.TI a computer software program for coding and storage of my recorded interviews, transcriptions of the interviews, emergent themes, and notes. Transferability, dependability, triangulation, and confirmability are standards represented in research to ensure validity credibility (Ravitch and Carl, 2015; Guba, 1981).

To ensure credibility, I recorded, transcribed, and coded each interview with common or recurrent themes and patterns. I sent each interviewee a copy of their transcription for verification of their interpretation, meaning, and accuracy of their lived experience or perspective. Notes taken from by the researcher during each interview will also be recorded and transcribed to refine the interview and address any biases that may occur during the interview. For dependability, I ensured my data collection methods were aligned with my research questions. For transferability, I utilized the social construction and policy design framework as they were aligned with the relevance of my study. Triangulation was achieved when four or more of my participants experienced the same thing and showed a pattern of those experiences. For conformability, I incorporated any

biases I journaled during my interview into the limitation of study for the purpose of replication.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed analysis and rationale for selecting a qualitative study. I discussed why I chose to study parental alienation and impact or effect it has on African American noncustodial father's as it relates to Texas child support possession and access codification and the relationship to delinquent behavior. I elaborated on the research design and rationale, information about the interviews, the research tradition, the role of the researcher, and the methodology of my study. I also provided information on the participants, instrumentation, research participants, data analysis and trustworthiness of my study.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the data setting, the demographics, data collection, and data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results of the study, and I presented summarized analysis of Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine African American noncustodial fathers' lived experience with alienation and how the Texas Family code, possession and access provisions, imposes on the social construction of their lives while impacting their family structure and father-child relationship. This study also examined if alienation contributed to delinquent behavior from the father's perspective. The concept of interest is derived from the overwhelming number of children residing in a single-mother household in the United States.

According to the US Census Bureau (2016), the most common second family structured arrangement is a single mother household. Texas demographic of unwed or head of household parents represents 20% of females in comparison to the 7% of males (Texas Demographic Data 2016). Under the Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access, it identifies each parent as a custodial (usually mother) and noncustodial (usually the father) entity.

Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access incorporates a doctrine that provides the rights and responsibilities of each parent. Under the presumption that each parent has legal access and visitation to the child or children associated with a case. Texas family code §153.002-§153.317 does not offer a legal defense to addressing visitation and access denial. This provision imposes a relationship barrier between the father, mother, and child familial structure.

The primary research questions for this study are:

RQ1: How does parental alienation impact African American non-custodial fathers' perception of Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 access and possession order? Describe their experiences?

RQ2: How does the codification of §153.002-§153-317 of Texas Family Code impose on family structure and the father-child relationship.

Subquestion 2a: What role does the mother exhibit that influences the father-child relationship?

Subquestion 2b: How does alienation and father's involvement contribute to delinquent behavior in their children?

Subquestion 2c: Has the mother, father or both engaged in indoctrinating behaviors?

In Chapter 4, I discussed the data setting, the demographics, data collection, and data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results of the study, and I presented summarized analysis of Chapter 4.

Setting

I used a purposive sampling to collect data through an in-depth, semi structured interviews with seven African American noncustodial fathers. These participants were identified as African American males; lived in the Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area at the time of the interview; had a current child support order in

Tarrant County that included possession and access; were currently not married to the child(ren)'s mother; and did not reside in the same household with the child(ren) on the supported case. Interviews took place between September 5, 2020- January 2nd, 2021 via Zoom and Facetime. There were no organizational conditions that influenced the participants directly or indirectly at the time of this study that may have influenced the interpretation of the study results.

Table 1

Demographics

Participants	Marital Status	Age	Race	Mom	Kids
Father 1	Single	50	AA	1	1
Father 2	Married	36	AA	1	1
Father 3	Single	29	AA	2	2
Father 4	Single(D)	37	AA	1	2
Father 5	Single(D)	40	AA	1	3
Father 6	Married	37	AA	1	1
Father 7	Married	27	AA	1	1

Note. Marital status determines the status of the father during the interview. Fathers with (D) reflect their divorce status at the time of order.

Fourteen African American men volunteered to participate in this research study. I screened each volunteer by asking questions to determine whether they met the criteria to participant in this research study. I determined three of the volunteers did not meet the criteria to participate in the study. These three participants identified as African American noncustodial fathers; had a current child support order that included possession and access; did not reside in the household with their children; however, did not reside in the

Dallas/ Fort Worth Texas area. Upon elimination of the three ineligible volunteers, four of the volunteers that met the criteria to participate failed to respond in a timely manner after several attempted contacts made by the researcher.

The seven volunteers that were invited to participate in the study consisted of African American noncustodial fathers between the age of 27-50; three were currently married; 4 were currently single; two of the fathers were married to the custodial parent and child support order was incorporated through the divorce decree; four of the fathers had other children from previous or current relationships; and one of the fathers had two separate children from separate mothers. All the participants were employed at the time of the study. All participants resided in the Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area.

Data Collection

As a researcher, I served as an instrument for this research study as I used a self-developed interview questionnaire that took an average of 45 minutes for each participant. I employed an interactional and conversational observation for data collection and interpretation. Seven research participants participated in this research study. With the interview questions, I obtained the participants' perspective and viewpoint on (a) their interaction with the Texas child support division, (b) their role and responsibility to their child, (c) their relationship with their child(ren), (d) their possession and access obligation, (e) their relationship with the custodial parent, (f) their understanding of "the best interest of child", (g) the impact parental alienation has had on their life, (h) their

financial obligation to the child, (i) their perception of the child support system biases, (j) the changes they would like to see in the child support system.

I e-mailed each participant a consent form, detailing the purpose and specifics of the research study. Upon receiving an email from the participants with “I consent” and agreed to participate in the research study. I e-mailed each participant a calendar that included a list of my availability time. Once I received the response from the participants with a selected date and time from the calendar, I scheduled the interview. Upon scheduling the interview, I e-mailed each participant a copy of the interview questions so they could be comfortable with the questions that would be asked. The participants had the option of Zoom, via telephone, Facetime, or Skype. Due to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, face-to-face interviews were not permitted. All interviews were recorded using Call Recorder, an audio- recording application. I reviewed the recording with each participant upon completion of the interview for accuracy within their responses. There were no variations in the data collected from the plan in Chapter 3 and there were no unusual circumstances in the data collection for this study.

Data Analysis

According to Yin (2016), qualitative research consists of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. Qualitative analysis requires the analytical process of writing in order to develop a pattern of narratives. Themes are usually developed from these narratives. Ravitch and Carl (2016) argues that themes are generated from the researcher acting as the primary instrument in the research. Due to

issues regarding Nvivo, I used Atlas.TI to assist in the analysis of the data collected from the interviews. According to Saldana (2016), like Nvivo, Atlas.TI is a CAQDAS software program that efficiently assist the researcher with storing, organizing, managing, and analyzing content captured from multiple sources including interviews. I used data analysis steps that were used by Moustakas, one of the founders of phenomenological research, to analyze each interview conducted.

My method for data analysis included these steps: (a) reviewed each of the participants responses as they described their encounter, (b) documented notes on all relevant comments from each participants, (c) transcribed the audio-recording interviews (d) examined the audio-recording and transcription to remove overlapping/or excess wording, (e) organized consistent comments from each participants into themes, (f) summarized each theme into an explanation or cause of an experience from their perspective, (g) sorted each viewpoint of the participant as they explained the impact of their experience, (h) constructed written depiction of the experience and a portrayal of participants involved in the research study (Patton, 2015).

The themes that I identified with the assistance of Atlas.TI through word clouds and tag crowd creator included: (a) great father-child relationship, (b) standard legal rights as a father, (c) child support system biases and unfair treatment toward them as a father, (d) lack of understanding to the term best interest of the child, (e) equal parental rights (e.g. Time, roles, finances), (f) removing the label of being deadbeat, (g) wanting

more parental time with children, (h) updating the child support policies to be fair to mothers and fathers, (i), limited familial structure.

Figure 1

Word Cloud



Note. Figure 1 shows a word cloud constructed from TagCrowd from Atlas.ti, a qualitative data software program. I utilized Atlas.ti to show word frequencies, and to formulate themes for scholarly research.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I established the trustworthiness of the data I collected and analyzed for my dissertation by the standard means credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I established credibility in my research study by identifying the primary themes, which was noted in the previous section, from each of the participants' responses in their interview. Thorough examination and interpretation to each of the participants'

responses to each other, helped identify relevant content, without deception and manipulation of the participants responses; creating internal validity and reliability to the results.

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), transferability is used in qualitative research to confirm the context relevancy within the study that can “transferable while still maintaining a context-specific richness” (p. 189). Specific-detailed themes that were gathered from the participants’ data helped establish credible validation. Ravitch and Carl (2016) believes, transferability requires the researcher to include detailed descriptions of the data that can be applied to or compared to other context and settings. I implemented a strategy of selecting participants that resided in the entire area of Dallas Texas to achieve variation of a perspective of a phenomenon that I have studied. I limited the county (Tarrant) of which the participants were selected in the study. According to Cope (2014), transferability allows researcher to provide “sufficient information” (p. 89) of the participants that helps the reader understanding the findings capabilities of being transferable.

Cope (2014) entails dependability is the consistency of the data usage through similar conditions. Qualitative research study is presumed to be dependable based on their constancy to remain stable over time (Ravitch and Carl, 2016). The participants’ audio interviews, transcriptions and notes have been successfully stored away for the required 5 year minimum. However, my study hasn’t been conducted to provide findings.

According to Johnson et al. (2020), data triangulation remains interchangeable which requires researchers to use different data sources and methods to draw a conclusion. I established credibility in my research study by identifying primary themes from each of the participants' responses to my interview questions, based on their perspective. Upon the completion of the internal and external validity strategies, the final strategy I employed in my research study to validate the conclusions of my data that was collected and analyzed was to report my findings.

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016) confirmability suggest a researchers' findings should be less objective and more visible to confirm while acknowledging, if any, the researchers' biases in the interpretation of the data. Confirmability can alter the researchers' data if the conclusion seems to be based on the researcher's viewpoints (Cope, 2014). I achieved the confirmability of my research study by implementing the reflexivity process. During the process of data collection, the researcher's values, background, and previous experience with a phenomenon often appears, and can affect the research process (Cope, 2014). I had to exercise a systematic reflexive awareness as I am employed at Texas Attorney General as a Child Support Enforcement Officer III and an African American female.

Many of my participants asked after the interview if I had any children. I remained opened with my participants as a child-free individual. Yin (2016), argues the importance of the researcher disclosing any relatable information on the topic being studied. As a researcher, to avoid any biases, I often recorded my feelings regarding the

process on a personal audio recording device. The two previously reflections could have unintentionally impacted my strategies and methods of the data that I collected, organized, coded, generated, analyzed, and interpreted. I utilized a strategy documenting the entire data collection process step-by-step and examining and reexamining the data that I collected.

Upon transcribing the data collected from the participants' interviews, I also transcribed the notes taken during the interview. To ensure the accuracy of the data I collected throughout this research study, I listened to the participants' interview multiple times, repeated review of the transcripts, while carefully quoting the participants. These steps assisted me with establishing conformability hence enhancing the credibility of the findings that I identified in my data.

Results

After I reviewed each transcript from the participants' interviews, I identified eight main themes. The eight main themes that I identified were: (a) great father-child relationship, (b) standard legal rights as a father, (c) child support system biased and unfair treatment toward them as a father, (d) lack of understanding to the term best interest of the child, (e) equal parental rights (e.g. time, roles, finances), (f) removing the label of being deadbeat (g) wanting more parental time with children; (h) updating the child support policies to be fair to mothers and fathers, (i) limited familial structure. The following section will address how my results guided the primary questions and subquestions 2a, 2b, and 2c.

Primary Research Question

The primary research questions for my study was: How does parental alienation impact African American non-custodial fathers' perception of Texas Family code access and possession statute? Describe their experiences? In response to the primary research question, I asked each of the participants to describe their legal rights and role as a non-custodial father. I asked each of the participants if they were married or in a relationship prior to establishing a child support order. I asked each participant to explain their encounter with the Texas child support division regarding their possession and access order. I also asked each of the participants to explain their experience with the child support system.

I asked the participants to describe their relationship with their children before and after the establishment of the child support order. I asked each participant to describe, if any difficulties, they have experienced as the non-custodial parent regarding possession and access and visitation. I asked each participant to describe from their perspective if the visitation impacted the children's behavior. I asked each participant to describe any actions or events that led them to believe they were being alienated from their child (ren). I asked each participant to describe their current perception of their child support order.

I asked each participant to give their perception of what best interest of the child represents. I asked each participant to describe their familial structure with the mother and child (e.g. attend activities together with mom and child as a family). I asked each participant if their perception of parental alienation influenced their ability to be an active

father. I asked each participant if to explain their communication process between the mother and child (e.g. how often they communicate, forms of communication).

I asked each participant to tell me what changes they would like the Texas Child support division to make and anything else they wished to share. Each participant shared the details of their lived experience with alienation as an African American non-custodial father. Most of the participants shared the common themes of (a) great father-child relationship; (b) standard legal rights as a father; (c) child support system biased and unfair treatment toward them as a father; (d) lack of understanding to the term best interest of the child; (e) equal parental rights (e.g.time, roles, finances); (f) removing the label of being deadbeat; (g) wanting more parental time with children; (h) updating the child support policies to be fair to mothers and fathers, (i) limited familial structure. Table 2 displays the responses for each of the participant as it relates to each theme.

Table 2*The Lived Experiences with Alienation of African American Noncustodial Father*

Themes	Number of Occurrences (n=7)	Percent of Occurrences
Great father-child relationship	7	100%
Standard legal rights as a father	7	100%
Child support system biased and unfair	7	100%
No clear understanding to <i>best interest of the child</i>	6	85.7%
Equal parental rights	7	100%
Removing the <i>deadbeat</i> father label	7	100%
Want more parental time with children	7	100%
Updating the child support policies	6	85.7%
Limited familial structure		

Theme 1: Great Father-Child Relationship

All seven research participants shared their great relationship with their children (See Table 2). Participant 1 shared that his relationship with his child is great and that his relationship with his child never changed after child support was established. He shared his excitement for his child's relationship with his older disabled child. He stated, "he loves to come over here and play with his sister". The participant also shared his interest

for creating and stabilizing the positive relationship with his child. He stated, “like, when I coach him in basketball, he’s over here every weekend, basically, so it’s no issue among that.”

Participant 2 believed the relationship with the child is positive however, it could be a lot better and he knows that it will happen in due time considering the circumstances of their father/child relationship. He stated, “the relationship is great, this year has been distant because of everything going on because of he is going in school and he has had a couple of contacts with Covid”.

Participant 2 also expressed the relationship with the child from previous years have totally changed into a positive one. Participant 2 stated, “I didn’t come into (child’s name) until he was about 6, when the child support order was established. The whole six years, he thought another guy was his father.” Participant 2 explained the relationship took a while for child to adjust to understanding, “so this is my daddy?”

Participant 3 explained due to the fact he has two children by two different mothers, the relationship with the children started off rocky but is a lot better now. He stated, “I get to see my kids now, I spend time with them whenever they want to come. Before it wasn’t much time to build a bond over the phone and understand how they grow up.” Participant 3 continues to explain the relationship between the children, “now that I have that access, we are able to build more of a bond and this is the first time the two have spent time together and hanging out with each other.”

Participant 4 and 5 shared common interest to their positive relationship with their children. Participant 4 and 5 were married and their visitation was established during their divorce. Both participants expressed their relationship with their children are great but required major adjustment as they were no longer residing together. Participants 4 and 5 reported the amount of time spent with the children was the primary adjustment. Participant 4 stated, "I don't want to say the relationship has changed, probably the amount of time we spend together with each other has changed; because me and both of my sons are close." Participant 5 stated, "In the beginning the relationship was very difficult on the children because they were used to having their father every day, 24-7." Participant 6 and 7 also had similar parental interest. Both are currently married but children were established before their marriage.

Participant 6 and 7 confirms a positive relationship with their children and hasn't changed before or after the child support order was established. Participant 6 stated, "Oh man, my daughter loves me, we have a great relationship. She loves me. She knows I'm there for her and will do everything for her." Participant 7 stated, "It really didn't change from when the child support order begins until now. My relationship with my daughter is perfect, it can be struggle because she's young and coming from mom's house to my house." Participant 7 accounts to the transitional process is more of rule changing than most. He stated, "Mom is more of the fun parent and lets her do anything she wants to do and at dad's house it's a lot more structured especially when it comes to bedtime for school and the nutrition in what she's eating."

Theme 2: Standard Legal Right as a Father

Seven out of the seven participants stated they have a standard legal right as a father. According to the child support possession and access order, the participants stated they have standard visitation order at the time of the data collection for the study.

Participant 1 shared that possession and access was established but he and the mother have their own agreement outside of the child support system. Participant 1 stated, “If it’s not my weekend to get him and I want to get him, she doesn’t have an issue with that. She understands the importance of me being in his life (the child) as a father.” He stated, “If it’s my weekend to get him and she has something planned with him. I don’t have no problem with that.” Participant 1 shared that he and the child’s mother have been co-parenting for 6 years.

Participant 2 shared that his standard legal rights as the father were difficult due to state to state child support laws. Participant 2 original child support order was established in Arkansas and transferred to Texas as both parents and child were now residing in Texas. He stated, “Texas established the visitation order because Arkansas never had a visitation order.” Participant 2 shared with me establishing the visitation was an important issue to him. He stated, “I need to get this order in place before he (the child) turns 12. So that’s when I saw the need to get the visitation established in the state of Texas.”

Participant 3 shared that his standard legal rights varies from between the mother’s. He stated, “As far as my son, the legal rights that was setup for him was an out

of state visitation and I had to commit to like 12 visits and alternate holidays, but it was something never really happened.” He further explains his visitation with his other child, “her visitation, basically, her mom asked for supervised visit on weekends only.”

Participant 4, 5, 6, & 7 reported they share joint conservatorship of the children with the mother. They each share the standard visitation of the 1st, 3rd, and 5th weekend of every month; every Thursday from 6:00-8:00pm; even number of years for Spring break; even number of years for Christmas; odd number of years for Thanksgiving; 30 days during summer vacation. Participant 4, 5, 6, & 7 each have a joint responsibility for making overall decisions for each child under the Texas access and possession child support order.

Theme 3: Child Support System Biased and Unfair to Fathers

Seven out of the seven participants felt that the child support system is biased and unfair to noncustodial fathers. Participant 1 expressed his mixed perceptions of the child support system. He stated, “I don’t worry too much about that. I allow them to take what they going to take because me and the custodial parent, which is mom, we have a relationship that’s untouchable.” Participant 1 further stated, “We understand the court system going to do what they going to do.”

Participant 2 expressed his concerns about the child support system from multiple states. Participant 2 stated, “Arkansas and Texas just enforced the orders without consulting the other state”. He further described the legality issues between Arkansas and Texas. Participant 2 stated, “I ended up having to pay child support in two states at the

same time because they did not work with the other state to shut off one order and turn on the other. My job had two orders and they couldn't turn off one because they could be held in contempt of court."

Although the participant was paying in both states, he expressed his frustration with the child support system and their lack of consideration. Participant 2 stated, "I felt like I was getting the vibes of, I was just a person that kept calling every day because I didn't want to make my payments. And that wasn't the case." He stated, "I didn't want to make the payment because I felt I didn't owe those payments." He also explained how the child support inaccuracies affected his household. He went on to say, "I ended up having six months' worth of arrears that I needed to pay to the state of Arkansas and for a while, my wife just said, let's just pay for it so we don't have to deal with that again." Furthermore, "My concern was if I pay them for money, I do not owe them, when will I get it back, will we ever see it again?"

Participant 2 further expressed that the state of Texas offered a little bit more of assistance as far as explaining what he needed to do to correct the issue. However, he did state he would make contact with the child support office and asked what the provisions for visitation are, and the response would be, "we don't enforce visitation, you have to take that up with her."

Participant 3 shared, "During the court date, I missed it because I had a death in the family, and I guess everything that she (mother of the child) asked for in that hearing she was awarded everything." He further explained the amount of child support that was

ordered without his knowledge. He stated, "For the first child it was based off my income, and the second one it was based on me not appearing, and I'm assuming whatever she said she wanted a month, kind of what they awarded." Participant 3 also expressed his concerns how the order was obtained. He stated, "Even on the order it's not standard, it's a handwriting order that was written on top of it. Something I've never seen before."

Participant 3 explained how the child support system provided little to no assistance. He stated after several attempts to contact Texas child support system, he was informed to contact a private attorney. He further stated, "I don't really see in what areas the justice system really helps. Like, there's not like a hotline number you can call regarding questions you have about certain things." He also said, "If it's your time to pick up your kids, they say call and report it, call the cops, have them come and make documentation that it's not happening." Participant 3 continues, "Personally, I don't feel like they are for fathers. They basically rewards mother's more of the rights."

Participant 4 stated, "I pay child support, so I pay child support but then turn around and when they are with me, I spend more money on them." He went on to say, that financial support for the other mother is needed but when the children are with him, he still must provide, which he's spending more money. Participant 4 expressed his disdain for the set of rules and responsibilities provided to the noncustodial parent by the child support system. He stated, "I have joint custody, but I don't have a joint living arrangement and I don't have a joint spend arrangement. It says joint on paper, but I don't

have the benefits of 50/50.” Participant 4 further stated, “If it was 50/50 then the payment would be different, and the living arrangements would be different.” He went on to share with me that child support laws are always sided with the other custodial parent and that’s usually, the mother.

He advised me that during his interactions with the child support division, he and the mother were informed that they did not have to go by the standard visitation order if they agree upon other arrangements. If not, they must adhere to the court order.

Participant 4 also shared with me his thoughts on how the child support system employs a binary narrative regarding time spent and financial obligation. He stated, “You get so engulfed in thing you want to do, to make up that income from child support that you may negate that relationship some.” He goes on to say, “You have to make a conscious effort to not do it.” He also expressed how taking a certain percentage of someone’s income creates a burden on them financially, leaving uneasy feeling of neglect to their kids.

Participant 5 expressed is discernment for the legal system as it assists the child support system in its biases and unfairness. He stated, “Initially, when I was going through my divorce process, I did have an attorney at the time. The attorney wasn’t as favorable with as far as what I desired, as far as the custody and the explanation of child support.” He further states, “The only thing the attorney explained to me is that, in the state of Texas its less likely for the father to be the custodial parent. It is also less likely that the state of Texas will grant any lower child support payment.” He also shared with

me that he was “very uneducated” about the process of the system and relied heavily on the attorney’s advice.

Participant 6 stated, “As far as like, me having an option; there was no option if I wanted joint custody, split custody, it was more 50/50 and anything out of that I would have to go to court pretty much on my own.” Compared to similar perspectives from participants 3, 4, and 5; participant 6 expressed his concerns about the unfairness and biases the child support system employs on fathers. He stated, “I really feel that the system is set up for the woman. The thing about it is, I understand why the system is set up for the woman. She has the baby and everything, but there’s certain situations where I feel the father can do a better job than the mother.” He continues, “For the man to get joint custody or even full custody he has to jump through hoops with the courts.”

Participant 7 had a different point of view regarding the child support system biases and unfairness. He stated, “It wasn’t like strenuous as far as the legal standpoint but far as mentally, it was very different for me.” He further stated, “Like, I said before, just be fair and look at the totality of both parents.” He shared, “I’m paying \$600.00 a month and I have her on my insurance, and when it comes to medical bills, I must split the bills with her mom. So, I keep coming out of more money.” He goes on to say that it’s only fair that if he’s spending more money, he should be allowed more access.

Theme 4: No Clear Understanding to the Best Interest of the Child

Six out of seven participants stated the child support system offers no clear understanding to the coined term, *best interest of the child*. Participant 2 stated, “They

never expressed what's best for the child." He also explained the meaning from his perspective. He stated, "It pertains to his basic needs. Does he have a roof over his head? Does he have shoes and clothes? Is he receiving love and affection from both parents? Those are the best interest of the child." He further stated, "There is so much more you can do for the child other than provide money. It shouldn't be based on my income; it should be more of what are you doing with that child?" He further elaborates that, "The biggest interest of the child, is to have both parent's in his life."

Participant 3 stated, "When they say *best interest of the child* but then you put it in the order, and it's more of a financial thing." He goes on to say, "So, you're asking for money as far as supporting the child, but how is that building a bond? How's that building a relationship." He further stated, "As far as the order, the child support system is not necessarily asking for time or asking for a relationship. They're more so concerned with the financial aspect." He also shared with me that determining who's more fit to have custody of the child is one of the child's best interest.

Participant 4 stated, "That was my biggest argument in court and with my lawyer. What is the best interest for a young black male in 2020? Living with mom or being raised by dad. A strong, educated, black dad. Like what's the best interest? He further expressed his issues with the less elucidated term. He stated, "Is it the best interest while you're young, or is it the best interest that is already etched in this social environment that mom needs to have the kids?" Participant 4 believed that contributing factors such as: gender of the child, age of the child, what role each parent played while in the same

household together, who contributed the most to the child, who's bond is stronger with the child, who is the spiritual leader of the child, and who's the most actively involved parent.

Participant 5 argues the best interest of the child requires, "Shared parenting situation where instead of being strictly this certain time, it should be more of a coparent responsibility to decide what's best for their children, versus the state telling you that this is the way it must be." He further defines the best interest of the child as, "The child should have access to their parents. If the environment has been determined safe for them. It shouldn't be no gray area behind it, and no hidden policies behind that is favorable for the mother than for the father."

Participant 6 believes the child support system should consider the most qualified parent when determining the best of the child. He states, "Which parent is more stable, which parent has the most income, which parent can take care of the child, be there for the child. Which parent can be there to spend time with the child and provide for the child financially, and not there physically?" Participant 6 shares with me that the best interest of the child was never an option to consider. The child support division automatically ruled in favor of the mother as custodial parent.

Participant 7 shared, "When I was going through the beginning, I wanted custody of my child. I looked at everything as far as how long I been on my job, what my job entailed, and my job security." He further shares with me that he felt like he had everything his child needed. He explained how less resourceful the mother was at the

time of the order. He shared, “She wasn’t working, she had instability as far as her residence.” He expressed that if the child support system had focused on the best interest of the child, then they would’ve allowed the child to be placed in his household.

Participant 7 further stated, “The mother of the child always gets the best bargain.”

Theme 5: No Equal Parental Rights

Seven out of the seven participants have expressed that the child support system does not offer equal parental rights. Participant 1 shared with me a story involving a relative who experience difficulties with equal parental rights. He stated, “I have a cousin who is paying child support, it’s taken out of his check and everything. He hasn’t seen his daughter for about four or five years. I told him, you need to go down there and tell them you haven’t seen her. They tell him, there is nothing they can do.” He further stated to his relative, “If a parent goes down and complains that he hasn’t seen his child, they need to get out of find that person ASAP.” He said, “The same way they would if the other parent wasn’t paying child support.”

Participant 2 shared with me a moment when he knew the child support system was not about establishing equal parental rights. He stated, “She (the mother) would say, I don’t care what the state says, this is my son so you will see him when I want you to see him.” He further stated, “I felt like, he’s my son, I should have access to see him even if it’s just for a couple of hours every other weekend, but that’s state law.” Participant 2 also stated, “Before the visitation, it was all about when the she wanted to do it, and how she wanted to do it. I really didn’t have a say in it because the child was at her house.” He

further stated, “The phone was never the problem, it was the in-person visits. If I said, I want to take my son to do this or see this person. That is what she felt like she had more control over, and she didn’t want to relinquish that control.”

Participant 2 shared with me that during the initial process of establishing an order, he was only informed of the amount to be paid and to provide health insurance. He shared, no one ever explained to him his rights as a non-custodial father. He stated, “All I knew a noncustodial father to be at the time, was a person who pays child support. That’s all they ever talked about. Money, Money, Money.” He further stated, “It was never what’s best for the child.” He shared his personal definition of a non-custodial father was, “You are a supporter; you pay money weekly”. Participant 2 also shared with me that the child support officers should be trained to understand what both sides of what this child is going through. He stated, “I feel like all the attention is on the noncustodial parent because they’re not in the house.

Participant 3 stated, “I placed myself on child support in hopes to gain access to my children but that didn’t help.” He also shared with me that his communication with the child support system did not provide equal parental rights. He recalled, “I remember calling to see if I can get another hearing, and I they told me I had to wait between two and four years before I could qualify for another hearing.” Participant 3 stated, “It’s been time I would struggle trying to see my daughter. It’s been time the mom would say oh were not available or no you can’t see her. I’ve went 5 months without seeing her because she was being kept from, and it was nothing I could do about.” Participant 3

stated, “The whole process to me doesn’t make since. Going months, years without seeing your child is very draining and stressful.” He stated, “As far as asking for help, a program called Father’s Rights walked you through a course to teach you what you need to do for equal rights, which wasn’t helpful in my situation.”

Participant 3 further stated, “The mother’s feel like they have the upper hand in keeping the child away or threaten to do certain things. The system is being used against the situation by the parent to keep them from somebody, impacting the relationship with any kid.” Participant 3 went on to say, “I believe it should be an equal situation when doing joint custody. It should be an equal access for both parents regarding the child, instead of giving one-person sole custody.” He also shared with me that he’s dealt with a lot from the child support system and it was never a situation that helped him.

Participant 4 stated, “The financial burden of trying to give them (the children) equal benefits in each home, but some of things I would like to do, has to be paused, negated, or even postpone until I can get the funds to do those things.” He also stated, “If I was awarded 50/50 then the payment and living arrangements would be different.” Participant 4 also expressed his views on society’s perception of parental roles. He shared, “We as society, think the mother is the person that raises the kids, which is a little different in my family and my upbringing because I was raised in a biblical home and sons were raised by their fathers.” He stated, “The child support paperwork negates what’s priority in real life. There is no clause in there to go to the judge to declare, this is

more important for the kids to be a part of. It's just whoever weekend it is or holiday it is."

Participant 4 expressed his views on the lack of current possession and access provisions. He continued, "I think it was made with the intentions that the dad was the breadwinner, and the mom is usually home with the kids. I don't think it was geared toward two working parents." He stated, "It doesn't take into present time factors. Its more mainly the man is the breadwinner, makes the most money, and has the most resources. That's not always the true in real life." Participant 4 also shared with me that male children should be under the leadership of their father to avoid chaos that is being displayed in society today. He stated, "If custody is going to automatically going to the female, it will continue the cycle. That's for fathers who want to there and a part of their lives."

Participant 5 stated, "The child support division didn't offer no type of legal aid. It was cut and dry. This is what is going to happen, this is what we're going to do." He continued to share with me that the mother would only allow the children to come over on the standard visitation days only. Participant 5 shared with me that he couldn't attend events at school due to not being aware. He stated, "When I know about the events, I will show up without talking it over with the mother. It will be an issue with it." He further stated, "Now keep in mind, there was no type of history of domestic violence or any restraining orders within our case. It was strictly how their mom was." Participant 5 also shared his financial responsibility that impacted unequal parental rights. He stated, "At

that time, I had a job, but I wasn't making a lot of money. When the Office of the Attorney General calculated what they were going to take out, they literally garnished at least 50% of my gross earnings." Participant 5 continued, "So, I barely had money to live on my own. I had to move back in with my mother just so I can have a stable place for them to come, when they do come over."

Participant 5 also shared with me that during the initial child support order, the mother requested back pay which placed him behind. After receiving a second job, the child support division begin garnishing from his second employer. He stated, "When the mother asked for back pay during the time of the divorce, to my knowledge they just granted it. It was nothing I could say or do about it. It wasn't explained to me the reason why." Participant 5 stated, "There is no area where we (mother and self) can meet to bring balance. So now we just kind of learn to deal with it and cope with it." He stated, "It's been situation that happened with the children that I didn't know about until they come over and tell me about it. I don't communicate with mother unless there is something really important."

Participant 6 stated, "As far as like, me having an option to joint custody, or split custody, I would have to go to court on my own." He stated, "She doesn't keep me up to date with what's going on as far as schooling or anything like that. I have to ask for information." Participant 6 also shared with me his issues with the equally parenting during visitation hours.

He stated, “We’ve had a couple of issues with her (the child) getting picked up on time or dropped off on time.” He shared, “It was a time where I picked her up on Friday and dropped her off on Sunday. I called that Sunday evening to drop her off, she’s out of town somewhere. I’m like, why didn’t you let know I needed to keep her until Monday. I have to work, and I have to make arrangements to find a babysitter.” He also shared with me that during the time of working a part-time job, the child support division began garnishing from his part-time employer as well as the full-time employer. He explained that upon speaking to the child support division to request a refund. They informed him that they were unable to complete that request however, the money will remain on his case as future pay. Which he will be granted closure of his child support earlier than the original date.

Participant 7 stated, “They required us to do a study. They came to my old residence to interview myself and adults in the house. They required my daughter’s mom and I to go to a class for co-parenting.” He also stated, “The order limits a time where the parent gets to see their kids, especially if it’s not any abuse or anything. We should be able to co-parent without anyone telling us when we can and can’t see our kids.”

Theme 6: Removing the Deadbeat Father Label

Seven out of seven participants stated the child support system labeled fathers as deadbeat and that stigma attached should be removed. Participant 1 stated, “The only issue I had with the child support system was probably with a payment where they said I didn’t make a payment. Then they came back and said, well we made a mistake. He

continued, “I’m like I know you did because I’ve always paid my support because y’all take it from my check.” He further details his thoughts of being placed on child support and how it could be perceived. He stated, “For a little while I felt I was labeled. I mean, I know I put myself in this position. Whether we disagreed with something back then or not, I didn’t do this right like I said I would, but she has every right to seek support.”

Participant 1 also explained his familial constellation and his ability to be empathic from both sides of the spectrum. He stated, “I’ve been a single parent myself. My wife is deceased but I’ve always taking care of my disabled child since she was four. I understand how difficult it can be but if you had another parent that’s willing there’s no need to go through the court.” Participant 1 expressed passionately about the situations single parents are placed in which many do not understand. He stated, “If a person just isn’t doing nothing and you have no other choice. I understand and respect that. But I mean, I look at that as a lesser man, that’s your child regardless of your relationship with the mom. You still have a responsibility.”

Participant 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 had similar responses to the insulting labeled placed on non-custodial fathers. Participant 2 stated, “I felt like my role as a father was labeled and like times I would call the child support system and ask about my provisions their answer was, *we don’t enforce visitation, you have to work that out with her*. I was like, okay so you guys do just see me as a bank.” He further stated, “When I established the visitation with my attorney and still dealing with arrears from Texas and Arkansas. I still hung out with my child every week.” He shared with me, “I went to his game. I didn’t want them

to know that it was going on. I can't put that on the child to say, *hey man I can't come see you this weekend because I just paid child support to two different states for you.*"

Participant 2 stated, "That's not right. I'm going to care of that. I still took care of his back to school supplies and whatever else he wanted." He also spoke on his conversation with the child after finding out he was the biological father. He stated, "I talked to him about it. I told him, I'm your biological father, like the guy that you saw as your father, he's still a father figure in your life. I'm not going to take that from him, cause he's going to love you as a son but I'm your biological dad." He further stated, "My blood is your blood. I had to explain it to him in a way a 9-year-old would understand. I told him the speed he has, that's all me. That's all biological. He understands I support him in whatever he does."

Participant 3 stated, "I was told that in order to reopen my case regarding visitation and then on top of that the amount I was paying, I would need to get an attorney for that." He further stated, "Part of the issue with visitation was her (child's mother) and when we visited the judge, he awarded her (child's mother) to leave. Participant 3 further explained his reservations to adhering to coparenting roles outside of the agreed court order. He stated, "If a situation, if they get mad again or upset about something, they can pick and choose; and repeat the same cycle that I've been through before. Not allowing me to see them or keeping them from me, not having that equal access to my children."

He furthered share with me that 2020 holiday was the first time he's had his children for a long time. He expressed his excitement on how his children were able to spend time with each other. He stated, "I also explained to them what happened, and this is what's going. Therefore, I wasn't there like I should've been." He also shared with me his frustration toward the child support system. He explained, "I'm getting letters in the mail about child support that I owe but not getting the proper visitation that I was awarded. I got to a point like, *why am I paying child support to someone that's keeping my child from me?* Therefore, I stopped paying it. I know do it without going through the system."

Participant 4 stated, "I Facetime them every day to keep in contact them and to let them know, *daddy is here at all times.*" He continued, "I'm a little different because I was the one taking them to school, picking them up from school, taking them to daycare, taking them to football games, taking them to school events, going to the school, volunteering in the classroom, going to school dances and picnics." He stated, "If you would ask anybody around us, I was the more hands on parent. It was almost a shell shock at the beginning not being hands on with the kids in general."

Participant 4 also expressed how his lack of presence in the household daily affects him. He stated, "They're growing up and I'm missing some of that by not being around." He also shared with me that the kids were informed that each parent would be residing in different household. Participant 4 explained his perspective of alienation and the inability it has on him as a father.

He stated, "I hate to say this, but one of the problems with society is we have women raising these little boys and no matter how independent and strong you are, it takes a man to raise another man. That's something I personally believe." He continued, "Me having my sons 6 days out of the month, 72 days out of the year excluding holidays, I just don't think it's enough male leadership. So, I try to get them as much as possible." He also explained the uncommon factors related to fatherhood. He shared, "Picking the team your son is going to play football or basketball for, and you know, the friends he has around him. It's a lot of snowball decisions in life you're not a part of anymore and you can only correct so much without not being there."

He also shared the impact a child support order has on father's ability to be actively involved; however, he hasn't allowed that to happen. He stated, "From a normal person's position it would, whether its monetary or time you have to make up your paycheck and the only way you can do that is with time. You have to make a decision, if you're going to live lower than your means or you're going to work to try and make it up." He also informed me that he continues to attend the parent-teacher conferences at the children's school and extra-curricular practices.

Participant 5, "My role as a father is, I am responsible for monetary child support." He stated, "I was under the impression, under the possession and access portion that me and other parent would be cordial enough where we could at least have our children be with each other. However, that didn't work out how I desired." He also explained his communication with the other parent. He stated, "The relationship was

difficult because we were still dealing with emotional trauma going through the divorce. It was nothing physical or any infidelity, we just start growing a part.

Like Participant 4, Participant 5 explained how his role as an active father before the child support possession and access order. He stated, "They were so used to their father taking them to school, being a part of extra-curricular activities, and they were young at the time, so they had to adjust to that." He also shared with me that he explained to his children that he and the other parent were now coparenting. The time we spend together will have to be limited due to the visitation order there is a certain time they have to be back at their mother's house."

Participant 5 also shared with me the financial limitations he had to endure. He stated, "There was a time I was homeless, even though I had a job, but I just couldn't afford a place to live due to the child support payments. Eventually, I found a better job to support my own living. Participant 5 stated, "Even when they would come over during the visitation, I barely had enough money, so I had to use whatever money I had to make sure they were fed. There were times where I let them eat, and I didn't nothing or I ate whatever they had left over. I even picked up a second job to support."

He further stated, "The father shouldn't be looked upon as a deadbeat father because he's having a tough time paying child support and in some cases, the father doesn't have the income to do it, Not that they don't want to do, they just don't have the income to do it." Participant 5 stated, "I'm talking about father's who are actively

involved, not the ones who are inactive.” He also shared with me that his relationship with his kids are great and they communicate a lot. He stated, “We are really bonded.”

Participant 6 stated, “My child support order was created out of spite. It was a situation and we were no longer together so when the child got here, we called it quits. It had nothing to do with me not taking care of her because I did. It was to get back at me.” He stated, “I’m definitely not a deadbeat because I pay child support, I have her on life insurance, dental and vision. I also keep with visitation without the mother interrupting anything.” He also shared that his relationship with the mother is only about the child and he’s heavily involved in his child’s life. He stated, “I am the father. We have a good relationship and she knows right from wrong.” He also shared that father’s still having to pay support even when the child is with them. He stated, “I have her for the summer and still have to pay child support. Why does the mom still receive a check and the child is with me?”

Like participant 6, participant 7 explained that his child support case was opened out of malicious intent. He stated, “The relationship originally started off kind of rocky when the separation began. We were never married so when we stopped talking and I started dating. She was more so jealous and could somewhat be very spiteful.” Participant 7 shared, “But now we communicate mainly about my daughter regarding school and extra-curricular activities.”

He goes on to say he is a very active parent and his role as a father is very important. Participant 7 also shared his perspective of a dead-beat label that is attached to

father's who are responsible for paying support. He stated, "My time is more valuable than money, so I should be able to see my kid more than just the 1st, 3rd, and 5th weekend." He also shared with me that he and mother remain cordial with one another and that he remains active in the child's extracurricular activities.

Theme: Want More Parental Time with Children

Five of the seven participants wished for more parental time with their children. Participant 1 shared, "I have a great relationship with my child. I get him when I want to." He further stated, "Me and the custodial parent, which is the mom, we have a relationship that's untouchable." He further explains the relationship that he and the mother of his child share as she is aware of the significant role he has in his child's life.

Participant 2 had a different experience from Participant 1. Participant 2 shared with me his experience on building a relationship with his child after receiving confirmation unbeknownst to him, he was a presumed father. He stated, "I believe the relationship is great. Due to covid, I haven't been able to see him as much as I would like. Going back to the last two years, it has really taking a 180 turn as far as him not being reserved and not wanting to come around."

Participant 2 shares, "Now he's opened, he's talking more about everything and most of the time he just wants to come out and hang with us. I guess he considers us the fun house. I have all the stuff here he likes." He further explains, "I didn't come in *child's name*, until he was about 6. The whole 6 years he thought that another guy was his father. So, it took a while for him to get comfortable with me, come around or call me to tell me

things he needs; or to confide in me. Last summer, I couldn't even keep him out of my house.”

Participant 2 further explains the child's reservation from his perspective. He stated, “In my mind, I believe he felt like, *wait this is my daddy, well who is this guy*. He still didn't start call me dad and I'm okay with that. He calls me dad sometimes. But he understands now, I am his father. If he really, really wants something he's like dad, but if were in a general conversation it was, *hey participant 2 real name*.” Participant 2 stated, “I understood why he called me by my name, and I wasn't going to force it on him.” He also shared with me that during the beginning stages, he knew the child felt uneasy about overnight weekends so to make the child comfortable he would keep him for the entire day and return him to the mother at the end of the day.

He also stated, “five years ago after establishing the visitation order, another year after that is when we started having that breakthrough of building a relationship.” He also shared with that before he established his rights, the mother of the child set communication stipulations. He stated, “It was all about when she was ready, when she wanted to do it, and how she wanted to do it. I was basically at her mercy when it came to seeing him.” He furthered expressed how the father-child relationship is stronger than ever. He stated, “I'm the person he wants to talk to when they lose a game because he takes it really hard.”

Participant 3 expressed some similar issues as Participant 2, pertaining to the child's resistance during establishment stages of visitation. He stated, “Whenever, they

were around me, I used to think it was a convenience for them as far as seeing them. It's like, I'm still kind of that stranger to them. Participant 3 stated, "They don't really know how to adapt to me or certain things. One thing I struggle with for a while is that, I believed they were uncertain about who I really was. It's like, *this is my dad, but I don't really know what to call him.*" He shared with me that he explained the entire situation to the children. He stated, "The only thing I can do is built upon my relationship now and educate them and overwhelm them with unconditional love." He expressed how more in person interaction with the child is important because it allows that father-child bonding process to flourish. He stated, "A child isn't getting to know you and vibe over the phone. Trying to coparent, understand how they grow up, and different moods they have is hard to adjust. Now that I have that access, we're able to build more of a bond."

Participant 4 shared from his perspective as a divorcee. He stated, "Mine is a little different. I was married so the kids were used to having both of us at any time. It wasn't a *quote on quote* baby mother situation. They grew up with us. They've had me for ten years in the house." Participant 4 stated, "We've been in this situation approximately August 2019. I think coming from a background, I'm always having access to the kids being in the same house. It was a little different than just being with a person you had a child with." He also shared with me that time and access to experiencing the child's growth plays has an emotional impact on the father and the child. Participant 4 stated from his perspective, "I would say the children have been negatively, emotionally and

physically affected. “Participant 4 said, “When I say physically, I mean daddy’s touch and daddy being around.”

Participant 5 also shared from a similar perspective as Participant 4. He stated, “During the divorce, I was under the impression that me and the custodial parent would be cordial enough where we could at least have our children be with each other, weekend and week out.” Like participant’s 4 perspective, Participant 5 shared the dynamic of co-parenting that impacted the children after establishing visitation. He stated, “They had to adjust to not having their father in the household because I was a very active father. They wanted more time with me other than standard visitation and their mother wouldn’t allow it to happen.” He also shared the conversation he had with the children explaining the visitation process. He stated, “I had to explain to them that since we’re doing visitation, the time spent together will be limited. Participant 5 shared with me that time and financial responsibility were contributions that initially affected his ability to be an active father. He also shared how the child support system acted as a contributing factor to alienating fathers. He stated, “At the end of the day if we were good parents then it should be no reason whatsoever that children are alienated from their father and limited to standard visitation.”

Participant 5 stated, “I believe to this day that causes alienation as a father. It limits me a lot. It limits my time. I wish I could spend more time with them.” He also expressed his views on the possession and access provisions. He stated, “What would be the consequences if I was to keep the children late, or what are the consequences if the

mother brings them late? I believe the state has to understand that shared parenting should be implemented with parents' responsibility."

Participant 6 stated, "For the most part, we have a good relationship so I can see her whenever I want to. I may can get her every weekend or weeks in a row. If something is going on, then I may get her. It also depends on our work schedule. Now, we have a good relationship when it comes to that."

Participant 7 stated, "Even though I'm on child support, when it comes to me seeing my child, we don't have any issues with that. We both follow the visitation guidelines and established county lines. Participant 7 stated, "Everything was cut and dry. She picks my daughter up from school and I drop her off." He also shared with me his opinion on how coparenting can assist with more parental time. He stated, "If we didn't have the order, it would be better for my daughter. We should be able to be adults and she can spend even amount of time at both households. Participant 7 stated, "Therefore, she can spend more time with me, which I would like. It's not me being selfish or anything. The order limits the time that a parent gets to see their kids."

Theme 8: Updating Child Support Policies and Procedures.

Seven out of seven participants recommended updating the child support policies and procedures that remains conclusive to the best interest of the child. Participant 1 stated, "I feel that the child support system needs to enforce visitation more. If a parent goes down and complains that he hasn't seen his child, they need to find that person." He also stated, "Visitation should be at the top of the list. It's probably other father's that

have that issue where the mothers are doing it out spite. Even though he's paying, you shouldn't put your relationship with the father before your child."

Participant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 shared common recommendations for equal parental and financial obligation. Participant 2 stated, "I do believe the child support system has to be a little more flexible. I feel like it's a one size it's all scheme. I believe the judges, the attorney's, and the case workers know that it many situations are case by case, but the law states on thing; and what's going on in a person's family or individual circumstances my varies from what the law allows." He furthered stated, "The state may need a little bit more funding to train more child support officers. I do believe they have a lot of workers but lack the training to understand what both sides of what the child is going through." He also shared that each case should be examined and concluded individually with both parents' resources and obligations. He stated, "Parenting is a two-way street until it comes to the child, then it becomes all about you. If were splitting everything, why not split support. It helps paints a true picture, opposed to putting all pressure on one side."

Participant 3 stated, "The child support system should focus on helping build a relationship with your child and make decisions on who's more fit to have custody or joint custody of the child." He further stated, "The system should be an equal opportunity for both parents to raise a child. Background checks should be taking into consideration when addressing sole custody. Participant 3 stated, "Father's should be giving equal rights as the mother to determine who's best suitable to be the custodial parent."

Participant 4 shared, “The child support system should factor in determinations of married couples and single parents. Ex-husbands are treated almost the same as a boyfriend or a person that may not have been trying to have a baby.” He further stated, “Truthfully, I would like to address the monetary issue because there’s no documentation on where the money goes and what actually determines how much it cost to raise a kid?” Participant 4 continues with, “Both parents’ income should be based on a decision to how much child support one receives. I think there should be a provision where a liaison can determine certain important factors where there is a disagreement.”

He stated, “The state needs to figure out what the best interest means and explain it. We can’t use the term so broadly when 98% of the time, custody is to the mother.” Participant 4 also stated, “The kids should have an input also.” Participant 4 also shared an experience with one of the children requesting to go with him and the other with mother. He stated, “I would love it, but I would never break them up. He concluded, “I think a lot of the rules and regulations with of Texas Family code is outdated. It was established when women were not working, and dad was out making the money. That’s not the case anymore.”

Participant 5 stated, “The child support system has to understand every parent’s situation is not the same. Identifying what is in the best interest of the children but once identified, it should be the basic standard policy.” He stated, “Everyone situation is not the same and each process requires a little bit more skillful examination.” He furthered stated, “Each case should be handled as a unique case. It’s not a cut and dry situation.

Shared parenting should be implemented were both parents are responsible for financial support.”

Participant 6 stated, “I don’t like how the child support division asked for my financial records but didn’t go through the mothers which is unfair.” He also shared his experience with the child support system double garnishment of employers without any compunction. He stated, “The child support division should actually have a hearing to decide which parent should actually have custody and which parent can provide a stable home.” Participant 6 shared, “Also, during the summer and I have the child why does the mother still get child support? That’s something that should definitely change.”

Participant 7 shared, “Just be fair and look at the totality of the situation regarding both parents. See where both parents stand financially, mentally, and just be fair.” He also stated, “Male or female, mother or father you be shorted time by someone who doesn’t know your situation, doesn’t know the child, but can tell you what’s in the best interest of the child when you’ve only talked to me for a certain amount of minutes.” Participant 7 stated, “Allow more time, and allow equal financial support for both parents. Also, just like we vote in politics, lets vote to see how to direct change. We can also look at how the other 49 states are doing.” He concluded, “Sometimes, we as people don’t like change; but change is sometimes better.”

Theme 9: Limited to no Familial Structure.

Six out of the seven participants they have limited familial structure with the other parent and child. Participant 1 excitingly shared the familial structure between him and

the other parent. He stated, "We are good friends. Best friends, I mean she's there for me if I need to vent and I'm there for her. It's just the personal relationship didn't work out." Participant 1 further shared with me that that he and the child's mother still attend church together. He stated, "If you see us out, the family dynamic would make you think we were a couple. We have that type of friendship that's just fine. We don't have any issues. If there were any issues, we talk about it when the child is not around."

Participant 2 stated, "The relationship with me and the mom still need work due to unsurpassed trustworthiness." He further stated, "We don't communicate or converse if it's not about the child. We ask what he need for back to school, his game days, what jersey is he wearing, what side of the field are we sitting on, can I pick him up from practice, can I take him to practice today."

Participant 3 stated, "Now, as far as both situations, it's well now." He stated, "I get to see them now and spend time with them. It's coparenting on our behalf. No other interactions other than that."

Participant 4 stated, "The relationship is cordial." He stated, "I look at the relationship as a business relationship. Whether you like them or not, you got to work with them. The common goal is to raise the kids in a healthy environment. I'm personally going to go over and beyond to continue my relationship going with my kids."

Participant 5 stated, "It's more of a separation then a unit together." He stated, "Whatever goes on in her household goes on and whatever goes on in mine is on me. There is no area where we could meet to bring balance." He further stated, "As far as

communicating with the mother, if it's something important then we talk other than that, no communication or interaction.”

Participant 6 stated, “No, we haven't acted as a family unit. I am currently married. I have a wife and she doesn't play that.”

Participant 7 stated, “When my daughter has an activity, me and the custodial parent go but we don't sit together or nothing like that. I am married now, and I have another daughter which is my wife's daughter and we are now expecting one on the way together. So as a man and father, I don't see how acting as a family unit with the mother will be.” He further stated, “I have my own family, so I don't agree with acting like we're a family with the mother.”

Subquestion 2a.

What role does the mother exhibit that influences the father-child relationship? In response to sub question 1 an analysis of the transcript interviews that six participants believed that the mother's behavior influenced the father-child relationship. The participants revealed from their perspective during the initial child support process, the fathers were limited to Texas standard visitation. While six participants believed the mother's, behavior influenced the father-child relationship, participant #1 believed the mother's behavior was warranted. Also, it is important to mention in this section besides the Texas standard visitation, three of the participants experienced parental alienation from the mother's behavior.

Subquestion 2b.

How does alienation and father's involvement contribute to delinquent behavior in their children? In response to subquestion 2b, an analysis of the transcript interviews revealed that none of the participants experienced delinquent behavior from their children. Furthermore, it is also important to mention in this section that two of the participants believed their children have experienced emotional trauma from the alienation.

Participant 4 stated, "When we (mother and father) broke up, my oldest son wanted to go with me and let his brother go with his mother. I told him, I would love it, but I would never break them up." He further expressed how he noticed the negative emotional affect experienced by the children. Participant 5 expressed the emotional affects his children experienced. He stated, "There were a lot of emotional adjustments that they (children) had to endure." He furthered shared with me the emotional acts his children displayed. He stated, "When they were with me, and it was time for them to go back to their mother's house, they used to hide in the closet and under the bed." Participant 5 furthered stated, "They'll begin to cry and say, *well we don't want to go.*"

Subquestion 2c.

Has the mother, father or both engaged in indoctrinating behaviors? In response to subquestion 2c, an analysis of the transcript interviews revealed that both parents have participated in indoctrinating alienation. Gardner (1998) described parental alienation as an indoctrination of brainwashing of the child by one parent and the child's own

contributions incited toward the targeted parent. According to Milchman et al. (2020), to understand the complexities within a family dynamic, the courts must adhere to the consideration of allegations against a parent that undermines the parent-child relationship.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to examine the lived experience of African American non-custodial fathers with alienation while exploring how codification of the Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access impose on the social construction of their lives; while impacting their family structure, father-child relationship and if any, delinquent behavior from the non-custodial father's perspective. The phenomenon of interest was the large number of African American males identified as noncustodial fathers with standard visitation in the state of Texas.

According to Texas Attorney General, 10 % of non-custodial parents are mothers as to, 90 % of non-custodial parents are fathers. Despite the increased effort to encourage parental responsibility, establish a parent-child relationship, and perform duties in an efficient manner that offers assistance involving the federal government, the child support system has failed to provide support to fathers who are denied possession and access to their child (ren).

There were two research questions and three sub questions that navigated this research study. Data collection was via semi-structured electronic face-to-face interviews

that were conducted utilizing Zoom and/ or Facetime and audio recordings were conducted by the using Call Recorder, an audio software. I used ATALSti, a qualitative data analysis software program to assist in the analysis of the data collected and stored for this study. This software allows the researcher to make decisions about assigning codes, categories, concepts, and patterns of the data (Moser and Korstjens, 2018).

I used data analysis steps adopted by Moustakas, one of the phenomenological research founders to explore, scrutinize, and examine each interview I conducted. The first theme that was developed in my study was having a great father-child relationship. All seven of my research participants expressed how they all have a great father-child relationship despite the standard visitation issued by the State of Texas and the parental alienation instructed.

The second theme that was developed in my study was having a standard legal right implemented by the State of Texas. All seven research participants explained their legal rights as ordered by the State of Texas under the possession and access provision. Each participant was awarded standard possession and access. Under *Subtitle B. Suits Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship*, §153-312-317 of the Texas Family Code, the standard visitation for the noncustodial father is: Right to possession of the child on weekends throughout the year beginning at 6:00p.m. on the first, third, and fifth Friday of each month and ending at 6:00p.m. on the following Sunday; every Thursday from 6:00p.m. to 8:00p.m; even number of years for Spring vacation beginning 6:00 p.m. on the day the child is dismissed from school for the school's spring vacation and returning

6:00 p.m. on the day before school resumes after that vacation; shall have possession of the child for thirty days beginning not earlier than the day after the child's school is dismissed for the summer vacation and ending not later than seven days before school resumes at the end of the summer vacation; shall have possession of the child in even-numbered years for Christmas; and odd number of years for Thanksgiving. These time guidelines for holidays are correspondence with the child's dismissal from school.

The third emergent theme in my study was the child support system biased and unfair to the research participants. Seven out of seven research participants had experiences within the child support system that lead to believe it was biased and unfair to fathers. At least all the participants felt the child support system is designed to be in favor of women. All felt the child support system stereotyped the father's and gave the mother's automatic custodial parent rights.

The fourth emergent theme in my study was there was no clear understanding to the coined term to the best interest of the child. Six of the seven participants believed the term is clearly undefined and offers no descriptive definition. Out of the seven research participants, one research participant had no issue with the term. The remaining six research participant felt the child support system need to provide clarity to determine who is fit to be the custodial parent.

The fifth emergent theme in my study was fathers requesting equal parental rights to their child(ren). Seven out of the seven research participants argued that the child

support system should represent each parent equally. All felt that if the fathers are equally responsible for paying support, they should have equal parental right.

The sixth emergent theme in my study was fathers wanting to remove the deadbeat father label. All seven of the research participants felt that being placed on child support as the non-custodial father places a negative label on them. All felt that the child support system considers them as deadbeat fathers without even considering the entirety of the relationship. Two out of the seven participants were married to the mother of their children. Therefore, their child support guidelines were implemented during the divorce process. Four out of my seven research participants also had private attorneys to assist them during the process.

The seventh emergent theme in my research study was father's wanting more parental time with their children. Six out of my seven research participants wanted more time with their child(ren). Six of the father's felt they were limited to visitation by the child support order and the mother. They all felt that if they're financially responsible for the child, they shouldn't be ordered limited access. One of the fathers stated his relationship with the mother is great and that he could spend as much time with his child as he wanted.

The eighth emergent theme in my research study is updating the child support policies. Seven out of seven participants father's felt that to be considered equal to the mother, updating the child support policies is the most important factor. All the participants felt the Texas Child support system policies and procedures are outdated and

should be implemented to define the best interest of the child. All the father's felt that updating and adding new policies will ensure the father rights are just as important as the mothers.

The ninth and final emergent theme in my study was limited familial structure. Six of the seven participants had limited familial structure with the child(ren) and mother. The father's felt that it was no need to interact as a family unit with the mother. However, one of the seven research participants stated that he and the mother of his child interact as a family unit. He insisted they still attend church and family functions together. Three out of the seven research participants are currently married, and their new familial structure is with their significant other. The remaining three research participants felt that it was not that type of relationship between them and the mother.

All of my participants in the study had a great father-child relationship with their children; all of the participants had standard legal rights implemented by the State of Texas; all of the participants believed the child support system is biased and unfair to non-custodial fathers; many of my participants believed the coined term the best interest of the child provides no clear understanding; all of my participants requested equal parental rights to their child(ren); all of my participants believed that child support system placed a deadbeat father label on them as the non-custodial father and should be removed; many of my participants wanted more parental time with their children; all of my participants recommended the Texas Attorney General to update their policies and procedures; and many of my participants had limited to no interaction with the mother

and child as a family unit. These findings are significant because these laws were designed to ensure each parent has the fundamental right to direct the upbringing of their child(ren) (Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act of 1995) and many of the participants felt the child support system biases are unfairly placed upon them therefore, favorable toward the mothers. These findings suppose implications for changes discussed in chapter 5.

In chapter 4, I discussed the setting, demographics, the method for data collection, the evidence of trustworthiness, the results for the data analysis, and a conspectus. In chapter 5, I discussed my interpretation of the findings, limitations, recommendations, implications of social change, and a conclusion. In chapter 5, I presented a summation of the entire dissertation.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of my qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of African American noncustodial fathers' interaction to parental alienation and how Texas Family Code possession and access impact the social construction of the father-child relationship while exploring, if any, an influence to delinquent behavior. The phenomena of interest were the high rate of African American males in the state of Texas immersed in the child support program with standard visitation access. In conjunction with the 6.5 million custodial parents awarded child support in 2013, only half (52.2%) of the noncustodial parents were permitted visitation but denied joint or shared physical custody; in addition, 30.5% of noncustodial parents were granted some sort of joint or shared custody (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Texas Family Code enacted a third party right for courts to act in the best interest of the child; however, in practice the family-structure created by the code may not provide assistance to "all parents seeking to care for their children nor protecting children's rights to have loving adult persons care for them." (Holtman, 2018, p. 578). My intent for this study was to reach the core of African American non-custodial fathers lived experience with alienation and how Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access impose on the social construction of their lives while impacting their family structure, father-child relationship and if any, delinquent behavior from the noncustodial father's perspective.

My research study sample included seven African American noncustodial fathers, residing in Texas, regarding their interaction to parental alienation and how Texas Family Code possession and access provision impact the social construction of the father-child relationship while exploring, if any, an influence to delinquent behavior. Patton (2016) reports that phenomenological approach to research requires capturing and describing how people experience a specific phenomenon- “how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others.” (p. 54).

I used a combination of social media websites, that included Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, to identify seven research participants who were African American noncustodial fathers with current child support cases in Tarrant county, Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area. The seven research participant’s current child support order also included the possession and access provision. I interviewed the research participants via Zoom using Call Recorder, an audio-recording application for recording. I conducted my interviews between September 5, 2020- January 2nd, 2021 and each interview took roughly 45 minutes to complete.

I conducted this qualitative phenomenological study to add to and fill the gap in the current literature on the lived experience of African American noncustodial fathers. The participants were between the ages of 27-50 and had a current child support order that included possession and access in Tarrant county, Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area. The completion of my research has resulted in critical feedback in the form of qualitative information that can be examined, scrutinized, and reviewed by policymakers to effectively

implement changes to current policies regarding the disparities on the father-child relationship with emphasis on best interest of the child, and the child support system.

I used a qualitative analysis to assist with understanding and identifying the emergent themes that generated from the data I collected that captured from my interviews (Saldana, 2016). I used Atlas.TI, a CAQDAS software program, for data analysis and storage. I identified eight emergent themes using Atlas.TI.

Interpretation of the Findings

I examined the lived experiences of seven African American noncustodial fathers. The participants were between the age of 27-50, with current child support order in Tarrant County in Dallas/Fort Worth Texas area that included the possession and access provision. The results of this study included those related to the theoretical framework.

The findings for both research questions and three subquestions can be applied to the theoretical framework. The social construction and policy design theory was used in this study and discussed in detail in the literature review. Social construction and policy design are a framework that provides an understanding to why some groups benefit from policies and others do not (Pierce et al., 2016). According to Purohit et al. (2018), social construction and policy designs' framework for policy change is based on "who benefits and who loses from the change" (p.1). The employment of public policies is represented by the influence it tends to have on a target population. This behavior alters the ideal concept policymakers adopted to provide balance in society, therefore fundamentally identifying the perpetuation of injustice, an external discernment for citizenship,

unsupported democratic institutions, and unresolved socioeconomic difficulties (Ingram et al., 2007).

By using the social construction and public policy design framework, my qualitative study aligned with both research questions and 3 sub-questions. There were four significant themes that attributed to the social construction and public policy design that include (a) the child support system identifiable biases and unfair treatment to non-custodial fathers, (b) Texas family code access and possession statute lack of discretion in providing a clear and unconscious standing to the best interest of the child, (c) the apathetic imposition to the codification of §153.002-§153-317 disuniting the familial structure and father-child relationship, (d) disbanding parents equal fundamental rights and responsibility to their child. The African American non-custodial fathers that participated in this research study shared with me that they are stereotypically targeted by the child support system as the non-custodial parent, creating bias and unfair treatment toward fathers, while favoring the mother. According to Schneider and Ingram (1993), target populations are exploited based on their political power and their characterization is identified on a positive or negative spectrum. The four “ideal types” identified by Schneider and Ingram includes: advantaged (powerful groups with positive image); contenders (powerful groups with negative images); dependents (powerless groups with positive images); and deviants (powerless groups with negative images). Many of the participants felt powerless and had no say-so in their child support order pertaining to possession and access, and best interest of the child. Based on Schneider & Ingrams’ interpretation of power, many of the participants identified as dependents (treated

positively in public but unable to mobilize to negotiate benefits) were at a disadvantage. No matter the amount the courts ordered the non-custodial father to pay in support, or the previous or current relationship status amongst the parents; the possession and access provision remain standard. These emergent themes significantly apply to the theoretical framework of the study because social construction and policy design aligns with the problem statement and research questions.

The results of the interviews conducted that reveal that all seven of the research participants had great father-child relationship with their child(ren), had standard legal rights implemented by the State of Texas; believed the child support system is biased and unfair to non-custodial fathers; requested equal parental rights to their child(ren); believed that child support system placed a deadbeat father label on them as the non-custodial father and should be removed; and all recommended the Texas Attorney General update their policies and procedures. Six out of seven research participants wanted more time with their child(ren). One out of seven research participants interacted as a familial unit with the child and mother. Six out of the seven research participant believed there was no clear understanding to the best interest of the child.

The findings were consistent or an extension of previous research. A few of the themes were that the participants believed the child support system exhibit biases and unfair treatment toward non-custodial fathers and no equal parental rights. Miller (2018) concluded, in a study based on gender role influences that family law judges tend to make decisions based on their own biases. According to Miller (2018), judges who participated

in shared-custody cases were more likely to grant more time with a child to the mother than father. All the participants in my study expressed how unfair the child support system is to father's and how they do not uphold the entire child support order, just the financial portion. One of the participants in my study informed me that he stopped paying support due to the mother wasn't allowing him his visitation rights. He felt the child support division offered him no assistance to resolving the matter. Another finding was that the participants felt the Texas family code access and possession statute lacks no clear understanding to the best interest of the child. Warshak (2011) argues that many critics suggest the best-interest standard is "too subjective to produce predictable results" (p.102); the decision is not based solely on the important factors relatable to the child's interest therefore, parties asserts hidden agendas during court proceedings; influence courts to navigate with broad discretion and no mere objective in selecting between the two parents; and it allows the courts to intervene and rely on mental health professionals evaluation decisions (p.105). Another finding was that the participants felt stereotyped as a "dead beat" and insist on removing the label. The finding was consistent to the literature. According to Haman et al., (2016), negative stereotypes about non-custodial or unmarried fathers as being "bad" (p. 866). All the participants expressed to me how they felt judged by the child support officers, attorney, judges, and friends and families of the other parent. Many of the participants in my study expressed how they paid their child support on time, participated in all their children school activities, had a great relationship with their children, and provided financially for their children outside of the child support

order. Another finding was that the participants wanted more parental time with their children. The finding was consistent to the literature. Kruk (2010) study revealed that fathers expressed their need for support in building their relationship with their child and shared parenting without interference from the court system. According to Kruk (2010) study, fathers relied heavily on consistent contact with their children. Many of the participants expressed how they speak with their children every day and the difficulties that occur when extra parental time is wanted. One participant described an unpleasant occurrence that resulted in the child not attending the fathers' parent birthday party due to it not being the father's visitation weekend. To add, many of the participants in my study felt that standard possession and access provision limited their ability to be actively involved in their child(ren)'s lives, and the child support division need to update their policies. The findings were consistent Lassko and Adams (2006) study on the barriers father's exhibit based on the relationship with the other parent. One of the participants within their study reported due to his disability he was unable to pay support and due to not paying support, the mother denied him access to speak with the child. Although possession and access provision is a separate entity from child support payments, many custodial parents prevent access if non-payment of child support (Bloomer et al., 2002). The Office of Child Support Enforcement was enacted in 1975 to assist parents with obtaining financial support for their children. This program is designed under the Title IV-D (government entity) courts to assist with financial support but offers no assistance to possession access. Many of the participants felt that if they're responsible for paying

financially and adhering to that, they should have access to the child as often as wanted and custodial parents should be held responsible for not adhering to that portion of the order. The finding was consistent with the research. Friend et al. (2016) reported that father's frustration with the co-parenting was affected due to their inability to establish or maintain contact with their child.

Limitations of the Study

There were several identified potential limitations to the trustworthiness of the research study. The first potential limitations were the findings generalization of all African American non-custodial father's in this country regarding parental rights and the child support system. The findings of the research study should only be taken generally for individuals who demographics are rationally aligned to that of the participants in this study. Secondly, the fact that I am an African American woman and I am currently employed with Texas Attorney General as a Child Support Enforcement Officer III must be mentioned. My personal biases and feelings on this subject matter could have affected my ability to conduct and analyze the data. To avoid this possibility, I developed a research strategy that was more effective in all areas. I utilized social media outlets to identify the first seven participants who met the criteria needed for this study, gained their informed consent via e-mail upon agreeing to participate, scheduled an interview time and date, emailed the participants the interview questions prior to the interview, interviewed participants electronically face-to-face via Facetime and Zoom, and recorded each interview via Call Recorder for the Facetime and Zoom interviews. I used AtlasTi to

collect, organize, code, and summarize my data. Through analyzing the data, I identified the themes and reported each theme that was recognized.

The final, yet possible limitation to the trustworthiness of this research study was the potential of ulterior motives of the research participants. I am not aware or have access to any of the research participants child support cases therefore, the possibility that the research participant may have a clear unbiased fact that they did not mention to me. I have no control over whether the participant was honest about their experience, as I acted as no witness to the participants as they described their experience with me as a researcher. Furthermore, there is always a potential ulterior motive of each research participant.

Recommendations

I offer several recommendations for the future research resulting from my study. According to Pierce et al. (2014) the initiative concept behind social construction and policy design theory is the ability to create a conception of feed-forward which creating policies that feeds forward from other effective policies. It is important for citizens and policy makers to act in unity to reproduce updated practices and policies that are aligned to solve major issues including racism, sexism, and inequality. Social construction and policy design represent policies based on the deservedness and entitlement. Social construction and policy design were ideal theoretical framework for my study as we focused on procedures and policies that marginalize individuals such as African American non-custodial fathers as way to further governor under the process of

“deserving and underserving”. Enacting under “Title IV-D”, Texas Child Support division governs as third-party legal entity in determining who deserves custodianship in the best interest of the child. Although the Texas child support division includes “joint conservatorship” of the child to both parents, the non-custodial is responsible for providing financially for the child to custodial, while the child resides full time with the custodial parent, granting the non-custodial parent rights to visit and spend time with the child. According to Schneider and Sidney (2009), policy designs need to “contain positive constructions of all social groups and points of view even those we are “losing” (p. 30). My first recommendation is to implement policies and procedures that address fairness, equal financial responsibility, and shared-parental rights to both parents (with specifications if past or current criminal and drug usage are applicable).

My second recommendation is to change the demographic of the participant to include African American non-custodial mothers as the target population. According to Grall, in 2014, one in every 6 custodial parents were fathers (17.5%) while about 50 of every 6 custodial parents were mothers (82.5%). This would allow researchers to compare the experience of non-custodial mother’s lived experience with alienation and how the Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access imposes on the social construction of their lives. This study will seek to conduct similar or contrasting experiences of the non-custodial mother to the non-custodial father. This study would allow researchers to determine if the unfair treatment of non-custodial father’s experience with the child support division is gender based or equally unfair based on the role as a

non-custodial parent. My second recommendation is to conduct a qualitative inquiry on the possession and access geographic restriction placed on the child. This would allow researchers to determine if the policies and procedures imposes on the social of construction of the custodial parent lives by limiting their rights to relocate their child without notification.

My final recommendation for future research resulting from this study would be to conduct a qualitative research study that examines the best interest of the child method from the child support enforcement officer's perspective. Child support officers are the initiating mediators during the child support review process. They are responsible for ensuring the children are receiving the support they need and deserve. Child support officers assist with establishing paternity, obtaining court orders for financial, medical, and dental support of children, promote active parental involvement by establishing conservatorship through possession and access provision. This would help the researcher develop an understanding of how public service workers view the policies and procedures they are encouraged to promote that acts in the best interest of the child and if those interest are considered when establishing a parent-child relationship.

Implications

The results of this research study have compelling potential for positive social change, adhering to the empirical implications that produce a greater impact on the child's well-being, establishing a more redesigned system that focuses on the affirmation that parental presumption fundamental rights are in the best interest of the child,

implementing family law reform policies that is pivotal in child support cases to encourage positive familial structure, removing the gender and race based stereotypes that eliminates gender biases, and to engage policymakers to create a plan of action that reflects the racial disparities associated with African American non-custodial father's. It is the parent's fundamental rights to assure the best interest of their children is met with great intentions. Neither parent should be subjected to limited access and rights to their child. For a child to have a healthy, positive, and social well-being, they require financial, emotional, and social support from both, mother, and father. The best interest of the child shouldn't rely of court assumptions, but on parental presumption.

The recommendations for practices are created to redefine the best interest of the child standard that encourages a familial structure unit and support the parental fundamental rights with judicial discretion or limitations, to empower more research to understanding the policies and procedures that systematically disproportionate in gender and race, and to promote more research needed to understand the Texas standard possession and access order, what resources that are available to assist non-custodial parents with visitation issues, procedures for parenting time with married parents vs. unmarried parents, the implementations of procedures and policies to ensure equal parental rights and legally enforceable orders that acts in the best interest of the child, while eliminating the alienation of targeted parents.

The capabilities associated with these implications will address the racial disparities that African American non-custodial fathers have been subjected to base on

the stereotypical assessment placed on them by the judicial system. These implications can potentially impact positive social change by creating a system that enforces a positive familial unit specifically within the African American community. As I reported previously, many African Americans believed the child support system was designed to target African American families by removing the father from the household, then labeling the father as a “dead beat”. Furthermore, it is imperative that a non-adversarial approach, equal parenting encouragement, and to ensure the primary responsibility constitutes the best interest of the child.

Conclusion

To fully comprehend and understand the impact of what are African American non-custodial fathers lived experience with alienation and how codification of Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access imposed on their social construction, it was necessary to obtain from the perspective of non-custodial fathers ages 27-50. It was imperative that one understands the child support division possession and access provision and how it impacts familial structure and the father-child relationship. The research revealed from this qualitative study has contributed to the previous literature by disseminating interviews of African American fathers’ experiences with the codification of Texas Family code §153.002-§153.317 possession and access that contributes to alienation and interference of the father-child relationship.

This research study appeared to produce nine common themes from the interview responses. The themes included: (a) great father-child relationship; (b) standard legal rights as a father; (c) child support system biased and unfair treatment toward them as a

father; (d) lack of understanding to the term best interest of the child; (e) equal parental rights (e.g.time, roles, finances); (f) removing the label of being deadbeat; (g) wanting more parental time with children; (h) updating the child support policies to be fair to mothers and fathers, (i) limited familial structure.

The results of this study revealed how child custody laws were created to alienate fathers, specifically African American fathers, which impacted familial structure and father-child relationship. The implementation of alienation interceding in child custody disputes began with Gardner's representation of recognizable indoctrination conducted by the alienating parent, considerably the mother. According to Gardner (2002), the alienating parent (mother) performs a level of manipulation and brainwashing techniques to damage or interfere with the relationship between the child and target parent (father). The obstruction of parental involvement has shaped the child support policies by inciting the indoctrination of alienation and influencing the social construction of a family unit and father-child relationship. Despite the overall objective for equal and active parental involvement, the child support division best interest of the child standard corrupts the family structure, impacting delinquent behavior in adolescents. Recent studies have shown the lack of adequate family structure and parental involvement may cause delinquency (Sykes and Mata, 2013; Yablonski, 2002). From the child support division that represents in the best interest of the child, the disproportion in race and gender greatly impacts the social order designed to ensure that children receive financial and emotional support from both parents.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Balmer et al. (2018) found mothers frequently used parental alienation tactics exposure over a time period such as: interrogating the child; speaking rudely about the alienated parent in front of the targeted child; withholding affection from the child when the child is showing support toward the alienated parent; demanding the targeted child illustrates loyalty towards them; encouraging the targeted child to be defiant toward the alienated parent when in his or her custody; demanding the targeted child refute custody and visitation with the alienated parent; encouraging an active alliance with the alienating parent against the alienated parent. Gender expectations are considerably the deciding factor in child support cases regarding the non-custodial father's relationship with their children (Baker, 2004). Friend et al. (2016) findings indicated that most fathers engaging in conflict co-parenting relationships have reported frustration due to the inability to establish or maintain contact with child. Once the parent-child relationship weakens, the child becomes vulnerable, making him or her more inclined to engage in delinquent behavior (Hirschi, 1969; Kierkus and Baer, 2002). The separation of parental involvement within the sociocultural phenomenon of fatherhood is culturally prevalent in the development of any child (Barnes, 2016).

The results of this research study provided several possibilities for social change. The reconstruction of the child support division policies and guidelines that encourage, facilitate, and capture the depth and relatable meaning to the best interest of the child standard. Six out of the seven research participants indicated the term offers no clear understanding or descriptive classification that falls under the guideline that determines

the custodial and non-custodial parent. Creating a newly revised child support policy that enables both parents to act within their fundamental rights to provide financially, emotionally, physically, and mentally for child as an act of the child's best interest. Seven out of the seven research participants believed that the child support system policies are unfair to the non-custodial father's and should be reexamined to address the equal responsibilities of both parents.

The system must remain partial to implementing procedures that acts within the broad realm of the constitution without using their own discretion to gain control. It is with great interest that implementation of legislature that allows government, state, or local entities to intercede as third-party option, that fundamentally rewards one social group, hence burden the other social group. Hence, seven out of the seven research participants argued that the child support system should represent each parent equally. Policymakers are obligated to operate with discernment when creating policies that impact citizens. There must be a conscious effort to focus on the policymaker's content and overall purpose for implementing procedures that are designed to systematically control socioeconomic growth. A quantitative research study could provide meaningful insight into the negative and positive influences of the child support system. Through properly understanding the significance of this research study, future scholarly research on this study could help parents and the child support system to recognize the child's best interest is the controlling factor under Texas family code and should be considered and

used without discretion. Therefore, continuing to create a system that is designed to encourage parental responsibility, and establishing the parent-child relationship.

References

- Ackerman, M.J., & Dolezal, S. (2006). Experienced custody evaluators' views of controversial issues. *American Journal of Family Law*, 5, 200-205.
- Ainsworth, M.D.S, Belhar, M.C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ainsworth, M.D.S. (1990). Some considerations regarding attachment theory assessment relevant to attachments beyond infancy. In Greenberg, M.T., Cichetti, D., & Cummings, E.M. (EDS.). *Attachment in the preschool years*. (pp. 463-488). Chicago Press.
- Agnew, R. (2001). Building on the foundation of general strain theory: Specifying the types of strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 38 (4), 319-361.
- Akers, R.L. (2011). *Social learning and social structure: A general theory of crime and deviance*. Transaction.
- Alexander, R.C (1995). Distinctive dates in social welfare history. In R.L. Edwards (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of social work*, (19th. ed., pp.2631-2647). NASW Press.
- Allen, S., & Daly, K. (Fall, 2002). The effects of father involvement: A summary of the research evidence. *Newsletter of the Father Involvement Initiative*.
- Allen, W.P., Doherty, W. (1996). The responsibilities of fatherhood as perceived by African American teenage fathers. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 77, 142-155.

American Sociological Association. (2007). *Race, Ethnicity, and the Criminal Justice*

System. ASA Series on how Race and Ethnicity Matter. Available at

<http://asanet.org>

Anderson, K.G., & Gray, P.B. (2015). The impact of fathers on children.

Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development.

Arendell, T. (1995). *Fathers and divorce*. Sage.

Armsden, G.C., & Greenberg, M.T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachment:

Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 16, 427-453.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02202939>

Austin, Z.A., Sutton, J. (2014). Qualitative research: Getting started. *Canadian Journal of*

Hospital Pharmacy, 67 (6), 436-440. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v67i6.1406>

Bala, N., Hunt, S., & McCarney, C. (2010). Parental alienation: Canadian court cases

1989-2008. *Family Court Review*, 48, 164-179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1774->

[1617.2009.01296.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1774-1617.2009.01296.x)

Balmer, S., Matthewson, M., Haines, J. (2018). Parental alienation: targeted parent

perspective. *The Australian Journal of Psychology*. 70, 91-99.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/alpy.12159>

Baker, A.J.L. (2005a). The cult of parenthood: A qualitative study of parental alienation.

Cultic Studies Review, 4 (1), 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926180590962129>

Baker, A.J.L. (2005b). The long-term effects of parental alienation on adult children: A

- qualitative research study. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 33, 289-302. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926180590962129>
- Baker, A.J.L. (2006). Patterns of parental alienation on adult children: A qualitative study of adults who are alienated from a parent as a child. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 34 (1), 63-78. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926180500301444>
- Baker, A.J. L., & Darnall, D. (2006). Behaviors and strategies of parental alienation: A survey of parental experiences. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 47 (1/2), 97-124. https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v45n01_06
- Baker, A.J.L. (2007). *Adult children of parental alienation syndrome: Breaking the ties that bind*. Norton.
- Baker, A.J.L. (2007b.) Knowledge and attitudes about parental alienation syndrome: A survey of custody evaluators. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 35, (1), 1-20.
- Baker, A.J.L. (2010a). Even when you win you lose: Targeted parents' perceptions of their attorneys. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 38 (4), 292-309. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2010.493429>
- Baker, A.J.L. (2010b). Adult recall of parental alienation in a community sample: Prevalence and associations with psychological maltreatment. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 51, 16-35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502550903423206>
- Baker, A.J.L., & Andre, K. (2008). Working with alienated children and their targeted parents: Suggestions for sound practices for mental health professionals. *Annals*

of the American Psychotherapy Association, 11, 10-17.

Baker, A.J.L., & Darnall, D.C. (2006). Behaviors and strategies employed in parental alienation. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 45* (1-2), 97-124.

https://doi:10.1300/J087v45n01_06.

Baker, A.J.L., & Darnell, D.C. (2007). A construct study of the eight symptoms of severe parental: A survey of parental experiences. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 47* (1), 55-75.

Baker, A.J.L., & Verrocchio, M.C. (2014). Parental bonding and parental alienation as correlates of psychological maltreatment in adults in intact and non-tact families.

Journal of Child and Family Services, 24 (10). <https://doi:10.1007/s10826-014-0108-0>.

Baron, R.M., & Kenny, D.A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51 (6), 1173-1182.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1173>

Barnes, C.C. (2016). The relationship between male involvement in early childhood education and student academic achievement. *Walden Dissertations and doctoral studies*.

Bell, C.A. (2009). All choices created equal? The role of choice sets in the selection of schools. *Peabody Journal of Education, 84* (2), 191-208.

<https://doi:10.1080/01619560902810146>.

- Beni-Ami, N., & Baker, A.J.L. (2010). The long-term correlates of childhood exposure to parental alienation on adult-sufficiency and well-being. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, *40*, 169-183.
- Bernet, W. (2009). Parental alienation, DSM-V, and ICD-II, unpublished manuscript submitted to the disorders in child and adolescence work group for the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)*. (5th ed.).
- Bernet, W., Von Boch-Gallu, W., Baker, A.J.L., & Morrison, S.L. (2010). Parental Alienation, DSM-V, and ICD-11. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, *36*, 76-187. <https://doi:10.1080/09126180903586583>.
- Bernet, W., Baker, A.J.L., & Verrochico, M.C. (2015). Symptom Checklist-90 Revised Scores in adult children exposed to alienating behavior: An Italian Sample. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, *60* (2), 357-362. <http://doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.12681>.
- Beverly, B.L. (2013). A remedy to fit the crime: A call for the recognition of the unreasonable rejection of a parent by a child as tortious conduct. *Journal of Law and Family Studies*, *15*, (4), 154-179.
- Bloomer, S.R., Sipe, T.A., & Reudt, D.E. (2002). Child support payment and child visitation: Perspective from Nonresident Fathers and Resident Mothers. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, *29* (2).
- Boghossian, P.A. (2001). What is Social Construction.
- Bos, H., Gelderen, L.V., & Gartrell, N. (2014). Lesbian and heterosexual two-parent

families: Adolescent-parent relationship quality and adolescent well-being.

Journal of Child Family Studies. <http://doi:10.1007/s10826-014-9913-8>.

Bowlby, J. (1953). *Childcare and growth of love*. Penguin Books.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment*. Basic Books. In Baker, A.J. (2005). The long-term effects of parental alienation on adult children: A qualitative research study. *The*

American Journal of Family Therapy, 33, 289-302.

<https://doi:10.1080/01926180590962129>.

Bosch-Brits, E., Wessels, C., & Roux, A. (2018). Fathers' experience and perceptions of parental alienation in high-conflict divorce. *Social Work Journal*, 54 (1); 6, 99-

109. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15270/54-1-617>.

Boushey, G.T. (2013). The political and institutional determinants of rulemaking in the American states. *Working paper presented at the 2013 State Politics and Policy Conference*.

Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss*. (4). Hogarth Press. In Kruk, E. (2010). Parental and social institutional responsibilities to children's needs in the divorce transition: Father's perspective. (2010). *Journal of Men's Studies*, 18 (2), 158-178.

Brito, T.L., Pate, D.J., & Wong, J.H.S. (2015). "I do for my kids": Negotiating race and racial inequality in family court. *Fordham Law Review*, 83 (6), 3027-3052.

Brits, E.B., Wessels, C., & Roux, A. (2018). Father's experience and perceptions of parent alienation in high-conflict divorce. *Journal of Social Work*, 54

(6). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15270/54-1-617>.

- Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 759-775.
- Broidy, L., & Agnew, R. (2008). Gender and crime: A general strain theory perspective. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 34 (3), 275-306.
- Burch, C. S. (2001). Parental alienation syndrome and parental alienation: Getting it wrong in child custody cases. *Family law Quarterly*, 35 (3).
- Burgess, E.W. Locke, H.J., & Thomes, M.M. (1971). *The Family*. Van Nostrand Rein-hold.
- Burr, V. (1995). *An introduction to social constructionism*. (1995). Taylor & Frances/Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203299968>.
- Cairney, P. (2018). Three habits of successful policy entrepreneurs. *Policy and Politics*, 46 (2), 199-217. <https://doi10.1332/030557318X15230056771696>.
- Cairney, P. (2019a). *Understanding Public Policy*. (2nd ed.). Palgrave.
- Cahn, N., & Carbone, J. (2018). Custody and visitation in families with three (or more) parents. *Family Court Review*, 56 (3), 399-409.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12356>.
- Carbone, J. (2014). Legal applications of the “best interest of the child” standard: Judicial rationalization or a measure of institutional competence? *Pediatrics*, 134 (2):
<https://doi:10.1542/peds.2014-1394G>.
- Carter, K.E. (2009). The relationship between delinquent behavior, adolescent-parent

relationships, and intergenerational cycles of crime. *College of William and Mary*.

W& M Scholar works.

Cartwright, G.F. (1993). Expanding the parameters of parental alienation syndrome.

American Journal of Family Therapy, 21, 205-215.

Carbone, J. (2014). Legal applications of the “best interest of the child” standard: Judicial

Rationalization or a measure of institutional competence.

<https://doi:10.1542/peds.2014-1394G>.

Carrey, N. (2011). Coasting to DSM-5- parental alienation syndrome and child

psychiatric syndromes: We are what and who we define. *Journal of the Canadian*

Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 20 (3), 163-164.

Cauffman, E., Farruggia, S., & Goldweber, A. (2008). Bad boy or poor parents:

Relations to female juvenile delinquency. *Journal of Research on*

Adolescence, 18, 699-712. [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2008.00577.x)

[7795.2008.00577.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2008.00577.x)

Cenat, J.M., Herbert, M., Blais, M., Lavoie, F., & Guerrier, M. (2015). Delinquent

behaviors among students exposed to family violence in Quebec schools.

Adolescencia & Saude 12(3), 43-52.

Cernkovich, S.A., & Giordano, P.C. (1987). Family Relationships and Delinquency.

Criminology, 25 (2), 295-319. [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1987.tb00799.x)

[9125.1987.tb00799.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1987.tb00799.x).

Chamlin, M.B., Burek, M.W., Cochran, J.K. (2007). Welfare as social control: A

- specific test of the piven and cloward thesis. *Criminal Justice Review*, 18 (2), 132-152.
- Charlow, A. (1986). Awarding custody: The best interests of the child and other fictions. *Yale law & Policy Review*, 5 (3).
- Cheadle, J.E., Amato, P.R., & King, V. (2010). Patterns of nonresident father contact. *Journal of Demography*, 47 (1), 205-255. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0084>
- Cheunig, M. (1997). Social construction theory and the satir model: Toward a synthesis. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 25, (4), 331-342.
- Choy, O., Raine, A., Venables, P.H., & Farrington, D.P. (2017). Explaining the gender gap in crime: The role of heart rate. *Criminology*, 55 (2), 465-487. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12138>.
- Coley, R.L., & Medeiros, B.L. (2007). Reciprocal longitudinal relations between nonresident father involvement and adolescent delinquency. *Child Development*, 78, (1), 132-147.
- Conger, R.D., Cui, M., Bryant, C.M., & Elder, G. H., Jr. (2000). Competence in early adult romantic relationships: A developmental perspective on family influences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79 (2), 224-237. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.2.224>.
- Connolly, E.J., Schwartz, J.A., Jackson, D.B., & Beaver, K.M. (2018). How far does the apple fall from the tree? Maternal delinquency and sex-specific patterns of offspring delinquent behavior. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 54, 50-61.

<https://doi:1016/j.jcrimjus.2017.12.004>.

- Cooper, M.L., Shaver, P.R., & Collins, N.L. (1998). Attachment styles, emotion regulation, and adjustment in adolescence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74* (5), 1380-1397.
- Cozzolino, E. (2018). Public assistance, relationship context, and jail for child support debt. *Socius*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118757124>.
- Coltrane, S. (1998). *Gender & families*. Pine Forge.
- Coltrane, S., Parke, R.D., Adams, M. (2004). Complexity of father involvement in low-income Mexican American families. *Family Relations, 53*, 179-189.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3700261>
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Custer, L.B. (1978). *The Origins of the Doctrine of Parens Patriae*. In Kindred, K. P. God bless the child: Poor children, parens patriae, and a state obligation to provide assistance. (1996). *Faculty Publications, 962*.
- Darnall, D. (1998). Divorce casualties: Protecting your children from parental alienation. Taylor Publishing. In Baker, A.J. (2005). The long-term effects of parental alienation on adult children: A qualitative research study. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 33*, 289-302. <https://doi:10.1080/01926180590962129>.
- Davidson, A.S. (2012). Phenomenological approaches in psychology and health sciences. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 10*, (3), 318-399,

<http://doi.org.10.1080/14780887.2011.608466>.

DeLone, M.A., & DeLone, G.J. (2017). Racial disparities in juvenile justice processing.

The Encyclopedia of Juvenile Delinquency and Justice.

<https://doi:10.1002/9781118524275.ejdi0084>.

Demuth, S., Brown, S.L. (2004). Family structure, family processes, and adolescent

delinquency: The significance of parental absence versus parental gender. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 41 (1), 58-81

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427803256236>.

Denzin, N.K. (2001). *Interpretive interactionism* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2011c). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Donges, W.E. (2015). A qualitative case case study: The lived educational experiences of former juvenile delinquents'. *The Qualitative Report*, 20 (7), 1009-1028.

<http://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2189>.

Dowling, M. (2007). From Husserl to van Manen. A review of different

phenomenological approaches. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 44, 131-

142. <https://doi:10/1016/j.ijnurstu.2005.11.026>.

Doyle, O., Clark, T.T., Cryer-Coupet, Q., Nebbitt, V.E., Goldston, D.B., Estroff, S.E.,

Magan, I. (2015). Unheard voices: African American fathers speak about their parenting practices. *Psychology Men Masculine*, 1 (16), 274-283.

<https://doi:10.1037/a0038730>.

- Drodz, L.M., & Olesen, N.W. (2004). Is it abuse, alienation and/or estrangement? A decision tree. *American Journal of Child Custody*, 1 (3), 65-106.
https://doi:10.1300/J190v01n03_05.
- Dunne, J., Hedrick, M. (2010). The parental alienation syndrome: An analysis of sixteen selected cases. *The Journal Divorce & Remarriage*, 21, 21-38.
- Dunne, M.P., et al. (2009). ISPCAN child abuse screening tools retrospective version (ICAST-R): Delphi study and field testing in seven countries. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 33, 815-825. <https://doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.09.005>.
- East, L., Jackson, D., & O'brien, L. (2006). Father's absence and adolescent development: A review of the literature. *Journal of Child Health Care*, 10 (4), 283-295. <https://doi:10/1177/1367493506067869>.
- Eaton, N.R., Krueger, R.F., Johnsonston, W., McGue, & Iacono, W.G. (2009). Parental monitoring, personality, and delinquency: Further support for reconceptualization of monitoring. *Department of Psychology*. <https://doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2008.10.006>.
- Ellis, S.M., Khan, Y.S., Harris, V.W., Mcwilliams, R., & Converse, D. (2017). The impact of fathers on children's well-being.
- Ellis, E.M., & Boyan, S. (2010). Intervention strategies for parent coordinators in parental alienation cases. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 38 (3), 218-236. <https://doi:10.1080/01926181003757074>.
- Emery, R.E. (2005). Parental alienation syndrome: Proponents bear the burden of proof. *Family Court Review*, 43, 8-13.

- Emery, R.E., Otto, R.K., & O' Donnhue, W.T. (2005). A critical assessment of child custody evaluations: limited science and a flawed system. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 6(1), 1-29. <https://doi:10.1111/j.1529-1006.2005.00020.x>
- Emory L.J., & Custer. L.B. (1985). The Origins of the Doctrine of Parens Patriae. 27-195.
- Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*. (2nd.ed). Norton & Norton.
- Erickson, F. (2011). A history of qualitative inquiry in social and educational research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 43-59). Sage Publications.
- Faller, K.C. (1998). The parental alienation syndrome: what is it and what data support it? *Child Maltreatment*, 3(2), 100-115.
- Farrell, G., Tilley, N., & Tseloni, A. (2014). Why the crime drop? *Crime and Justice*, 43(1), 421-490.
- Farrington, D.P. (1993). Juvenile delinquency. In J.C. Coleman (Ed.), *The school years* (2nd ed., pp-123-163). Routledge.
- Farrington, D.P. (2002). Families and Crime. In J.Q. Wilson & J. Petersilia (Eds.), *Crime: Public polices for crime control*, (2nd ed., pp-129-149). Institute for Contemporary Press.
- Farrington, D.P. (2010). Family influences on delinquency 10.
- Farrington, D.P., Jolliffe, D., Loeber, R., Stouthamer-Loeber, M., & Kalib, L.M. (2001). The concentration of offenders in families, and family criminality in the

prediction of boys' delinquency. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24, 579-596.

<https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2001.074>.

Fearon, R.P., Bakersmans-Kranenburg, M.J., Ijzendororn, M.H., Lapsley, A.M.,

Roisman, G. The significance of insecure attachment and disorganization in the development of children's externalizing behavior: A meta-analytic study. *Child Development*, 81 (2), 435-456.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01405.x>

Fergusson, D.M., & Horwood, L.J. (2002). Male and female offending trajectories.

Development and Psychopathology, 14 (1), 159-157.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0954579402001098>.

Fidler, B., & Bala, N. (2010). Children resisting post separation contact with a parent:

concepts, controversies, and conundrums. *Family Court Review*, 48, 10-47.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.2010.48.issue-1>

Fitzgerald, C.S. (2011). Historical theories of crime and delinquency. *Journal of Human*

Behavior in the Social Environment, 21, 297-311.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2011.564954>.

Fletcher, A.C., Darling, D.E., & Steinburg, L. (1995). Parental monitoring and peer

influences on adolescent substance use. In McCord, J. (Ed.), *Coercion and*

punishment in long-term perspectives, pp. 259-271. Cambridge University Press.

Friedlander, S., & Walters, M.G. (2010). When a child rejects a parent: Tailoring the

intervention to fit the problem. *Family Court Review*, 48, 98-111.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2009.01291.x>

- Frieman, B. (2003). Helping professionals understand the challenges faced by non-custodial parents. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 39 (1/2), 167-173.
- Friend, D., Max, J., Holcomb, P., Edin, K., & Dion, R. (2016). Father's views of co-parenting relationships: Findings from the pact evaluation.
- Furstenberg, F. F., Sherwood, K.E., Sullivan, M.L. (1992). Caring and paying: What father's and mothers say about child support. Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.
- Gadsden, V.L., & Smith, R.R. (1994). African American males and fatherhood: Issues in research and practice. *Journal of Negro Education*, 63, 634.
- Gallagher, J.R., Rycraft, J.R., & Jordan, T. (2014). An innovative approach to improving father-child relationships for fathers who are noncompliant with child support payments: a mixed methods evaluation. *Journal of Adolescent and Family Health*, 6 (2). Retrieved from <http://scholar.utc.edu/jafh/vol6/iss2/2>
- Gaik, L.P., Abdullah, M.C., Elias, H., & Uli, J. (2013). Parental attachment as predictor of delinquency. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 10, 99-117.
- Ganong, L., & Coleman, M. (2014). Qualitative research on family relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31 (4) 451-459. <https://doi:10.1177/0265407514520828>
- Gardner, R. A. (1979a). *Marital problems*. In J. Noshpitz (Ed), *Basic handbook of*

child psychiatry. (Vol.IV, pp, 263-270). Basic Books.

Gardner, R.A. (1985). Recent trends in divorce and custody litigation. *Academy Forum*, 29 (2), 3-7.

Gardner, R.A. (1987a). Child custody. In J.D. Noshpitz (Ed.). *Basic handbook of child psychiatry* (pp.637-646). Basic Books.

Gardner, R. A. (1992). *The Parental alienation syndrome: A guide for mental health and legal professionals*. Creative Therapeutics, Inc.

Gardner, R.A. (1998). *The parental alienation syndrome* (2nd ed.). Creative Therapeutics.

Gardner, R.A. (1999). Differentiating between PAS and bona fide abuse/neglect. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 27 (3), 195-212.

Gardner, R.A. (2001b). The recent gender shift in PAS indoctrinators. *News for Women in Psychiatry*, 19 (4), 11-13.

Gardner, R.A. (2001c). Should courts order PAS children to visit/reside with the alienated parent? A follow-up study. *The American Journal of Forensic Psychology*, 19 (3), 60-106.

Gardner, R.A. (2002a). Parental alienation syndrome vs. parental alienation syndrome (PAS): Which diagnosis should evaluators use in child custody disputes? *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 30, 93-115.

doi:10.1080/019261802753573821

Gardner, R. (2002). Denial of the parental alienation syndrome also harms women. *The*

American Journal of Family Therapy, 30, 191-202.

- Gallagher, J.R., Rycraft, J.R., & Jordan, T. (2014). An innovative approach to improving father-child relationships for fathers who are noncompliant with child support payments: A mixed methods evaluation. *Journal of Adolescent and Family Health*, 6 (2), 1-20.
- Gaskell, G., & Bauer, M.W. (2000). Towards public accountability: Beyond sampling, reliability, and validity. In a M.W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.). *Qualitative researching with text, image, and sound* (pp.336-350). Sage Publication.
- Gibbs, G.R. (2014). Using Software in qualitative analysis. In Flick (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis*, (pp.136-149). Sage Publication.
- Giorgi, A. (1985). Sketch of a psychological phenomenological method. In Giorgi, A. (ed.), *Phenomenological and psychological research*. Duquesne University Press, (pp. 8-22).
- Giorgi, A. (1992). Description versus interpretation: competing alternative strategies for qualitative research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 23, (2), 119-135.
- Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation, of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 28, (2), 235-261.
- Giorgi, A., & Giorgi, B. (2003). Phenomenological. In Smith J.A. (ed.). *Qualitative psychology*, 25-50. Sage Publications.
- Gold, M. (1969). Juvenile delinquency as a symptom of alienation. *The Journal of Social*

Issues, 25 (2), 125-135.

Grall, T. (2016). Custodial mothers and fathers and their child support: 2013. U.S.

Department of Commerce. Economics and Statistics Administration. U.S.

Census Bureau.

Gray, P.B., & Anderson, K.G. (2015). The impact of father's on children. *Encyclopedia*

on Early Childhood Development.

Griswold, E., Pearson, J., & Thoennes, N. (2000). New directions for child support

agencies when domestic violence is an issue. *Policy & Practice*, 58, 29-36.

Gorman-Smith, D., Tolan, P.H., & Henry, D.B. (2000). A developmental-ecological

model of the relation of family functioning to patterns of delinquency. *Journal of*

Quantitative Criminology, 16, 169-198.

Gottlieb, D. (2012). Prospect, theory, life insurance, and annuities. *The Wharton School*

Research paper, 44. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2119041>.

Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative

research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of*

qualitative research (3rd ed., pp.105-117). Sage Publications.

Guba, E.G., Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and

emerging influences. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage handbook*

of qualitative research (3rd ed., pp. 191-215). Sage Publication.

Hahn, H., Edin, K., & Abrahams, L. (2018). Transforming child support into a family-

building system. *US Partnership Mobility from Poverty*.

- Hands, A.J., & Warshak, R.A. (2011). Parental alienation among college students. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 39* (5), 431-443.
<https://doi:10.1080/01926187.2011.575336>.
- Harman, J.J., Birigen, Z., Ratajack, E.M., Outland, P.L., & Kraus, A. (2016). Parents behaving badly: Gender biases in the perception of parental alienating behaviors. *Journal of Family Psychology, 30*, (7), 866-874.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000232>.
- Harper, C.C., & McLanahan, S.S. (2004). Father absence and youth incarceration. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 14* (3), 369-397.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2004.00079.x>
- Hammersley, M., & Trianou, A. (2012). *Ethics in Qualitative research: Controversies and contexts*. Sage Publications.
- Hetherington, M.J. (1998). The political relevance of political trust. *The American Political Science Review, 92*, (4), 791-808.
- Hetherington, E.M. (2002). *For better or worse: Divorce reconsidered*. Norton. In Kruk, E, "Parental and social institutional responsibilities to children's needs in the divorce transition: Father's perspective". (2010). *Journal of Men's Studies, 18* (2), 158-178.
- Hirsch T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hirsch, T. (2017). On the compatibility of rational choice and social control theories of

- crime. *The Reasoning Criminal*, 105-118. <https://doi:10.4324/9781315134482-7>.
- Hoeve, M., Dubas, J.S., Eichelsheim, V.L. et al. (2009). The relationship between parenting and delinquency: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 37, 749-775. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-009-9310-8>.
- Hoffman, J.P., & Dufur, M. (2018). Family social capital, family social bonds, and juvenile delinquency. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62 (11), 1525-1544. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218787020>.
- Holzer, K.J., Oh, S., Salas-Wright, C.P., Vaughn, M.G., Landess, J. (2018). General differences in the trends and correlates of major depressive episodes among juvenile offenders in the United States. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*. Vol. 80, 72-80, ISSN 0010-440X, Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsy.2017.09.005>.
- Holtman, J.N. (2018). Standing in the way of our goals: How the best interest of the child (whatever that means) is never reached in Texas due to lack of standing for third-party parents. *Tex. A&M L. Rev*, 5, 563. <https://doi.org/10.37419/LR.V5.13.4>
- Houchin, T.M., Ranseen, J., Hash, P.A.K., & Bartinicki, D.J. (2012). The parental alienation debate belongs in the courtroom, not in DSM-5. *40*, 127-31.
- Hoult, J. (2006). The evidentiary admissibility of parental alienation syndrome: Science, law, and policy. *Children's Legal Rights Journal*, 26 (1).
- Howard, K.S., Burke-Lefever, J.E., Borkowski, J.G., & Whitman, T.L. (2006). Fathers' influence in the lives of children with adolescent mothers. *Family Psychology*, 20

(3), 468-76. <https://doi:10.1037/0893-3200.20.3.468>.

Husserl, E. (1962). *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson. (1962). Macmillan.

Husserl, E. (1983). *Ideas pertaining to pure phenomenology and to a phenomenology philosophy*.

Hyland, N. (2018). Delinquency cases in Juvenile court, 2014. *Juvenile Justice Statistics: National report series fact sheet*. Retrieved from Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention <http://ojjdp.ncrjs.org>.

Ingram, H.M., & Schneider, A.L. (1991). The choice of target populations. *Administration and Society*, 23 (3), 333-356.

Ingram, H.M., Schneider, A.L. (2005). *Public Policy and Social Construction of Deservedness*. State University of New York Press.

Ingram, H.M., & Schneider, A.L. (2007). Policy Analysis of Democracy. In Moran, M., Martin, R., Goodin, R.E. (Eds.). *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*. Oxford University Press.

Ingram, H.M., Schneider, A.L., & Deleon, P. (2007). Social construction and policy design. In Sabatier, P.A. (Eds.) *Theories of the policy process*, (pp 169-189).

Ingram, H.M. (2007). Poverty, politics, and the social construction of target groups. In *Remaking America*, (Eds, 245-53.). Sos, J., Hacker, J., & Mettler, S.

Jaffee, A.M., Thakkar, M.J., & Piron, P. (2017). Denial ambivalence as a hallmark of parental alienation. *Cogent Psychology*, 4.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2017.1327144>.

Jaffe, P.G., Johnston, J.R., Crooks, C.V., & Bala, N. (2008). Custody disputes involving allegations of domestic violence: Toward a differentiated approach to parenting.

Family Court Review, 46, (3), 500-522. <https://doi:10.1111/j.1744->

[1617.2008.00216.x](https://doi:10.1111/j.1744-1617.2008.00216.x)

Jagger, J.W., Bolland, A.C., Tomek, S., Bolland, K.A., Hooper, L.M., Church, W.T., & Bolland, J.M. (2015). The longitudinal impact of distal, non-familial relationships on parental monitoring: Implications for delinquent behavior. *Journal of Youth &*

Society, 1-23. <https://doi:10.1177/0044118x15602415>.

Janesick, V.J. (2011). “*Stretching*” *exercises for qualitative researchers*. (3rd.ed.). Sage Publications.

Jensen, L., & Allen, M. (1994). A synthesis of qualitative research in wellness-illness.

Qualitative Health Research, 4 (4), 349-369.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/104973239400400402>

Johnston, J.R. (1994). High conflict divorce. *Future of Children*, 4, 165-182.

Johnston, J.R. (2003). Parental alignments and rejection: An empirical study of alienation in children of divorce. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry & the Law*, 31, 158-170.

Johnston, J.R., & Kelly, J.B. (2004a). Commentary on Walker, Brantley, and

Rigsbee’s (2004) “A critical analysis of parental alienation syndrome & its admissibility in court”. *Journal of Child Custody*, 77-89.

https://doi.org/10.1300/j190v01n02_03

Johnston, J.R., & Kelly, J.B. (2004b). Rejoinder to Gardner's "Commentary on Kelly and Johnston's 'The alienated child: A reformulation of parental alienation syndrome.'" *Family Court Review*, 42, 622-628. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.174-1617.2004.tb01328.x>

Johnston, J.R., Walters, M.G., & Friedlander, S. (2001). Therapeutic work with alienated children and their families. *Family Court Review*, 39 (3), 316-333. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.174-1617.2001.tb00613.x>.

Johnston, J.R., & Roseby, V. (1997). In the name of the child: A developmental approach to understanding and helping children of high-conflict and violent families. In Kelly, J.B, & Johnston, J.R. (2001), *The alienated child: A reformulation of parental alienation syndrome*. *Family Court Review*, 39 (3), 249-266. Sage Publications.

Jones, J., Mosher, W.D. (2013). Fathers' involvement with their children: United States, 2006-2010. *National Institute of Health Statistics Reports*, 71.

Jorgensen, C.R. (2004). Active ingredients in individual psychotherapy: Searching for common factors. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 21, (4), 516-540. <https://doi:10.1037/0736-9735.21.4.516>

Juang, L.P., & Silbereisen, R.K. (1999). Supportive parenting and adolescent adjustment across time in former East and West Germany. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22 (6), 719-736. <https://doi:10.1006/jado.1999.0267>

- Katorski, J. (2003) Father/daughter relationships: effects of communicative adaptability and satisfaction on daughter's romantic relationships. *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 1-5.
- Kelly, J.B. (1991). Conflict in children's post-divorce adjustment: A clearer look. *Family Law News*, 14(3), 1-2.
- Kelly, J.B. (1997). The best interest of the child: A concept in search of meaning. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 35(4), 377-387.
- Kelly, J.B. (2000). Children's adjustment in conflicted marriage and divorce: A decade review of research. *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 39 (8), 963-973. <https://doi:1097/00004583-200008000-00007>
- Kelly, J.B., & Johnston, J.R. (2001). The alienated child: A reformulation of parental alienation syndrome. *Family Court Review*, 39 (3), 249-266.
- Kemerer, R.W. (1991). Understanding the application of learning. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 49, 67-80. In Springer, D.W., Roberts, A.R., Brownell, P., Torrente, M., Lippman, A.D., Deitch, M. (2015). *A Brief Historical Overview of Juvenile Justice and Juvenile Delinquency*. Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Kempf-Leonard, K., Chesney-Lind, M., & Hawkins, D.F. (2001). Ethnicity and Gender Issues. In Lober, R. & Farrington, D.P. (2001). From child delinquents: Development, intervention, and service needs, 247-269.

- Kerr, M., & Stattin, H. (2000). What parents know, how they know it, and several forms of adolescent adjustment: Further support for a reinterpretation of monitoring. *Development Psychology, 36* (3), 366-380.
<https://doi:10.1037//0012-1649.36.3.366>.
- Kierkus, C.A., Johnson, B.R., & Hewitt, J.D. (2010). Cohabiting, family, and community stressors, selection, and juvenile delinquency.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016810379338>.
- Kindred, K.P. (1996). God bless the child: Poor children, parens patriae, and a state obligation to provide assistance. *Faculty Publications, 962*.
- Kim, J.S. (2014). A father's race to custody: An argument for multidimensional masculinities for black men. *Berkeley Journal of African American Law & Policy, 16* (1).
- Klein, K., & Forehand, R. (1997). The delinquency during the transition to early adulthood: Family and parenting predictors from early adolescence. *Journal of Marriage & Family, 36*, 655-666.
- Kormondy, M., & Archer, N. (2017). 2016 Healthy Texas Babies Data Book. *Division for Family and Community Services, Texas Department of State Health Services*.
- Koball, H., & Prinicpe, D. (2002). *Do nonresident fathers who pay child support visit their children more?*
- Kopetski, L.M., Rand, D.C., Rand, R. (2006). Incidence, gender, and false allegations of child abuse: Data on 84 parental alienation syndrome cases.

In R.A. Gardner, R Sauber, & D. Lorandos (Eds), *The international handbook of parental alienation syndrome: Conceptual, clinical, and legal considerations* (p.65-70).

Krostjens, I., & Mosier, A. (2018). Series: practical guidance to qualitative research.part 4: trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24 (1), 120-124. <https://doi:10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>.

Kruk, E. (2005). Shared parenting responsibility: A harm reduction-based approach to divorce law reform. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 43 (3/4), 119-140. https://doi.org/10.1300/j087v43n03_07

Kruk, E. (2010). Parental and social institutional responsibilities to children's needs in the divorce transition: Father's perspective. (2010). *Journal of Men's Studies*, 18 (2), 158-178. <https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.1802.159>.

Laird, R.D., Petit, G.S., Dodge, K.A., & Bates, J.E. (2003a). Parents' monitoring-relevant knowledge and adolescents' delinquent behavior: Evidence of correlated developmental changes and reciprocal influences. *Social Development*, 74 (3), 752-768. <https://doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00566>.

Laird, R.D., Petit, G.S., Dodge, K.A., & Bates, J.E. (2003b). Change in parents' monitoring knowledge: Links with parenting, relationship quality, adolescent beliefs, and Antisocial Behavior. *Social Development*, 12 (3), 401-419.

Lamb, M.E. (2004). *The role of the father in the child development*. (4th ed). Wiley. In Kruk, E. (2010). Parental and social institutional responsibilities to children's

- needs in the divorce transition: Father's perspective. (2010). *Journal of Men's Studies*, 18 (2), 158-178.
- Laasko, J., Sherri, A., (2006). Noncustodial Fathers' involvement with their children a right or a privilege? *Social Work Publications (Paper 2)*.
http://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/socialwork_pub/2.
- Laub, J.H., & Sampson, R.J. (1988). Unraveling families and delinquency: A reanalysis of the Gluecks' data. *Criminology*, 26, 355-380.
- Laumann- Billings, L. (2000). Distress among young adults from divorced families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 14, 671-687. <https://doi:10.1037//0893-3200.14.4.671>
- Lasswell, H.D., & Kaplan, A. (1950). *Power and Society: A framework for political inquiry*, xxiv, 295.
- Lee, M., & Olesen, N. (2001). Assessing for alienation in child custody and access evaluations. *Family Court Review*, 39 (3), 282-298.
<https://doi:10.1111/j.174-1617.2001.tb00611.x>
- Lehr, R., & MacMillian, P. (2001). The psychological and emotional impact of divorce: The noncustodial fathers' perspective. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 82, 373-382. <https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.186>
- Lerman, R.L., & Ooms, T.J. (2009). Young unwed fathers: Changing roles and emerging policies. Temple University Press.

- Lester, S. (1999). An introduction to phenomenological research. Stan Lester Developments.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (2003). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging, confluences. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp.255-286). Sage Publications.
- Liska, A., & Reed, M.D. (1985). Ties to conventional institutions and delinquency: Estimating reciprocal effects. *American Sociological Review*, 50, 547-560.
- Loeber, R., & Stouthmer-Loeber, M. (1986). Family factors as correlates and predictors of juvenile conduct problems and delinquency. *Crime and Justice*, 7, 29-149.
- Loeber, R., & Farrington, D.P. (2001). Child delinquents: Development, intervention, and service needs. Sage Publications.
- Loeber, R., Farrington, D.P., & Petechuk, D. (2003). Child delinquency: early intervention and prevention. *U.S. Department of Justice (Child delinquency bulletin series)*. Retrieved from Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention <http://ojjdp.ncrjs.org>.
- Lorandos, D. (2020). Parental Alienation in U.S. Courts, 1985 to 2018. *Parent-Child Contract Problems: Concepts, Controversies, and Conundrums*, 58 (2), 322-339. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12475>.
- Lukes, S.M. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. Macmillan.

- Lund, M. (1987). The non-custodial father: Common challenges in parenting after divorce.
- Mack, K.Y., & Leiber, M.J. (2005). Race, gender, single-mother households, and delinquency: A further test of power control theory. *Youth Society*, 37, <https://doi:10.1177/0044118X04271022>.
- Magaraggia, S. (2012). Tensions between fatherhood and social construction of masculinity in Italy. In *Current Sociology*. (Reprinted from sagepub.co.uk/journalspermissions.nav. 61(1), 76-92. <https://doi:10.1177/001139211264231>).
- Martinez, K., Rider, F., Cayce, N., Forrsell, S., Poririer, J., Hunt, S., Crawford, G., Sawyer, J. (2013). A guide for father involvement in systems of care. *Technical Assistance Partnership for child and family mental health*.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Martin, J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Osterman, M.J.K., Driscoll, A.K., Drake, P. (2018). Births: Final data for 2016. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 67, (1). Division of Vital Statistics.
- Manen, M. (2007). Phenomenology of Practice. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 1 (1), 11-30.
- Masons, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

- McCord, W., & McCord, J. (1959). *Origins of Crime: A new evaluation of the Cambridge-Somerville youth Study*. Columbia University Press.
- McCord, J. (1991). Family relationships, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminality. *Criminology*, 29 (3), 397-417.
- McGill, B.S. (2014). Navigating new norms of involved fatherhood: Employment, fathering attitudes, and father involvement. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35 (8), 1089-1106. <http://doi.10.1177/0192513x1422247>.
- McKoy, D.E.H. (2013). Examining parental control, parent-adolescent relationship, delinquency, and criminal behavior. *Florida State University Libraries*.
- McLanahan, S.S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*. Harvard University Press. In Musick, K., & Meier, A. (2010). Are both parents always better than one? Parental conflict and young adult well-being. *Social Science Research*, 39 (5), 814-830.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.03.002>,
- McNeely, C.A. (1998). Comments: Lagging the times: Parenthood, custody, and gender bias in the family court, 25 FLA. ST. U.L. REV. 891.
- Meldrum, R.C., Connolly, G.M., Flexon, J., & Guerette, R.T (2016). Parental low self-control, family environments, and juvenile delinquency. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60 (14), 1623-1644.
<https://doi:10.1177/0306624X15584907>.
- Meier, J.S. (2009). A historical perspective on parental alienation syndrome and

parental alienation. *Journal of Child Custody*, 6 (3), 232-257.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15379410903084681>.

Meier, J. S. (2013). Parental Alienation Syndrome and Parental Alienation: A research review. *National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women*.

Milchman, M.S., Geffner, R., Meier, J.S. (2020). Putting science and reasoning back into the “parental alienation” discussion: Reply to Bernet, Robb, Lorandos, and Garber. *Family Court Review*, 58 (2), 375-385. <https://doi:10.1111/fcre.12477>.

Miller, G.E., Chen, E., Parker, K.J. (2011). Psychological stress in childhood and susceptibility to the chronic diseases of aging: Moving towards a model of behavioral and biological mechanisms. *Psychological bulletin*, 137 (6), 959-997. <https://doi:10.1037/a0024768>.

Miller, A.L. (2018). Expertise fails to attenuate gendered biases in judicial decision-making. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 10 (2), 227-234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617741181>.

Moore, M. (2011). Psychological theories of crime and delinquency. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 21, 226-239. <https://doi:10.1080/10911359.2011.564552>.

Moore, R.O., & Ordway, A. (2013). The mirror without a face: Assessment of parental alienation among children of high conflict divorces. *Vistas*, 76.

Mone, J.G., & Biringen, Z. (2012). Assessing parental alienation: Empirical assessment of college students’ recollections of parental alienation during

their childhoods. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 53, 157-177.

<https://doi:10.1080/10502556.2012.663265>.

Morales v. Turman, 363 F. Supp. 116 (E.D. Tex.1974).

Morse, J.M. (1991). Strategies for Sampling. In J.M. Morse (Ed). *Qualitative nursing research: A contemporary dialogue* (pp. 127-145). Sage Publications.

Morse, J.M (1994). Designing qualitative research. In N.K.Denzin & Y.S.Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative inquiry* (pp.220-235). Sage Publications.

Moser, A., & Krostjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24 (1), 9-18.

<http://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>.

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Herusitic research.: Design, methodology, and applications*. Sage Publications.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.

Murry, V.M., Bynum, M.S., Brody, G.H, Wilbert, A., & Stephens, D. (2001). African American single mothers and children in context: A review of studies on risk and resilience. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 4 (2)

Musick, K., & Meier, A. (2010). Are both parents always better than one? Parental conflict and young adult well-being. *Social Science Research*, 39 (5), 814-830.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.03.002>

Myers, J.E.B. (1997). *What is PAS and why is it so often used against mothers? In a mother's nightmare-Incest: A practical legal guide for parents and*

professionals (pp.135-137). Sage Publications.

Myers, J., Berliner, L., Briere, J., Hendrix, C.T., Jenny, C., & Reid, T.A. (Eds). (2002).

The APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment, (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Nachmias-C.F., Nachimas, D., & DeWaard, J. (2015). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. (8th ed.). Worth Publishers.

Nebbitt, V.E., Lombe, M., Doyle, O., & Vaughn, M.G. (2013). Modeling variation in paternal encouragement and monitoring among African American adolescents living in urban public housing: A latent profile analytic approach. *Journal of African American Studies*, 17, 253-274.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12111-012-9214-5>.

Nickerson, A.B., & Nagle, R.J. (2004). The influence of parent and peer attachments on life satisfaction in middle childhood and early adolescence. *Social Indicators Research* 66, 35-60. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-2312-5_3

Nielsen, L. (2018). Joint versus sole physical custody: Children's outcomes Independent of Parent-child relationships, income, and conflict in 60 studies. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 59 (4), 247-281.

<https://doi:10.1080/10502556.2018.1454204>.

Nielsen, L. (2018). Parental alienation empirical analysis: Child best interests or parental rights? *Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research*.

Nguyen, B. M. (2018). Custodial parental perceptions and experiences of non-custodial parents and child support. *Walden University Scholar works*.

Nusbaum, L., Douglas, B., Damus, K., Passche-Orlow, M., & Estrella-Luna, N. (2017).

Communicating Risk and Benefits in informed consent for research: a qualitative study. 4, 1-13. <https://doi:10.1177/23333393617732017>

Nord, C.W., & Zill, N. (1996). *Non-custodial parents' participation in their children's lives: Evidence from the survey of income and program participation, synthesis of literature*. In Koball, H., & Prinicpe, D. (2002). Do nonresident fathers who pay child support visit their children.

O'Brien, P. (1978). Crime and punishment as a historical problem. *Journal of Social History, 11* (4), 508-520.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2002). Juvenile justice and delinquency act milestone. Retrieved from <http://ojjdp.gov/about/jjdpa2002titlev.pdf>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1974). Juvenile justice and delinquency prevention as amended, 93-415. Retrieved from http://www.ojjdp.gov/about/JJDPAct_Milestones_Infographic.pdf.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Statistical Briefing Book. (2018, October) Online. Retrieved from <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/cfrime/qa05101.asp?qadate=2017>

OpenStax College. (2013). *Introduction to Sociology*. Rice University, <https://doi:9781938168017>.

Opperman, J. (2004). What to do when your parent stops seeing you as a mom or dad. In

- Baker, A.J. (2005), The long-term effects of parental alienation on adult children: A qualitative research study. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 33, 289-302. <https://doi:10.1080/01926189590962129>.
- O'Sullivan, E., Rassel, G., Berner, M., & Taliaferro, J.D. (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators*. (6th ed.). Routledge.
- Pacquette, D. (2004). Theorizing the father-child relationship: Mechanisms and developmental outcomes. *Human Development*, 47, 193-219.
<http://doi.org/10.1159/000078723>.
- Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S.M., Green, C.A., Wisdom, J.P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health*, 42 (5), 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>.
- Pandey, R., Purohit, H, Stabile, B., Grant, A. (2018). Distributional semantics approach to detect intent in twitter conversations on sexual assaults. *IEEE/WIC/ACM International Conference on Web Intelligence*, 270-277,
<https://doi:10.1109/WI.2018.00-80>.
- Patacchini, E., & Zenou, Y. (2012). Juvenile delinquency and conformism. *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 28 (1), 1-31.
<http://doi.org/10.1093/jleo/ewp038>.
- Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. (4th ed.). Sage Publication.

- Patterson, G.R., Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1984). The correlation of family management practices and delinquency. *Child Development*, 55 (4), 1299-1307.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1129999>.
- Parks, A.B. (2013). The effects of family structure on juvenile delinquency. *Electronic thesis and dissertations*.
- Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act of 1995. H.R. 1946
- Pearson, J., & Anhalt, J. (1993). When parents complain about visitation. *Mediation Quarterly*, 11 (2), 139-156. <https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.3900110205>.
- Peck, J.H. (2016). Contemporary issues of race/ethnicity, offending behavior, and justice responses. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 39 (1), 1-8,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2015.1136381>.
- Perry, S.J., Marcum, J.D & Stoner. (2011). Stumbling down the courthouse steps: Mediators' perceptions of the stumbling blocks to successful mandated mediation in child custody and visitation. *Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal*, 11(3). *Journal of American Academy Psychiatry Law*.
- Petrie, S. (2017). Schools, alienation, and delinquency.
- Pierce, J.J., Siddiki, S., Jones, M.D., Shumacher, K., Pattison, A., & Peterson, H. (2014). Social construction and policy design: A review of past applications. *The Policy Studies Journal*, 42, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12040>.
- Pierce, P. (1993). When effect becomes cause: Policy feedback and political change. *World Politics*, 45, 595-628.

- Pleck, J.H., Masciadrelli, B.P. (2004). Parental involvement by U.S. residential fathers: Levels, sources, and consequences. In Lamb, M.E. (2004). *The role of the father in the child development*. (4th ed).
- Polizzi, D. (2011). The phenomenology of deviant behavior. *Research Gate*. In the Phenomenological Theory Routledge Handbook.
- Pope, C.E., Feyerherm, W.H. (1990a). Minority status and juvenile justice processing: An assessment of the research literature. *Criminal Justice Abstracts*, 22, 327-335.
- Poustie, C., Matthewson, M., & Balmer, S. (2018). The forgotten parent: The targeted parent perspective of parental alienation. *Journal of Family Issues*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x18777867>.
- Post, D. (2013). Arguments against joint custody. *Journal of Gender, Law, & Justice*, 4 (2).
- Rand, D. C. (1997b). The spectrum of parental alienation syndrome Part I. *The American Journal of Forensic Psychology*, 15(3), 23-52.
- Rand, D.C. (2010). Parental alienation critics and the politics of science. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 39 (1), 48-71.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2010.533085>.
- Rand, D., & Rand, R. (2006). Factors affecting reconciliation between the child and target parent in parental alienation syndrome. In R.A. Gardner, R. Sauber, & D. Lorandos (Eds.), *The international handbook of parental alienation syndrome: Conceptual, clinical, and legal considerations* (p.65-70).

- Rankin, J.H., & Kern, R. (1994). Parental attachments and delinquency. *Criminology*, 32 (4), 495-516.
- Rathinabalan, I., & Naaraayan, S.A. (2017). Effect of family factors on juvenile delinquency. *International Journal of Contemporary Pediatrics*, 4 (6), 2079-2082.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.18203/2349-3291.ijcp20174735>.
- Ravitch, S.M., & Carl, N.M (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage Publications.
- Ravitch, S.M., & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason and Rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Sage Publications.
- Ravitch, S.M., & Tillman, C. (2010). Collaboration as a site of personal and institutional transformation: Thoughts from the inside a cross-national alliance. *Prospective on Urban Education*, 8 (1), 3-9.
- Rimm-Kaufman, S., & Zhang, Y.B. (2005). Father-school communication in preschool and kindergarten. *School Psychology Review*, 34 (3), 287-308.
<https://doi:10.1080/02796015.2005.12086288>.
- Rocheftort, D.A., Cobb, R.W. (1994). *The politics of problem definition: Shaping the policy agenda*. Lawrence University Press of Kansas.
- Romanoff, K.M. (2012). *Interpretative and critical phenomenological crime studies: A model design* 17 (54), 1-32.
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/miner-romanoff.pdf>

- Rosich, K. J. (2007). Race, ethnicity, and the criminal justice system. *American Sociological Association*.
- Roy, K., Zvonkovic, A., Goldberg, A., Sharp, E., & Larossa, R. (2015). Sampling richness and qualitative integrity: Challenges for research with families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 77 (1), 243-260. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12147>.
- Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2012). *Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data*. (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Rudestam, K.E., & Newton, R.R. (2015). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (4th.ed). Sage Publications.
- Rueda, C. (2004). An inter-rater reliability study of parental alienation syndrome. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 32 (5), 391-403
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Sabatier, P. (1997). The advocacy coalition framework: Revisions and relevance for Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 5 (1), 98-130.
- Sabatier, P. (2007a). *Theories of the Policy Process*. (2nd ed.). Westview Press.
- Sabatier, P. (2007b). The need for better theories. In Sabatier, P. (Ed.). *Theories of the Policy Process*, (pp 3-20). Westview Press.
- Sampson, R.J. (1987). Urban black violence: The effect of male joblessness and family disruptions. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 93, 348-382.
- Sampson, R.J. (2011). The incarceration ledger: Toward a new era in assessing societal

- consequences. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 10 (3), 819-828.
- Sampson, R.J., & Laub, J. (2003). Life-course desisters? Trajectories of crime among delinquent boys followed to age 70. *Criminology*, 41, 555-592.
- Sankey, M., & Huon, G.F. (1999). Investigating the role of alienation in a multicomponent model of juvenile delinquency. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 95-107.
- Sasson, T. (1995). African American Conspiracy Theories and Social Construction of Crime. *Sociological Inquiry*, 65 (3/4), 265-285.
- Scholossman, S., & Sealock, M.D. (1983, pp. 399). Tri-Cities Building and Sites. In Springer, D.W., Roberts, A.R., Brownell, P., Torrente, M., Lippman, A.D., Deitch, M. (2015). *A Brief Historical Overview of Juvenile Justice and Juvenile Delinquency*. Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Schepard, A., Johnston, J.R., & Kelly, J.B. (Eds.). 2001. Alienated children in divorce. *Family Court Review*, 39(3), 243-343.
- Schepard, A., Fiedler, B.J., & Bala, N (2010). Alienated children in divorce and separation: Emerging approaches for families and courts (*Special issue*). *Family Court Review*, 48 (1), 1-243. <https://doi:10.1080/01926187.2010.533085>.
- Schneider, A.L., & Ingram, H. (1990a). Behavioral assumption of policy tools. *Journal of Politics*, 52, 510-529.
- Schneider, A.L., & Ingram, H. (1990b). Policy design: Elements, premises, and strategies. In N, Stuart. *Policy theory and police evaluation*. (ED.). Greenwood.

- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *American Political Science Review*, 87 (2), 334-347.
- Schneider, A.L., & Ingram, H.M. (1997). *Policy Design for Democracy*. University Press of Kansas.
- Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H.M. (2005a). (Eds). *Deserving and Entitled: Social Construction and Public Policy*. State of University New York Press.
- Schneider, A., & Sidney, M. (2009). What is next for policy design and social construction theory? *Policy Studies Journal*, 37 (1), 103-119.
- Schwartz, S.J., & Finley, G.E. (2009). Mothering, fathering, and divorce: The influence of divorce on reports of and desires for maternal and paternal involvement. *Family Court Review*, 47, 506-522. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2009.01270.x>.
- Schwartz, P.S., & Yanow, D. (2015). Interpretation and method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn. (2nd.ed.).
- Shader, M. (2003). Risk factors for delinquency: An overview. *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*.
- Sherman, M.G. (2010). It's a Two-way street: The bidirectional relationship between parenting and delinquency. *Juvenile Youth Adolescence*, 41, 121-145. <https://doi:10.1007/s10964-011-9656-4>.
- Shoemaker. D.J., (2018). Theories of delinquency: An examination of explanations of

delinquent behavior. Retrieved from *books.google.com*.

- Signh, A., & Kiran, U.V. (2014). Effects of single parent family on child delinquency. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 3 (9), 866-868.
- Silverthorn, P., Frick, P.J., & Reynolds, R. (2001). Timing of onset and correlates of severe conduct problems in adjudicated girls and boys. *Journal of Psychopathology and behavioral assessment*, 23 (3), 171-181.
<https://doi:10.1023/A:1010917304587>.
- Smith, D.W. (2013). *Husserl* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Smith, H. (2016). Parental alienation syndrome: Fact or fiction? The problem with its use in child custody cases. *University of Massachusetts Law Review*: 11, (1).5
<http://scholarship.lawumassd.edu/umlr/vol11/iss1/5>
- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method, and research*. Sage.
- Smith, J.A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In Smith, J.A (ed.). *Qualitative Psychology*, 51-80. Sage Publications.
- Sommer, R. (2004). Parental Alienation Syndrome.
- Springer, D.W., Roberts, A.R., Brownell, P., Torrente, M., Lippman, A.D., Deitch, M. (2015). *A Brief Historical Overview of Juvenile Justice and Juvenile Delinquency*. Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Spruijt, E., Degoede, M. & Vandervalk, I. (2001). The well-being of youngsters coming from six different family types. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 45 (4),

285-294. [https://doi:10.1016/s0738-3991\(01\)00132-x](https://doi:10.1016/s0738-3991(01)00132-x).

Stahl, N.A. (2011). Building a foundation together. *From Policy to Politics*, 65 (3), 179-182. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.01030>.

Stewart, E.A., Simons, R.L., Conger, R.D., & Scaramella, L.V. (2002). Beyond the interactional relationship between delinquency and parenting practices: the contribution of legal sanctions. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 39 (1), 36-59. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002242780203900102>.

Stoleberg, A.L., et.al. (2002). Denied visitation, its impact on children's psychological adjustment, and a nationwide review of state code. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 36 (1). <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/law-faculty-publications>.

Stone, D. (1988). *Policy Paradox and Political Reason*. Glenview.

Stoner, J., Perrewe, P., & Hofacker, C. (2011). The development and validation of the multi-dimensional identification scale (MDIS). *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 41 (7), 1632-1658. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2011.00770.X>.

Sullivan, M.J., & Kelly, J.B. (2001). Legal and psychological management cases with an alienated child. *Family Court Review*, 39 (3), 243-343.

Sykes, G.M., & Matza, D. (1957). Techniques of Neutralization: A theory of delinquency. *American Sociological Review*, 22, 664-670.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2089195>.

Templer, K., Matthewson, M., Haines, J., & Cox, G. (2016). Recommendations for the best practice in response to parental alienation: findings from a systematic review.

Journal of Family Therapy. <https://doi:10.1111/1467-6427.12137>.

Texas Office of Attorney General. *Child Support of Texas*. Retrieved from www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/childsupport.

TEX. PENAL CODE ANN.§ 12.45(a) (West 2011).

Tisak, M.S., Wichorek, M.G., & Tiask, J. (2011). Relation between exposure to and consequences of aggression: U.S. National sample of adolescents. *Journal of School Violence, 10*, 355-373. <https://doi:10.1080/15388220.2011.602603>.

Tisak, M.S., Tiask, J., Baker, E.R., & Graupensperger, S.A. (2019). Relations among victimization, witnessing, and perpetration of aggression: Impact of gender among youth offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal violence, 34* (10), 2158-2180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516659658>.

Trochim, W.M., & Donnelly, J. The research methods knowledge base. (3rd.ed.). *Atomic dog and Cengage learning*.

Trojanowicz, R.C., & Trojanowicz, J.M. (1978). Juvenile delinquency-concepts and controls. (2nd. Ed.).

Turkat, D. (2002). Shared parenting dysfunction. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 30* (5), 385-393. <https://doi:10.1080/01926180260296297>.

Turkat, I. (2012). Parental alienation syndrome: A review of critical issues. *Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 13*, 131-176.

United States Census Bureau. (2016). Retrieved at <http://www.census.gov/Texas>.

- Urdahl, T.M., & Creswell, J.W. (2004). Using transcendental phenomenology to explore the “ripple effect” in a leadership mentoring program. *International Institute for Qualitative Methods*, 3 (2), 19-34.
- Vassiliou, D., & Cartwright, G.F. (2001). The lost parent’s perspective on parental alienation syndrome. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 29 (3), 181-191.
- Vessel, A. (1999). Mediation and parental alienation syndrome: *Family and Conciliation Review*, 37, 487-503.
- Vogt-Yuan, A.S. (2016). Father-child relationships and non-resident father’s psychological distress: What helps and what hurts? *Journal of Family Issues*, 37 (5), 603-621. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x14526394>.
- Vries, S.L.A., Hoeve, M., Assink, M., Stams, G.J., & Asscher, J.J. (2014). Practitioner review. Effective ingredients of prevention programs for youth at risk of persistent juvenile delinquency-recommendations for clinical practice. *Child Psychology Psychiatry*, 56 (2), 108-121. <https://doi:10.1111/jcpp.12320>.
- Wallerstein, J., & Lewis, J., & Blakelee, S. (2001). *The unexpected legacy of divorce: The 25-year landmark Study*. Hyperion.
- Wallerstein, J.S., & Kelly, K.B. (1980). *Surviving the breakup: How children and parents cope with divorce*. Basic Books.
- Walters, G.D. (2013). Delinquency, parental involvement, early adult criminality, and

sex: Evidence of moderated mediation. *Journal of Adolescence*, 36, 777-785.

<https://doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.03.011>.

Warshak, R. A. (2001a). Current controversies regarding parental alienation syndrome.

American Journal of Forensic Psychology, 19 (3), 29-59.

Warshak, R. A. (2001). *Divorce Prison: Protecting the parent-child bond from a*

vindictive ex. Regan Books.

Warshak, R.A. (2002). Misdiagnosis of parental alienation syndrome. *American Journal*

of Forensic Psychology, 20 (2), 31-52.

Warshak, R.A. (2003a). Bringing sense to parental alienation: A look at the

disputes and the evidence. *Family Law Quarterly*, 37 (2), 273-301.

Warshak, R.A. (2015). Parental alienation: Overview, management, intervention, and

practice tips. *Journal of American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*, 28, 181-

248.

Waters, B., Dimock, J. (1983). A Review of Research Relevant to Custody and

Access Disputes. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*,

17,181-189.

Williams, J. (2001). Should judges close the gate on PAS and PA? *Family Court*

Review, 39 (3), 267-281.

Williams, R. G., & Smalls, E.W. (2015). Exploring a relationship between parental

supervision and recidivism among juvenile offenders at a juvenile detention

facility. *International Social Science Review*, 90, (2).

- Wolchik, S., Fenaughty, A., & Braver, S. (1996). Residential and nonresidential parents; perspective on visitation problems. *Family Relations*, *45*, 230-237.
- Wright, W.A. (1993). Negative Campaigning. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, *24* (1), 103-113. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9833.1993.tb00498.x>
- Urdahl, T.M., & Creswell, J.W. (2004). Using transcendental phenomenology to explore the “Ripple Effect” in a leadership mentoring program. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. *3* (2).
- Zahavi, D. (2003). *Husserl’s Phenomenology*. Stanford University Press.
- Zembroski, D. (2011). Sociological theories of crime and delinquency. *Journal of Human behavior in the social Environment*, *21*, 240-254.
<https://doi:10.1080.10911369.2011.564553>.
- Yates, P.M. (2013). Before, during, and after: Identity and the social construction of knowledge in qualitative research interviews. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*, *1*, 31-41.
- Yin, R.K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.
- Yogman, M., & Garfield, C.F. (2016). Fathers’ roles in the care and development of their children: The role of pediatricians. *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*, *138* (1). <https://doi:10.1542/peds.2016-1128>.

Appendix A: Research Questionnaire

Parental Alienation Social Construction to Texas Family Code: A Father's Perspective

Instructions: Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

1. Are you African American?
2. Do you reside in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area?
3. Do you have a current child support order in Tarrant County?
4. Are you listed as the non-custodial parent?
5. Does your child support include possession and access provision?
6. Are you currently identified as a non-custodial parent?
7. Were you ever married to the custodial parent?
8. Do you currently reside in the household with the child or children you're on child support for?