

1-27-2025

Lived Experience of African American Males Upon Community Reentry Postincarceration in California

DAN UGOCHUKWU DURU
Walden University

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

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 Allied Health

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Dan Ugochukwu Duruobishiri

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. Megan Corley, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Janet Howard, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty

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

Walden University
2024

Abstract

Lived Experience of African American Males Upon Community Reentry

Postincarceration in California

by

Dan Ugochukwu Duruobishiri

MS, Walden University, 2021

MA, National University, La Jolla, California, 2004

BS, California State University, Long Beach, 1998

AS, El Camino College Torrance, California, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Clinical Psychology

Walden University

October, 2024

Abstract

The research on the experiences of African American Black males in the criminal justice system has been a focus of scholars since the early 20th century. Researchers have demonstrated that this population faces high rates of incarceration and systemic barriers to reintegration postincarceration. However, researchers have yet to establish a clear understanding of the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black males during their reentry to the community. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to better understand the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black males in California during their reentry to the community postincarceration, and how it makes meaning to them. Critical race theory was used to analyze the impact of race on their reintegration process. Using semistructured interviews, data were collected from 10 formerly incarcerated African American Black male adults from Los Angeles, California. The results of these analyses indicated four major themes: circumscribed opportunities due to incarceration history, constrained prospects tied to racial identity, societal stigma due to gender identity, and the cumulative effects of these intersectional factors. Ultimately, the insights generated through this study have the potential to inform more responsive, culturally sensitive approaches to reentry and to guide the development of interventions and policies that prioritize the needs and perspectives of those most directly impacted by the challenges of reintegration, thereby promoting positive social change and mitigating the costly recidivism.

Lived Experience of African American Black Males Upon Community Reentry

Postincarceration in California

by

Dan Ugochukwu Duruobishiri

MS, Walden University, 2021

MA, National University, La Jolla, California, 2004

BS, California State University, Long Beach, 1998

AS, El Camino College Torrance, California, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Clinical Psychology

Walden University

June 2024

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my study to my late elder brother Dr. Nathan Chukwuma Duruobishiri whose inspiration served as a pivot upon which this academic journey rotates. I dedicate this study to all those who have experienced the struggle of life after incarceration, especially formerly incarcerated African American Black males who feel as if their first crime was being born as African American Black boy. I would also like to dedicate my study to the families affected by the especially unjust incarceration and re-entry challenges of their loved ones. I want to dedicate this study to my family and my family of origin who are a major cornerstone of this accomplishment. Your unalloyed support and prayers have motivated me in so many ways. Finally, I want to dedicate my study to all researchers of any race who acknowledge a problem with life after incarceration and feel their purpose in the topic. We must continue to educate ourselves and do what we can to help those who are trying to help themselves but may be subtly and blatantly hindered and judged due to the color of their skin and disregarded to be heard based on the content of their character. It is hoped that one day, formerly incarcerated African American Black males would be able to find resources to effectively re-enter their community post-incarceration.

Acknowledgement

Let me begin first by thanking God Almighty for His guidance through this entire process, which at some point became so overwhelming beyond the quest for an advanced degree. I have grown exponentially in my faith walk and have acquired a much deeper appreciation for the seemingly smaller things in life. Learning how to see the beauty in humanity and in nature, to be patient, kind, and love unconditionally, have been major takeaways from this journey which coincides beautifully with this chosen profession. Next, I want to extend gratitude to my committee members who have been wonderful in their guidance and support throughout this process.

Dr. Esralew, thank you for your kind and gentle presence and for being so approachable. It has been amazing working with you in your capacities of professor, advisor, supervisor, and my initial dissertation chair. As stressful as this process has been, it has truly been a lot easier with your encouragement, patience, and leadership. Thanks for the thoroughness in your feedback throughout this process. Dr. Esralew, I have many significant memories from our numerous interactions during this process. However, the one that remains refreshing in mind was joyous learning moments I shared with you about the corrective markers of the resounding critical feedback I received from you in my several dissertation drafts to you. It was those corrective feedback markers that ramified to my today's academic work excellence. I thank you immensely for that.

Dr. Corley, thanks for your calm, gentle, but all-ears presence approach which makes every interaction filled with a resounding rewarding experience. Thanks for all your encouragement and support in the roles of professor and second committee member, and subsequently, my final dissertation chair. It is my goal to get close to your

proficiency as a group leader one day, and to be as practically proficient in providing guidance with unconditional positive regards to doctoral students.

Dr. Perez, thank you. You are one of the most amazing practical and professional working relationships I have ever had. Your enviable position as a program director notwithstanding, you created an approachable and warm workspace that encouraged productivity. As supervisor, you did not hesitate to make yourself available to attend to any issues and concerns with every attention and support. Thank you for your insightful and timely interventions, and detailed feedback through this process.

Thanks to my wife Chinyere Duruobishiri whose unconditional love and support has been wonderful through this process. We have made many sacrifices and endured many struggles through this education journey, and I trust that they will pay off in the end. Thanks to our children Chinyere, Jaachimike and Chimezurum Duruobishiri who on many occasions, have endured my unavoidable absence. You all have brought so much joy and meaning to our lives, and I want to spend the rest of my life modeling fairness, integrity, and unconditional love to you all. To my beloved parents, peace, and steadfast love. To Chief Emma Duruobishiri and the rest of my siblings, this academic journey has taken time from us, and I still get very homesick from missing you all. Thanks for the calls and texts and check-ins that have kept communication alive.

Thanks to my participants, who were patient during the entire selection process, and for trusting me with their stories. It was not easy, and you could have quit at any moment, but you all did not. I will endeavor to use your collective voices to bring continued awareness to the numerous problems the formerly incarcerated African

American Black males endure during their re-entry to the community post-incarceration. and do my part to facilitate policy changes.

Last, but not the least, to my group college peers in the clinical psychology department, thanks to you all for the accommodation and collaboration as a one united team in our collective quest for academic excellence. To everyone else who have lent support whichever way they have; I say thank you and this journey would not have gone this far without you.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose of Study.....	6
Research Question	7
Theoretical Foundation	7
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Nature of the Study	11
Definitions.....	12
Assumptions.....	14
Scope and Delimitations	15
Limitations	15
Significance.....	17
Summary.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	20

Introduction.....	20
Literature Research Strategy.....	23
Theoretical Foundation	25
Conceptual Framework.....	25
Challenges to Community Reentry and Postincarceration Adjustment.....	41
Family System and Family Reunification.....	44
Transgenerational Slavery Trauma	48
Child Support Indebtedness	50
Economic Challenges (Employment, Housing, and Personal Debts).....	52
Stigma Associated With Incarceration.....	55
Risk of Recidivism.....	58
Substance Use and Relapse.....	61
Summary.....	64
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	67
Introduction.....	67
Research Design and Rationale	68
Role of the Researcher	72
Methodology.....	74

Setting and Sample	74
Participant Selection	75
Sample Size and Eligibility Criteria	77
Instrumentation	78
Data Collection	79
Reflexivity.....	80
Participant Recruitment Procedure	83
Participant Protection.....	85
Informed Consent.....	86
Potential Risks and Benefits	87
Reflexivity.....	91
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	93
Credibility	93
Transferability.....	95
Confirmability.....	96
Dependability	97
Ethical Concerns and Procedures.....	97
Summary	99

Chapter 4: Results	100
Introduction.....	100
Setting	100
Demographics	101
Data Collection	101
Data Analysis	102
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	105
Credibility	105
Transferability.....	106
Dependability	107
Confirmability.....	107
Results.....	107
Demographic Data	108
Thematic Analysis	109
Summary	125
Chapter 5: Discussions, Recommendations, and Conclusions	127
Introduction.....	127
Interpretations of the Findings	128

Circumscribed Opportunities Due to Incarceration History Challenges	128
Constrained Prospects Tied to Racial Identity	130
Societal Stigma Due to Gender Identity	132
Cumulative Effects of These Intersectional Factors	134
Limitations of the Study.....	135
Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research.....	137
Implications.....	139
Practical Implications.....	139
Theoretical Implications	140
Conclusion	142
References.....	144
Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer.....	185
Appendix B: Interview Guide Questions	186
Appendix C: Background Survey	187

List of Tables

Table 1. Lived Experience of African American Black Males in Community	104
Table 2. Participants' Period of Incarceration	108
Table 3. Circumscribed Opportunities Due to Incarceration History Challenges	111
Table 4. Constrained Opportunities Due to Black Racial Identity Challenges.....	118
Table 5. Societal Stigma Due to Black Male Gender Identity.....	122
Table 6. Cumulative Effect of Intersectional Barriers	124

List of Figures

Figure 1. Illustration of Research Design: IPA.....	68
---	----

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

For decades, African American Black males have experienced the disproportionate incarceration within the criminal justice system, compared to White males in the United States (Hetey & Eberhardt, 2018), and to a point at which researchers are beginning to wonder if the American criminal justice system resembles of the Indian Caste System (Chrispal et al., 2021). Grant (2018) posited that former-incarcerated African American Black males continue to experience significant psychological difficulties in their reentry into the community and accomplish reunification with their families. However, the literature does not provide an understanding of this experience.

In another study, Hetey and Eberhardt (2018) concluded that focused policing occurs in the neighborhoods in which African American Blacks are the predominant residents. Verbal or physical confrontation between law enforcement and African American Black males are often triggered by fear and stereotypes linking Blacks with crime, to which African American males emotionally react with psychological instincts of fight or flight. Many of these African American Black males who have encounters with the law enforcement are either on probation, parole, or who may just have recently been off parole, and which could lead to their rearrest and incarceration or reincarceration (Swaine & McCarthy, 2017).

This research study can provide these formerly incarcerated African American Black males with the opportunity to describe the phenomenon of their lived experience. The research findings may help deepen the understanding of this topic, which could inform practitioners in their clinical work with ex-inmates and inform legislators and

policy makers who create policies that can support formerly incarcerated African American males in their reentry challenges after imprisonment and mitigate financially and psychologically costly recidivism. Chapter 1 includes the background of the study topic, problem statement, purpose of the study, and the significance. This chapter also includes a discussion of the theoretical framework, methodology, assumptions, limitations, and challenges of the study. Furthermore, this may lead to a systemic pattern that makes it practically impossible for the African American Black males to experience a true freedom in the United States (Walter et al., 2017). Despite the robust research on this topic of African American Black male incarceration, there remains a gap in the relevant literature about the lived experience of the African American Black males, particularly with regards to their postincarceration community reentry. The negative effects of the disproportionate incarceration and subsequent difficulty in reentry to the community are taking a toll in the lives of African American Black men (Williams et al., 2020) and continue to present as significant barriers to educational advancement and gainful employment to support themselves and achieve family homeostasis, and avert recidivism (Hetey & Eberhardt, 2018).

Background

Williams et al. (2020) postulated that African American males are faced with more distinctive and a difficult pathway to community reentry than their non-Black peers after incarceration. These difficult pathways continue to present negative effects on their health and psyche and could trickle down to the negative implications for their family homeostasis. Previous researchers have found the rate at which African American Black

males are being admitted into the criminal justice system to be concerning (Vera Institute, 2019). African Americans Black males represent only 6% of entire population of the state, while in California's prison population, African American Black males continue to be overrepresented with 28.5% of the state's male prison's population, compared to just 5.6% of the state's adult male residents, and with the imprisonment rate for African American Black males standing at 4,236 per 100,000 people, 10 times the imprisonment rate for White men, which is 422 per 100,000 (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

Rosenberg et al. (2017) maintained that this disproportionate admission of African American Black males as inmates into the criminal justice system continues to receive an unprecedented attention. African American males constitute about 13% of the male population in the United States, with about 35% of them incarcerated. Rosenberg et al. posited that one in five Black people born in 2001 are likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime, compared to one in 10 Latino people and one in 29 White people. Taylor et al. (2018) and Hetey and Eberhardt (2018) affirmed that the discriminatory criminal justice policies and practices at all stages of the justice process have unjustifiably disadvantaged African American males, including through discriminatorily enforcement of all laws from felony to just a mere infraction.

According to Bishop et al. (2020), African American Black males are more likely to be stopped by the police, detained for pretrial, charged with more serious crimes, and sentenced more severely than their White counterparts even when the controlling act and commission of the crime carries the penalty. Despite research studies that continue to maintain that incarceration experience continue to maintain that incarceration experience

results in significant devastation to wellbeing in the community and their family homeostasis of the African Americans Black males (Hetey & Eberhardt, 2018), there remains a gap in relevant literature in terms of hearing from formerly incarcerated African American males about their experiences regarding community reentry.

According to Scharff et al. (2010), the reluctance of the African American males to participate in research studies could be traced back to the originating mistrust generated from their past experiences in different clinical trials. Given the desire for this study to provide conducive environment that will facilitate trust and allow these formerly incarcerated African American males to share their experiences about the phenomenon would provide them with the opportunity to share their lived experience about community reentry postincarceration. Eliciting such relevant information may facilitate to provide an informed knowledge and provide a better understanding to practitioners, policy makers, and legislators on how to formulate laws and policies to better serve these population,

According to William et al. (2019), having informed knowledge about the lived experience challenges on community reentry will inform about the reduction policies for recidivism. The authors posited that high rates of recidivism greatly impact public safety and the victims affected by those new crimes, as well as the lives of offenders who are unable to break out of the cycle of repeat offending.

Problem Statement

The Sentencing Project (2018) postulated that African American Black males were incarcerated in state and federal prisons at a rate almost six times that of Whites,

and almost double the rate for Hispanics. According to Gibbons et al. (2020), African Americans Black males continue to be overrepresented in the prison population. Studies have shown that in California prisons, 28.5% of the state's male prisoners were African American, compared to just 5.6% of the state's adult male residents, and with the imprisonment rate for African American Black males standing at 4,236 per 100,000 people, 10 times the imprisonment rate for White men, which is 422 per 100,000 (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019). African American Black ethnic group are 8% of LA's residents and account for 40% of those experiencing homelessness, while composing 13% of the U.S. population (Olivet et al., 2021).

Shadravan et al. (2020) maintained that significant proportion of the homeless individuals in Los Angeles are African American Black males, who had experienced incarceration at some point in their lives, and who continue to experience police harassment, detention, and subsequent reincarceration. President Obama (2016) in an address to his Council of Economic Advisers stated that “the costs of criminal justice policies are not limited to direct government expenditures.” Individuals who obtain a criminal record or serve a prison sentence often face difficult circumstances when they return to society. Having a criminal record or history of incarceration is a barrier to success in the labor market and limited employment, leading to depressed wages, which can trickle down to stifle an individual's ability to become self-sufficient to support and maintain a healthy crime-free family homeostasis (Tanner, 2021).

Beyond earnings, criminal sanctions can have negative consequences for individual health, debt, transportation, housing, and food security. Further, criminal

sanctions create financial and emotional stresses that destabilize marriages and have adverse consequences for children. Incarceration has been linked as a major contributing factor to unemployment, lack of educational advancement, divorce and family destabilizations, homelessness, chronic substance use and disorders, mental illness, and criminality among African American Black males (Martin, 2017; Tanner, 2021).

Despite research on the topic of incarceration and postincarceration community reentry, there remains a gap in the relevant literature about the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American males regarding their postincarceration community reentry, and how they make meaning of their lived experience (Williams et al., 2020). Hetey and Eberhardt (2018) posited that much can be accomplished by including formerly incarcerated African American males as participants in the research that studies their experiences about the phenomenon of postincarceration community reentry.

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to deepen the understanding of the topic of the topic of African American males' postincarceration community reentry and to address an identified gap in the current literature by hearing from formerly incarcerated African American Black males in their own words about how they make meaning of their experience of postincarceration community reentry.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to address a gap in the current literature by hearing from formerly incarcerated African American Black males in their

own words and how they make meaning in their reentry into the community postincarceration. Although researchers have utilized different conceptual approaches in some of their research findings in various articles and peer-reviewed articles, these researchers have omitted studying the affected individuals and providing them with the opportunity to describe in their own words their lived experiences during and after incarceration in the United States (Grant, 2018). Because quantitative or mix methods designs have not yielded information to ameliorate this situation, asking individuals with lived experience can deepen our understanding of the phenomenon of postincarceration community reentry. Eliciting such significant information from the lived experience in their own words of former incarcerated African American Black males could inform psychologists and other mental health practitioners on how to better serve this population.

Research Question

What are lived experiences of African American males upon community reentry after incarceration?

Theoretical Foundation

The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), hermeneutic phenomenology denotes an approach to a qualitative research study that seeks to describe the importance of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of the studying participants' lived experience in their own words. Originating from the work of a 20th Century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976), Heidegger through hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on being and temporality or an ontological focus on human experience and how it is lived. The IPA hermeneutic phenomenology lens is used to

identify and account the researcher's preconceptions about phenomenon for which they are collecting data, to facilitate the researcher's understanding the lived worldview of the participants (Peoples, 2021). Peoples (2021) maintained that when utilizing this approach, the researcher moves back and forth between transcribed experiences of the participants and their own interpretation of what these experiences mean. The process, referred to as the "hermeneutic circle," deepens the researcher's understanding of the meaning participants make of their experience, and results in generation of themes or patterns within the responses from participants' own experience (Peoples, 2021).

Conceptual Framework

In this study, I used the critical race theory (CRT) as the foundation for conceptual basis for the research. Relevant literature has documented the disproportionate rate at which African American Black males are incarcerated in the criminal justice system, but very little is known about reentry lived experience into their community postincarceration (Wildeman et al., 2019).

CRT is used along with the IPA, Hermeneutic phenomenology to make meaning of the phenomenon (Peoples, 2021). Conceived in the early 1970s by Bell and Freeman, these scholar researchers opined that this theory has become necessary given the need for a coexistent civil society. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2023), CRT became necessary to deepen the understanding about the relationship among race, racism, and power, and assist in transforming to a better understanding of the current Civil Rights statutes that were at the verge of extinction.

In this study, I used the CRT as the foundation for theoretical contextual basis for the research. Relevant literature has documented the negative effects, which have been endured by the families of the incarcerated African American Black males (Wildeman et al., 2019). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2023), there are five major tenets of CRT: (a) the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational, which allows the perpetrators of white racism to feel consciously irresponsible for the hardships people of color face and encounter daily, while maintaining power and strongholds within society; (b) the idea of an interest convergence; (c) the social construction of race; (d) the idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling; and (e) the notion that whites have actually been recipients of civil rights legislation.

Given the rates at which African American Black males continue to be disproportionately admitted into the criminal justice system, this study used CRT as a framework to evaluate the lived experiences of African American males during their reentry to the community postincarceration. According to Crenshaw (2010) and Delgado and Stefancic (2023), CRT was developed by scholars as a tool to paint an in-depth picture of white supremacists' racial ideology and discriminatory power control in the United States, along with how racism is subtly and blatantly permeated within the structure of American culture and the criminal justice system.

Furthermore, CRT is utilized to deepen the understanding about how to transform to a better understanding of the current Civil Rights safeguards and statutes that were at the verge of extinction. To accomplish these goals, CRT scholars have utilized conscious efforts to bring about contemporary swift change to the status quo that were initially

designed not in the best interest of the African American and other people of color lived experience (Garcia et al., 2015). According to Ledesma and Calderón (2015), CRT argues for a permanent society with a system where everyone is treated and respected equally regardless of the color of their skin, and a society devoid of egotism, supremacy, and privilege, and where racism and prejudice are eliminated and abandoned.

CRT envisages routine race-conscious decision making and nondeviant modes, as a preferred permanent standard to be utilized in allocating positions of wealth, stature, and influence. Delgado and Stefancic (2023) maintained that the CRT also has the focus of rejecting colour-blind meritocracy, whereby the law can and should treat all people equally regardless of the color of their skin as a vehicle for egotism, supremacy, and privilege (Barlow, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). CRT challenges the concept of ahistoricism and strive to underscore the recognition of racism within its social, historical, and financial contexts as a set standard rule for all (Crenshaw, 2010).

I chose CRT as a framework for my study because, it has much to do with inequity, which aligns with my research inquiry. Asasari et al. (2018) affirmed that systematic racism contributes to the racial disparities of incarceration of African American males into the criminal justice system, and which is taking a toll on them and their families. According to Carson (2015), the effects of structural racism embedded in criminal justice policies and mental health practices ramify into high rates of offending, arrest, and subsequent incarceration. The author affirmed that this disparate high incarcerate rate, with no structural plans for effective reentry trickle down to negatively impact on African America Black families and the communities.

In another instance, Macpherson (1999) opined that institutional racism consists of the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes, and behavior, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping, which is not in the best interest of the minority ethnic people. According to Elias and Paradies (2021), CRT is necessary to facilitate in reevaluating the existing structures, laws, and social norms, along with dismantling the institutional racism which have been created to the disadvantage and marginalization of the African American Black families and other minority ethnic groups in the United States.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I used the phenomenological methodology approach to make meaning of how formerly incarcerated African American males make meaning of their lived experience in reentry to their communities' postincarceration (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I conducted semistructured interviews with 10 formerly incarcerated African American males who were prompted to tell in their own words about their lived experience on reentering the community after incarcerations. Furthermore, the research I used the current relevant literature of peer reviewed articles and scholarly journals about the phenomenon. Findings from this study can enable researchers to obtain insights about what it feels like to be another person and to understand the worldview from lived experience. Furthermore, the outcome of the research can inform mental health practitioners, policy makers, and legislators about their services effectiveness.

Definitions

African American males: Black American males; Americans of Black African descent (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.).

Collateral consequences: The legal disabilities imposed by law as a result of a criminal conviction regardless of whether a convicted individual serves any time incarcerated, and the consequences, which creates social and economic barriers for the individual's reentering into society by denying or restricting benefits otherwise available to all Americans (American Bar Association, 2018).

Incarceration: Confinement in jail or prison; the act of imprisonment (28 CFR § 115.5).

Incarceration: Confinement in jail or prison; the act of imprisonment (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, n.d.).

Mass incarceration: Refers to the extreme imprisonment rate that is concentrated particularly on African American men who typically reside in disadvantaged communities (Wildeman & Wang, 2017).

Mass incarceration: Refers to the extreme imprisonment rate that is concentrated particularly on African American men who typically reside in disadvantaged communities (Wildeman & Wang, 2017).

Prison: State or federal correctional facility that confines convicted felons for typically longer than a 1-year sentence (Morenoff & Harding, 2014).

Prison: State or federal correctional facility that confines convicted felons for typically longer than a 1-year sentence (National Institute of Justice, n.d.).

Racial disparity: When referring to the criminal justice system, racial disparity refers to the proportion of the racial/ethnic population in the system that is greater than the population number outside the system; the proportion of a racial/ethnic group in the criminal justice system is significantly greater than other racial/ethnic groups (National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2017).

Racial disparity: When referring to the criminal justice system, racial disparity refers to the proportion of the racial/ethnic population in the system that is greater than the population number outside the system; the proportion of a racial/ethnic group in the criminal justice system is significantly greater than other racial/ethnic groups (National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2017).

Racism: The belief that race is key to human traits and capacities, and one race is superior to another (Shiao & Woody, 2021; Williams et al., 2019).

Racism: The belief that race is the key to human traits and capacities, and one race is superior to another (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.).

Recidivism: When a person is released from incarceration and is rearrested, reconvicted, and reincarcerated for either the same crime or a different crime (LaCourse et al., 2019; Yukhnenko et al., 2020).

Recidivism: When a person is released from incarceration and is rearrested, reconvicted, and re-incarcerated for either the same crime or a different crime (Bureau of Justice, 2018; National Institute of Justice, n.d.).

Reentry: Refers to the transition of offenders from prison to community (Morenoff & Harding, 2014).

Reentry: Refers to the transition of offenders from prison to community (Bureau of Justice, n.d.; Williams et al., 2019).

Assumptions

There are several assumptions relevant to this research study. Firstly, I assumed that prospective participants, who were Blacks of African descent, might have been reluctant to participate in the study because of the lack of trust. According to Durant et al. (2011) and Scharff et al. (2010), mistrust remain an important barrier to participating in research studies by the African American Black population due to their negative lived experience from previously exposed clinical research, including the Tuskegee experiments that compromised their lives without their knowledge.

Another assumption was that participants may have had skeptical feelings with a scholar researcher similar to how they viewed criminal justice officials. For instance, Alang et al. (2017) and Smith Lee and Robinson (2019) argued that the disparate traumatic experience of the African American Black males have left them with the belief that submitting to clinical trials could be another way designed by the law enforcement to reed off the African American Black males in the society.

Another assumption in this study was that all participants would be honest in their efforts to share credible information about their lived experiences on reentry to their community postincarceration. Furthermore, I assumed based on relevant literature that all formerly incarcerated African American males experienced reentry challenges and shared similar experiences. Also, I assumed that the phenomenological method was the most appropriate qualitative research method to obtain information that would best answer the

research questions for the study. Williams (2019) maintained that the rates at which African American Black males are incarcerated is not unconnected to racism, and as such, I assumed that all formerly incarcerated African American Black males believed that racism plays significant roles in their community reentry challenges postincarceration. Finally, I assumed that everyone presents unique and varying experiences, given the presence and availability of the unique social support, location, or social and economic status prior to, and postincarceration.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was a sample of formerly incarcerated African American Black adult males in Los Angeles. African American males are more likely to experience significant reentry challenges postincarceration, which presents significant negative effects to them, their families, and communities. Therefore, this research study may or may not be applied to a similar population with residence in the neighborhood with more opportunities available for formerly incarcerated African American Black males. In this study, I purposefully excluded the perceptions of formerly incarcerated women of any race, and I did not include the perceptions of formerly incarcerated men of other racial groups, or formerly incarcerated individuals based on any sexual orientation, including delimitation of the study of the geographical area.

Limitations

There are some limitations with qualitative research approach and the uniqueness of these limitations, if left unattended, can alter the information in subtle ways, and may pose significant disadvantages to the outcome of my research study. Firstly, I am African

American Black male, who lived in the South-Central Los Angeles, California, and have lived experience of the phenomenon that is the topic of the study because I have been in direct contact with law enforcement agents, which may affect my thoroughness in the research study. Another bias concerns with my employment background. As an employee with the criminal justice system and coming in direct contact with inmates with the same ethnic background with me as African American Black male, their shared experience about their treatment may have affected my approach to recruitment of participants for the study, design of the study, data collection, and data analysis. Cognizant of the possibility my experience and training may lead to bias, I took taking precaution to account for my experience through journaling, bracketing and audit trails. These will be further detailed in Chapter 3 (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Furthermore, qualitative approach in a research study is time-consuming, including problems arising with the interpretations are limited. For instance, researching on lived experience and knowledge may be influenced by the participants' embellished observations and conclusions, making the process to be prolonged to several weeks or months. Also, because this process delves into personal interaction for data collection, discussions often tend to deviate from the main issue to be studied (Vasileiou et al., 2018), and as such, the scholar practitioner researcher should design an ethical, legally acceptable process to mitigate wasting time while producing a quality outcome and recommendations that is valid, reliable, and trustworthy, and can be withstand the empirical test of operationalized (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Finally, one of the major limitations of phenomenological qualitative study is that the findings from the study cannot be generalized beyond the study sample. Although certain patterns or themes may emerge from participants' responses, these cannot be applied to formerly incarcerated African American Black males outside of the study sample (see Ataro, 2020; Neubauer et al., 2019).

Significance

Hinton et al. (2018) maintained that formerly incarcerated African American Black males are treated as outcasts postincarceration for mere violation of the legislative enactments, and even after paying the price for violating such laws. As a result, formerly incarcerated African American Black males receive such demeaning treatments such as lack of access to funds for their education, public housing assistance, disenfranchisement, and unemployment, which have a significant negative impact on their family homeostasis and on their wellbeing. The research study presented a unique approach to understanding the postincarceration community reentry experience of African American males by understanding their lived experience as related through a phenomenological qualitative study. This has the potential to add a much-needed perspectives in the study of African American mass incarceration, which has not only been identified as a social problem but has also been identified as a social determinant and as a risk factor in the status of Black males (see Neubauer et al., 2019). This research study sheds light on whether the incarceration experiences of the African American/Black males have contributing negative psychological effects in their efforts to reenter to their community post-incarceration.

Summary

This chapter provided the relevant background, purpose, and problem statement for the study. The disproportionate rate at which African American Black males are incarcerated has been well documented. While this is the case, there is not enough literature about the inclusion of formerly incarcerated African American males, as participants in the research about the phenomenon, and to talk about their lived experience during their reentry to the community postincarceration. The exclusion of these participants from the study deprives society of understanding the psychological hardships and exceptional challenges that formerly incarcerated African American males may have faced during their reentry into the community after incarceration.

Chapter 1 provided the background information how the African American Black males are disproportionately admitted into the criminal justice rate and with a higher recidivism rate (see Williams et al., 2020). The problem is that because of this incarceration experiences, most formerly incarcerated African American Black males find it very difficult to obtain and maintain gainful employment due to their criminal history background. They have no legitimate access to acquire wealth that will facilitate to secure housing and maintain stable family homeostasis. When they are faced with the stress due to their inability to provide for their families, along with delinquent child-support debts, family reunification, and the proliferation of neighborhood liquor stores, they are forced to resort to their usual criminal addictive thinking, use and sale of illicit drugs and/or alcohol, and committing crimes, which lead to recidivism.

The primary purpose of this qualitative research study was to address a gap in the current literature by hearing from formerly incarcerated African American Black males in their own words how they make meaning in their reentry into the community post-incarceration. The hermeneutic IPA was utilized as the theoretical foundation for the study to describe the importance of the phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of the studying participants' lived experience in their own words. The conceptual framework for the study was the CRT, along with the IPA hermeneutic phenomenology to make meaning of the phenomenon.

Next, interviewing conducted semistructured interviews with 10 formerly incarcerated African American males who were prompted to tell in their own words about their lived experience on re-entering the community after incarcerations. Also, I used current relevant literature of peer reviewed articles and scholarly journals about the phenomenon. Findings from the study can contribute to the bridging prior gap in research by exploring the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American males during their reentry to their community postincarceration and inform psychologists and other mental health practitioners, policy makers, and legislators on how to better serve this population.

In Chapter 2, I provide relevant discussion of available literature on the disproportionate incarceration of the African American males and major factors contributing to their high rate of recidivism. Also, the literature review search strategies, the theoretical foundation, and conceptual framework are discussed. Finally, the end of Chapter 2 will be a conclusion based on all the available reviewed relevant literature.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

Introduction

Pettus-Davis et al. (2017) found that significant stressors are experienced by incarcerated individuals during their imprisonment in state and federal penitentiaries, and these hardships increase when they are released for reentry into their communities, as they are faced with different life challenges including but not limited to reunion with their nuclear families and family of origin, which have experienced disruption due to their relative's incarceration, economic difficulties, difficulties with securing gainful employment due to their criminal records, to embracing delinquent debts upon their release from incarceration.

At the same time, these stressful difficult experiences are tripled among formerly incarcerated African American Black males, who are even more marginalized and discriminated against due to, not only because of the content of their character, but also, because of the color of their skin (Hinton & Cook, 2021). Chrispal et al. (2021) wondered if such a desperate and discriminatory mistreatment within the American criminal justice system is reflective of the Indian Caste System.

Williams et al. (2020) posited that the administrators, policy makers, and legislators got it all wrong when they designed a one-size-fits-all reentry programs to facilitate the reintegration of these formerly incarcerated individuals to their communities. The authors maintained that what these policy makers did not know was that the research findings with which they used in their policy formulations and legislative enactments excluded formerly incarcerated African American Black males as

participants during their research studies, and, as such, not a true reflection of their community reentry lived experience post incarceration.

Although the reentry programs may be providing significant reentry adjustment pathways to formerly incarcerated individuals from other ethnic groups who get released to habitable environments, formerly incarcerated African American Black males experiences the opposite, as they end up getting released into the neighborhood slums that lack the necessary aids to their reentry and adjustment process (Norris & Billings, 2017; Tanner, 2021). Besides their incarceration experience, most formerly incarcerated African American males live mostly in slum neighborhoods, and are uneducated, which is a concept that goes together with incarceration (Key & May, 2019), being unemployed prior to committing the crime that earned them the conviction and to serve time in the state or federal penitentiary.

Norris and Billings (2017) argued that as a result, when they are released back into their old neighborhood invested with crimes and illegal drug activities, along with dysfunctional families, poverty-stricken environment, they end up homeless and/or reengaged in committing the same or other more serious crimes, which violates the terms and conditions of their parole, thereby increasing their rates for recidivism (Bates, 2018; Donaldson-Richard, 2020).

While the Black or African American population alone or in combination amounted to 46.9 million people (14.2%) in 2020 (Jones et al., 202), they totalled 9.0% in Los Angeles, California (United States Census Bureau: Los Angeles California (n.d.). Research studies have indicated that African Americans remain overrepresented in

California's prison population, where 28.5% of the state's male prisoners were African American Black males, compared to just 5.6% of the state's adult male residents, which indicates that the imprisonment rate for African American Black males is 4,236 per 100,000 people, 10 times the imprisonment rate for White men, which is 422 per 100,000 (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019). Although recidivism rate among formerly incarcerated individuals is neither constant nor an isolated occurrence in California and the United States generally, formerly incarcerated African American Black males recidivate more often than their other ethnic counterparts because of more challenges and often man-made barriers, which makes their reentry process more difficult more than their other ethnic peers (Wallace & Wang, 2020).

Despite significant research, there remains a gap in the relevant literature about lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black males during their reentry to the community postincarceration, and how this experience make meaning to these individuals (Williams et al., 2020). Other research studies have posited that the proliferation of the incarceration rate has been made possible due to the dramatic expansion of the American penal system, which has disproportionately affected a small segment of the population comprised of young minority males with very low levels of education and residing in a relatively small number of local communities, which bear the brunt of the phenomenon of mass incarceration (Bronson & Carson, 2019; The Sentencing Project, 2018). Despite significant research studies about the reentry challenges phenomenon, there remains a gap in the relevant literature on why formerly incarcerated African American Black males are not included as participants in this type

of research study to tell in their own words about the challenges they experience during their reentry back to the community postincarceration.

In Chapter 2, I review the relevant literature that reveals the challenges and barriers that formerly incarcerated African American males face during their reentry postincarceration. I review the impact on the exclusion of formerly incarcerated African American Black males in the research studies on the challenges and barriers formerly incarcerated individuals face during their reentry to the community postincarceration could have on administrators, policy makers, and legislators in creating laws, and formulating policies and reentry programs that could facilitate a less stressful community reentry process to the formerly incarcerated individuals.

In this chapter, I present a description of the theoretical foundation as it relates to reentry challenges and recidivism among the formerly incarcerated African American Black male population. Also in this chapter, I present a synopsis of relevant literature in support of the relevance of this research study. I provide an overview of a scholarly discussion about the barriers and challenges that formerly incarcerated African American Black males face postrelease and how the challenges relate to recidivism. I provide the need for the African American males to be included as participants in the research studies about this phenomenon, to tell in their own words about the barriers and challenge the experience during their reentry to the community postincarceration.

Literature Research Strategy

I utilized various resources to access literature sources that were relevant to this research study. Databases that were used include PsychINFO, Google Scholar, Education

Source, SAGE Online Journals, Thoreau Multi-Database, University of Colombia, JSTOR Journals, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and PsychARTICLES. I utilized several keywords specific to this topic to create the library search inquiries, including *African American males, imprisonment, prison, reentry to community, postincarceration, substance abuse causes, lived experience, felony conviction, unemployment rate, wellbeing, aggressive policing, discrimination, prejudice, mental health, psychological distress, child support, and homelessness*. During my literature review, I utilized the identified keywords derived from Boolean Operators and Truncation, which has specific operationalization. The relationship between words or groups of words is defined using Boolean Operators such as “and,” “or,” “not” (book). Adding a truncation symbol (*) to the root of a word (book) aids in finding variations of the identified keywords

Walden library psychology database helped me to apply the truncation and Boolean operators of *African American males and imprisonment; African American males and reentry to community; African American males and lived experience; African American males and substance abuse causes; African American males and felony conviction; African American males and unemployment rate; college athletes and wellbeing; African American males and psychological distress; college athletes and aggressive policing; African American males and discrimination; African American males and prejudice; African American males and mental health; African American males and psychological distress; African American males and child support; African American males and homelessness*.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this research study was the hermeneutic IPA. As a qualitative thematic approach, the hermeneutic IPA is developed within psychology underpinned by an idiographic philosophy that focuses on the subjective lived experiences of individuals (Heidegger, 1889-1976). Horrigan-Kelly et al. (2016) opined that Heidegger through hermeneutic phenomenology focused on being and temporality or an ontological focus on human experience and how it is lived.

Peoples (2021) maintained that the IPA hermeneutic phenomenology lens is utilized to identify and account for the researcher's preconceptions about phenomenon for which they collected data, which facilitates the researchers to understand the lived experience of the participants. The author posited that this "hermeneutic circle" approach was accomplished by moving back and forth between transcribed experiences of the participants and their own interpretation of what these experiences mean.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research study was CRT (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2018). Crenshaw et al. (1995) utilized their analytical lens of CRT through their progressive knowledge, which dramatically transformed how law, race, and racial power are understood and discussed in America. The authors in the 1980s organized into a framework targeting the blatant, subtle, and systemic ways racism currently operates through both covert and overt expressions. Crenshaw et al. postulated that in order to make meaning of the term "racism," the CRT concept need to be used as a

means to understand and challenge the racism, and, as it can better be explained and understood through lived experience.

By adopting this theory, the authors paved ways that differentiate CRT from two other approaches in law, including progressive approaches that are color-blind to racism, such as critical legal theory, critical feminist theory, and civil rights approaches. Although the later, civil rights approaches rely on the racially unjust legal system strategically, the CRT, on the other hand, seeks to eradicate racism from it, which requires radical transformation of the system that serves and protects racism as its breeding ground (Ford & Airhihenbuwa 2018; Sharif et al., 2022).

The CRT concept, which is more than 40 years old, presents as the core idea that race is a social construct, and that racism is a product of individual bias and/or prejudice that is embedded in legal systems and public policies (Crenshaw et al., 1995). For instance, in the 1930s, government officials literally drew lines around areas deemed poor financial risks, often explicitly due to the racial composition of inhabitants, while the in the 1930s, government officials literally drew lines around areas deemed poor financial risks, often explicitly due to the racial composition of inhabitants. (Steil et al., 2018) posited that these discriminatory practices continue through the 21st century. Furthermore, CRT continues to vindicate the African American Black, Latino, and other minorities, including in the last decade U.S. housing crisis, where African American Black and Latino borrowers disproportionately received high-cost, high-risk mortgages (Steil et al., 2018).

The scholars of CRT utilized this approach to make a foundational persuasive case by providing significant in-depth view on how racial discrimination is embedded in the policy decision making and laws that specifically designed to target African American Blacks, a historical deleterious event, which was reechoed during the civil war era, when African American Blacks became convinced that the promises and application of the letters of 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments could only be accomplished in theory rather than in practice (Carol Shively, 2020).

While the formerly incarcerated African American males continue to face many barriers during and after their reentry to society after, research studies have maintained that not only has this man-made barriers contributed to significant hardship and poor health problems but that these individuals continue to be excluded as participants to tell in their own words in research studies that study's the postincarceration challenges formerly incarcerated African American Black male experience during their reentry postincarceration (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019; Williams et al., 2019).

This marginalization of the African American Black ethnic group in the United States transcended the slavery era, including the Reconstruction era, Jim Crow laws (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). Above all these man-made barriers put in place to subjugate the African American Black ethnic group, the American criminal justice system, through their embedded racial prejudicial and discriminatory practices, have been identified as one destructive government agency that hinders the economic progress and social development of the African American males (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

The CRT postulates that the American criminal justice system is not interested about the hardship experience reentry to the community postincarceration of the formerly incarcerated African American males, given their focus of interest is to promote the agenda of the White supremacy, and using this government machinery as a means to increase the affluence of the White ethnic group, while using these discriminatory laws and policies to subjugating the African American Black ethnic group to a perpetual misery and poverty (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

Furthermore, the voting rights were embedded with significant racial discriminatory undertone. Given the importance of voting to the functioning of a democracy, one might think the U.S. Constitution would enshrine in their Constitution the voter safeguards and specify voter's eligibilities, but the reverse is the case instead (Chung, 2021).

Historically, instead of including this important democratic clause in the Constitution, the authors of the U.S. Constitution, who were predominantly all White acclaimed privileged Americans, allotted the voting rights and land-owning rights exclusively to all White/Caucasians (Uggen et al., 2020). The voting rights through an act of the legislation were later extended to the African American males with the 15th Amendment, while the women gained the right to vote with the 19th Amendment but living the details of who can be excluded from voting was left up to each state to decide (Chung, 2021).

These racial discriminatory practices continued in California until the California legislator. Approximately 13% of African American Black males are disqualified from

voting because of a felony conviction due to institutionalized racism embedded in the criminal justice system, which tends to work together with social policies designed to subjugate the African American Black ethnic group to perpetual health disparities and disenfranchisement (Purtle, 2013).

On the other hand, the CRT postulates that racism as social construct phenomenon should be dismantled and abandoned because it is designed with guidelines that are to the disadvantage of the African American males and other people of color (Braveman & Parker, 2021). CRT maintains that the criminal justice system polices have been utilized to disproportionately marginalize formerly incarcerated African American Black males and precipitates their resolve to despondency and helplessness (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

Ultimately, these racially embedded practices of prejudice and discrimination across the various branches of the criminal justice systems' policies frustrates the formerly incarcerated African American males from effective reentry back to their community postincarceration (Evans, 2021; Williams et al., 2019). The emergence of CRT lends credence that the criminal justice system continues to be utilized by legislators and social policy makers to marginalize African American males in getting their fair share in corporate America (Roberts, 2019).

In other words, the CRT argues that the policy makers and legislators create and enact laws that are enforced by the legitimate agents in a discriminatory manner, thereby inflicting more oppression, psychological hardship, and exceptional depravity to African American males (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). For instance, the CRT maintains that in their

racial discriminatory practices, African American males are sentenced to a harsher punishment than Whites who commit the same crime (Fusaro et al., 2018; Holzer, 2021).

Legislators and policymakers have used the criminal justice system as an effective instrument to marginalize African Americans, thereby unleashing them with yet another oppression (Flowe, 2020; Hinton & Cook, 2021; Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). Evidence of racism can be found across institutions that employ economic and social barriers to marginalize formerly incarcerated African American men. The CRT maintains that this systemic racial marginalization began from the period the first African American males set their foot on the American soil of the State of Virginia more than 400 years ago, and which has trickled down from the eras of slavery, through the Reconstruction Era, Jim Crow Laws, and Black Belts (LaVeist et al., 2019).

In one summation, the CRT maintains that the criminal justice system as the brainchild of the White supremacists was not created with the inclusion and/or in the best interest of the African American males, given their long outstanding trajectory with prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization of the African American Black males (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019). Indeed, CRT posits that decades following emancipation from slavery, the construction of black criminality was left in the hands of the legislators and policy makers who were directly or indirectly involved with slave trade (Flowe, 2020).

These former slave masters, by their current and legitimate authorities, create policies and laws there are not inclusive of significant issues that could facilitate the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the African American Black males from decades of cruel and unusual mental torture (Flowe, 2020), a process whereby their agents, the

police, parole, and social services departments, are utilized and activated to permeate their racially discriminatory agenda (Flowe, 2020).

The impact of this long-term marginalization and mistreatment of the African American Black males by the criminal justice system oftentimes continues with no significant empirical data on the formerly incarcerated African American Black males struggle with their reentry postincarceration (William et al., 2019) as the scholar researchers continue to exclude these group of individuals as participants in their clinical research studies on the phenomenon.

This exclusion leaves the legislators and the criminal justice and social services policy makers with no other option but to use the data that excluded formerly incarcerated African American Black males to formulate policies that were not based on the true response on the research about their struggle for reentry back to the community postincarceration (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019), and, at the same time, promoting the agenda of White supremacy while benefitting the middle-class and upper-class White elite group (Flowe, 2020; Hinton & Cook, 2021).

The CRT further argues that these man-made barriers to reentry postincarceration was a deliberate and calculated agenda by the White supremacy to prevent the advancement of racial minorities by continuing oppression through laws, policies, and practices by their law enforcement agents and other social and policy agents, and that continue to negatively impact the African American males and other racial and ethnic minorities.

For instance, the formerly incarcerated African American Black males are less likely to be included as participants in research studies to tell in their own words about their lived experience on reentry to the community postincarceration even though the focus of study centers on their lived experience (Williams et al., 2020). Furthermore, due to these racially systemic flaws, African American Black males upon release from incarceration find it very difficult to reintegrate back to their community (Williams et al., 2019).

In fact, studies have indicated that the White supremacists racially design the criminal justice system to make it extremely difficult for formerly incarcerated African American Black males to not return to prison after release, as research studies have found that 68% of African American Black male ex-convicts were rearrested within 3 years of release, 79% within 6 years, and 83% within 9 years of release (Williams et al., 2019). In another research study, the findings showed that while an estimate 3% of the total U.S. adult population has experienced prison sentence in their lives, 15% of the African American adult male population has ever been to prison; people with felony convictions account for 8% of all adults and 33% of the African American adult male population (Shannon et al., 2017).

Child support is another debilitating factor designed by the racially systemic criminal justice to target and derail the progress and advancement of African American males, a process that has rather created the absent Black fathers due to their falling victims of the laws created against their own best interest, while promoting the welfare-

child support system at the expense of the African American nuclear family system (Rambert, 2021).

A research study in the United States showed that 13% of White children are raised by a single parent; 7% of Asian children come from a single parenting home, 24% of Hispanic children come from single parenting homes, and 46% of African American Black children come from single parenting homes (Hemez & Washington, 2021).

To use a linear process to ascribe the blame to the plight of African American Black fathers would not pass the litmus test of repugnancy for fairness and equity. It is important to be cognizant of why significant portion of African American children emerge from single parenting homes. African American Black males have the highest number of incarcerations in the American criminal justice system (Blankenship et al., 2018; Braveman et al., 2022).

African American Black males may be unaware that their girlfriend/wife may have been pregnant prior to his incarceration, only to be faced with his conviction fines and restitution, along with child support and other personal delinquent bills in his process of reentry to the community after incarceration, and with little or no resources to meet with these urgent obligations. This process oftentimes ramifies to real social consequences, which feed back into the social perception of African American Black fatherlessness, which begs the question as and assesses the insensitivities in state child support enforcement and questions whether system is motivated to unite of push African American Black fathers out of their homes (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

The CRT offers another compelling systemic flaw driven by the criminal justice system that was founded on the ideology of the White supremacist's agenda. According to Williams et al. (2019), reintegration following an incarceration by the African American males is challenging because of the need to achieve a favorable state of stability and normalcy. More importantly, it is difficult for the incarcerated African American male to establish and experience the parent-child relationship while the parent is incarcerated and absent to seeing his child grow (Dargis & Mitchell-Somoza, 2021).

Furthermore, William et al. (2020) and Alang et al. (2017) affirmed not only a link between police brutality of the African American males and the unique derogatory and aggressive manner with which the law enforcement uses specifically during their stops and approaches on the African American males but also if an African American Black male was arrested and subsequently incarcerated during this aggravating and racially designed stops, including especially if the suspects are found guilty on a drug charges, they were disqualified from obtaining any public housing assistance, which automatically makes them eligible for homelessness.

Research by William et al. (2020) concluded that the relationship between the criminal justice system and the promotion of White supremacy mirrors the oppression of African Americans. After the Civil War, many freed African American slaves had no resources or support for survival. Instead of offering assistance, former slave owners insisted that they "pull themselves up by their bootstraps"—despite having no means to do so (Alang et al., 2017; William et al., 2020).

Norris and Billings (2017) argued that the ongoing practice of conducting research on African American males without including them as participants in studies about issues that directly affect them reflects a clear intent. This exclusion perpetuates the goals of a White supremacist society, reinforcing prejudice and discrimination.

Norris and Billings (2017) maintained that the flawed system is much consumed in its self-centeredness that it is willing to do anything to permeate their racially motivated status quo, including utilizing a legitimate process to create laws, policies, and practices that support racial inequality through the mass incarceration of African American Black males.

Alexander (2010) maintained that the infamous slave trade was technically not abolished; rather, it ramified and translated into racially biased legislations and social policies, which are witnessed in the modern-day criminal justice system and which appear race-neutral at the surface, but on the inside, such policies are specifically designed to exert control over the African American males and other people of color. Legislation significantly escalated the criminalization of nonviolent civil disobedience. This was part of a continued effort by White supremacists to exploit the criminal justice system. They used these laws to disempower, demonize, and incarcerate African American Black males and their supporters in anti-segregation movements (Alexander, 2010).

At worst, and afraid that they may be confronted by the international human rights watchdog for violations, and about the propensity of intentionally creating reentry challenges to formerly incarcerated African American males (U.S. Department of Justice,

Civil Rights Division, 2019), the criminal justice system quickly and systematically created a reentry program that was thought to help alleviate these reentry challenges, but that was actually an extension of a racially discriminatory criminal justice system that uses legitimate law enforcement agents, courts, and other criminal justice and social service agencies to continue their oppression of the most marginalized population, the formerly incarcerated African American Black males (Hinton et al., 2018). This mindset gives allows them to justify the framework of racists' disproportionate police brutality and violence against people of color as a justifiable application of the principle to serve and protect oath of duty (Smith et al., 2019).

The CRT serves as critical lens with which to make an informed meaning about this phenomenon. For instance, CRT affirms that there are many instances where freelance cameras who happened to be at the right place at the right time have helped get these long existing indiscriminate human rights violations as perpetrated by these racially discriminatory law enforcement agencies to the attention of the public, which has helped to provoke their thoughts to question the validity of such abuses ranging from Rodney King's brutal beating in 1991 by Los Angeles Police Department in Los Angeles, California, Abner Louima's brutalization and torture by New York City police in 1997, the 1999 shooting of Amadou Diallo when police mistook his wallet for a gun as he was entering his home, and Sean Bell, the young groom who was shot 50 times by police on the day of his wedding in 2006, to many other inhumane killings of the African American Black males, including the 2012 Trayvon Martin killing by a vigilante in his Sanford, Florida, neighborhood, the police-involved deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner,

Freddie Gray, Laquan McDonald, Tamir Rice, and Walter Scott (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division, 2017). These were just few of many killings that were incidentally captured by cameras.

While these killings of the African American Black males continue (Leslie et al., 2022), the CRT argues that the criminal justice system, which was founded on the White supremacists' agenda, do not have better approaches for systemic reforms to prevent or deescalate situations that could ameliorate such future preventable deaths, including, designing and implementing prosocial and civilized measures to change the way the legal system responds to emerging adults, along with creating a specialized supervision approaches within the court systems and corrections' units (Alang et al., 2017).

CRT argues that disentangling these racists' permanent criminalization of one race in the United States is essential to clear the reputation of the criminal justice system as a legitimate criminal justice system for all and not a caste system for the less privileged few in the United States (Dennison & Demuth, 2018). Nembhard and Robin (2021) maintained that racism and racial biases are so deeply embedded in the criminal legal system that disparities based on race exist at each decision point impact subsequent decision points and result in negative outcomes for African American Black males and other people of color.

This deep-rooted racism within the rank and file of the law enforcement agencies is continually experienced by every African American Black male in the United States. For instance, Goff et al. (2016) pointed out that police that African American males and other individuals of color, regardless of their social economic status, are more likely to

experience excessive use of force than their White counterparts. Findings in another research study has shown that African American males and other individuals of color are more likely than White individuals to be threatened with force during officer-initiated contact and to experience some form of force in interactions with police (Davis et al. 2018).

Furthermore, African American Black people are twice as likely as White people to be killed by police (36 per million people versus 15 per million people, respectively; Goff et al. 2016). In another study, Bor et al. (2018) maintained that in 2018, more than 300 Black individuals were killed by law enforcement, and one-quarter of them were unarmed. These deleterious disparate killing of African American Black males continue to demonstrate how the criminal justice system has compromised the responsibility with their duties to protect all individuals.

Given the above reasons of pervasion by the criminal justice system with the White supremacists agenda, the criminal justice system transformed incarceration for a mere crime commission as a lifelong career for the African American Black males, rather than providing them with a commensurate punishment for their acts of crime committed and corrective rehabilitation process as was originally designed (Taylor et al., 2018). The CRT postulates that while it remains disheartening to be the truth, there is still the potential for real change in the way policing is done (Nembhard & Robin, 2021). For instance, the CRT calls for significant changes in the agenda of the criminal justice with their treatment towards the African American males admitted into the justice system for committing the acts of crime. Policing reforms should be developed and tailored with

African American males in mind, which will likely have an outsized impact on the outcomes achieved and help to save the taxpayers with significant dollars they appropriate to house and recycle these individuals in the justice system (Pettus-Davis & Kennedy, 2019).

CRT acknowledges the need for appropriate punishment and restitution for crimes while aiming to reduce excessive retribution. However, it also questions the moral legitimacy of a criminal justice system that has often been compromised by racist White supremacists. This influence makes the reentry process disproportionately difficult for African American males post-incarceration (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Even when these individuals successfully reenter society, their time in the community is often short-lived. There is a high likelihood of recidivism due to a criminal justice system deliberately designed by White supremacists to keep African American males behind bars and perpetuate their criminal careers (Ortiz & Jackey, 2019).

Luna (2017) maintained that the differential treatment on the basis of race is well documented in the U.S. criminal legal system, given the system in itself, in its definition of criminality and criminal activity grounded the definition to reflect the structural inequalities between African American males and other people of color and White individuals, while at the same time, they effectively use their racist policies and practices as an instrument to control and separate families and communities of color, and African American Black males from their women, which leads to an irretrievable breakdown of family values in their communities. Furthermore, the report asserted that a dysfunctional

family most oftentimes begets a delinquent child who will end up getting in trouble with the law, quickly exposed to use of illicit drugs, sexual promiscuities, and/or prostitution.

The CRT points out that, soon after the emancipation of the slaves, White slave masters, driven by their fear of retaliation from African American males, aligned with the criminal justice system, legislators, and policymakers. They did so to promulgate laws that criminalized behaviors and perpetuated discrimination against people of color. These laws were designed to maintain the status quo (Henderson & Reed, 2018; Saladino et al., 2021).

In addition to these laws, other social regulatory statutes and economically based policies, such as convict leasing, redlining, and credit score usage, have continued to prevent formerly incarcerated African American males from generating wealth and developing resources in their neighborhoods. Laws like the Black Codes and vagrancy laws were used to control Black communities during and after Reconstruction. Similarly, Jim Crow laws restricted access to resources and opportunities, often denying communities of color the higher-quality resources available to White communities (Rothstein, 2017).

The mindset of the White supremacists has always been on their self-centered privileges than to facilitate the African American males in their quest for success in the corporate America through education and equity.

However, the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* began to set the records straight and struck down the segregation of the American children in the classroom due to the color of their skin (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007, 2017). Even with

such an outstanding legal precedent, Bell opined the White supremacists believed such a ruling was not in the best interest of helping the African American males and their families rather; instead, it was an attempt to maintain the interest of the White elites without hurting middle-class White people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The CRT proposes that policy makers, legislators, and social scientists begin without further delay to engage in a thorough discussion on this issue and what they can do to eradicate racism and perverting laws and policies designed to subjugate the African American Black makes within the criminal justice system (Bell, 1990, 1992). In another instance, the CRT argues that such tenet and ideas where the White supremacists often propose policies and strategies that continue to maintain and propagate the self-interests of White people rather than helping Black people should be dismantled for the interest of natural justice, equity, and good conscience (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017).

Given that racial inequality is found across various government organizations and/or establishments, this study focused on the criminal justice system with emphasis on the challenges the formerly incarcerated African American males experience during their postincarceration reentry to the community. The CRT was used as a framework to understand the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American males who shared what meaning they have, given their experiences.

Challenges to Community Reentry and Postincarceration Adjustment

Community reentry is the process where the formerly incarcerated person(s) returns to the community with or without the supervision of the criminal justice system (Williams & Rumpf, 2020). Given the current era of mass incarceration, an increasing

number of African American Black male inmates face the challenge of transitioning from prison to society, as research studies have shown that incarceration comes with significant collateral consequences to their community return (Williams & Rumpf, 2020; Williams et al., 2019). Formerly incarcerated African American males experience significant reentry challenges postincarceration. William et al. (2019) posited that due to these deleterious challenges they face postincarceration, formerly incarcerated African American males have the propensity for disproportionate recidivism.

For instance, during their incarceration, the incarcerated African American males have access to meals, housing, and medical assistance with no worries if they can afford it. Their successful reentry back into the community depends on many different factors and some factors combined; these factors include employment, housing, and family reunifications (Williams et al., 2019).

Williams et al. (2019) utilized critical ethnography and semistructured interviews to study participants and their experience with social, economic, and political oppression. In the same study, the authors found that stigma, housing, employment, masculinity, and family reunification and support were factors that continue to have a negative impact on formerly incarcerated African American Black male's successful and/or failure for effective reintegration into society. Scholar researchers have maintained that gainful employment is a significant and essential factor in successfully reintegrating back into society (Crutchfield & Weeks, 2015; Power & Nolan, 2017). It is often difficult for formerly incarcerated individuals to obtain employment (Nembhard & Robin 2021; Williams et al., 2019).

Employment is an essential factor for effective reentry of formerly incarcerated African American Black males. Employment can mitigate the ex-felon's risk of returning to criminality, as a way of economically sustaining himself and his family. The formerly incarcerated African American relies on these legitimate earnings to secure housing for themselves and their families.

However, seeking and obtaining employment by formerly incarcerated African American Black males has not been an easy process. African American males with felony convictions loses a significant social welfare benefit, including food stamps, financial aid for their educational improvements and public housing, along with facing discrimination in employment and the private housing market (Custer, 2019). According to Owens et al. (2017), there is a continued collision between the criminal justice system and racism.

African American males and other people of color continue to be overrepresented in the prisons. For instance, Carson (2020) found that 4.4% of the African American Black male population of California is incarcerated in a California prison; 1 in every 5 African American Black male in California is incarcerated at 100 times the rate of Asian men, 10 times the rate of White men, and five times the rate of Latino men.

Owens et al. (2017) maintained that these disparities and their causes are a result of preventable variations in socioeconomic status, access to employment and education opportunities, patterns in policing, and differences in charging and sentencing decisions made by prosecutors and judges. Hinton et al. (2018), in another examination of employment outcomes of people with felony convictions, found that African American Black males without a felony conviction are not equally treated better or the same as their

White male counterpart with a felony conviction; this research finding is a clear manifestation of how the felony conviction is preceded by racism.

On the other hand, Williams et al. (2019) maintained that upon release from incarceration and faced the even more hardship of unemployment due to their criminal record, formerly incarcerated African American males continue to struggle with the experience of poverty post-incarceration, just as they did prior to their incarceration. Yu and Sun (2019) maintained that employment due to their criminal records, along with, but not the color of their skin alone, remains a major predictor for the African American males for higher recidivism rate in the criminal justice system.

Family System and Family Reunification

African American Black males and their families have been significantly impacted by mass incarceration, given the unprecedented and disproportionate rates with which they are admitted in the U.S. prison population. More than 1.5 million men were incarcerated in the United States prisons in 2016 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018). Despite the growing body of literature on the phenomenon, along with the disproportionate collateral social consequences of mass incarceration to the African American Black families, along with the unprecedented exposure of their young adolescents to psychosocial vulnerability to risky behaviors, and from many of whom are fathers, enough attention has not been given to the extent of damage on fatherhood and father identity.

Creswell (2009) posited that qualitative research design is appropriate as a way to explore meaning, by assigning people to larger social problems, to explore how

incarceration impacts fatherhood and father identity, to help inform the participants about how the concept of fatherhood make meaning to them, and particularly to explore how incarceration impacts fatherhood and father identity among the formerly incarcerated African American Black males.

Lewis and Hong (2020) utilized semistructured interviews for a study to help to better understand the participants' fathering experiences while incarcerated and after release. The sample focused on participants between the ages of 21 and 40, with the mean age of 33-years-old, who identified as having at least one biological child under the age of 18 at the time of their most recent incarceration. Also, the 20 participants to this study were limited to formerly incarcerated fathers who reported serving no more than a total of 10 years in prison over their lifetime for nonviolent offenses.

Lewis and Hong's (2020) qualitative study examines the consequences of mass incarceration on father identity and the performance of fatherhood among a group of formerly incarcerated African American Black males. Drawing from the qualitative data on the lived experiences and perceptions of a group of formerly incarcerated African American Black fathers, the research study found that the incarceration experience significantly presents a dangerously disruptive performance of fatherhood among this group of men, which translate to acute harm to their identity as fathers during incarceration, and an ongoing harm postincarceration and reentry to their community.

The concept of community reentry is designed to provide formerly incarcerated African American Black male with the opportunity to reintegrate back to a place they once called their community. Although every incarcerated individual looks for a chance

to getting released from the penitentiary, even those sentenced to life imprisonment, reentering into society can be difficult and challenging for those returning to impoverished communities. Their findings have indicated that oftentimes African American males are involuntarily removed from their families by the criminal justice system, who is working in collision with the White supremacist's agenda.

Gifford (2019) postulated that incarceration removes individuals from their families and their communities, increasing the propensity for disrupted child-father bonding, exposure to unhealthy relationships, community fragmentation, and increased burden on the taxpayers and governmental agencies such as social services, mental health, schools, and juvenile justice, along with the fact that families of prisoners are often plagued by significant human needs for healthy living disadvantage, even prior to incarceration, like, the higher unemployment, mental health problems, interpersonal conflict, maltreatment, substance abuse, and poverty.

In another instance, Gifford (2019) study found that due to these disparate rates of incarceration, the African American males experience the father-hood identity deficiencies. Furthermore, research findings have indicated that African American Black males recognize the importance of a father's physical presence in his child's life and view it as an essential component of fatherhood. However, they also emphasize that merely being present is not sufficient. They believe that true fatherhood involves more than just physical presence.

Furthermore, Gifford (2019) identified that lack of presence and adequate providing financial and emotional support for their families are some of the collateral

negative effects of incarceration the criminal justice system. African American males are systemically deprived of the invaluable opportunity to be a role model, a hero, and being looked up to, and a good example for the children due to their incarceration.

Gifford (2019) also found that incarceration limits the enactment of fatherhood and disrupts the father identity confirmation process and debilitates African American Black males with the ability to set positive examples for their children in their developmental stages and character development; the research study maintained that incarceration not only modifies the fatherhood identity of an average incarcerated African American Black male, but also their absence due to incarceration significantly diminishes the fatherhood expectations and standards, which in turn translates into lowering their expectations and requirements of themselves as fathers while incarcerated.

De Claire and Dixon (2017) in another study found that while several fathers reported maintaining communication with their children either by writing them letters every weekend, sending them cards and drawings, despite cutting off physical contact through visitation, some African American Black male prisoners cut off prison visits from their children to avoid experiencing additional stress.

De Claire and Dixon (2017) however pointed out that fathers who adopt such later measures end up to find it difficult to bridge the gap and psychological strain caused by the loss of contact with their children, even as the fathers attempted to make up for the lost time when they returned, which led to most of these formerly incarcerated African American Black males to report about experiencing ongoing emotional distance from their children as part of the collateral consequence of incarceration.

Family support provides a significant and effective psychological reassuring to the new entrants to the community, through interpersonal and interactional guidance and support. In their research, Mowen et al. (2019) examined multiple theoretically and methodologically distinct factors of family support related to reincarceration, substance use, and criminal offending during prison reentry and how multiple theoretically and methodologically distinct factors of family support relate to reincarceration, substance use, and criminal offending during prison reentry. They found that family support is instrumental as a base for a smooth transition to providing housing and transportation, while at the same time, the family provides emotional love and belongingness, and such factors play significant roles to mitigate recidivism (Mowen et al., 2019).

Transgenerational Slavery Trauma

Bosick and Fomby (2018) postulated that African American Black males, especially those from dysfunctional families, continue to experience disparate incarceration by the criminal justice system. Ruggles (1994) argued that the practices and inhumane exposures to slavery remain a major contributing factor to the disorganization and the instability in the African American Black families. Hunter (2006) explained African American males in the most fundamental answer to a question of whom, culturally, the African became, to what translated into African American Blacks today. Hunter (2006) further maintained that African American Blacks, as an ethnic group, experienced the destruction of their traditional African family values due to slavery. This destruction was driven by the systemic actions of White supremacists and their collusion with the criminal justice system.

The research findings credited the utility of these original family values as a major contributing factor to the African Americans victory on the wars against slavery. Williams (2022) theorized that since the loss of these distinctive invaluable family cultural values, Africans who arrived as slaves into America have not been the same. On dismantling their family values as a factor that makes meaning to them, the criminal justice system with their White supremacists' agenda shaped the African American Blacks condition in America with macrostructural forces, including economic institutions, social relations, and social stratification, which makes them more vulnerable as a victim, rather than suspects with the criminal justice system.

Halloran (2019) in a qualitative research study utilized the terror management theory (TMT) to analyze the poor social and psychological well-being of African Americans by drawing upon a model of cultural trauma to explain the antecedents and effects of posttraumatic slave syndrome (PTSS). Halloran argued that the comparatively negative social and psychological conditions of African Americans Black males have for many generations now become so problematic, that must deserve a universal and coordinated attention for an investigation about the sources of the origin. The author maintained that African American males experience more misfortunes ranging from higher rates of poverty, financially insecurity, prejudice, while blatant and subtle discrimination more than every other ethnic group in the United States.

Halloran (2019) defined cultural trauma as a state that occurs when a people's cultural worldview has been destabilized to the point where it does not effectively meet its (TMT) function of providing a buffer against basic anxiety and uncertainty (Halloran,

2019). Jones (n.d.) argued that historical trauma is an example of intergenerational trauma, which is caused by events that targets a group of people whereby; even family members who have not directly experienced the trauma can feel the effects of the event generations later. In another concurring research studies, Yehuda and Lehrner (2018) in their qualitative study, found a correlation in the role of epigenetic mechanisms in intergenerational trauma and as it permeates through individual biology, cultural and societal experiences, along with an enduring change in the function of DNA that can be passed to future generations.

Child Support Indebtedness

Davies and Thate (2017) posited that the orthodox universal consensus and practices assumes that men generally work hard to put food on the table and provide for the children and family, and African American males do not intend to shy away from this universal providing for the family concept. However, Rambert (2021) found that the continued perception of African American Black male fathers' unintentionally absenting themselves from their children's lives has largely been described as part of the collateral consequences of the disparate incarceration of the African American males.

Furthermore, Rambert (2021) found that in the past 50 years, it has been a norm and common occurrence in the African American communities that a significant number of the children were impregnated by their fathers who were free in the community, but only to be incarcerated, and causing their females to go through the hard labor and experience during pregnancy, so the child would first see their father while incarcerated. Rambert pointed out that this trend has become so common that most of these children

are born in the absence of their natural fathers. Lewis and Hong (2020) maintained that these children fall within the category of those whose fathers make up 92% of incarcerated parents, a disproportionate number of which were African American males.

Grall (2020) posited that child support delinquent debts and other accumulating debts continue to represent as a significant burden on formerly incarcerated African American males during their reentry to the community post-incarceration.

Haney and Mercier (2021) reported that African American Black males struggle with the delinquent child support indebtedness, along with other significant community reentry adjustment related issues, like family reunification and reintegration and abstinence from crime. Harper et al. (2021) affirmed that the inability for these community new entrants to resolve their delinquent child support debts and other socioeconomic adjustment related issues puts the African American Black male new community entrant postincarceration at a high risk of probation and/or parole violation and subsequent recidivism.

For instance, Harper et al. (2021) finds that a formerly incarcerated African American Black male owes an average child support debts of \$20,000 to \$36,000, with an interest rate of >8 to 12% in the State of California. Harper et al. (2021) also maintained that the amount is two to three times more than the average child support debt of other low-income parents, and three to four times the average criminal justice debts of other reentering citizens from other ethnic groups. In another instance, a recent report indicated that while the African American males struggle with these and other debilitating restrictions including their criminal records during their reentry to the

community postincarceration, all 50 states in the United States, including California, have statutory or administrative provisions that authorizes the suspension or revocation of various licenses for failure to pay child support, including driver's, occupational, professional, business and recreational licenses (Haney & Mercier, 2021; NCSL, 2020).

Economic Challenges (Employment, Housing, and Personal Debts)

Different research studies have continued to identify the negative impacts of coming in contact with the law enforcement agencies on daily bases. Williams et al. (2020) in their qualitative study about the effects of daily surveillance, arrest, sentencing, and reentry processes within the United States found that these practices have different significant effects in all individuals for different reasons. Furthermore, Mogk et al. (2019), in the study about the about the impact of the legal system involvement is a policy-driven risk factor for homelessness, maintained that formerly incarcerated African American Black males face some legally created man-made economic challenges during their reentry to their community postincarceration. Williams et al. (2019) and Mogk et al. (2019) found that the criminal justice system during the past half century has institutionalized racism and discrimination through their disproportionately incarceration of African American Black males and other people of color. Olivet et al. (2021) posited that because of this system racism and disproportionate rate of incarceration, along with these legally created man-made economic challenges during their reentry to their community postincarceration, formerly incarcerated African American men are overrepresented in the homeless population. Olivet et al. (2021) pointed out that due to these difficult challenges, these African American Black male new entrants often rely on

their family and their family of origin network for support, sustainable reentry to the community postincarceration, and to mitigate recidivism. Remster (2021) and Williams et al. (2019) affirmed that there is a correlation between the incarceration history of African American Black males and homelessness.

Furthermore, Remster (2021) found that homelessness and unemployment are mutually inclusive for formerly incarcerated African American Black males and should be seen as a collateral consequence of the legally created barriers that are designed to make things and life difficult for formerly incarcerated African American males reentering the community postincarceration. Williams et al. (2019) further affirmed that the disproportionate discriminatory laws, policies and practices, including a mandatory policy to labor employers, who are encouraged and directed by existing policies and practices to take into considerations the criminal history of potential employees continue to minimize the likelihood of absorbing the formerly incarcerated African American males into the workforce. On the other hand, the Stanley-Becker (2022) and Keene et al. (2018) reported that owners of private property systemically deny housing to formerly incarcerated African American Black males.

Stanley-Becker (2022) and Keene et al. (2018) maintained that when these potential African American Black male renters are denied the renting opportunities, they turn to the usages of conventional shelters and/or homelessness as a refuge. On the other hand, Olivet et al. (2021) and Antenangeli and Durose (2021) affirmed that African American Black males who reenter the community without family support, both social and financial, face significant challenges. Furthermore, the authors posited that while the

African American Black males formerly incarcerated community new reentrants are continually faced with hardships from lack of employment opportunities, or the housing and financial assistance due to their criminal records, they must remain in compliance with the laundry list of the terms and conditions of their probation and/or parole, including paying their delinquent child support indebtedness and other debts from their personal financial responsibilities. Brydolf-Horwitz (2020) pointed out that when these formerly incarcerated African American Black males' community new reentrants are faced with these problems, there is a higher propensity for them to experience anxiety and frustration, which may lead them to them to the use of illicit drugs/alcohol.

Lewis and Hong (2020) in their semistructured qualitative study posited that there are significant disproportionate social consequences of mass incarceration to African American Black males, especially those who are fathers. The study affirmed that given their thinking as a role model and provider in his family, his inability to fulfil such obligations damages fatherhood and father identity, and often may lead to a damaging self-fulfilling prophecy, corrected by increasing their chances to recidivism.

Lewis and Hong (2020) maintained that such collateral consequences not only affect the formerly incarcerated African American males but also affects their environment, community, and society as a whole. This continued marginalization leaves the formerly incarcerated individual with no option but to embark on criminal thinking and behavior, which could lead to him to recidivate back in penitentiary, leaving the mother as a single parent to fend for the children. Ortiz and Jackey (2019) affirmed that the cycle of incarceration of the African American males is unhealthy to their family

growth and exposes them and their children to a greater risk of deviant behaviors. The authors maintained that because of these exposures, African American Black communities continually remain at a disadvantaged and marginalized state, both socially and economically with poverty-stricken neighborhoods.

Stigma Associated with Incarceration

Williams et al. (2019) affirmed that African American males endure the punishment of incarceration in the penitentiary as a debt they owe to the society for commission of such criminal act, for which they pled no contest/nolo contendere and/or were found guilty. The research study maintained that the criminal justice system is systemically designed in such egregious manner, where in most cases, the criminal records of formerly incarcerated African American Black male remain as a shadow for him to travel along for the rest of life, resulting in perpetual poverty; discrimination, homelessness, psychological hardship, and exceptional depravity (Williams et al., 2019).

Ramakers (2022) asserted that despite having paid their price for their crimes with their incarceration, they find it difficult to gain back control of their lives and reintegrate into society because they are still stigmatized in many facets of their activities in the society, including employment. Nellis (2021) postulated that African American males are nearly five times the rate of whites incarcerated in state prisons across the United States. Ramakers maintained that potential employers are generally reluctant to recruit employees who have spent time in prison. Ramakers posited that this employment discrimination based on criminal records has left significant number of African American Black males less employable, due to skill-erosion or the loss of valuable network

members in the community. Moore and Tangney (2017) opined that the formerly incarcerated individuals continue to struggle with the permanent systemic stereotypes as a stigmatized group throughout the life-course. Oftentimes, this may lead to develop stigma expectations syndrome. Moore and Tangney (2017) maintained that when formerly incarcerated African American Black males experience stigmatization for a long period of time, it may cause them to experience labelling effects, and the propensity to transcend from expectations to anticipated stigma. The authors argued that formerly incarcerated individuals are forced by the society to accept this negative reinforcement as their permanent identity, which they often endure with psychological distress.

Furthermore, Williams et al. (2019) posited that formerly incarcerated African American Black males often face multiple challenges, ranging from the color of their skin, gender identity discrimination as African American Black males who experience prejudice and discrimination, and now, the stigma about the content of their character, as associated with their incarceration history. For the formerly incarcerated African American Black males, what is painful to them is not necessarily the stigma associated with their incarceration history, rather, it is the stigma associated what makes them a people: their race.

Tyler (2018) and William et al. (2019) maintained that the stigma phenomenon have ripple effects on both the formerly incarcerated African American males and their respective families. The authors pointed out that the formerly incarcerated African American Black males in their reentry process are looked by their peers and the community as outcasts due to their incarceration experience. The authors found that the

African American Black males' incarceration experience and even their longer stay in the prisons have been a mechanism through which incarceration exacerbates the conditions of an already medically disenfranchised population.

Tyler (2018) and William et al. (2019) affirmed that these practices contribute to the diminished health status of individuals, families, and entire African American Black communities who are most impacted by hyper incarceration experience. Park and Tietjen (2021) in another qualitative study affirmed that formerly incarcerated African American males endure significant permanent and highly stigmatizing label of "ex-convict" in their communities.

Tyler (2018) and William et al. (2019) posited that having such stigmatized status poses serious threat to an effective reintegration into society. For instance, Tyler (2018) negatively hindered that such stigma serves as a negative hindrance to their ability to form and maintain significant healthy relationships with friends, family and/or romantic partners. Park and Tietjen (2021) affirmed that formerly incarcerated African American males are excluded from access funding for educational prospects and even statutorily limited to employable positions in the labor market in certain States.

While in other instances, formerly incarcerated African American Black male new community entrants are perceived by potential employers, for just mere seeing or learning about their criminal records, as individuals who lack the necessary skills needed to be productive workers or that they lack the values, reliability, and/or trustworthiness of an ideal worker, and even when they are hired, such perception makes the population particularly vulnerable during a time of economic recession when employment

discrimination can decrease their chances of securing well-paying jobs and limits their earnings potential. Park and Tietjen (2021) shared significant dissimilarities between the African American Black males with criminal records and their White counterparts. The authors found that African American Black male applicants specifically without a prison record received a similar callback rate to their White non-Hispanic applicants with a prison record. Park and Tietjen affirmed that being an African American Black male and formerly incarcerated thus constitutes an uphill battle for these individuals in our society.

Risk of Recidivism

Formerly incarcerated Black males face many barriers once they return to society post-incarceration. Carson (2020) postulated that while the total prison population in the United States declined from 1,464,400 at year-end 2018 to 1,430,800 at year-end 2019, with a decrease of 33,600 prisoners, which is the largest absolute population decline since year-end 2015, African American Blacks still command the disproportionate portion of 1,096 black prisoners per 100,000 black residents, and 525 Hispanic prisoners per 100,000 Hispanic residents, while the White has 214 White prisoners per 100,000 White residents in the United States. The author maintained that even released from prison, African American males are faced with several collateral consequences of incarceration during their reentry to the community upon successful completion of their time in the penitentiary.

Carson (2020) affirmed that due these barriers, the formerly incarcerated African American Black males are often limited with the ability to reintegrate effectively into society. For instance, Carson's (2020) research study maintained that one of such

collateral consequences is disenfranchisement. Uggen et al. (2020) posited that historically, the American criminal justice system, including California, disenfranchises citizens if they have a felony conviction on their records. This trend has continued until in the last 25 years when half the states began to change their laws and practices to expand voting access to people with felony convictions. Uggen et al. posited that despite these significant reforms, more than 5.2 million Americans remain disenfranchised, 2.3% of the voting age population. At the same time, one in 16 African Americans of voting age is disenfranchised, a rate 3.7 times greater than that of non-African Americans, while over 6.2% of the adult African American population is disenfranchised compared to 1.7% of the non-African American population (Uggen et al., 2020).

Homan and Brown (2022) maintained that the criminal justice in collaboration with the White supremacists' agenda incorporated disenfranchising African American Black males and other people of color as a means to keep them down and from effectively competing in the national and local economic and social participation and advancement for their well-being. The authors argued that the disenfranchisement and many other documented factors constitute evidence of structural racism and racially targeted voter suppression in the political sphere in the entire United States, just at a focused deleterious detriment of the African American Black males.

Furthermore, Homan and Brown (2022) posited that this structural racism in politics presents significant collateral consequences on the health and psychological well-being of the African American Black males. According to Homan and Brown (2022), the criminal justice and policy makers continue to perfect the fluidity of this suppression in

which over time, there has been a recent shift in the predominant forms of racism aimed at suppressing the African American Black vote from overt, de jure forms (for instance, laws prohibiting African American Black citizens from voting, to appear more covert, de facto forms, such as laws that restrict voting rights for people convicted of a felony).

Homan and Brown (2022) further argued that even if criminal justice policies and lawmakers present their policies as race-neutral, the reality is different. These policies and laws are not designed with full representation of African American Black citizens in mind. Instead, they often do not serve the best interests of this group. Laws that are framed as neutral but result in felony convictions when violated can become a covert and harmful means of keeping African American males incarcerated and disenfranchised. Homan and Brown (2022) opined that even though these laws were promulgated without adequate representation of the African American ethnic group, violation of these felonious laws carry serious consequences. For instance, the authors affirmed that, in 2020, 5.2 million U.S. citizens were not permitted to vote because of laws that disenfranchise people with felony convictions, with the African American Black ethnic group at 370% greater than rates among non-Black Americans. Significant deplorable psychological and health problems have been attributed to the racialized disenfranchisement of African American Black males.

For instance, Homan and Brown (2022) maintained that racialized disenfranchisement is accompanied by health problems including depression, physical limitations, and disability. African American males who are disenfranchised continue to be reminded about the days of Jim Crow laws, which could make them feel as being

treated like worthless beings, unreliable, and less of a human. Such feels evoke anger and rage, as their emotional response, which if left unattended and unaddressed, could ramify violent and abnormal behavior, with absolute disregard to the terms and conditions of their probation and/or parole.

Being provoked at such emotional level could lead to violent criminal acts and subsequent conviction and incarceration into the penitentiary. Furthermore, Homan and Brown (2022) also found that African American males living in states with higher levels of racialized disenfranchisement are associated with having more functional limitations like the ability to climb stairs, difficulty with instrumental activities of daily living like grocery shopping, and difficulty with more basic activities of daily living like eating, dressing, and getting out of bed (Homan & Brown, 2022).

Substance Use and Relapse

While Williams et al. (2019) and Mkuu et al. (2019) affirmed that the United States currently has the highest incarceration rate in the world, the largest proportion of those incarcerated (46.3%) are imprisoned for committing a drug-related offenses (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2017). The Federal Bureau of Prisons (2022) postulated that while the African American Black ethnic group make up 13.3% of the U.S. population, they disproportionately represent 38.4% of the prison population.

Mkuu et al. (2019) asserted the disparity in the criminal justice system that finds itself in collusion with the White supremacists' agenda, resulting in African American Blacks being incarcerated for drug-related offenses at a significant higher rate than non-Blacks. Mkuu et al. maintained that African American Blacks disproportionately make up

almost 38% of arrests made, with 59% of those arrests resulting in imprisonment for drug-related offenses. African American Black continue to be overrepresented among those incarcerated for drug-related offenses, while drug use, postincarceration, is associated with high risk of recidivism and overdose deaths (Mkuu et al., 2019).

Amaro et al. (2020) opined that formerly incarcerated African American Black males are faced with significant social factors more than any other ethnic group in the United States, which contributes to their disproportionate rate of relapse to substance use and recidivism.

Amaro et al. (2020) also states that the factors to social vulnerabilities for substance use relapse are multifaceted and occurs across different levels of influence such as individual, interpersonal, community, and at the societal levels. For instance, the authors found that the role of stressors, particularly early and ongoing exposure to socially toxic childhood environments, including racism and discrimination, are foundational social, which creates vulnerability to substance use and its consequences among formerly incarcerated African American Black males. Having continued to endure for more than 400 years of inequality, segregation, prejudice, and discrimination since 1619, African American Black males continue to experience intolerable mistreatment by the criminal justice system and its agents, with their disproportionate habits of stop and frisk, arrests, and incarceration of this targeted population.

Frazier (2020) presented the chronicle unique stories that exemplified in a larger experience and description about his childhood home, the Fifth Ward, Houston, as a rather historically African American district in a rapidly changing city. The author seized

the moment to narrate the ongoing injustice of depriving African American Blacks of their history and its place in American history. This historical omission was orchestrated by a biased establishment through a setup committee, which aimed to prevent African Americans from being fully aware of or educated about their own heritage. The author posited that the White conglomerate committee felt that the African American history was unimportant and should not be taught and never mentioned the names of prominent African Americans (Frazier, 2020).

These deleterious discriminatory practices were historically handed down as oral tradition to the generations of the African Americans, bringing a lot of anger to them till date, and causing them to continue to question why such wicked hatred on humanity for no justifiable reasons. Frazier's (2020) study postulated that these continued chronic exposure to stressors and a maladaptive stress response to those stressors can influence the development of physical dependence and substance use to formerly incarcerated African Americans Black males and increasing their rates of recidivism.

According to Hipes (2019), it is not inconceivable for a formerly incarcerated African American male to feel angry. This anger is understandable given the extreme mistreatment and discrimination he has faced throughout his life. As a human being, he deserves to be treated with dignity in his own society. Additionally, as an African American male ex-offender, he faces unique challenges in the labor market. These challenges include enduring long-lasting negative labels and pervasive stereotypes, which complicate his efforts to find gainful employment to support his family and meet the conditions of his probation or parole.

Hipes (2019) affirmed that the formerly incarcerated African American Black male feels angered to note that no matter how hard they work to prove of their ability and capacity to be civil and respectful to the rule of law, the criminal justice and most of the society continues to treat this targeted group with negative stereotypes and with strong negative perception as very dangerous and incompetent, which is contrary to who they are. Such a formed negative opinion and perception about oneself often could cause one to react angrily and violently as a response in utter rejection of such negative stereotypes. Neupert et al. (2017) affirmed that people with disadvantaged social status, such as living below the poverty, along with the precipitating negative daily experiences of racial discrimination and prejudice are increasingly susceptible to more stressors, vulnerable poor coping skills and responses to stressors due to their chronic and overwhelmed psychosocial and limited maladaptive resources. Such exposure and resulting vulnerability, as explained by social stress theory, may lead to a higher risk of mental illness, including substance use and addiction.

Summary

The current relevant literature identified the rate at which Africa American Black males are incarcerated in the criminal justice system (Williams et al., 2020). African American males comprise about 13% of the U.S. male population (U.S. Census Bureau). According to Carson (2018), Hinton et al. (2018), and William et al. (2020), while African American males continue to experience disproportionate contact with the law enforcement, arrest, and incarceration more than any other ethnic group in the United

States, nearly 35% of all their men are under state or federal jurisdiction with a sentence of more than 1 year.

The literature has shown that when African American Black males commit same crimes in the criminal justice system, they not only receive more longer and harsher sentences than any other race in the criminal justice system, but also are disproportionately incarcerated when compared to Caucasian males (Rosenberg et al., 2017). Furthermore, relevant literature identified many other factors that contribute the high recidivism rates among African American males in the criminal justice system. According to the Blankenship et al. (2018), formerly incarcerated African American Black males are faced with significant social and family problems because of their history of incarceration.

For instance, their inability to secure and maintain gainful employment has been attributed to background criminal history. Prior to reentry to the community, formerly incarcerated African American males, just like their peers in the prison, receive some skills to prepare them for gainful employment when the return back to the society; however, the fact that they are ex-felons and that they are just “African American Black male” makes it even more difficult to secure and maintain pre- and post- gainful employment in society (Duke, 2018; Ramaswamy & Freudenberg, 2012).

While the formerly incarcerated African American Black males try to mend their family and social relationship upon reentry to their community, a significant portion of their relationship are irreparable because of their prison experience and lack of social and financial support system (Williams et al., 2019). When they are unable to get a job, they

run the risk of unstable family relationship and a higher risk of illicit drugs/alcohol use and/or sale, which impacts their family intimate relationship, education advancement, housing, employment, and their general health, and well-being.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of African American males during their community reentry postincarceration in California. This study was necessary to help inform about the challenges this population face during reentry to their community postincarceration, how these individuals make meaning of their experiences, and what others can learn from their experiences.

According to Campbell et al. (2020a) and Andrade (2021), purposive sampling is utilized in a qualitative study to recruit individuals who have experience in the phenomenon of the study. In this study, my recruitment was based on a purposive sampling selection of 10 formerly incarcerated African American Black adult males to participate in semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews involve asking the participants open-ended questions to receive rich, thick descriptions of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Ruslin et al., 2022).

Having African American males as participants to the research study about the phenomenon allowed this group to tell in their own words about their lived experience during their reentry to their community postincarceration. The interviews provided me with the opportunity to elicit in-depth information from participants who have lived experience. In this chapter, I discuss the research method I used in this study and other research methods used for similar studies. I discuss in detail the research design and

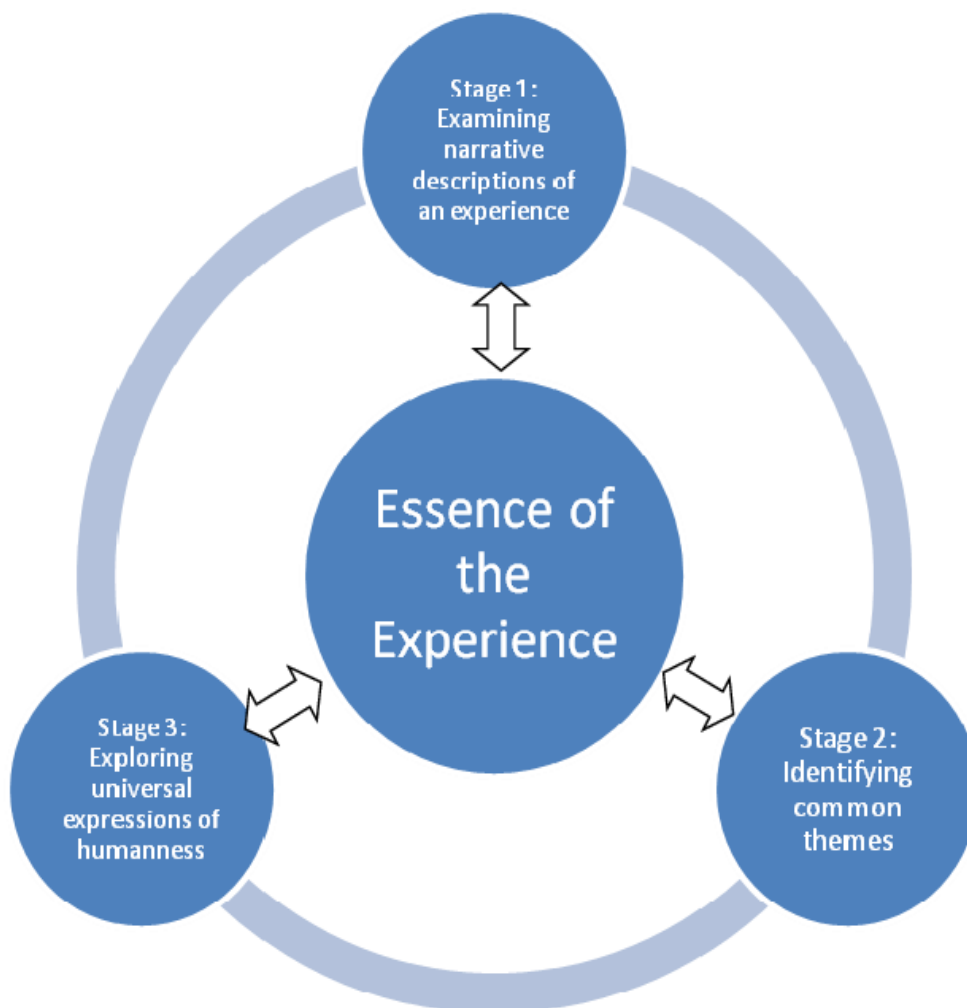
rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, sample criteria, trustworthiness, data analysis and sample size, and data collection.

Research Design and Rationale

Figure 1 shows my research design: the IPA.

Figure 1

Illustration of Research Design: IPA



The following research question was utilized for this study: What is the lived experience of African American males during community reentry after incarceration? I

used phenomenology as the qualitative method in this chapter as a foundation in the study. Zhou et al. (2022) posited that a research study often begs the question about what the motivational force behind is conducting such study. Altenmüller et al. (2021) and Snyder (2019) affirmed that the ability to identify the motivation and goals of a research study helps to initially inform how the study could be utilized for the targeted audience, demonstrates the significance of the study, and provides the researcher with a sense of direction and the propensity for the beneficiaries to make meaning of the research study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) and Cole et al. (2017) affirmed that rationale is a reasoning significance of the qualitative study. According to Gibbons et al. (2020), African Americans continue to be overrepresented in the prison population.

According to U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (2019), in California prisons, 28.5% of the state's male prisoners were African American, compared to just 5.6% of the state's adult male residents, and with the imprisonment rate for African American males standing at 4,236 per 100,000 people, which is 10 times the imprisonment rate for White men. This study was necessary because of the high recidivism rates among formerly incarcerated African American males, in the United States with over 76.6% of offenders reoffending and returning to prison (Nellis, 2021). Carson (2018) affirmed that African American men between the ages 18-19 were 11.8 times more likely to be incarcerated than their White counterparts.

William et al. (2019) maintained that while African American Blacks are disproportionately incarcerated more than any ethnic group, they continue to have the highest proportion of recidivism rate in the criminal justice system. Given the importance

of this research finding, it was necessary to understand what the contributory factors to these high rates of violations might be and how it influences their reentry challenges and impacts their recidivism. Consequently, a qualitative research approach using qualitative semistructured interviews of individuals with lived experience was necessary to obtain data that could help to understand these challenges from the perspectives of those who are knowledgeable about such challenges.

The essence of qualitative interviews is to elicit insight about the participants lived experiences and understand how the interviewee makes sense of their experiences (Frechette et al., 2020). According to Moser and Korstjens (2018) and Sibeoni et al. (2020), qualitative research approach helps researchers to better understand how individuals interpret and make meaning of their lived experiences. Nowell et al. (2017) and Tenny et al. (2022) affirmed that conducting a qualitative interview allows a researcher to gain in-depth information and deepen an understanding about the phenomenon. In a qualitative interview, the interviewer asks open-ended questions that allow the interviewee with a free hand to respond with an in-depth knowledge about the subject matter, as opposed to providing the interviewee with a limited and restricted yes or no responses.

According to Aspers and Corte (2019), this research approach covers a variety of research method that provides an in-depth description of complex events and the interpretive nature of their social worldview. Busetto et al. (2020) and Aspers and Corte (2019) pointed out that qualitative research involves nonnumerical data and do not

believe in universal truths; rather, they believe that there are many truths and perspectives.

Nowell et al. (2017) affirmed that qualitative researchers are more interested in knowing with what lens people view their lived experiences and how they make meaning of these experiences. I used an IPA research design for the qualitative study because it was appropriate and ideal when conducting research about psychology. IPA is a qualitative research method that allows a researcher to collect and analyze participants' lived experience perceptions of the phenomenon they experience (Creswell, 2018).

IPA seeks to describe the importance of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of the individuals in their own words about their lived experience of the phenomenon, thereby quadrupling the advantageous elements of the qualitative research method by creating an atmosphere for bonding relationship that researchers develop with their research participants (Saldaña, 2018). Hermeneutic phenomenology originated from the work of a 20th Century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976; Peoples, 2021). Heidegger developed interest in the nature of being and temporality or an ontological focus on human experience and how it is lived. The purpose of IPA hermeneutic phenomenology in research analysis is to identify and account for, rather than dismissing, the preconceptions about the data to facilitate the researchers with the ability to focus on understanding and the exploration of being as understood through lived experience and worldview of the participants (Peoples, 2021). Furthermore, utilizing the IPA hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me to move back and forth between transcribed experiences of the participants and their own interpretation of what

these experiences mean, while at the same time helping me to understand the participants of their own experience, making this a double hermeneutic approach (see Peoples, 2021).

According to Neubauer et al. (2019), the IPA as a qualitative method helps to obtain rich, in-depth information rather than to rely on just the mere perceptions of the formerly incarcerated African American Black male participants in this study on the re-entry challenges in California. The use of a phenomenology approach allowed me to focus on participants' lived experiences. The authors argued that the use of this approach would enable in collecting data from participants from their own words about their lived experience about the phenomenon.

Role of the Researcher

Abayomi (2017) posited that the role of a qualitative researcher utilizing an IPA approach is to investigate and interpret the impact of the research subject-matter or phenomenon on the lived experiences of the research participants. Furthermore, Creswell (2012) opined that “the purpose of a proposal is to help an investigator think through all aspects of the study and anticipate problems” (p. 268). Abayomi (2017) maintained that my role would include to focus on context analysis, explore the deeply rooted causes of phenomena, and highlight the explanations of what happened.

Furthermore, Aspers and Corte (2019) and Tomaszewski et al. (2020) asserted that the qualitative researcher should be knowledgeable about specific understanding of the relation and differences between issues involved and the method that is being utilized in the study. Therefore, my choice of the IPA for this study was appropriate, given that the qualitative instrument (tradition) was utilized to investigate and interpret the phenomena,

and because of the uniqueness and suitability for the subject matter, I used the IPA to appropriately investigate and interpret the lived experiences of the research participants.

Positionality: According to Holmes and Darwin (2020), positionality refers to a researcher's worldview and the position they adopt about a research task/phenomenon and its social and political context, along with its relationship to the subject matter and the participants. Consequently, Wilkins (2018), Guillemin et al. (2018), Jordan et al. (n.d.), Fleming (2018), and Williams and Harcourt (2018) postulated that a researcher must build a rapport with the participants in the research study.

Wilkins (2018) and Guillemin et al. (2018) maintained that as a researcher, I needed to develop rapport with my participants so that they would be comfortable and willing to participate in the study. Therefore, my role as the researcher for this study was to conduct interviews by asking research questions and to observe the verbal and nonverbal cues of the participants to make sure they were comfortable and unthreatened in any way during the entire process. I provided the participants with responses to pertinent questions they asked at any time during the process.

Another major role as a researcher in this study was to collect, interpret, and analyze data, and sort the data to develop patterns and themes that informed me to answer the research question. During data collection, I asked all interview questions, recorded each interview, and took notes that served as an aid during my analysis. My ability to provide the participants with a conducive environment and unconditional positive regard facilitated the participants to feel reassured and present to provide me with answers that were as accurate as possible. Interviewing participants was one of the major sources to

data collection in this study, and, therefore, my role in the interview process was essential to the successful data collection.

For the validity of the study, I did not allow personal or professional relationships, if any, to interfere with the process of data collection and analysis. As a resident of South-Central Los Angeles, California, I am privileged to witness the disproportionate arrests, incarcerations, releases, recidivisms, and rearrests of African American Black males. Also, I lived and witnessed the psychological, economic, and social issues that exist within many African American communities in California. My focus for this study was on the lived experience of African American Black males during their reentry to their community post-incarceration.

My role as a researcher in this study must be separated from my profession and lived experience in the community. Currently, I am employed with part of the criminal justice system where African American adult males are among the population we serve. In this study, I had an ethical obligation to be open and honest with the participants about my role as a researcher and my purpose for the research study. Also, I had a responsibility to advise the participants to this study about the need to be open and honest in their responses to the interview questions. My role was to focus on conducting the research study in a professional manner.

Methodology

Setting and Sample

The sample for this research study was collected from the offices of the local political and church organizations based in the community throughout the Los Angeles

Area California, which serves or meet with formerly incarcerated African American males. I needed no permission from these organizations because I was a resident of the community and an outstanding member of the churches and political organizations during my undergraduate college years. I asked these offices to post fliers and meet with their staff to inform them of the study and asked that they make all clients who have a history of incarceration aware of the opportunity to engage in the study.

Furthermore, I attempted to connect with the local libraries, parole, and probation officers to inform them about the study and request that they post fliers in strategic locations in their respective offices or give fliers to their probationers. Neubauer et al. (2019) and Moser and Korstjens (2018) affirmed that in phenomenological studies, the sample needs to have had a similar shared experience.

Participant Selection

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), sample in a research study denotes a representation of the population for the study, while sampling is a way to choose a smaller group of this population for the research study, whereby the findings would be utilized to generalize across the larger population. Andrade (2021) affirmed that sample selection in research study is essential to mitigate meaningless and biased findings.

In this study, I chose the purposive sampling, which allowed me greater access to participants who could engage in an interview that could provide me with a truthful response about their lived experiences as formerly incarcerated African American Black male. I used a purposive sampling for this study. According to Campbell et al. (2020a) and Ames et al. (2019), the rationale for purposive sampling is to select the sample

participants that are believed to have homogeneous characteristics about the population to inform my topic of study from their relevant lived experience perspectives.

In this research study, the criteria for participation selection were that each participant must have been an African American Black male who had been formerly incarcerated who was above 18 years old. According to Campell et al. (2020), there are not a set number of individuals required for a purposive sample. However, in this study, I selected 10 individuals to participate in this study, as this number fell within the given range of five to 25 and allowed participants who had lived experience of the phenomenon to be among the selected sample size (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

According to Staller (2021) and Patton (2015), the power of purposive or purposeful sampling is derived on information-rich cases for in-depth studies and in ensuring that every person or thing from this predefined population is presented with the propensity of inclusion that is greater than zero. The authors maintained that information-rich cases are cases in which a researcher can gain an abundance of valuable information from those who are knowledgeable and lived experience about the phenomenon. I used this sampling strategy to recruit 10 formerly incarcerated African American males who were currently residing in South-Central area in Los Angeles, California.

Although I was aware of some of the reentry challenges of formerly incarcerated African American males, as I was currently employed by a branch of the criminal justice system, and by reviewing past and previous literature sources regarding the phenomenon, I was not aware of the exact reentry challenges specific to South-Central area of Los Angeles. Therefore, I used the purposeful sampling strategy because it was important for

the participants to represent those who had lived experience of the phenomenon under study. Utilizing this sample selection strategy allowed me to obtain rich, in-depth descriptions of the lived experience of the formerly incarcerated African American males during their reentry to the community postincarceration.

Sample Size and Eligibility Criteria

Polit and Beck (2010) and Leung (2015) posited that qualitative research is more concerned with meaning than generalization. The authors, in other words, affirmed that qualitative researchers are concerned with the meaning behind the numbers rather than statistical data. LaDonna et al. (2021) and Malterud et al. (2016) maintained that unlike quantitative research studies that presents with large sample sizes, in qualitative studies, the samples are small because the study is labor-intensive and the data analysis is measured by the number of themes or categories identified within the data.

Guenther and Falk (2021) maintained that large samples for qualitative studies can be time-consuming and unnecessary especially when saturation is reached, which is what occurs when additional interviews do not improve the explanations of the themes or the categories or add any new information is experienced and no information is added. The authors postulated that utilizing larger sample size in a qualitative study increases the chances of for diminishing returns on qualitative data occur when more data leads to no new information, as one occurrence is enough to add the information to the analytical framework.

There have been many discussions about the appropriate sample size for phenomenological studies (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). While Bartholomew et al. (2021)

argued that six to 12 participants was an appropriate sample size for phenomenological studies, Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested five to 50 participants. However, Moser and Korstjens (2018) maintained that a phenomenological research study should consist of 10 interviews or fewer. Furthermore, I used similar studies in the relevant literature that I reviewed on this topic that were conducted with a qualitative design.

I recruited 10 participants who met the required criteria for this study. My recruitment strategy consisted of the recruitment of volunteer sample participants in the geographical location of South-Central area in Los Angeles California. Although the sample was small, I hoped to obtain the information that would be transferable to a larger, similar population, and represent those who have experienced the phenomenon because they were able to provide me with rich, thick descriptions about information related to my research question.

Instrumentation

As a qualitative study, I was the instrument for the study. I collected data by conducting semistructured interviews respectively with the participants, analyzing, and interpreting the data. For qualitative research studies, the researcher is the primary instrument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Sutton & Austin, 2015). Furthermore, I used a Recruitment Flyer (see Appendix A), Interview Guide (see Appendix B), Background Survey (see Appendix C), and Informed Consent to facilitate in the semistructured interview process.

According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) and **Roberts (2020)**, with the background survey, the reader should be able to understand the topic and the importance

of my focus of study; the authors stated that the length and detail of the background survey helps to demonstrate the understanding of the topic for study, as it states what theories are used and concepts, terms, and ideas that may be unfamiliar to the sample participants, which require relevant explanation. Moser and Korstjens (2018) maintained that the interview guide helps interview research in several ways. Developing the interview guide assisted me in identifying a list of the high-level topics that I planned on covering during the interview, including important questions that I wanted to address about the topic of inquiry.

Creating this interview guide in a concise manner organized my line of thinking. Furthermore, it made it easy for me to refer to and served as an energy reinforcement to elicit relevant information from the sample participants during the process. During the study process, my responsibility was to observe the participants' interactions and reactions with the phenomenon in their environment while conducting interviews to obtain information in their own words about their lived experience during their reentry to the community postincarceration and how such experience make meaning to them.

Data Collection

Prior to embarking on the data collection process, I sought permission from the institutional review board (IRB) to conduct the study. The IRB consent letter outlined in detail the moral and ethical implications of the study as well as the rights and responsibilities of the participants and researcher. The collection of data for this APA study used in-depth, open-ended interview questions (see Creswell & Creswell, 2019; Rich & Katheria, 2019). The volunteer participants were formerly informed orally and in

writing about the date, location, and time for the interview respectively. I informed the participants that the interview would be conducted face-to-face in a particular location. My questions were based on the relevant literature.

I conducted my interviews face-to-face with the participants in a conducive environment in the community center of the South-Central area in Los Angeles California. Conducting the interviews helped inform me about the participants' lived experiences and how it makes meaning to their worldview (see Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). I considered this data collection method appropriate because it allowed me to elicit significant information about the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences.

Also, I used journals, observations, and field notes in this research process. According to Manti and Licari (2018) and Rich and Katheria (2019), interviewing the participants face-to-face is essential because it provides them with conducive environment for effective observation and documentation, along with physical collection of necessary data, that may be required from the participants about their lived experience. Neubauer et al. (2019) and Frechette et al. (2020) affirmed that data collection in phenomenological research needs to elicit from different participants with similar lived experience. In this research study, I interviewed and collected data from 10 participants who met the criteria as formerly incarcerated African American males.

Reflexivity

According to Subramani (2019), Francisco Olmos-Vega et al. (2022), and Rankl et al. (2021), reflexivity refers to when a researcher acknowledges their role in the

research process and is aware and sensitive to the fact that as a qualitative researcher, the researcher is part of the research process. I knew that my prior experiences, assumptions, and beliefs would influence the research process and must not be left unattended to mitigate biases. In other words, the reflexivity concept is practiced prior to and during the process of data analysis.

Holmes and Gary (2020) maintained that an interview in phenomenological research requires rigorous reflexivity through the entire process. They asserted that reflexivity begins by making sure that as a researcher, I would not allow my prior identified preconceptions previous personal and professional experiences, prestudy beliefs, and core beliefs about how things were to influence my professional judgment as a researcher in this process. I exercised caution and thoughtfulness when conducting the interviews, given that participants were providing sensitive information about their lived experience during their reentry to the community post-incarceration and how it makes meaning to their worldview.

Furthermore, I asked follow-up questions in order to gain additional knowledge about what changes that may have occurred in their lived experience. When I completed interviewing the participant, I adopted the “member check in” principle by sending the summary to the participants respectively to review for accuracy. This also provided the participants with the opportunity to add something that they may have forgotten to say during the initial interview and assured trustworthiness (see Lindheim, 2022).

von Allmen et al. (2015) and Dettori (2011) postulated that an important component of all research is that follow-up questions and procedures are most often

conducted during the actual research but can also be conducted afterward. They maintained that follow-up questions are generally done to increase the overall effectiveness of the research efforts and can be conducted for several reasons, which may include to further an end in a particular study and to review new developments. Furthermore, the authors argued that follow-up questions can be used to fulfil research promises, comply with IRB protocol for research exceeding a year, ensure that targeted project milestones are being met, thank participants or informants for their time, debrief stakeholders, and/or may also be conducted as a normal component of the research design.

I sought permission from the participants to digitally record the interviews with an audiotape recorder to maintain the integrity of the data. Obtaining the recorded response to the questions from the participants allowed me to transcribe and triangulate the audiotape interview, observation notes and field notes. These diverse approaches provided rich and thick descriptions of the data, as well as offered distinctive scopes of the same phenomenon (see b et al., 2020).

I came in as a doctoral candidate with a double master's degree in psychology and counselling psychology respectively, along with extensive field experience in the mental health profession, working with clients who have been dual diagnosed with chronic and persistent mental illness and substance abuse. My background allowed me to ensure that the participants were provided with assistance that would help them to tell in their own words about their lived experience during their reentry to the community postincarceration and with no hurtful experience of revictimization (see Fohring, 2020).

Also, as an employee with a department in the criminal justice system and having lived in this neighborhood where this research was being conducted, I witnessed some African American males reenter the community postincarceration. I set aside my biases from both sides as I provided the interviewees the unbiased opportunity, regardless of their cultural background, religion orientation, and socioeconomic status, to tell in their own words about their lived experience during reentry to the community postincarceration, and how they make meaning to their worldview.

According to Baldwin et al. (2022), Nowell et al. (2017), and Olteanu et al. (2019), to conduct a good bracketing interview, I needed to set aside personal experiences, biases, or any preconceived notions that would distract the study from focusing on the lived experiences of the interviewees. For example, I had participants review my results; I also verified with more relevant data sources, checked for alternative explanations, reviewed my findings with peers, and kept a reflexive journal that assisted me with bracketing personal biases and keeping me with the self-awareness.

Participant Recruitment Procedure

For the purposes of phenomenological studies, researchers have the option of recruiting participants in a single site (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Frechette et al., 2020; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). However, as mentioned earlier, I used local political offices and church organizations in the South-Central Los Angeles area as informants. These organizations serve or have met with formerly incarcerated African American Black males. They were instrumental in introducing me to potential participants for this study. Furthermore, I connected with the local libraries and parole and probation officers to

inform them about the study and requested that they post fliers in strategic locations in their respective offices or give fliers to their probationers.

I anticipated that the local political offices and church organizations serving as informants in this recruitment process would provide me with significant assistance, given that they were affiliated with the potential participants. I hoped they would be instrumental in establishing connections with potential participants and providing and retaining contact information such as addresses and telephone numbers to facilitate text messaging or phone calls during this process. I intended to complete these arrangements prior to obtaining consent from these individuals.

Also, I implored such other recruitment strategies that could help for an effective outcome of this study, for instance, handing out flyers to leaders of various churches and community centers in the locality, barber shops, and hair salons that served African American Black families and African American Black males. I used the advertisement of the research study as a backup plan through email and social media platforms. This strategy was used as a backup because, given the low socioeconomic status of this population, a significant number of the potential participants may not have had access to the internet network system.

My ability to coordinate these plans depended on my rapport with this targeted population. Therefore, I worked to build trust with the participants primarily by beginning to educate them that I was a longtime resident of the neighborhood, and as a member of the same racial group, I identified with their lived experience of the phenomena. Also, I created a warm and safe environment that was adaptable to the

participants to feel comfortable to voluntarily share their experiences without fear of any consequences.

Participant Protection

In this research study, I did not anticipate any physical risk, given the nature of the study, which was to explore the lived experience of African American Black males during their reentry to their community postincarceration; however, there are potential psychological or emotional risks to participants, which may have occurred from their cognitive and memory recall about their lived experiences. I documented this information in the consent forms and took time to explain to participants to ensure clarity and proper understanding of the concept.

During this process, I informed the participants they had the right to stop at any point within the interview process and withdraw from the study without fear of any consequences. I informed the participants that the data gathered from the interview would be handled with extreme confidentiality and that their names would not be attached to any information collected.

Also, I exercised due care and thoughtfulness throughout the interview process, given that processing such sensitive information could be emotionally exhausting and overwhelming (see Silverio et al., 2022). I explained in detail the possible risk that the participants might encounter. According to Coleman (2019), environment and other factors may play some roles in the outcome of the research findings. I provided the participants with congruent listening ears, in a nondistracting environment, and utilized

unconditional positive regards and empathic skills to ensure the volunteering participants comfort and safety, before, during and after the research interview process.

During the process, I provided the interviewees a nondistracting environment where I provided them the following numbers to get some help if they were triggered or became distressed during the interview process: Mental Health Crisis Lines 211LA. For LA County's Mental Health Hotline, call (800) 854-7771. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255. Crisis Text Line: Text LA to 7417.

According to Sivasubramaniam et al. (2021), ethics and ethical behavior are the fundamental pillars of a civilized society. Therefore, in conducting this study, my initial contact with the participants for this study was through the best contact source provided by each participant. The Market Research Society (MRS, 2014) Code of Conduct stated that methods of contact such as private homes or office visits, text messages, or landline or mobile telephone numbers are acceptable means of contacting research participants. I paid particular attention and abide by the MRS (2014) Code of Conduct, which discourages any contact with potential participants during antisocial hours.

Informed Consent

I presented full disclosure information about the study to the potential participants, as can be found in Appendix A. This is important because it allowed the participants the ability to decide whether they want to participate. The study used only formerly incarcerated African American adult male participants. Thus, for this research, the informed consent consisted of the consent form. I provided the participants with the name and contact information of my dissertation chair and the university's IRB for the

Protection of Human Subjects in case they had any concerns or questions regarding this study. The IRB approval was obtained with the following number: #09-01-23-0971654.

The information on these forms was designed to explain the purpose of the study, the need for individuals' participation in the study, the possible implications of the study, and ethical issues along with the university personnel to be contacted, if the researcher breaches their rights or violates any ethical principles. According to Sugiura et al. (2017) and Barrow et al. (2022), the following is information included in a consent form: the purpose of the study, the steps for the collection of the data, the participants' right to withdraw voluntarily at any time from the study, information about safeguarding the privacy of the participants, information about the possible risks and benefits concerning participation in the research, along with the signature of participants and myself. Furthermore, the ethical principles in qualitative research and data protection, and participant safety, which were very important in the research study, must be contained in the informed consent form.

Potential Risks and Benefits

Heneghan et al. (2017) and Resnik (2018) affirmed that it is the responsibility of the researchers to anticipate the outcomes of the study and strive to weigh the benefits and potential harm. I was aware that I must not do anything to harm the participants to this study. Therefore, to mitigate harm and exploitation of the interviewee, I will not publish any material that can cause them any physical or psychological harm, including economic harm like, job loss, or any form of financial loss.

Given the absence of any physical harm in this process, there is the likelihood that the interviewees may experience some psychological harm from the participants reliving their traumatic lived experiences. Recalling the negative lived experiences during their encounter with the criminal justice system may elicit feelings of depression and anxiety. To mitigate such risk, I educated the potential participants about the propensity of such experience informed the participants of the potential risks before conducting the interview (see Azad et al., 2021; Radez et al., 2022).

If I noticed that I could not avoid the anticipated harm during this process, then I had the option to consider the risk-benefit ratio by determining whether the benefits outweighed the harm that may be caused. For instance, I educated the participants to understand that sharing the negative lived experiences is one major way to influencing positive social change. Muraglia et al. (2020) and Kostovicova and Knott (2022) posited that informing the interviewees that their voluntary participation to the research process extends through the entire interview process and remind them that they are not under any mandate to continue participation if they choose otherwise. Kostovicova and Knott (2022) asserted that a researcher may choose to not ask questions that could trigger more distress and anxiety, especially when the interviewee is already noticed to be in distress. However, if the information was essential to the study, I found a way to include the information in the study without direct reference of the specific information to the participant in question.

As I stated earlier, I used IPA for this qualitative study. Neubauer et al. (2019) and Rich Katheria (2019) pointed out that phenomenology focuses on the lived

experiences of people. Therefore, utilizing an interpretative phenomenological method allowed me to obtain rich, thick descriptions of the lived experience of the formerly incarcerated African American males during their reentry to the community postincarceration, and how it makes meaning to them. I conducted semistructured interviews physically and face-to-face with the participants in a conducive environment in the community center of South-Central area in Los Angeles California. Conducting the interviews helped inform me about the participant's lived experiences and how it makes meaning of their worldview (see Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

I constructed 10 questions that allowed me to obtain rich, in-depth responses from the participants based upon the current relevant literature. During this process, I asked probing questions to obtain detailed information when elaboration was necessary. I obtained the interviewee's consent to use the audio recorder to record the interview. Using the audio recorder to record the interview assisted me to review later and mitigated the tedious task of transcribing.

During the face-to-face interview, I paid closer attention and noted any relevant thoughts that came to mind, and with which I used during my review of the participants' responses. Also, I kept a journal to document the interview site, topic, date, time, and interaction with the participants, including probing questions where necessary to obtain thick descriptions that would eliminate the need to conduct a second of interview with the participants.

Storing the data is another important section in this qualitative research process. According to In and Lee (2017) and Lester et al. (2020), data analysis involves the data

interpretation, organization and management of data, and data presentation. I stored the transcripts of the interviews on multiple hard drives, which included the accurate transcripts and word-for-word transcription of the interview. Kleinheksel et al. (2020) and Williamson et al. (2020) posited that coding serves as means for one to see through the analytic lens of the researcher; thus, I used the coding to interpret the data for a better understanding of my research findings

Zamawe (2015) and Maher et al. (2018) affirmed that NVivo coding can serve useful purposes in any qualitative study and especially appropriate for those who are learners and/or beginners in coding. Therefore, for this study, I used NVivo software that helped me categorize information that I coded because of my manual inspection of participant responses. Dhakal (2022) and Dhakal et al. (2021) maintained that the verbatim principle of NVivo coding is one of its features which could allow me to elicit the terms and concepts to convey the meaning of the participants' response in their own words and phrases.

A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or phrase that is a summative used to condense, summarize, or distil data (Saldaña, 2016). During the coding process, I eliminated phrases that did not reflect the lived experiences of the participants, because according to Ravitch and Carl (2016), in a phenomenological study, the analysis remains close to the data, and at the same time gave me the opportunity to capture the interviewees' lived experiences. Furthermore, utilizing the qualitative data analysis allowed me to seek patterns and construct themes. This process provided me with the

opportunity to address any emerging discrepancies within the data collection process and methodology.

Reflexivity

According to Subramani (2019), Francisco Olmos-Vega et al. (2022), and Rankl et al. (2021), reflexivity refers to when a researcher acknowledges their role in the research process and is aware and sensitive to the fact that as a qualitative researcher, they are part of the research process. I knew that my prior experiences, assumptions, and beliefs would influence the research process and must not be left unattended to mitigate biases.

In other words, reflexivity concept is practiced prior to and during the process of data analysis. I came in as a doctoral candidate with a double master's degree in psychology and counselling psychology respectively, along with extensive field experience in the mental health profession, working with clients who have been dual diagnosed with chronic and persistent mental illness and substance abuse. My background allowed me to ensure that the participants were provided with assistance that would help them to tell in their own words about their lived experience during their reentry to the community postincarceration and with no hurtful experience of revictimization (see Fohring, 2020).

Also, as an employee with a department in the criminal justice system, and having lived in this neighborhood where this research was conducted, I witnessed some African American males reenter the community postincarceration. I set aside my biases from both sides as I provided the interviewees the unbiased opportunity, regardless of their cultural

background religion orientation and socioeconomic status, to tell in their own words about their lived experience during reentry to the community postincarceration, and how it makes meaning to them.

According to Nowell et al. (2017) and Olteanu et al. (2019), to conduct a good bracketing interview, it is necessary to aside personal experiences, biases, or any preconceived notions that can distract the study from focusing on the lived experiences of the interviewees. Also, Olteanu et al. (2019) affirmed that an objective research study requires the researcher to maintain a self-awareness and disclosure about the biases, values, and experiences that they bring bring to the study by keeping a reflexive journal that can assist them with bracketing personal biases and keeping me with the self-awareness.

In another instance, Forero et al. (2018) and Nair (2021) posited that in exploring the proceedings and results of the study, especially for the intent of appraising the accuracy and validity and to check whether the findings, clarifications and deductions are supported by the data. I utilized the services of an external auditor who had a PhD degree and was a competent statistician to serve as an investigator who was not involved in the research process. Another reflexive strategy I used was a peer debriefer who was a doctoral candidate and trusted colleague and who was proficient with qualitative research study. According to McMahon and Winch (2018) and Nowell (2017), this technique can bring a fresh perspective in examining the data and interpretations and facilitate the improvement of trustworthiness of the research.

Issues of Trustworthiness

According to Nowell et al. (2017) and Johnson et al. (2020), a qualitative researcher is deemed and accepted as trustworthy when there is a clear and convincing demonstration that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible. The authors asserted that credibility and transferability are two major criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research design.

They maintained that for these criteria to be implemented effectively, it is necessary for the researcher to consider and put into practice the following strategies: follow all ethical guidelines as provided for research studies and utilize probing strategies to gain thick, detailed information and to reduce the risk of dishonesty from participants. I established research methods and prolonged engagement in the field during this process and implemented my member checking strategies utilizing triangulation, which included different data collection methods such as observations, individual interviews, focus groups, as well as data sources, which I used to seek and/or compare the information.

Credibility

According to Johnson et al. (2020) and Nadarevic et al. (2020), credibility refers to the truth of the research data and the interpretation by the researcher. The authors postulated that a qualitative study would be regarded as credible when the experiences of the researcher are recognized by other peers, and, to the end, the researcher demonstrates this credibility by sharing their experiences as a research scholar, while using the

participants as a means not only to present the true picture of the phenomena but also to verify their research work.

To mitigate the issues of ethical concerns, Jenkins et al. (2020) and Wilkins et al. (2020) affirmed that the researcher must make sure the information they receive is like the information that is received from other interviewees. According to Jenkins et al. and Wilkins et al., the problem with establishing credibility in qualitative research can significantly be diminished if the methods of obtaining the data are transparent in which the data is obtained.

To achieve the objectives in this research process, I strove to be objective and to identify and separate biased responses from nonbiased responses by interviewing participants who were knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest. Bergen and Labonté (2020) stated that there is no single correct answer when conducting research using human responses.

According to Englander and Morley (2021), providing a research topic that is amenable to scientific study using the qualitative approach, along with detailed descriptions of the phenomena to the understanding of the participants, would allow the researcher to achieve some credibility, while making it possible for the data and the research findings to inform other researchers and policy makers.

Nowell et al. (2017) and Korstjens and Moser (2018) maintained that to increase credibility for the research study, I needed to establish and maintain prolonged and consistent engagement from the recruitment phase, through to the interview stage, along with a documented consistent member checking with the participants. I created a time to

attend each participant who may want to share more of their lived experiences beyond the scheduled 60-90-minute interview time.

Furthermore, I encouraged the participants at their own freewill and patterns to journal after the interview process, as way to document any afterthoughts, events, or feelings that may have been experienced from the interview process. I made my email address available to the participants to use in submitting such feedback/ reflective journals, along with making myself available to any sample participants, who wished to process any relevant issues or who may have had additional relevant additional questions.

Transferability

Transferability refers to findings that can be applied to other settings. Burkholder et al. (2016) and Andrade (2018) maintained that transferability in qualitative research is synonymous with generalizability or external validity in quantitative research. The authors maintained that the researcher should provide enough details that will assist the reader to conclude if the data inform to another situation, with the propensity that the findings is applicable to similar setting.

The goal of transferability is not to produce generalizations but to establish practical conclusions applicable to formerly incarcerated African American males' lived experience during their re-entry to the community post-incarceration (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lorelli et al., 2017; Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020; Schloemer & Schröder-Bäck, 2018). I used different strategies to achieve the transferability during and after the research inquiry.

For instance, I asked all potential interviewees to affirm their eligibility for participation before being accepted to participate in the study. In another instance, I made known the criteria for participation by displaying my research flyer in accessible strategic areas in the community and by hand delivering the flyer to potential participants. Also, I used a criterion-based purposeful sampling. The criterion-based purposeful sampling was necessary for me to ensure the information I gathered was specific to the lived experience and context of the targeted population.

Confirmability

Nowell et al. (2017) defined confirmability as one of the criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative and deals with the level of confidence that the research study's findings are based on the participants' narratives and words as opposed to the potential researcher biases. The authors opined that for a research study to be trustworthy, the researcher has to have the ability to demonstrate that the research findings emerged from data rather their perceptions. In this study, I used the qualitative method to seek subjective rather than objective findings. According to Nowell et al. and Johnson et al. (2020), the data derived from the study must be confirmable, neutral, and free of unacknowledged biases.

I achieved the confirmability criterion by providing and maintaining an audit trail that detailed each step of the data analysis and that demonstrated that my findings were not consciously or unconsciously influenced my any bias but a genuine reflection and portrayal of the participants' responses. Furthermore, the confirmability concept can be applied in this study by my approach of summarizing the content of each question I asked

the participants during the in-depth structured interview; the essence of which was to create overlapping themes, without bias, along with inclusion of all comments heard through the entire process and to provide value to my findings.

Dependability

Janis (2022) and Korstjens et al. (2018) postulated that dependability refers to having consistent data over and difficult to prove in qualitative studies. Campbell et al. (2020a) defined triangulation as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources or the use of multiple sources to show consistent stability over time. To establish the dependability criterion of trustworthiness, I repeated the study and used triangulation of multiple sources to show consistent stability over time. Furthermore, I maintained a consistent audit trail along with my peer-debriefings to ensure some quality stability and was mindful of any changes during the entire study process. Dependability as a criterion ensures uniformity between described or narrated lived experiences and emergent themes from recorded data. This criterion helped me to remain mindful of any personal reactions from participants to mitigate data complications and ensure compliance with the expected methodical process of rigor in a research study.

Ethical Concerns and Procedures

Nowell et al. (2017) maintained that a good qualitative study is required to comply with standard guidelines. Therefore, in conducting an ethical study, I abided by all ethical standards set forth by my college, including but not limited to obtaining informed consent from the participants before embarking on any form of interview with

them. One major ethical consideration was that I used no deception and did no harm to the participants to the study. I provided thick descriptions of the data based on the participants' responses. Also, I made it clear and to a thorough understanding of the participants that their participation in this exercise was voluntary, and they were welcome to end the interview at any point during the process.

According to VandeVusse et al. (2022) and Jacobs and Keegan (2018), researchers may be tempted to alter the research findings to facilitate positive social change in the criminal justice system. I did not desire and did not alter the participants' responses to change the outcome of the study. Rather, I used various research literature and data to help inform me about the understanding and the perceptions of the participants on how they perceive the phenomenon being studied. I reminded and established an understanding with the interviewees how important it was for them to be open and honest with me, and to which I also reciprocated. Coffelt (2017) and Surmiak (2020) posited that confidentiality of the interviewees in a research study is very important to mitigate harm and other violations, which may lead to the loss of employment, psychological harm, as well as physical harm to the participants.

For these reasons, I endeavored to protect the interviewee's identity and to not include any identifying information about the participants. For instance, I listed the participants as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc., including with a pseudonym to protect the interviewees' confidentiality. Furthermore, protection and confidentiality of the participants does not exclude the storage of the data/information. Hence, I will store the information in a secure location.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the research design to communicate the methods and tools that I used to conduct this IPA study to raise awareness about the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American males during the reentry to the community postincarceration and how it makes meaning to them. I conducted in-depth semistructured interviews based on the relevant literature. The interviewing process helped me to obtain thick descriptive data to inform my research question. The data gathered during the interview process were analyzed using phenomenological techniques that allowed me to develop logical and unbiased conclusion.

Also in this chapter, I explained the process I would take to ensure quality and trustworthiness of the research study. Also, I presented in this chapter this information with regards to this study's research setting, participant demographics, data collection, and analysis procedures. In the following Chapter 4, I will present the findings from my study and identify themes that emerged from the data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to better understand the lived experience of African American Black males upon community reentry postincarceration in California and their thoughts of the likelihood of their challenges impacting their recidivism. As a guide to this research study, I used the following question: What is the lived experience of African American Black males upon community reentry postincarceration in California?

To answer this research question, I collected data through structured qualitative interviews. The interview questions were intended to answer the research question. In Chapter 4, I address the description of the setting for this research study, demographics of participants, data collection methods, data analysis, data results, and evidence of trustworthiness.

Setting

The setting of my study took place either in a private room in the home of participants or in a reserved room at the local library that was convenient for each participant and provided easy access for participants to enter and leave with discretion. Furthermore, I made sure that all the interview rooms were well-lit, convenient, and quiet so that participants would not be distracted or disrupted during the interview process. Upon receiving my IRB approval, I scheduled the interviews that I conducted at the venue that was acceptable and provided adequate privacy to each participant, as they

appeared to be relaxed, focused in answering the questions, and open about their lived experiences.

Demographics

The participants were limited to formerly incarcerated African American males from South-Central Los Angeles California who had been incarcerated in a state or federal penitentiary, above 18 years old, and who are currently not on probation or parole and/or out on bail and awaiting trial. The demographic data collected focused the data demography of participants on gender, race, and age, as such focused points were relevant to the research study. Therefore, the study made sure that participants identify as African American males, 18 years old or above, who have been imprisoned in the state or federal penitentiary, no longer on probation or parole, and who is not out on bail and awaiting trial.

Data Collection

Prior to embarking on the data collection process, I sought and obtained permission from the IRB to conduct the research study. I arrived in the South-Central Los Angeles California, and physically walked door-to-door and handed out the flyer (see Appendix A) individually to residents at their homes and on the street. I introduced myself as a PhD student at Walden University who was seeking for formerly incarcerated African American males, who were 18 years old or above to voluntarily participate in a research study on the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black during reentry to the community postincarceration. Four potential participants indicated their interest to participate in the research study on the first day, for whom I verbally

scheduled interviews because they stated that they did not have access to email address or internet. I made sure that the time scheduled for the interviews with participants did not clash with their personal engagements and to mitigate their thinking about other things that could have compromised their responses.

When the participants arrived for the scheduled research interview, I established rapport with them individually to make them feel comfortable to participate in the interview process. I presented each participant with the consent agreement form and had them consent in writing to their voluntary participation to the research study. After the participants consented to participate in the study. I verbalized the sample criteria for the study to ensure the requirements are met. I continued to interview participants until I reached data saturation after the interview with 10th participant. The face-to-face interview with the participants helped to mitigate any compromise to the overall quality of the interviews and helped to answer the research questions. Also, the process allowed me to physically hear each participant and provided an opportunity to discern any physical or body language responses to their response.

Data Analysis

Through rigorous qualitative analysis of participant interview data, four prominent themes emerged surrounding the multifaceted reentry barriers confronting formerly incarcerated African American men. Nvivo coding software helped to extract meaningful units directly from transcripts, clustered into codes encapsulating struggles tied to conviction records, racial discrimination, gender bias, and cumulative marginalization. Further distilled into a coherent structural framework, these categories

capture the intersecting obstacles these demographics face when navigating housing, employment, healthcare, and education after imprisonment. With interpretation ethically grounded in verbatim quotations, findings shed light on achieving supportive, equitable societal integration for returning citizens against systemic inequality--an issue with profound social justice implications. Table 1 shows the lived experiences of African American Black males in the community.

Table 1*Lived Experience of African American Black Males in Community*

Themes	Codes	Number of files	Number of coding references	Number of words coded	Number of paragraphs coded
Circumscribed opportunities due to incarceration history	Challenges during re-entry into the community	10	20	1,032	20
	Experience when seeking employment following release from prison	10	13	805	13
	Support received during and after incarceration	9	17	838	17
	Returning to neighborhood lived before going to prison	10	13	680	13
Constrained opportunities due to Black racial identity	Challenges faced prior to incarceration	10	16	946	16
	Incarceration and re-entry challenges	9	11	740	11
Societal stigma due to Black male gender identity	Challenges faced that are unique to incarcerated AA males and comparison with other racial groups	9	14	1,092	14
Cumulative effect of intersectional barriers	Aspects that should be included in re-entry programs specific to formerly incarcerated African American males	10	17	1,179	17
	Changes in the criminal justice system	10	14	1,016	14

Themes	Codes	Number of files	Number of coding references	Number of words coded	Number of paragraphs coded
	promoting successful reintegration				

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In Chapter 3, I stated that there would be two key tools used to establish trustworthiness, I followed all ethical guidelines as provided for research studies, and I utilized probing strategies to gain thick, detailed information, which mitigated the risk of dishonesty from participants. I established research methods and prolonged engagement in the field during this process, along with implementing my member check-ins strategies, utilize triangulation, which included different data collection methods such as observations, individual interviews, as well as data sources authentication, where I sought and compared the information. Furthermore, my interview questions were reviewed and approved by two faculty members who have Doctor of Philosophy in clinical psychology and experienced in both overseeing and conducting research.

Credibility

In my efforts to maintain credibility for this research study, I utilized the ethical guidelines during the entire interview process and made sure that the participants' responses regarding certain laws and practices were true and correct, conducted member check-ins, applied the triangulation techniques by conducting interviews and verifying all data sources, along with utilizing probing questions to elicit rich and thick information and to mitigate dishonesty from the participants. I made the interview environment

conducive to each participant and was not in a rush with time to share about their lived experiences beyond the scheduled 60 minutes interview time, along with making sure and encouraging participants at their own freewill and patterns to journal after the interview process as a way to document any afterthoughts, events, or feelings that may have been experienced from the interview process. Also, after transcribing the responses, I scheduled and met with the individual participants, during which time I allowed them to access, review and authenticate the transcribed data as their true and correct information.

Transferability

Nowell et al. (2017) and Janis (2022) maintained that the goal of transferability is not to produce generalization but to establish practical conclusions applicable to the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black males during their reentry to the community postincarceration. I utilized different strategies to achieve the transferability during the research inquiry. I asked potential interviewees to affirm their eligibility for participation before being accepted to participate in the study by making known the criteria for participation and by displaying my research flyer in accessible strategic areas in the community, including walking the street and by hand delivering the flyer to potential participants. These strategies helped me to draw a criterion-based purposeful sampling which was necessary for this study and to ensure that the information gathered was specific to the lived experience and context of the targeted population.

Dependability

Each participant was given the opportunity to review the transcript for their interview. Also, I made them aware that I could remove any information in their transcript that they did not want me to use in the study. All participants confirmed their satisfaction of the transcribed responses.

Confirmability

I presented the findings as emerged from the data and devoid of my personal opinion or ideas. I utilized the ethical standards for research study and made sure that the research findings and its analysis were not influenced by any biases. In Chapter 3, I acknowledged my propensity to experience biasness. Also, I presented in the chapter steps I would take to mitigate such experience. I followed through the steps rigorously with no deviations.

Results

The results of this qualitative study revealed the multifaceted challenges faced by formerly incarcerated African American males during their reentry into society. Through semistructured interviews with 10 participants, four overarching themes emerged, each with several subthemes that captured the nuanced experiences of this marginalized population. These themes encompass the cumulative impact of incarceration history, racial identity, gender identity, and intersectional barriers on participants' ability to successfully reintegrate into their communities. The following sections present the demographic data of the participants and delve into the identified themes, providing a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles encountered by African American Black

males postincarceration and the critical changes needed to support their successful reentry.

Demographic Data

Participant Ages

The participants' ages ranged from 38 to 66, with a diverse distribution across various age groups. Participant 9 was the youngest, aged 38, while Participant 7 was the oldest, aged 66. The remaining participants fell within this range, spanning from their late 40s to early 60s. Understanding the length of time participants spent in prison provided valuable insight into their experiences within the criminal justice system. This analysis examines the duration of incarceration among participants, highlighting variations in the length of sentences served. Table 2 shows the participants' period of incarceration.

Table 2

Participants' Period of Incarceration

Participant	Sentence (Months)	Notes
1	19	State prison
2	14	State prison
3	48	State prison
4	28	State prison
5	22	State prison
6	48	State prison
7	48	State prison
8	48	State prison
9	48	State prison
10	40	State prison

Variability in Sentences

The data revealed considerable variability in the duration of incarceration among participants, ranging from 14 to 48 months. Some participants served relatively short

sentences, while others endured more extended periods of imprisonment. Factors such as the nature of the offense, criminal history, and sentencing guidelines likely influenced the length of each participant's sentence.

Thematic Analysis

Four major themes highlighted the multifaceted challenges and barriers confronted by African American Black males when reintegrating into communities after incarceration: a sense of circumscribed opportunities due to conviction history, constrained prospects tied to racial identity, societal stigma due to gender identity, and the cumulative effect of these intersectional factors. Within these broader themes, additional subthemes emerged around experiences of discrimination, obstacles securing employment and housing, inadequate reentry support structures, family and community disconnection, and systemic inequality compared to other demographic groups. The data revealed a shared narrative of struggle among participants as they endeavored to rebuild their lives after imprisonment, only to find their efforts hindered by prejudices and a lack of constructive resources afforded to African American Black males with criminal records.

Theme #1: Circumscribed Opportunities Due to Incarceration History Challenges

During Reentry Into the Community

All 10 participants reported facing significant challenges during their reentry into the community following their release from prison (see Table 3). Three key subthemes were identified within this overarching theme: homelessness and lack of housing

assistance, unemployment and barriers to securing employment due to criminal records, and loss of social support networks leading to isolation.

Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, and 10 experienced homelessness upon release, with some seeking refuge in shelters or halfway houses. Participant 1 "was homeless and end[ed] up going to LA Rescue Mission," while Participant 10 described being "thrown out there on the street, homeless." Similarly, Participants 2 and 4 faced immediate homelessness and disorientation upon release.

Participants 2, 3, 5, and 8 encountered significant difficulties securing employment due to their criminal records. Participant 3 reported frequent rejection, noting that "once you answered yes [to having a felony], and it's a felony, they don't want to deal with you." Participant 8 observed perceived racial discrimination, recounting that "the company didn't hire me, but all the other ex-cons like me were hired, and I think that was because I'm a Black man."

Participants 5, 6, and 9 reported a loss of critical familial and social support systems postincarceration. Participant 5 described "dealing with the loss of critical familial and social support systems postincarceration," while Participant 6 "portrayed comparable struggles with homelessness and extreme social isolation after release."

Although Participant 7 found some assistance through support from strangers and family, the prevailing narrative underscores the complex, multifaceted barriers to successful reintegration faced by formerly incarcerated African American Black males.

Table 3*Circumscribed Opportunities Due to Incarceration History Challenges*

Theme 1 and subthemes	Number	Percentage
Participants faced significant challenges during reentry into the community following release from prison	10	100%
Participants experienced homelessness and lack of housing assistance upon release (Subtheme 1A)	5	50%
Participants encountered unemployment and barriers to securing employment due to criminal records (Subtheme 1B)	4	40%
Participants reported a loss of social support networks and isolation postincarceration (Subtheme 1C)	3	30%

Note. $N = 10$. Some participants' experiences fell under multiple subthemes.

The narratives underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reentry support programs, including transitional housing, employment assistance, and wraparound services to address the unique challenges faced by formerly incarcerated African American Black males. By recognizing and addressing these systemic barriers, communities can facilitate more successful reintegration and reduce recidivism rates among this vulnerable population.

Subtheme 1A: Support Received During and After Incarceration. Participants described varying levels of support received during and after incarceration. Participant 1 mentioned occasional financial assistance from family members, primarily their aunt, who provided money and care packages while they were in prison.

Participant 10 expressed feeling abandoned both during their time in prison and after release, noting the lack of support and societal stigma faced by ex-convicts, particularly Black men. Similarly, Participant 2 recounted minimal support received during their incarceration, only citing limited assistance from job training programs upon release, which did little to mitigate difficulties securing employment as an ex-convict.

Furthermore, Participant 4 described an absence of support and a hostile prison environment where violence was prevalent while resources for personal development were scarce. Additionally, they highlighted the societal rejection faced upon release. Likewise, Participant 5 reflected on the lack of positive influences and guidance during their upbringing, which ultimately contributed to their pathway toward criminal involvement.

Participant 6 conveyed a comparable sentiment regarding the deficiency of familial support both prior to and throughout their incarceration. Despite having completed their GED diploma in prison, they still struggled with securing employment post-release owing to the stigma of having a criminal record.

Meanwhile, Participant 7 mentioned some support received from their children in the form of financial assistance and care packages during the period of incarceration; however, they still criticized the broader prison system for failing to provide adequate educational and mental health services to facilitate the process of rehabilitation and skills development.

Moreover, Participant 8 recounted difficulties faced in trying to obtain their GED qualification while imprisoned due to discouraging attitudes from correctional staff. After release, they faced substantial societal barriers tied to their status as a Black ex-convict.

Finally, Participant 9 emphasized the overarching detrimental impact of incarceration, perceiving it as a wasted period devoid of opportunities for constructive personal growth. Regardless of completing their sentence and gaining release, they continued to grapple with persistent struggles related to housing instability and financial hardship owing to the lack of supportive transition programs for ex-convicts.

Overall, participants highlighted the inadequacy of support systems both within the prison system and in society at large, particularly for marginalized individuals. Addressing these systemic issues is crucial for promoting successful reintegration and reducing recidivism rates among ex-offenders.

Subtheme 1B: Returning to Neighborhood Lived Before Going to Prison.

Participants had varying experiences upon returning to their neighborhoods after being released from prison. Participant 1 left their old neighborhood entirely and stayed with their aunt, seeking a fresh start away from their previous environment and potential negative influences. In contrast, Participant 10 expressed reluctance to return to their neighborhood owing to the temptation of reengaging in criminal activities and falling back into destructive patterns. As such, they consciously chose to avoid contacting former acquaintances from their past.

Meanwhile, Participant 2 observed little positive change in their neighborhood upon returning, still noting the persistent lack of viable job opportunities, especially for

Black individuals with criminal records facing discrimination. Alternatively, Participant 3 managed to find only temporary accommodation in their daughter's apartment after release and yearned for independent living and gainful employment despite confronting hiring barriers due to their criminal history record.

Moreover, while Participant 4 briefly visited their old neighborhood after imprisonment, they promptly recognized the palpable risk of relapsing into addictive or criminal behaviors, thereby opting to seek residence elsewhere to evade further trouble. At the same time, Participant 5 described a bleak, depressing atmosphere permeating their neighborhood, where many past friends were either incarcerated similarly or had passed away. Regardless, they returned to their grandmother's house as a stable location for caring for their children.

Additionally, Participant 6 consciously avoided returning altogether to their former neighborhood and contacts to prompt any exposure to negative influences or temptations that could derail their efforts toward overcoming addiction and past offenses. In a similar vein, despite briefly visiting old acquaintances, Participant 7 ultimately decided their best option was to reside with their daughter rather than return to their high-risk former environment and jeopardize their reintegration progress. Finally, even after initially staying with past connections right after release, Participant 8 and Participant 9 both elected to sever ties and move in with relatives to maintain distance from detrimental forces that could precipitate reversion to criminal tendencies or activities leading to reincarceration.

Subtheme 1C: Experience Seeking Employment After Prison Release.

Following their release from prison, participants encountered significant barriers when seeking employment. Participant 1 faced challenges due to a lack of job opportunities and skills, often receiving no callbacks after applying for positions. Participant 10 expressed frustration with the employment process, highlighting discrimination based on race and criminal background checks that hindered their chances of securing a job.

Facing distrust from prospective employers due to limited work histories and recent incarceration records, Participant 2 struggled to navigate reentry into the job market, while Participant 3 similarly found difficulty adjusting to life postrelease, especially when met with daunting obstacles to finding sustainable employment. Echoing frustrations regarding discrimination, Participant 4 emphasized the stigma ex-convicts must overcome when attempting to re-enter the workforce, citing ingrained societal prejudice attached to criminal records that marginalizes this demographic. Participant 5 conveyed comparable sentiments regarding facing compound marginalization and disregard in hiring decisions due to both race and criminal background status as key barriers.

Exacerbated by responsibilities to fulfil child support obligations, Participant 6 detailed their conflict navigating re-entry into employment and perceptions as a Black man with a convict label--a status beleaguered by discrimination. Meanwhile, Participant 7 depicted an even more stark portrait of the pervasive discrimination and sense of hopelessness in attaining jobs or pursuing vocational education as an African American male ex-convict. Adding to this narrative, Participant 8 gave voice to immense frustration

with systemic hiring biases hindering employment prospects for those with criminal records, often breeding resentment and relapse risks. Finally, Participant 9 shared struggles contending with layered judgments faced for both race and convict identity, which severely limited opportunities for career growth or educational advancement.

These accounts underscore the systemic challenges and prejudices that formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly those of marginalized backgrounds, encounter when attempting to reintegrate into society and secure stable employment. Addressing these barriers is essential to promoting successful reintegration and reducing recidivism rates among ex-offenders.

Theme #2: Constrained Opportunities Due to Black Racial Identity Challenges Faced Prior to Incarceration

All 10 participants reported facing a multitude of challenges prior to incarceration that contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system (see Table 4). Three key subthemes were identified within this overarching theme: unstable home environments and lack of parental support, systemic racial discrimination and limited employment opportunities, and involvement in gang activities and substance abuse.

Participants 1, 7, and 8 experienced unstable home environments and a lack of parental support during their upbringing. Participant 1 "grew up without a good home with my mom and dad," while Participant 7 "didn't have no father, no family; my mom raised me by herself, didn't have no male figure in my life to look up to." Similarly, Participant 8 "didn't have no father, no family; my mom raised me by herself."

Participants 2, 3, 5, and 10 faced systemic racial discrimination and limited employment opportunities, which forced them into hustling and criminal activities to provide for their families. Participant 2 "didn't see no changes, no difference, everything is still the same, no jobs for my people," while Participant 3 was "looked at as I'll never succeed, especially by people who're not Afro Americans or Black people period!"

Participant 5 shared that they

didn't have no job and I had to struggle to support my kids and their mothers during their pregnancies," and Participant 10 encountered difficulties stemming from "societal discrimination, which limited employment opportunities and forced them into hustling to provide for their family.

Participants 4, 6, and 9 described involvement in gang activities and substance abuse due to a lack of positive role models and tumultuous upbringings in dangerous neighborhoods. Participant 4 "joined the neighborhood gang, and started selling narcotics," while Participant 6 "joined the neighborhood gang because I didn't have no dad or uncles to look out for me and protect me." Participant 9 "got into too many fights with people from other neighborhoods, who challenging me with my territory, selling some goods to my customers."

Table 4*Constrained Opportunities Due to Black Racial Identity Challenges*

Theme 2 and subthemes	Number	Percentage
Participants faced challenges prior to incarceration that contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system	10	100%
Participants experienced unstable home environments and lack of parental support (Subtheme 2A)	3	30%
Participants faced systemic racial discrimination and limited employment opportunities	4	40%
Participants described involvement in gang activities and substance abuse	3	30%

Note. $N = 10$.

These narratives highlight the systemic issues of poverty, discrimination, and lack of familial support that contribute to individuals' involvement in criminal activities.

Addressing these underlying challenges is crucial in preventing recidivism and facilitating successful reintegration into society for formerly incarcerated African American males.

Subtheme 2A: Incarceration and Reentry Challenges. Participants described facing significant struggles with financial instability and lack of employment opportunities after being released from prison, which heightened the temptation to resort to illegal activities to survive while fearing the constant risk of reincarceration.

Participant 1 highlighted this challenge in their account, grappling with extremely limited job prospects despite continually applying for positions.

Likewise, Participant 10 emphasized difficulties securing any gainful employment as a Black man burdened with a convict label, especially considering his responsibilities to provide for his children. Participant 2 echoed comparable sentiments regarding the weight of stigma associated with having a criminal record, even for those like himself who had successfully earned a GED credential while imprisoned.

Furthermore, even after meeting parole requirements, Participant 3 lamented a dearth of legitimate housing and job opportunities and an absence of basic medical treatment for former prisoners during their transition period. Meanwhile, Participant 4 described the systemic barriers embedded at the structural level that ex-convicts continually face when attempting to reenter the workforce in their pursuit of a sustainable income, citing ingrained discrimination based expressly on race as well as any history of criminal convictions.

To illustrate this culture of prejudice personally, Participant 5 shared the demoralizing experience of being blatantly denied employment despite having transparently conveyed the details of their prior offenses to the employer. Overall, Participant 6 voiced frustration regarding the exceptionally limited options available for ex-convicts like himself to genuinely rebuild their lives and attain stability through conventional means like furthering their education or securing legitimate employment.

With a similar tone, Participant 7 highlighted a litany of obstacles confronted in attempting to find work and affordable housing and keep up with financial obligations for

their family – struggles made exponentially more challenging solely due to their criminal past. Finally, Participant 8 underscored the systemic inequality that enables even deeper discrimination against formerly incarcerated African American Black males seeking reentry compared to former inmates of other racial groups while also criticizing broader societal indifference and the substantial disparities in constructive resources made accessible to Black Americans leaving the prison system.

Theme #3: Societal Stigma Due to Black Male Gender Identity

Several participants emphasized the profound lack of social privileges and support systems available to African American Black males postincarceration, which cultivates substantial difficulties in securing employment or reintegrating into society after imprisonment (see Table 5). Three key subthemes were identified within this overarching theme: systemic inequality and discrimination, lack of familial support networks, and institutionalized barriers and double standards in the criminal justice system.

Participants 2 and 10 described pervasive societal discrimination that leaves African American Black men bereft of familial support networks to rely upon when navigating reentry into communities. Participant 10 emphasized the "profound lack of social privileges and support systems available to African American Black males postincarceration," while Participant 2 noted the "sharp contrast to former convicts from other racial groups who may still have access to various family resources."

Participant 3 attributed the layers of struggles familiar to African American Black males leaving prison to the "enduring historical legacy of slavery's destruction of Black

nuclear families, robbing entire generations of ancestral kinship bonds and safety nets that members of other ethnic groups may take for granted."

Participants 4 and 5 called attention to systemic barriers and discrimination entrenched at institutional levels, which uniquely disrupt African American males' socioeconomic stability after serving time. Participant 4 highlighted "pervasive obstacles to finding gainful employment or securing affordable housing" and "blatant double standards in their treatment within the criminal justice system compared to white offenders." Similarly, Participant 5 reiterated that "African Americans Black males as a whole endure substantially more aggressive societal discrimination and institutionalized obstacles."

Participant 6 placed emphasis on the "residual anger, embitterment, and socioemotional trauma experienced by many African American men due to the distinct lack of social support they are afforded by society upon being released from prison," advocating for policymakers to fund more comprehensive rehabilitation initiatives and support programming tailored to the unique needs of this demographic.

Table 5*Societal Stigma Due to Black Male Gender Identity*

Theme 3 and subthemes	Number	Percentage
Participants emphasized the lack of social privileges and support systems available to African American males post-incarceration	6	60%
Participants described systemic inequality and discrimination	2	20%
Participants noted the lack of familial support networks	1	10%
Participants called attention to institutionalized barriers and double standards in the criminal justice system	2	20%

Note: N = 6.

These narratives underscore the urgent need for targeted initiatives and support systems that address the unique challenges faced by African American Black males during their re-entry into society following incarceration. By acknowledging and actively working to dismantle the systemic barriers and societal stigma that disproportionately affect this demographic, policymakers and community leaders can facilitate more successful reintegration outcomes and promote greater social equity.

Theme #4: Cumulative Effect of Intersectional Barriers -- Changes Needed to Reenter and Reintegrate Into Community Living After Prison

All 10 participants identified a range of crucial priority areas for intervention to support African American males in successfully reentering and reintegrating into community living after prison (see Table 5). Four key subthemes emerged: providing

robust support resources upon release, combating systemic employment barriers, establishing tailored reentry and vocational programs, and addressing housing instability and fragmented family structures.

Participant 1 highlighted the "fundamental importance of providing robust support resources for ex-convicts immediately upon their release from prison – including access to job training programs as well as assistance with re-establishing connections with family or friends." Participant 5 called for "substantially expanding access to comprehensive support programs preparing soon-to-be-released individuals, particularly African American Black males, for constructive community reintegration."

Participants 2 and 10 strongly advocated for anti-discrimination policies to combat systemic employment barriers. Participant 10 emphasized the need for policies "that could combat systemic obstacles for African American Black males, especially those with criminal records, to access equal employment opportunities compared to applicants from other racial groups." Participant 2 echoed that "entrenched discrimination rooted in race and criminal history continues to severely hinder many African American men's capability to attain financial stability through legal means or successfully re-assimilate into society post-incarceration."

Participant 3 proposed "establishing more structured, tailored re-entry and vocational programs catered specifically to assisting African American Black males with securing stable housing, job placement, and educational opportunities during as well as after serving prison sentences."

Participant 4 emphasized "prioritizing addressing the crisis of housing instability and fragmented family structures that currently exacerbate many African American Black men's vulnerability to recidivism due to lack of community support following release from prison."

Participants 6 through 9 identified additional priority areas, including job skills training, continuing education, safe and affordable transitional housing, addiction recovery support, criminal record expunge policies, dismantling barriers to securing employment and education access to equal to other groups, enhanced access to mental health treatment, and specialized support programs tailored to the intersectional challenges facing formerly incarcerated African American Black males upon reentering society. Table 6 displays the cumulative effect of intersectional barriers.

Table 6

Cumulative Effect of Intersectional Barriers

Theme 4 and subthemes	Number	Percentage
Participants identified crucial priority areas for intervention to support successful reentry and reintegration	10	100%
Participants emphasized providing robust support resources upon release	2	20%
Participants advocated for combating systemic employment barriers	2	20%
Participants proposed establishing tailored reentry and vocational programs	1	10%
Participants highlighted addressing housing instability and fragmented family structures	1	10%

Note. $N = 10$.

These narratives underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, multi-faceted interventions that address the intersectional barriers faced by formerly incarcerated African American Black males. By implementing targeted policies and programs that prioritize housing stability, employment opportunities, vocational training, and family reunification, policymakers and community leaders can facilitate more successful reentry outcomes and promote greater social equity for this marginalized population.

Summary

The qualitative phenomenological study aimed to understand the lived experiences of African American Black males during their community reentry postincarceration in California and their perceptions of how these challenges might impact their recidivism. The study involved semistructured interviews with 10 participants, all of whom were formerly incarcerated African American males from South-Central Los Angeles, California, aged 18 years or above, and not currently on probation, parole, or awaiting trial.

The data analysis revealed four major themes: circumscribed opportunities due to incarceration history, constrained opportunities due to Black racial identity, societal stigma due to Black male gender identity, and the cumulative effect of intersectional barriers. Participants faced significant challenges during reentry, including homelessness, unemployment, and loss of social support networks. They also encountered systemic racial discrimination and limited employment opportunities prior to incarceration, which often led to involvement in gang activities and substance abuse.

The study highlighted the profound lack of social privileges and support systems available to African American Black males postincarceration, which exacerbated their difficulties in securing employment and reintegrating into society. Participants emphasized the need for robust support resources upon release, combating systemic employment barriers, establishing tailored reentry and vocational programs, and addressing housing instability and fragmented family structures.

The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, multi-faceted interventions that address the intersectional barriers faced by formerly incarcerated African American Black males. Policymakers and community leaders must implement targeted policies and programs that prioritize housing stability, employment opportunities, vocational training, and family reunification to facilitate more successful re-entry outcomes and promote greater social equity for this marginalized population.

The study's results contribute to a better understanding of the complex challenges faced by African American males during their community reentry postincarceration and highlight the critical importance of providing comprehensive support systems to reduce recidivism and promote successful reintegration into society.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological research study was to explore the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black males upon community reentry postincarceration in California during their reentry to the community postincarceration and how it makes meaning to them. Despite several studies on the topic of incarceration and postincarceration community reentry, there remains a gap in the relevant literature about the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black males regarding their postincarceration community reentry and how they make meaning of their lived experience (Williams et al., 2020).

This research study can provide these formerly incarcerated African American Black males with the opportunity to describe the phenomenon of their lived experience. Findings from this study help to deepen the understanding of this topic, which could inform practitioners in their clinical work with this population and inform legislators about creating policies that support formerly incarcerated African American males in their reentry challenges after imprisonment and mitigate the financial and psychological costly recidivism.

During my analysis of the data from the structured interview with the participants, the following four findings emerged as significant barriers confronted by formerly incarcerated African American males during their reentry back to their community postincarceration: (a) a sense of circumscribed opportunities due to incarceration history, (b) constrained prospects tied to racial identity, (c) societal stigma due to gender identity,

and (d) the cumulative effects of these intersectional factors. The chapter provides a summary of the research study, a discussion of the data from the research questions' perspectives, limitations to the research study, theoretical implications, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

Interpretations of the Findings

The primary results of this Interpretive phenomenological research study are that formerly incarcerated African American Black males experience significant amount of hardship during their reentry back to the community postincarceration, which helps to exacerbate the negative impact on their higher rate of recidivism. Furthermore, the interpretive phenomenological research study helped me to understand how they made sense of their experiences. My analysis of the data suggests that formerly incarcerated African American Black males are often faced with challenges of circumscribed opportunities due to their incarceration history. Although some formerly incarcerated participants relish themselves in their quest to excel above their incarceration experience, the findings indicated that they are met with the systemic designed harsh reality of shame, stigma, and name-calling like "ex-cons," and blatantly and subtly discriminated against, despite the clear evidence that they have served their time in the penitentiary and are no longer on probation or parole, and/or even awaiting trial for any other case.

Circumscribed Opportunities Due to Incarceration History Challenges

The participants' responses revealed a myriad of challenges they confronted during the process of reentry after incarceration. Their experiences align with recent research underscoring the complex barriers faced by formerly incarcerated individuals as

they attempt to transition back into society (see Braveman, 2021; Braveman et al., 2020; Brinkley-Rubinstein & Cloud, 2020).

A predominant struggle highlighted was securing stable housing after release from prison. Multiple participants reported encountering homelessness, often relying on homeless shelters as an immediate yet precarious solution (Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9). These housing instability issues after release corroborate findings a systematic review, which determined that 25-50% of formerly incarcerated individuals experience homelessness during re-entry (Clifasefi et al., 2022). Difficulties obtaining employment compound housing insecurity woes for those with conviction histories.

Unemployment was prominently identified among the reentry hardships described. Participants frequently cited difficulties navigating reentry into the job market and inability to secure viable work, facing pervasive hiring discrimination tied to their criminal records (Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). A 2021 study of over 1,000 employers in Los Angeles County found that nearly 60% were unwilling to hire an applicant with a criminal record (Denver et al., 2021). Moreover, multiple participants emphasized race as an additional marginalizing factor exacerbating employment barriers (Participants 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9), reflecting established research showing substantially lower callback rates for Black compared to White job applicants with equivalent qualifications and criminal histories (Ewald, 2021; Nally et al., 2021).

Beyond meeting basic material needs like shelter and income, participants expressed profound social isolation and disconnection from community support networks during the transitional period (Participants 1, 5, 6, 10). Difficulty reintegrating into social

system aligns with research indicating that following release, formerly incarcerated persons commonly struggle with the establishment or reestablishment of supportive personal relationships and report lower levels of perceived social support relative to the general population (Thomas et al., 2022).

However, for some participants, lack of access to rehabilitative or educational development opportunities, while incarcerated, hindered prospects for constructive personal growth during imprisonment and complicated productive societal reintegration afterward (Participants 4, 6, 7, 8, 9). These perspectives parallel research showing that increased availability and participation in educational, vocational, and cognitive-based programs among incarcerated individuals promote successful community reentry and facilitate the process of obtaining stable employment after release (William et al., 2019).

Overall, by spotlighting these complex, intersecting challenges spanning incarceration periods and the postrelease transitional phase, participants gave voice to the systemic marginalization and societal stigma endured by formerly incarcerated African American males, along with compounded barriers associated with racial minority status. Their insights underscore the need for multifaceted, wraparound support systems and comprehensive reforms addressing the structural disadvantages this population faces to promote social justice and effective reintegration and mitigate risks of recidivism aligned with prior scholarship (Yanney, 2022; Zang & Minton, 2019).

Constrained Prospects Tied to Racial Identity

The participants' responses on their lived experience shed light on the systemic challenges and institutional barriers tied to a racial identity that constrained opportunities

both prior to and following incarceration. Their perspectives align with scholarship demonstrating the disproportionate impact of societal marginalization and discrimination on life trajectories and outcomes among Black Americans (Ogunbajo et al., 2023; Pettit & Gutierrez, 2018). In describing their upbringings, participants frequently presented their neighborhoods marked by financial hardship, neighborhood violence, lack of familial support, indiscriminate and unrestrained association with gangs during adolescence (Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,10).

Research has indicated that African American Black youth are more likely to grow up in impoverished, high-crime neighborhoods with underresourced schools and minimal access to enriching developmental opportunities relative to their white counterparts (Boyd et al., 2022). Consequently, these external challenges become precursors for eventual criminal justice system involvement (McCrea et al., 2019).

Moreover, during reentry, participants emphasized shared struggles obtaining employment despite qualifications like earned GEDs, citing hiring discrimination tied expressly to the intersecting barriers of race and conviction records (Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10). A 2022 audit study affirmatively demonstrated substantially lower employer call back rates for African American Black males compared to white men with equivalent credentials but for the manipulation of reported race, corroborating participants' discrimination claims (Quillian et al., 2022).

Likewise, participants described immense frustration navigating limited, often discriminatory housing options as well as the constant specter of parole violations or reincarceration interfering with efforts to reintegrate (Participants 3, 4, 6, 7, 8). These

constraints reflect established research showing African American Black males experience higher risks of housing insecurity, parole revocation, and recidivism compared to white counterparts, indicative of systemic inequality in access to re-entry support systems (Jacobs and Gottlieb, 2020).

Collectively, these firsthand perspectives recount not only the profound personal challenges tied to societal marginalization but also reveal the cumulative disadvantages wrought by systemic racism permeating social structures and institutions. Furthermore, participants and affirmed through recent scholarship, adequately addressing constrained opportunities for the Black formerly incarcerated necessitates a commitment to dismantling structural inequality across societal domains (Fix et al., 2023).

Societal Stigma Due to Gender Identity

The participants' narratives revealed the distinct challenges and societal stigma confronting African American males navigating reentry postincarceration. Their firsthand experiences underscore scholarship demonstrating the disproportionate marginalization of and discrimination toward African American Black males across various phases of criminal justice system involvement (Nowotny et al., 2022).

Several participants emphasized pronounced difficulties securing employment or community reintegration resources relative to former white inmates, attributing these constraints to systemic societal barriers rooted in enduring legacies of racial oppression (Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10). These perspectives parallel research indicating significantly lower likelihoods of obtaining stable housing and jobs among African American Black males compared to white returning citizens--disparities tracing back to

cumulative disadvantages and the absence of intergenerational wealth caused by centuries of discriminatory policies and practices toward African American males (Nembhard & Robin, 2021).

Moreover, participants cited lack of access to familial support networks during reentry transition as a challenge distinctively impacting African American Black males compared to former prisoners from other racial groups benefitting from kinship systems (Participants 2, 3, 10). Scholarship has affirmed that formerly incarcerated African American Black males report lower levels of perceived emotional support from relatives and friends than their White counterparts (Nowotny et al., 2022). Diminished social capital exacerbates obstacles to securing essential needs like shelter and work. Additionally, some participants expressed embitterment regarding the perceived differential treatment within prison environments and the criminal justice system received by African American Black males versus White males (Participants 3, 4, 5), consistent with documented disparities in disciplinary actions, sentencing outcomes, and parole decisions linked to race (Nembhard & Robin, 2021).

In summary, these firsthand accounts spotlight how societal stigma intersects with the gendered realities of racial marginalization to further constrain opportunities and undermine social reintegration, specifically among African American Black males with incarceration histories. Research findings posited such compounding barriers necessitate the development of culturally informed support networks and policy reforms directly addressing systemic inequality (Nowotny et al., 2022; Perry et al., 2022; Pettit & Sykes, 2022; Williams & Bergeson, 2019).

Cumulative Effects of These Intersectional Factors

In conveying proposed solutions for promoting successful reentry and mitigating recidivism risks among formerly incarcerated African American Black males, participants highlighted the need to implement multifaceted reforms addressing the cumulative, intersecting barriers tied to conviction status, race, and gender identity that constrain opportunities for this demographic. Their perspectives align with an emerging scholarly emphasis on embracing intersectionality frameworks in developing socially just reentry policies and practices (Braveman et al., 2022; Flanagin et al., 2021).

For several participants, expanding access to employment assistance programming and banning discriminatory hiring policies ranked among the highest priorities (Participants 1, 2, 3, 10). These suggestions reflect established research indicating that participation in prison-based vocational training followed by postrelease job placement services significantly improves employment outcomes and reduces recidivism rates among African American Black males (Newton et al., 2020). However, research findings have maintained that effectively redressing entrenched structural racism necessitates moving beyond isolated programmatic interventions toward comprehensive anti-discrimination reforms addressing racially disparate barriers across institutions (Williams & Bergeson, 2019).

Additionally, multiple participants underscored the need to increase the availability of safe, stable, affordable transitional housing options adapted to the needs of formerly incarcerated African American males, given the vulnerabilities to housing insecurity wrought by systemic inequality (Participants 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). Indeed, studies

have determined that access to subsidized housing substantially lowers risks of recidivism, specifically among African American Black males, compared to their counterparts lacking such housing assistance (Nydegger et al., 2023). Nonetheless, research findings caution that such targeted initiatives must interconnect with broader efforts tackling institutional and systemic racism and sociopolitical inequities (Nydegger et al., 2023).

In calling for various combinations of job training, continuing education, mental health treatment, expunging criminal records, and specialized support services (Participants 6, 7, 8, 9), participants gave voice to the multidimensionality of barriers facing formerly incarcerated African American males. Researchers have posited that reducing social and economic marginalization for this demographic necessitates holistic reentry strategies addressing psychological, material, legal, and systemic needs simultaneously through an intersectional justice lens (Nowotny et al., 2022; Williams & Bergeson, 2019).

Limitations of the Study

While this interpretive phenomenological study provides valuable insights into the lived experience of formerly incarcerated African American Black males in California, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The sample size of 10 participants, although sufficient for reaching data saturation, may not capture the full range of experiences within this population. Additionally, the focus on men from California may limit the generalizability of findings to formerly incarcerated African American Black males in other regions or states.

Furthermore, as with any qualitative study relying on self-reported data, there is potential for participant response bias. Some participants may have been reluctant to fully disclose their experiences or may have provided socially desirable responses. Efforts were made to build rapport and trust, but the sensitive nature of the topic and the my outsider status could have influenced the depth and authenticity of the information shared.

Another limitation to the study is the inability to conduct a formal psychological/psychiatric screening among the study participants, as certain personality traits have been known to be associated with an increased likelihood of criminal behavior. For instance, traits such as impulsivity, sensation-seeking, lack of conscience or guilt associated with psychopathy, low empathy and aggressiveness have been linked to criminal conduct, including some cognitive factors such as deficits in decision-making, problem-solving skills, and executive functions, and other of severe mental disorders like antisocial personality disorder, conduct disorder, or substance use disorders can cause offenders to engage in criminal acts as a way of addressing their problems or achieving their goals.

In another limitation the study is unable to provide specifics on why some participants may be denied access to reentry programs due to the severity and seriousness of their crime. For instance the State of California provides that ex-offenders who were involved in violent crimes like murder, rape, and child molestation often excludes individuals from certain programs as provided in the eligibility criteria set by the

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) which considers the nature of the crime when determining access to specific reentry resources.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings of this interpretive phenomenological study, several recommendations can be made to address the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated African American Black males during their reentry process and to promote successful reintegration into their communities.

Firstly, it is crucial to develop and implement comprehensive, culturally responsive reentry programs that provide holistic support to formerly incarcerated African American Black males. These programs should address the multiple, intersecting barriers identified in this study, such as employment discrimination, lack of affordable housing, limited access to mental health services, and substance abuse treatment. By offering a continuum of care that begins during incarceration and extends well into the reentry period, these programs can help ensure a seamless transition and mitigate the risk of recidivism.

Secondly, policymakers and practitioners must work to dismantle the structural barriers and systemic inequities that perpetuate disparities in reentry outcomes for African American Black males. This requires a critical examination of institutional policies and practices, such as sentencing guidelines, parole conditions, and hiring processes, to identify and eliminate sources of bias and discrimination. Collaborative

efforts between criminal justice agencies, community organizations, and advocacy groups can help drive systemic reforms that promote equity and inclusion.

Thirdly, it is essential to foster positive social support networks and strengthen the bonds between formerly incarcerated African American Black males and their families and communities. Reentry programs should incorporate family reunification services, mentoring opportunities, and community-building activities to help individuals rebuild relationships and establish a sense of belonging. Engaging families and community members in the reentry process can also help reduce stigma and promote a more supportive environment for individuals returning from incarceration.

Fourth, efforts must be made to combat the stigma and discrimination faced by formerly incarcerated individuals in the job market and to provide meaningful opportunities for skill development and career advancement. Implementing ban-the-box policies, offering employer incentives for hiring returning citizens, and partnering with businesses and trade organizations to establish pipelines to stable, living-wage jobs can help level the playing field and support long-term economic stability.

Finally, it is crucial to center the voices and lived experiences of formerly incarcerated African American males in the development and implementation of reentry policies and programs. Participatory action research approaches that directly involve this population in the design and assessment of interventions can help ensure that reentry initiatives are responsive to their unique needs and perspectives. By empowering individuals to take an active role in shaping their own reentry journeys, we can foster a sense of agency and promote sustainable, long-term success.

Future research could build upon the findings of this study by exploring the experiences of formerly incarcerated African American Black males in other geographical areas to assess the consistency of identified themes and challenges across different contexts. Researchers may also consider using a larger, more diverse sample to capture a broader range of perspectives and to enable comparisons based on factors such as age, education level, or length of incarceration.

Given the significance of systemic racism and structural barriers highlighted in this study, future research should further examine the role of institutional policies and practices in perpetuating disparities in reentry outcomes for African American Black males. This could involve analyzing how specific laws, sentencing guidelines, or parole conditions disproportionately impact this population and contribute to cycles of recidivism.

Additionally, research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of existing reentry programs and support services in meeting the unique needs of formerly incarcerated African American Black males. Participatory action research approaches that directly involve this population in the design and assessment of interventions could yield valuable insights and help ensure the cultural relevance and responsiveness of reentry initiatives.

Implications

Practical Implications

The findings of this study underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, culturally sensitive reentry support services tailored to the needs of formerly incarcerated African American Black males. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the

development and funding of programs that address the multiple, intersecting barriers identified by participants, such as employment discrimination, lack of affordable housing, and limited access to mental health treatment and substance abuse services.

Efforts must be made to combat the stigma and discrimination faced by formerly incarcerated individuals in the job market and to provide meaningful opportunities for skill development and career advancement. This may involve implementing ban-the-box policies, offering employer incentives for hiring returning citizens, and partnering with businesses and trade organizations to establish pipelines to stable, living-wage jobs.

Reentry planning should begin well before release and involve close collaboration between corrections staff, community-based service providers, and family members to ensure a seamless transition and continuity of support. The findings also highlight the importance of fostering positive social support networks and building strong bonds between formerly incarcerated African American males and their families and communities.

Theoretical Implications

This study drew upon the IPA and hermeneutic phenomenology as its theoretical foundation. The findings underscore the value of these approaches in exploring and understanding the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated African American Black males and the meaning they ascribe to their reentry journey post-incarceration.

In utilizing the IPA lens, I was able to delve into the participants' perspectives and capture the essence of their experiences in their own words. My engagement in the "hermeneutic circle," moving back and forth between the transcribed experiences and

their own interpretations, facilitated a deeper understanding of the participants' worldviews and the significance they attached to their reentry challenges.

The emergence of themes such as circumscribed opportunities due to incarceration history, constrained prospects tied to racial identity, societal stigma due to gender identity, and the cumulative effects of these intersectional factors, highlights the power of the IPA approach in identifying patterns and shared meanings across participants' narratives. These findings not only provide insight into the lived realities of formerly incarcerated African American Black males but also illuminate the complex interplay of personal, social, and structural factors shaping their reentry experiences.

Moreover, the study's grounding in hermeneutic phenomenology, with its focus on being and temporality, allows for a nuanced exploration of how participants' past experiences of incarceration and their present struggles with reentry shape their sense of self and their aspirations for the future. By attending to the ontological dimensions of human experience, this theoretical approach enables a more holistic understanding of the participants' life-worlds and the existential challenges they face in rebuilding their lives post-incarceration.

The findings generated through the application of IPA and hermeneutic phenomenology in this study have significant implications for both theory and practice. They underscore the importance of centering the voices and lived experiences of marginalized populations in research on reentry and in the development of interventions and policies aimed at supporting successful reintegration. Furthermore, they highlight the need for theoretical frameworks that can capture the complexity and intersectionality of

the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly those belonging to historically oppressed and disadvantaged communities.

Essentially, this study's theoretical foundation in IPA and hermeneutic phenomenology has enabled a rich, contextualized understanding of the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated African American males and the meanings they ascribe to their reentry journey. The insights generated through this approach have the potential to inform more responsive, culturally sensitive theories of reentry and to guide the development of interventions and policies that prioritize the needs and perspectives of those most directly impacted by the challenges of reintegration.

Conclusion

This interpretive phenomenological study has shed light on the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated African American Black males in California as they navigate the difficult journey of reentry. The lived experiences shared by participants underscore the profound impact of systemic racism, discrimination, and socioeconomic disadvantage on the ability of this population to successfully reintegrate into their communities and build stable, fulfilling lives after incarceration.

The findings make clear that achieving meaningful improvements in reentry outcomes for African American Black males will require a concerted, collaborative effort to dismantle the structural barriers that perpetuate inequality and limit opportunities for growth and advancement. Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers must work together to develop comprehensive, culturally responsive interventions that address the

intersecting needs of this population and provide sustained, holistic support throughout the reentry process.

Ultimately, the goal must be to create a more just and equitable society in which formerly incarcerated individuals, regardless of race or background, have access to the resources, opportunities, and social support necessary to rebuild their lives and achieve their full potential. By centering the voices and experiences of those most directly impacted by the challenges of reentry, we can begin to forge a path toward genuine healing, restoration, and systemic change.

References

- Abayomi, A. (2017). *The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1149107>
- Alang, S., McAlpine, D., McCreedy, E., & Hardeman, R. (2017). Police brutality and black health: Setting the agenda for public health scholars. *American Journal of Public Health, 107*(5), 662–665. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2017.303691>
- Ames, H., Glenton, C., & Lewin, S. (2019). Purposive sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example from a synthesis on parental perceptions of vaccination communication. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 19*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4>
- Andrade, C. (2021). The inconvenient truth about convenience and purposive samples. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 43*(1), 86-88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0253717620977000>
- Antenangeli, L., & Durose, M. R. (2021). *Recidivism of prisoners released in 24 states in 2008: A 10-year follow-up period (2008–2018)*. Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Asasari, F., Smith, R., & Johnson, P. (2018). Systematic racism and its impact on African American males in the criminal justice system. *Journal of Social Issues, 74*(2), 245-262.
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Researcher, 1*(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678919849737>
- Assari, S., Lee, D. B., Nicklett, E. J., Moghani Lankarani, M., Piette, J. D., & Aikens, J.

- E. (2017). Racial discrimination in health care is associated with worse glycemic control among black men but not black women with type 2 diabetes. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 5, 235. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2017.00235>
- Ataro, G. (2020). Methods, methodological challenges and lesson learned from phenomenological study about OSCE experience: Overview of paradigm-driven qualitative approach in medical education. *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*, 49, 19–23.
- Azad, A., Sernbo, E., Svärd, V., Holmlund, L., & Björk Brämberg, E. (2021). Conducting in-depth interviews via mobile phone with persons with common mental disorders and multimorbidity: The challenges and advantages as experienced by participants and researchers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(22), 11828. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182211828>
- Azad, N., McGowan, J., & Miller, T. (2021). The importance of informed consent in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 21(3), 345-362.
- Baldwin, J. R., Pingault, J. B., Schoeler, T., Sallis, H. M., & Munafò, M. R. (2022). Protecting against researcher bias in secondary data analysis: Challenges and potential solutions. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, 37(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10654-021-00839-0>
- Bartholomew, L. K., Parcel, G. S., & Kok, G. (2021). Planning health promotion programs: An intervention mapping approach. *John Wiley & Sons*.
- Bartholomew, L. K., Parcel, G. S., & Kok, G. (2021). Sample size considerations for qualitative research. *Health Education Research*, 36(1), 55-67.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyaa077>

Bates, D. (2018). *Once a felon.... always a felon? A comparative case study of the experiences of convicted African American fathers.*

<https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/4730>

Bergen, A. E., & Labonté, R. (2020). Understanding qualitative research: The interplay of theory, method, and analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(8), 1120-1130.

Bergen, N., & Labonté, R. (2020). Everything is perfect, and we have no problems: Detecting and limiting social desirability bias in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(5), 783–792. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732319889354>

Bishop, E. T., Hopkins, B., Obiofuma, C., & Owusu, F. (2020). Racial disparities in the Massachusetts criminal system. *Criminal Justice Policy Program, Harvard Law School.*

Blankenship, K. M., Del Rio Gonzalez, A. M., Keene, D. E., Groves, A. K., & Rosenberg, A. P. (2018). Mass incarceration, race inequality, and health: Expanding concepts and assessing impacts on well-being. *Social Science & Medicine*, 215, 45–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.08.042>

Boccio, C. M., & Beaver, K. M. (2019). The influence of family structure on delinquent behavior. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 17(1), 88–106.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204017736272>

Bosick, S., & Fomby, P. (2018). Family instability in childhood and criminal offending during the transition into adulthood. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(11), 1483–1504. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218787000>

- Boyd, R. W., Lindo, E. G., Weeks, L. D., & McLemore, M. R. (2022). On racism: A new standard for publishing on racial health inequities. *Health Affairs, 41*(2), 5–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01523>
- Braveman, P. A., Arkin, E., Proctor, D., Kauh, T., & Holm, N. (2022). Systemic and Structural racism: Definitions, examples, health damages, and approaches to dismantling. *Health Affairs, 41*(2), 171–178.
<https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01394>
- Braveman, P., & Parker, D. T. (2021). Abandon "race." focus on racism. *Frontiers in Public Health, 9*, 689462. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.689462>
- Brinkley-Rubinstein, L., & Cloud, D. H. (2020). Mass incarceration as a social-structural driver of health inequities: A supplement to AJPH. *American Journal of Public Health, 110*(S1), S14–S15. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2019.305486>
- Brydolf-Horwitz, M. (2020). Risk, property rights, and antidiscrimination law in rental housing: Toward a property-in-action framework. *Law & Social Inquiry, 45*(4), 871-901. <https://doi.org/10.1017/Isi.2019.76>
- Campbell, R., Goodman-Williams, R., Feeney, H., & Fehler-Cabral, G. (2020a). Assessing triangulation across methodologies, methods, and stakeholder groups: The joys, woes, and politics of interpreting convergent and divergent data. *American Journal of Evaluation, 41*(1), 125–144.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214018804195>
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020b). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research

case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>

Carol, S. C. (2020). *Civil War to Civil Rights*. Retrieved from National Park Service U.S Department of the Interior Washington Support Office: Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Interpretation, Education and Volunteers.

<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/civil-war-to-civil-rights.htm>

Carroll, H. A., Toumpakari, Z., Johnson, L., & Betts, J. A. (2017). The perceived feasibility of methods to reduce publication bias. *PLoS One*, 12(10), e0186472.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0186472>

Carson, E. (2018). *Prisoners in 2016*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Carson, E. (2020). *Prisoners in 2019*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Carson, E. A. (2015). Prisoners in 2014. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin. September 17, 2015, NCJ 248955.

Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Jones, M. R., & Porter, S. R. (2020). Race and economic opportunity in the United States: An intergenerational perspective. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 135(2), 711–783. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjz042>

Choi, S. (2018). Experiencing financial hardship associated with medical bills and its effects on health care behavior: A 2-year panel study. *Health Education & Behavior*, 45(4), 616–624. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198117739671>

Chrispal, S., Bapuji, H., & Zietsma, C. (2021). Caste and organization studies: Our silence makes us complicit. *Organization Studies*, 42(9), 1501–1515.

Chung, J. (2021). *Voting Rights in the Era of Mass Incarceration: A Primer*. Retrieved

from <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/felony-disenfranchisement-a-primer/>

Clark, C. (2019). *The Power of Play: An Action Research Study Examining Teachers' Use of Gamified Learning Practices to Develop Habits of Mind in Elementary Students* (Thesis, Concordia University, St. Paul). Retrieved from

https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/cup_commons_grad_edd/377

Clifasefi, S. L., Lonczak, H. S., & Collins, S. E. (2022). Seattle's Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program: Within-subjects changes on housing, employment, and income/benefits outcomes and associations with recidivism.

Crime & Delinquency, 68(1), 78–102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128720948512>

Coffelt, T. (2017). Confidentiality and anonymity of participants. In M. Allen (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* (pp. 228-230). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411.n86>

Coleman, P. (2019). In-depth interviewing as a research method in healthcare practice and education: value, limitations, and considerations. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 12(3), 1879.

Collier-Thomas, B., & Turner, J. (1994). Race, Class, and Color: The African American Discourse on Identity. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 14(1), 5–31.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27501932>

Committee on Revision of the Penal Code (2021). *Annual Report and Recommendations*. Retrieved from http://www.clrc.ca.gov/CRPC/Pub/Reports/CRPC_AR2021.pdf

Crenshaw, K. (2010). *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*.

New York, NY: The New Press.

- Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (Eds.). (1995). In Ford, C. L., & Airhihenbuwa, C. O. (2018). Commentary: Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's it Doing in a Progressive Field Like Public Health? *Ethnicity & Disease*, 28(Suppl 1), 223–230. <https://doi.org/10.18865/ed.28.S1.223>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage.
- Cross, C. J., Nguyen, A. W., Chatters, L. M., & Taylor, R. J. (2018). Instrumental Social Support Exchanges in African American Extended Families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 39(13), 3535–3563. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X18783894>
- Crutchfield, R. D., & Weeks, L. (2015). The effect of incarceration on employment: A longitudinal analysis of criminal offenders. *The Prison Journal*, 95(4), 407-425. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885515603741>
- Curtin, S. C., & Tejada-Vera, B. (2019). Mortality Among Black Youth Aged 18–19: United States, 1999–2017. *NCHS Data Brief*, 352, 1–8. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db352-h.pdf>
- Daniel, H., Bornstein, S. S., & Kane, G. C. (2018). Addressing Social Determinants to Improve Patient Care and Promote Health Equity: An American College of

Physicians position paper. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 168(8), 577–578.

<https://doi.org/10.7326/M17-2441>

Davidson, J. R., & Milligan, S. (2020). Qualitative Research and Medical Knowledge.

International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19, 1609406920977111.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920977111>

Davies, P. R., & Thate, M. (2017). Challenging stereotypes: The experiences of African

American men in the labor market. *The Journal of African American Studies*,

21(3), 306-322. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-017-9427-0>

De Claire, K., & Dixon, L. (2017). The Effects of Prison Visits from Family Members on

Prisoners' Well-Being, Prison Rule Breaking, and Recidivism: A Review of

Research Since 1991. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 18(2), 185–199.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838015603209>

Deaton, A. (2003). Health, Inequality, and Economic Development. *Journal of Economic*

Literature, 41(1), 113–158. <https://doi.org/10.1257/002205103321544710>

Deaton, A., & Cartwright, N. (2018). Understanding and misunderstanding randomized

controlled trials. *Social Science & Medicine*, 210, 2–21.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.12.005>

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (Vol. 87).

NYU Press.

Delgado, R., Stefancic, J., & Harris, A. (2017). Table of contents. In *Critical race theory*

(*Third Edition*): *An introduction* (Vol. 20, pp. ix–xii). NYU Press.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1ggjjn3.2>

- Denver, M., Siwach, G., & Bushway, S. D. (2021). A new look at the employment and recidivism relationship through the lens of a criminal background check. *Criminology*, 59(4), 698–726. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12283>
- Dettoni, J. R. (2011). Follow-up questions: A systematic approach in qualitative research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-1>
- Dettoni, J. R. (2011). Loss to follow-up. *Evidence-Based Spine-Care Journal*, 2(1), 7–10. <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0030-1267080>
- Dhakal, P. (2022). Biochemical consequences of Gαq modulation in a model serotonin motor circuit [Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami].
- Dhakal, R. (2022). The role of NVivo in qualitative research: A practical guide for learners. *Journal of Qualitative Research Methods*, 11(1), 15-30.
- Dhakal, R., & Althobaiti, A. (2021). Utilizing NVivo for qualitative data analysis: Insights from researchers. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 1-12.
- Dhakal, R., Baniya, M., Solomon, R. M., Rana, C., Ghimire, P., Hariharan, R., ... & Sivan, M. (2021). TELeRehabilitation Nepal (TERN) to improve quality of life of people with spinal cord injury and acquired brain injury: A proof-of-concept study. *medRxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.06.23.21259254>
- Dill, L. J. (2017). Poetic justice: Engaging in participatory narrative analysis to find solace in the "killer corridor." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 60(1-2), 253–263. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12159>
- Donaldson-Richard, K. (2020). Effects of Laws, Policies, and Rehabilitation Programs on

- African American Male Juvenile Recidivism in Southwest Georgia. *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. Retrieved from Walden Library databases.
- Donato, S. (2020). Health disparities among African Americans. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellhealth.com/health-disparities-african-americans-4178301>
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1899). *The Philadelphia Negro: A social study*. Retrieved from <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/40869/40869-h/40869-h.htm>
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1994). *The souls of black folk*. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20200222195747/https://www.gutenberg.org/files/40869/40869-h/40869-h.htm>
- Durant, R. W., Legedza, A. T., Marcantonio, E. R., Freeman, M. B., & Landon, B. E. (2011). Willingness to participate in clinical trials among African Americans and whites previously exposed to clinical research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 18(1), 8–19.
- Edison Research, & National Public Media (2021). *The black podcast listener report*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalpublicmedia.com/uploads/2021/12/Black-Podcast-Listener-Report-2021.pdf>
- Elias, A., & Paradies, Y. (2021). The costs of institutional racism and its ethical implications for healthcare. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 18(1), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-020-10073-0>
- Elias, A., Ben, J., & Hiruy, K. (2024). Re-imagining anti-racism as a core organizational value. *Australian Journal of Management*, 49(1), 15–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03128962231151579>

- Englander, M., & Morley, M. (2021). Building credibility in qualitative research: Strategies and implications. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 27(2), 193-205.
- Ewald, A. C. (2021). Barred from employment: More than half of unemployed men in their 30s had a criminal history of arrest. *Science Advances*, 7(37), eabj6992. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abj6992>
- Fix, R. L., Mobach, T., Hoskins, S. N., & Pablov, S. (2023). A systematic review of the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and reentry outcomes. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 50(3), 326–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548221131378>
- Flanagin, A., Frey, T., Christiansen, S. L., & Bauchner, H. (2021). The reporting of race and ethnicity in medical and science journals: Comments invited. *JAMA*, 325(11), 1049–1052. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2021.2104>
- Fleming, J. (2018). Building rapport in qualitative research: The power of connection. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 15(2), 151-168.
- Fleming, J. (2018). Building rapport in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(1), 226-246. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3185>
- Flowe, D. J. (2020). *Uncontrollable Blackness: African American Men and Criminality in Jim Crow New York*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press.
- Ford, C. L., & Airhihenbuwa, C. O. (2018). Commentary: Just what is Critical Race Theory and what's it doing in a progressive field like public health? *Ethnicity & Disease*, 28(Suppl 1), 223–230. <https://doi.org/10.18865/ed.28.S1.223>
- Foster, B. (2021). *They Came in Chains but Their Minds Were Firm*. 1691: Journal of

African American Studies. Retrieved from

<https://www2.ccsu.edu/afamjournal/?article=418>

Frampton, G. K., Shepherd, J., Pickett, K., Griffiths, G., & Wyatt, J. C. (2020). Digital tools for the recruitment and retention of participants in randomized controlled trials: A systematic map. *Trials*, *21*, 478. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-020-04358-3>

Francisco Olmos-Vega, F. M., Stalmeijer, R. E., Varpio, L., & Dolmans, D. H. J. M. (2022). A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE Guide No. 149. *Medical Teacher*, *44*(8), 857–864.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2022.2037480>

Frazier, R. (2020). Fifth Ward: A personal history of a changing neighborhood. *The Journal of Urban History*, *46*(4), 725-739.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144219841011>

Frechette, J., Bitzas, V., Aubry, M., Kilpatrick, K., & Lavoie-Tremblay, M. (2020). Capturing lived experience: Methodological considerations for interpretive phenomenological inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920907254>

Fry, J., Scammell, J., & Barker, S. (2017). Drowning in Muddied waters or swimming downstream? A critical analysis of literature reviewing in a phenomenological study through an exploration of the life world, reflexivity and role of the researcher. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, *17*(1).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2017.1293355>

- Fusaro, V. A., Levy, H. G., & Shaefer, H. L. (2018). Racial and ethnic disparities in the lifetime prevalence of homelessness in the United States. *Demography*, *55*(6), 2119–2128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0717-0>
- Garcia, J. A., Sanchez, G. R., Sanchez-Youngman, S., Vargas, E. D., & Ybarra, V. D. (2015). Race as a lived experience: The impact of multi-dimensional measures of race/ethnicity on the self-reported health status of Latinos. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, *12*(2), 349–373. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X15000120>
- Gibbons, F. X., Fleischli, M. E., Gerrard, M., Simons, R. L., Weng, C. Y., & Gibson, L. P. (2020). The impact of early racial discrimination on illegal behavior, arrest, and incarceration among African Americans. *The American Psychologist*, *75*(7), 952–968. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000533>
- Gibbons, T., Brown, A., & Lee, Y. (2020). Overrepresentation of African American males in the prison system: A statistical analysis. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *29*(4), 345-360.
- Gifford, E. J. (2019). How incarceration affects the health of communities and families. *North Carolina Medical Journal*, *80*(6), 372-375. <https://www.ncmedicaljournal.com/content/ncm/80/6/372.full.pdf>
- Goff, P. A., Lloyd, T., Geller, A., Raphael, S., & Glaser, J. (2016). The science of justice: Race, arrests, and police use of force. *Center for Policing Equity*. <https://www.policingequity.org/science-of-justice-race-arrests-and-police-use-of-force>

- Goger, A., Harding, D. J., & Howard, H. H. (2021). *A better path for criminal justice chapter 7 prisoner reentry*. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/7_Better-Path-Forward_Chp7_Prisoner-Reentry.pdf
- Grall, T. S. (2020). Child support debt and reentry: The burden of financial obligations on formerly incarcerated fathers. *Family Relations*, 69(3), 700-712.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12442>
- Grant, J. (2018). The lived experiences of African American male ex-offenders in the Northeast United States. *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. Retrieved from Walden University Library Databases.
- Guenther, A., & Falk, I. (2021). Qualitative research in action: When sample size matters. *International Journal of Qualitative Research*, 20(3), 1-10.
- Guenther, J., & Falk, A. (2021). The problem with large samples in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 294-312.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1818655>
- Guenther, K. M., & Falk, R. F. (2021). Generalizing from qualitative research: A new old approach. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(6), 2045–2060.
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4897>
- Guillemin, M., Gillam, L., & Larkin, M. (2018). Ethics, reflexivity, and the role of the researcher in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 28(1), 1-11.
- Guillemin, M., Gillam, L., & Parker, M. (2018). Ethics, reflexivity and “being there”. *Qualitative Research*, 18(3), 359-370. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117742274>
- Haldipur, J. (2018). *No Place on the Corner: The Costs of Aggressive Policing*. New

York: NYU Press.

- Halloran, M. J. (2019). African American health and posttraumatic slave syndrome: A terror management theory account. *Journal of Black Studies*, 50(1), 45–65.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934718803737>
- Harding, D. J., Morenoff, J. D., & Wyse, J. J. B. (Eds.). (2019). *On the Outside: Prisoner Reentry and Reintegration*. University of Chicago Press.
- Harper, A., Ginapp, C., Bardelli, T., Grimshaw, A., Justen, M., Mohamedali, A., Thomas, I., & Puglisi, L. (2021). Debt, incarceration, and re-entry: A scoping review. *American Journal of Criminal Justice: AJCJ*, 46(2), 250–278.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-020-09559-9>
- Heneghan, C., Goldacre, B., & Mahtani, K. (2017). The ethics of conducting research on human subjects: Principles and challenges. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 43(8), 534–537.
- Heneghan, C., Goldacre, B., & Mahtani, K. R. (2017). Why clinical trial outcomes fail to translate into benefits for patients. *Trials*, 18(1), 122.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-017-1870-2>
- Hernandez, K. L. (2017). *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and The Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles 1771–1965*. University of North Carolina (UNC) Press.
- Hetey, R. C., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2018). The numbers don't speak for themselves: Racial disparities and the persistence of inequality in the criminal justice system. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(3), 183–187.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721418763931>

- Hetey, R. C., Monin, B., Maitreyi, A. A., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2016). *Data for change: A statistical analysis of police stops, searches, handcuffings, and arrests in Oakland, Calif., 2013–2014*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Social Psychological Answers to Real-World Questions.
- Hinton, E., & Cook, D. (2020). The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans: Historical Overview. *Annual Review of Criminology, 4*, 261–286.
- Hinton, E., & Cook, D. (2021). The mass criminalization of Black Americans: A historical overview. *Annual Review of Criminology*. Retrieved from <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/epdf/10.1146/annurev-criminol-060520-033306>
- Hinton, E., Henderson, L., & Reed, C. (2018). *An Unjust Burden: The Disparate Treatment of Black Americans in the Criminal Justice System*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.
- Hipes, C. (2019). The impact of a felony conviction on stigmatization in a workplace scenario. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, 56*, 89–99.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcrj.2018.12.002>
- Hipes, C. (2019). Understanding anger: The emotional landscape of formerly incarcerated individuals. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 46*(1), 23–41.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854818763936>
- Holloway, E. D., Folk, J. B., Ordorica, C., & Tolou-Shams, M. (2022). Peer, Substance Use, and Race-Related Factors Associated with Recidivism Among First-Time Justice-Involved Youth. *Law and Human Behavior, 46*(2), 140–153.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000471>

- Holmes, A., & Gary, D. (2020). Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1-10.
- <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232>
- Holzer, H. J. (2021). Why Are Employment Rates So Low Among Black Men? Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-are-employment-rates-so-low-among-black-men/>
- Homan, M. M., & Brown, K. (2022). Disenfranchisement and the white supremacist agenda: The effects of systemic racism on African American males. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Studies*, 9(2), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/631>
- Homan, P., & Brown, T. H. (2022). Sick and tired of being excluded: Structural racism in disenfranchisement as a threat to population health equity. *Health Affairs*, 41(2), 219–227. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01405>
- Hunter, A. G. (2006). Teaching classics in family studies: E. Franklin Frazier’s The Negro Family in the United States. *Family Relations*, 55(1), 80-92. Retrieved from https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/A_Hunter_Teaching_2006.pdf
- Jacobs, G., & Keegan, A. (2018). Ethical considerations and change recipients’ reactions: ‘It’s not all about me’. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 152, 73–90.
- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3311-7>
- Jacobs, L. A., & Gottlieb, A. (2020). The effect of housing circumstances on recidivism: Evidence from a sample of people on probation in San Francisco. *Criminal*

Justice and Behavior, 47(9), 1097–1115.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854820932231>

Janis, I. (2022). Strategies for Establishing Dependability Between Two Qualitative Intrinsic Case Studies: A Reflexive Thematic Analysis. *Field Methods*, 34(3), 240-255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X211069636>

Jeffers, A. R. (2017). Reflections of Academic Experiences from Formerly Incarcerated African American Males. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(2), 222–240.

Jenkins, S. P., Calvert, M. J., & Draper, H. (2020). Potential Research Participants' Use of Information During the Consent Process: A Qualitative Pilot Study of Patients Enrolled in a Clinical Trial. *PloS One*, 15(6), e0234388. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0234388>

Johnson, W. (2020). *The broken heart of America: St. Louis and the violent history of the United States*. New York: Basic Books.

Jordan, M., Houghton, M., & Williams, D. (n.d.). The ethical dimensions of qualitative research. *Journal of Social Research Ethics*, 1-15.

Jordan, M., Lutz, W., & Munk, R. (n.d.). The role of positionality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325018761316>

Kannenberg, K., Conley, M., & Synovec, C. E. (2020). Advancing occupational justice through street-based intervention: A case study examining strategies for increasing meaningful engagement in the face of homelessness and incarceration. *Work*, 65(2), 303–310. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-203082>

Kautz, S. V. (2019). The emotional experience of parental incarceration from the African

American adolescent perspective. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 12(2), 187–199. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-018-0232-x>

Keene, D. E., & Dwyer, K. (2018). The impact of housing instability on formerly incarcerated individuals: A cycle of disadvantage. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 17(2), 441-465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12356>

Kendall, S., Redshaw, S., Ward, S., Wayland, S., & Sullivan, E. (2018). Systematic review of qualitative evaluations of reentry programs addressing problematic drug use and mental health disorders amongst people transitioning from prison to communities. *Health & Justice*, 6(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40352-018-0063-8>

Key, R., & May, D. C. (2019). The impact of race on perceptions of educational attainment and employment opportunities for ex-offenders. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 58(3), 196–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2019.1598193>

Key, W. H., & May, D. C. (2019). Race, neighborhood disadvantage, and recidivism: A test of race-specific models of social disorganization and differential social opportunity. *Criminology*, 57(3), 452-481. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12211>

Khalikaprasad, L. (2020). Remorse, not race: Essence of parole release? *Journal of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity*, 9(1), 131–149.

King, L. J. (2020). Black history is not American history: Toward a framework of Black historical consciousness. *Social Education*, 84(6), 335–341. Retrieved from <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/view-article-2020->

[12/se8406335.pdf](#)

- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 120-124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>
- Kostovicova, D., & Knott, D. (2022). Consent and distress in qualitative research: A framework for ethical engagement. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 25*(5), 505-517.
- Kostovicova, D., Kerr, R., Sokolić, I., Fairey, T., Redwood, H., & Subotić, J. (2022). The “digital turn” in transitional justice research: Evaluating image and text as data in the Western Balkans. *Comparative Southeast European Studies, 70*(1), 24-46. <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2022-0015>
- Kutnick, A. H., Leonard, N. R., & Gwadz, M. V. (2019). “Like I have no choice”: A qualitative exploration of HIV diagnosis and medical care experiences while incarcerated and their effects. *Behavioral Medicine (Washington, D.C.), 45*(2), 153–165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08964289.2019.1591338>
- LaCourse, A., Listwan, S. J., Reid, S., & Hartman, J. L. (2019). Recidivism and reentry: The role of individual coping styles. *Crime & Delinquency, 65*(1), 46–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128718790497>
- LaDonna, K. A., Bulsara, C., & White, M. (2021). Understanding qualitative research: The importance of small samples. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211012273>
- LaDonna, K. A., Williams, M. J., & Conley, M. J. (2021). Beyond numbers:

- Understanding the significance of qualitative data. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 16(2), 191-206.
- LaVeist, T. A., Fullilove, M., & Fullilove, R. (2019). 400 years of inequality since Jamestown of 1619. *American Journal of Public Health*, 109(1), 83–84.
<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304824>
- Ledesma, M., & Calderón, D.-L. (2015). Critical race theory in education: A review of past literature and a look to the future. *Educational Policy*, 29(5), 690-715.
- Leslie, T. N. (2020). The impacts of incarceration on the wellbeing of family members of African American males who experience the U.S. prison system: A phenomenological study. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/3809>
- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(3), 324-327.
<https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.161306>
- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(3), 324-326.
- Lewinski, A. A., Anderson, R. A., Vorderstrasse, A. A., & Johnson, C. M. (2019). Developing methods that facilitate coding and analysis of synchronous conversations via virtual environments. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919842443>
- Lewis, D., & Hong, P. Y. P. (2020). Incapacitated fatherhood: The impact of mass incarceration on Black father identity. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.21428/88de04a1.09b4b7aa>

- Lindheim, R. (2022). Trustworthiness in qualitative research: Ensuring reliability and validity. *Qualitative Research*, 22(4), 482-495.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794121992563>
- Lindheim, R. (2022). Trustworthiness in qualitative research: Practical considerations. *Qualitative Research*, 22(3), 300-316.
- Lindheim, T. (2022). Participant validation: A strategy to strengthen the trustworthiness of your study and address ethical concerns. In G. Espedal, B. Jelstad Løvaas, S. Sirris, & A. Wæraas (Eds.), *Researching values* (pp. 245-262). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90769-3_13
- Luna, E. (2017). *Reforming criminal justice: Punishment, incarceration, and release* (Vol. 4). Phoenix, AZ: Arizona State University. Retrieved from https://law.asu.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academy_for_justice/Reforming-Criminal-Justice_Vol_4.pdf
- Macpherson, W. (1999). *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Mahaffey, C. C., Stevens-Watkins, D., & Leukefeld, C. (2018). Life after: Examining the relationship between sociobehavioral factors and mental health among African American ex-offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62(12), 3873–3889.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17750327>
- Maher, A. J., Evans, K. M., & Arslanian-Engoren, C. (2018). The importance of confidentiality in qualitative research. *Nursing Ethics*, 25(2), 229-237.

- Maher, G. M., O’Keeffe, G. W., Kearney, P. M., Kenny, L. C., Dinan, T. G., Mattsson, M., & Khashan, A. S. (2018). Association of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy with risk of neurodevelopmental disorders in offspring: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Psychiatry*, *75*(8), 809–819.
<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2018.0854>
- Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(13), 1753-1760. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>
- Manti, S., & Licari, A. (2018). Face-to-face interviews in qualitative research: Strengths and limitations. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *18*(1), 1-10.
- Manti, S., & Licari, A. (2018). The importance of face-to-face interviews in qualitative research. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Health*, *1*(1), 33-40.
<https://doi.org/10.5334/jqrh.23>
- Market Research Society. (2014). *Code of conduct: Celebrating sixty years of successful self-regulation*. The European Research Federation and the Global Research Business Network.
<https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/mrs%20code%20of%20conduct%202014.pdf>
- Martin, E. (2017). Hidden consequences: The impact of incarceration on dependent children. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, *278*. Retrieved from
<https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/hidden-consequences-impact-incarceration-dependent-children>
- Matamoros-Fernández, A., & Farkas, J. (2021). Racism, hate speech, and social media: A

systematic review and critique. *Television & New Media*, 22(2), 205–224.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420982230>

Maxwell, C. (2020). In their own words: African American youth make meaning of police shootings of unarmed African Americans. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 35(6), 760–789. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558420913482>

McMahon, S. A., & Winch, P. J. (2018). Systematic debriefing after qualitative encounters: An essential analysis step in applied qualitative research. *BMJ Global Health*, 3(5), e000837. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000837>

Mizel, M. L. (2018). *A plea for justice: Racial bias in pretrial decision making* (PhD dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.

Mogk, C., Sokol, K., & Winkle, M. (2019). The impact of legal system involvement on homelessness: Policy-driven risk factors for formerly incarcerated individuals. *Journal of Social Issues*, 75(3), 785-802. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12347>

Morenoff, J. D., & Harding, D. J. (2014). Incarceration, prisoner reentry, and communities. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 40(1), 411–429. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145511>

Mowen, T. J., Stansfield, R., & Boman, J. H., 4th (2019). Family matters: Moving beyond "if" family support matters to "why" family support matters during reentry from prison. *The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 56(4), 483–523. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427818820902>

Munthe-Kaas, H., Nøkleby, H., Lewin, S., & Glenton, C. (2020). The transfer approach for assessing the transferability of systematic review findings. *BMC Medical*

- Research Methodology*, 20(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0834-5>
- Munthe-Kaas, H., Schloemer, C., & Schröder-Bäck, P. (2020). Research credibility: The importance of rigorous qualitative methods. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 20(1), 1-10.
- Muraglia, A., Pizzoli, S. F., & D'Angelo, E. (2020). Ethical considerations in qualitative research: Respect for participants. *Research Ethics*, 16(3), 1-12.
- Muraglia, S., Vasquez, A. L., & Reichert, J. (2020). Conducting research interviews on sensitive topics. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. <https://doi.org/10.1002/crq>
- Nadarevic, L., Reber, R., Helmecke, A. J., & Köse, D. (2020). Perceived truth of statements and simulated social media postings: An experimental investigation of source credibility, repeated exposure, and presentation format. *Cognitive Research*, 5(56), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-020-00251-4>
- Nair, L. B. (2021). From ‘Whodunit’ to ‘How’: Detective stories and auditability in qualitative business ethics research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 172, 195–209. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04479-4>
- Nair, R. (2021). Validating qualitative research findings: A focus on reflexivity. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 1-8.
- National Conference of State Legislatures. (2019). Interest on child support arrears. Washington, DC: Author.
- National Conference of State Legislatures. (2020). License restrictions for failure to pay child support. Washington, DC: Author.

National Criminal Justice Reference Service. (2017). Special feature: Reentry. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/reentry>

Nellis, A. (2021). The color of justice: Racial and ethnic disparities in the American criminal justice system. *The Sentencing Project*.
<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/the-color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-the-american-criminal-justice-system/>

Nembhard, S., & Robin, L. (2021). Racial and ethnic disparities throughout the criminal legal system: A result of racist policies and discretionary practices. Urban Institute. Retrieved from
<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104687/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-throughout-the-criminal-legal-system.pdf>

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), 90–97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>

Neupert, K. E., Rook, K. S., & Sorkin, D. H. (2017). Chronic stress and health: A lifespan perspective. *Psychology and Aging*, 32(6), 635-646.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000216>

Noonan, A. S., Velasco-Mondragon, H. E., & Wagner, F. A. (2016). Improving the health of African Americans in the USA: An overdue opportunity for social justice. *Public Health Reviews*, 37, 12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40985-016-0025-4>

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis:

Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16.

- Obama, B. (2016). *2016 Economic Report of the President*. Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/cea/economic-report-of-the-President/2016>
- Obinna, D. N. (2020). Essential and undervalued: Health disparities of African American women in the COVID-19 era. *Ethn Health*, 1, 68-79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13557858.2020.1843604>
- Ogunbajo, A., Siconolfi, D., Storholm, E., Vincent, W., Pollack, L., Rebchook, G., Tan, J., Huebner, D., & Kegeles, S. (2023). History of incarceration is associated with unmet socioeconomic needs and structural discrimination among young Black sexual minority men (SMM) in the United States. *Journal of Urban Health*, 100(3), 447–458. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-023-00737-8>
- Olivet, J., Wilkey, C., Richard, M., Dones, M., Tripp, J., Beit-Arie, M., Yampolskaya, S., & Cannon, R. (2021). Racial inequity and homelessness: Findings from the SPARC study. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 693(1), 82–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716221991040>
- Olmos-Vega, F., Tabares, J., & Méndez, J. (2022). Reflexivity in qualitative research: The impact of the researcher's position. *Qualitative Health Research*, 32(6), 924-934. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323221088087>
- Ortiz, J. M., & Jackey, H. (2019). The system is not broken, it is intentional: The prisoner reentry industry as deliberate structural violence. *The Prison Journal*, 99(4), 484–

503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885519852090>

- Osei, P. S., & Osei, P. C. (2020). An ecological approach to improving reentry programs for justice-involved African American men. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 6(3).
- Owens, P. M., Fagan, J., & Votruba, M. (2017). The effect of legal and extra-legal factors on the risk of incarceration for first-time felony defendants in New York City. *Justice Quarterly*, 34(5), 850-878.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2016.1138288>
- Palandacic, A. K., Radez, J., Uzman, S., Lainscak, M., & Sarotar, B. N. (2022). Evaluating anxiety in elective coronary angiography study: Rationale, design, and study methodology. *Journal of Cardiovascular Medicine*, 23(10), 678-684.
<https://doi.org/10.2459/JCM.0b013e3283441cd7>
- Panuccio, E., & Christian, J. (2019). Work, family, and masculine identity: An intersectional approach to understanding young, Black men's experiences of reentry. *Race and Justice*, 9(4), 407–433.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368717705419>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Peoples, K. (2020). *How to write a phenomenological dissertation: A step-by-step guide* (Vol. 56). Sage Publications.
- Pettit, B., & Gutierrez, C. (2018). Mass incarceration and racial inequality. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 77(3-4), 1153–1182.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12241>

- Pettus-Davis, C., & Kennedy, S. (2019). The psychological toll of reentry: Early findings from a multi-state trial. Florida State University College of Social Work, Institute for Justice Research and Development. Retrieved from https://ijrd.csw.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1766/files/media/images/publication_pdfs/5Key_QR2_Psychological_Toll_of_Reentry.pdf
- Pew Charitable Trusts. (2020). Policy reforms can strengthen community supervision: A framework to improve probation and parole. Retrieved from https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/04/policyreform_communitysupervision_report_final.pdf
- Pezalla, A. E., Pettigrew, J., & Miller-Day, M. (2012). Researching the researcher-as-instrument: An exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity. *Qualitative Research: QR*, 12(2), 165–185. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14879>
- Pierson, E., Simoiu, C., Overgoor, J., Corbett-Davies, S., Jenson, D., Shoemaker, A., Ramachandran, V., Barghouty, P., Phillips, C., Shroff, R., & Goel, S. (2020). A large-scale analysis of racial disparities in police stops across the United States. *Nature Human Behavior*, 4(7), 736–745.
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2010). *Essential of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice* (7th ed.). Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2010). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Power, L., & Nolan, K. (2017). Reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals: The

- role of employment in successful reentry. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 56(7), 465-486. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2017.1365708>
- Prowse, G., Weaver, V. M., & Meares, T. L. (2020). The state from below: Distorted responsiveness in policed communities. *Urban Affairs Review*, 56(5), 1423–1471.
- Purtle, J. (2013). Felon disenfranchisement in the United States: A health equity perspective. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(4), 632–637. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300933>
- Radez, J., Reardon, T., Creswell, C., Orchard, F., & Waite, P. (2022). Adolescents' perceived barriers and facilitators to seeking and accessing professional help for anxiety and depressive disorders: A qualitative interview study. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 31, 891–907. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01707-0>
- Rambert, T. L. (2021). The impact of child support enforcement on African American fathers: Racial disparities and systemic challenges. *Journal of African American Studies*, 25(2), 243-259. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-021-09552-3>
- Rankl, F., Johnson, G. A., & Vindrola-Padros, C. (2021). Examining what we know in relation to how we know it: A team-based reflexivity model for rapid qualitative health research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 31(7), 1358–1370. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732321998062>
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Reeves, R. V., Nzau, S., & Smith, E. (2020). The challenges facing Black men and the

case for action. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/11/19/the-challenges-facing-black-men-and-the-case-for-action/>

- Resnik, D. B. (2018). Research ethics: A philosophical approach. *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, 39(3), 227-243.
- Rich, R., & Katheria, H. (2019). Face-to-face interviews: Methodological advantages and challenges. *International Journal of Qualitative Research*, 5(1), 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.2147/IJQR.S163334>
- Richardson, J. B., Jr., Wical, W., Kottage, N., & Bullock, C. (2020). Shook ones: Understanding the intersection of nonfatal violent firearm injury, incarceration, and traumatic stress among young Black men. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 14(6). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988320982181>
- Rios, V., Prieto, G., & Ibarra, J. M. (2020). Mano suave—mano dura: Legitimacy policing and Latino stop-and-frisk. *American Sociological Review*, 85(1), 58–75.
- Roberts, L. M. (2019). *Race, work and leadership: New perspectives on the Black experience*. Harvard Business Press.
- Rosenberg, A., Groves, A. K., & Blankenship, K. M. (2017). Comparing black and white drug offenders: Implications for racial disparities in criminal justice and reentry policy and programming. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 47(1), 132–142.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022042616678614>
- Rothstein, R. (2017). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America*. 1st ed. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- Rowell-Cunsolo, T. L., Szeto, B., McDonald, C., & El-Bassel, N. (2018). Return to illicit

drug use post-incarceration among formerly incarcerated Black Americans.

Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy, 25(3), 234–240.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687637.2016.1259391>

Saladino, V., Mosca, O., Petruccelli, F., Hoelzlhammer, L., Lauriola, M., Verrastro, V., & Cabras, C. (2021). The vicious cycle: Problematic family relations, substance abuse, and crime in adolescence: A narrative review.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.673954>

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage Publications.

Saldaña, J. (2018). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Saldaña, J. M. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Saldaña, J. M. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). Sage Publications Ltd (UK).

Saldaña, J. M. (2023). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). Sage Publications Ltd (UK).

Salehijam, M. (2018). The value of systematic content analysis in legal research. *Tilburg Law Review*, 23(1-2), 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.5334/tilr.5>

Scharff, D. P., Mathews, K. J., Jackson, P., Hoffsummer, J., Martin, E., & Edwards, D. (2010). More than Tuskegee: Understanding mistrust about research participation.

Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 21(3), 879–897.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/hpu.0.0323>

Schloemer, T., & Schröder-Bäck, P. (2018). Criteria for evaluating transferability of health interventions: A systematic review and thematic synthesis. *Implementation Science*, 13(1), 88. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-018-0751-8>

Sentencing Project. (2018). Report of the Sentencing Project to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance: Regarding Racial Disparities in the United States Criminal Justice System. Washington, DC: Sentencing Project.

Shadravan, S., Stephens, D., Appel, O., & Ochoa, K. (2020). Cross-sectional study of homeless high service utilizers in Los Angeles County jails: Race, marginalization and opportunities for diversion. *Ethnicity & Disease*, 30(3), 501–508. <https://doi.org/10.18865/ed.30.3.501>

Shannon, S. K. S., Uggen, C., Schnittker, J., Thompson, M., Wakefield, S., & Massoglia, M. (2017). The growth, scope, and spatial distribution of people with felony records in the United States, 1948-2010. *Demography*, 54(5), 1795-1818. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-017-0611-1>

Sharif Mienah Zulfacar, S. M., García, J. J., Mitchell, U., Dellor, E. D., Bradford, N. J., & Truong, M. (2020). Racism and structural violence: Interconnected threats to health equity. Retrieved from <https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpubh.2021.676783>. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.676783>

- Shiao, J., & Woody, A. (2021). The meaning of “racism.” *Sociological Perspectives*, 64(4), 495–517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121420964239>
- Silverio, A., McKinney, M., & Bullock, M. (2022). Handling sensitive information in qualitative interviews: A researcher’s guide. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211047035>
- Silverio, D. R., Curioso, W. H., & Maillón, A. (2022). Sensitivity in qualitative interviews: Balancing ethics and research needs. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1-11.
- Silverio, S. A., Sheen, K. S., Bramante, A., Knighting, K., Koops, T. U., Montgomery, E., November, L., Soulsby, L. K., Stevenson, J. H., Watkins, M., Easter, A., & Sandall, J. (2022). Sensitive, challenging, and difficult topics: Experiences and practical considerations for qualitative researchers. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221124739>
- Sivasubramaniam, S., Dlabolová, D. H., Kralikova, V., & Khan, Z. R. (2021). Assisting you to advance with ethics in research: An introduction to ethical governance and application procedures. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 17(14), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-021-00078-6>
- Sivasubramaniam, S., et al. (2021). Ethics in qualitative research: Principles and practices. *Qualitative Health Research*, 31(5), 867-874.
- Skinner-Osei, P., & Stepteau-Watson, D. (2018). A qualitative analysis of African American fathers’ struggle with reentry, recidivism, and reunification after participation in re-entry programs. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social*

- Environment*, 28(2), 240-255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2017.1402724>
- Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2014). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The philosophy, the methodologies, and using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Quality & Quantity*, 48(3), 1291-1303. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-013-9835-3>
- Smith Lee, J. R., & Robinson, M. A. (2019). “That’s my number one fear in life. It’s the police”: Examining young black men’s exposures to trauma and loss resulting from police violence and police killings. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 45(3), 143–184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798419865152>
- Staller, K. M. (2021). Purposive sampling and the role of representation in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 21(4), 666-678. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794121991472>
- Staller, K. M. (2021). The significance of purposive sampling in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 21(4), 546-558.
- Stanley-Becker, I. (2022). Housing discrimination and the formerly incarcerated: A persistent barrier to reintegration. *Housing Policy Debate*, 32(1), 59-75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2021.1937198>
- Steil, J. P., Albright, L., Rugh, J. S., & Massey, D. S. (2018). The social structure of mortgage discrimination. *Housing Studies*, 33(5), 759–776. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2017.1390076>
- Subramani, S. (2019). Reflexivity in qualitative research: Understanding the researcher's impact. *Qualitative Research*, 19(2), 142-157.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794118767872>

- Subramani, T. (2019). Reflexivity in qualitative research: A dynamic process. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1-10.
- Surmiak, A. (2020). Confidentiality in qualitative research: A review of key ethical considerations. *Research Ethics*, 16(3), 1-12.
- Surmiak, A. (2020). Should we maintain or break confidentiality? The choices made by social researchers in the context of law violation and harm. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 18(3), 229–247. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-019-09336-2>
- Swaine, J., & McCarthy, C. (2017, January 8). Young black men again faced highest rate of US police killings in 2016. *The Guardian*. Retrieved August 18, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/08/the-counted-policekillings-2016-young-black-men>
- Tanner, M. D. (2021). Poverty and criminal justice reform: Politicians love to portray themselves as “tough on crime.” But there are real consequences to heavy sentencing in terms of poverty. Cato Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.cato.org/study/poverty-criminal-justice-reform>
- Taylor, R. J., Miller, R., Mouzon, D., Keith, V. M., & Chatters, L. M. (2018). Everyday discrimination among African American men: The impact of criminal justice contact. *Race and Justice*, 8(2), 154-177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368716661849>
- Thomas, A., Wirth, J. C., Poehlmann-Tynan, J., & Pate, D. J., Jr. (2022). "When She Says Daddy": Black fathers' recidivism following reentry from jail. *International*

Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(6), Article 3518.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19063518>.

Thorkildsen, Z., Wohl, E., Walther, B., Bryson, B., & Cunningham, B. (2019). Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Traffic Stops Analysis Report: July 2017–December 2018. Phoenix: Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

Tomaszewski, L. E., Zarestky, J., & Gonzalez, E. (2020). Planning qualitative research: Design and decision making for new researchers. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920967174>.

Turney, K. (2017). Unmet health care needs among children exposed to parental incarceration. *Maternal Child Health Journal*, 21(5), 1194–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-016-2219-2>.

Tyler, T. R. (2018). The role of stigma in the lives of the formerly incarcerated. *The Prison Journal*, 98(1), 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885517744693>

U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2019). *Prisoners in 2019*. Retrieved from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p19.pdf>

U.S. Department of Justice [DOJ]. (2019). Justice Department Alleges Conditions in Alabama Men's Prisons Violate the Constitution. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1150276/download>.

Uggen, C., Larson, R., Shannon, S., & Pulido-Nava, A. (2020). Locked out 2020: Estimates of People Denied Voting Rights Due to a Felony Conviction. The Sentencing Project. Retrieved from <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/locked-out-2020-estimates-of->

people-denied-voting-rights-due-to-a-felony-conviction/.

- VandeVusse, A., Mueller, J., & Karcher, S. (2022). Qualitative data sharing: Participant understanding, motivation, and consent. *Qualitative Health Research, 32*(1), 182–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323211054058>
- VandeVusse, L., Keegan, C., & Jacobs, S. (2022). The ethics of research in criminal justice: Navigating sensitive topics. *Journal of Criminal Justice Research, 20*(2), 199-210.
- Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterizing and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: Systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 18*(148). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7>
- Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterising and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: Systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 18*(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7>
- Vera Institute. (2019). *A Vision for Change*. Retrieved from <https://www.vera.org/annual-report-2019-a-vision-for-change>
- von Allmen, N., & Dettori, J. R. (2015). The role of follow-up in qualitative research: Techniques for effective data collection. *Qualitative Health Research, 25*(6), 815-823.
- von Allmen, N., Meyer, A., & Simons, M. (2015). Follow-up questions in qualitative research: Addressing gaps and clarifying data. *Qualitative Research, 15*(2), 156-

174. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114565560>

von Allmen, R. S., Weiss, S., Tevaearai, H. T., Kuemmerli, C., Tinner, C., Carrel, T. P., Schmidli, J., & Dick, F. (2015). Completeness of follow-up determines validity of study findings: Results of a prospective repeated measures cohort study. *PLoS One*, *10*(10), e0140817. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0140817>

Wallace, D., & Wang, X. (2020). Does in-prison physical and mental health impact recidivism? *SSM - Population Health*, *11*, Article 100569. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100569>.

Wallace, D., David, H., Tyler, K., Kramer, Kempany, K. G., Brooks, L., Sweeten, G., Ylang, N., Daniels, A., Gricius, M., & Hale, J. (2018). *Annual report for the maricopa county sheriff's office: years 2016 to 2017*. Phoenix: ASU Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety.

Wildeman, C. (2014). Parental incarceration, child homelessness, and the invisible consequences of mass imprisonment. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *651*(1), 74–96.

Wildeman, C., & Wang, E. A. (2017). Mass incarceration, public health, and widening inequality in the USA. *The Lancet*, *389*(10077), 1464–1474. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)302593](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)302593)

Wilkins, C. H., Mapes, B. M., Jerome, R. N., Villalta-Gil, V., Pulley, J. M., & Harris, P. A. (2019). Understanding What Information Is Valued by Research Participants, And Why. *Health Affairs (Project Hope)*, *38*(3), 399–407. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2018.05046>.

Wilkins, R. (2018). Building rapport in qualitative interviews: Techniques and insights.

Qualitative Research, 18(1), 57-71.

Wilkins, R. (2018). Reflexivity in research: A review of the literature. *Qualitative*

Research, 18(3), 371-386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117742252>

Williams, C. & Harcourt, S. (2018). Researcher reflexivity: A tool for ethical research.

Ethics and Social Welfare, 12(3), 248-261.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2018.1476885>

Williams, D. R., Lawrence, J. A., & Davis, B. A. (2019). Racism and health: Evidence and needed research. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 40, 105–125.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040218-043750>.

Williams, J. M., & Bergeson, C. (2019). Incarceration as determinant of poor health

outcomes. In D. M. Griffith, M. A. Bruce, & J. Roland J. Thorpe (Eds.), *Men's Health Equity* (pp. 180–188). Routledge.

Williams, J. M., Wilson, S. K., & Bergeson, C. (2019). “It’s Hard Out Here if You’re a Black Felon”: A critical examination of black male reentry. *The Prison Journal*,

99(4), 437–458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885519852088>.

Williams, J. M., Wilson, S. K., & Bergeson, C. (2020). Health implications of

incarceration and reentry on returning citizens: A qualitative examination of Black men's experiences in a Northeastern City. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 14(4), Article 1557988320937211.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988320937211>.

Williams, M., Smith, R., & Johnson, P. (2019). The impact of incarceration on

community reentry: A qualitative study. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 45(3), 123-134.

Williamson, C., Van Rooyen, A., Shuttleworth, C., Binnekade, C., & Scott, D. (2020).

Wuity as a philosophical lens for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920926885>.

Yanney, K. O. (2022). Beyond the revolving door: Reducing the risks of recidivism so

African American male youth not only survive but thrive. *College of Education*

Theses and Dissertations, 247. Retrieved from

https://via.library.depaul.edu/soe_etd/247.

Yu, Y., & Sun, I. Y. (2019). Race, recidivism, and employment: Examining the role of

criminal records in the employment process. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 62, 47-

57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2018.10.006>

Zamawe, C. O., Nakamura, K., Shibanuma, A., & Jimba, M. (2016). The effectiveness of

a nationwide universal coverage campaign of insecticide-treated bed nets on

childhood malaria in Malawi. *Malaria Journal*, 15(1), 1-8.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12936-016-1247-1>

Zamawe, F. C. (2015). The role of NVivo software in qualitative research. *Journal of*

Qualitative Research in Health and Social Care, 3(1), 1-8.

Zang, Z., & Minton, T. D. (2019). *Jail inmates in (2019)*. Washington, DC: United States

Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

What is your lived experience in your community re-entry post-incarceration?

Dan Duru is inviting you to participate in a study about the lived experience in the community re-entry post-incarceration of African American Black adult males in California. The purpose of this study is to better understand the lived experience during the community re-entry of formerly incarcerated African American males. The potential participants must be (a) an African American Black adult male (b) from Los Angeles, California (c) between ages 18 and 50 years old (d) who has been incarcerated in a state or federal prison in California for felony offenses. If you meet the criteria for this study, please contact the researcher using the contact information below: **Dan Duru, Doctoral Student at Walden University - Phone Number: XXX**

Appendix B: Interview Guide Questions

1. Did you experience any challenges during re-entry into the community following release from incarceration? If so, could you describe these challenges?
2. What were some challenges you faced prior to incarceration?
3. What was your experience when seeking employment following release from prison?
4. How would you describe the support you received during and after incarceration?
5. Have you returned to the neighborhood in which you lived prior to going to prison? If so, can you describe your living environment?
6. In what ways did your incarceration relate to your re-entry challenges?
7. What changes in the criminal justice system do you perceive will promote successful reintegration?
8. What are some necessary aspects that should be included in reentry programs that are specific to formerly incarcerated African American males?
9. You previously mentioned some challenges you faced during your community re-entry following prison. To what extent do you see these challenges as unique to formerly incarcerated African American males or do you think that other racial/ethnic groups face similar challenges upon community re-entry?
10. What is needed for African American males to successfully re-enter and re-integrate to community living after prison?

Appendix C: Background Survey

Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Pseudonym: _____

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female _____ Other.

3. Marital Status: Married _____ Single _____ Divorced _____ Never been married _____

Widowed _____

4. Ethnicity: _____ African American _____ Hispanic _____ White _____ Other.

5. Highest level of education: _____ Elementary school _____ Middle school _____ Junior high school _____ Some high school _____ High school _____ GED _____ Some college _____ Associate _____ Bachelors _____ Masters _____ Ed.D/PhD.

6. Employment status: _____ Student _____ Employed _____ Unemployed _____

Retired

7. Income Level: _____ 0 – 25,000 _____ 26,000 – 35,000 _____ 36,000 – 45,000 _____ 46,000 – 55,000 _____ 6,000 – 65,000 _____ over 65,000.

8. Relationship to incarcerated individual: _____ Parent _____ Child _____ Sibling _____ Spouse/Partner _____ Other (state relationship).

9. Children (that the study participant is responsible or supporting) _____

10. Number of years incarcerated _____

11. How long since released from prison _____